

## EP 5: DAN GARVEY

### FINAL TRANSCRIPT

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The time stamps begin at 00:00:00:00 when the guest appears (after our intro reel).

Rus (co-host)

00:00:00:03 - 00:00:18:27

To the podcast. It's great to have you here. We obviously go back a long way over ten years now. So it's great to have you here. It's great to talk about not just education and all the great things that you're doing back working in New York but also talking a little about the traveling school that we both worked at.

Rus (co-host)

00:00:18:27 - 00:00:40:14

Think Global School. But before we get to that, I think the people that know us both will absolutely need me to ask you about your favorite hobby, which is spearfishing. And what I would say where I'm going to start this one is lessons from spearfishing that can be applied not just to life but to academia.

Dan (guest)

00:00:41:10 - 00:00:46:00

Oh, I like that. All right. You want me to answer that one right after that?

Rus (co-host)

00:00:46:03 - 00:00:46:24

Yeah. Go for it.

Dan (guest)

00:00:47:16 - 00:01:14:04

All right, so spearfishing. All right, so spearfishing is one of those things. And the way I do it is free diving. So with free diving, you have to sort of train your mind and your body. You have to be in physical condition in order to hold your breath for an extended period of time, swim underwater, and then calmly approach your target, a fish, and get close enough to shoot the fish.

Dan (guest)

00:01:15:06 - 00:01:55:18

Now, that whole process is something that doesn't just happen right away. It takes a significant four for a one-minute dove. You're looking at training for, you know, hours outside of the water. You know, you're doing your due diligence at night to do your breathing ladders. You're understanding the physiology of your body so that you can best prepare it and so that you can, even in your breathe-ups and your dives, you can ensure that your sort of bio rhythms are in sync and that you're not going to put yourself in danger and that you're actually going to calmly approach your target.

Dan (guest)

00:01:56:15 - 00:02:23:20

And then even with all of that work, preparation and effort, the key is like when you get down there, if you are too focused on that fish and you are too focused on trying to get that

fish and you move too quickly or you move without patience, the fish will sense you and they're better in the water than you are and they'll disappear.

Dan (guest)

00:02:24:15 - 00:02:43:21

So it's one of those things that when you're 30 feet underwater and you're holding your breath, you can see the fish. And you have to remind yourself that it's not about the fish. Right? It's if the fish comes, the fish comes. If you can. Getting close that you can get it. Great. But if all you can do is get a glimpse of it, then you're already winning.

Dan (guest)

00:02:44:02 - 00:03:10:06

So it's kind of like, you know, within the learning and education that you have to realize that the goal is it's not really the goal. It's just the opportunity to be able to swim with the fish and, you know, test yourself and, you know, be diligent in your work and practice. That's that you're already winning. So with spearfishing, it's, you know, at the end of the day, if you get a fish, even better, you get to go home and cook it up and appreciate where it came from.

Dan (guest)

00:03:10:06 - 00:03:17:27

But you more appreciate it when everything that you put into that dove in that, you know, hunt It's that's the best.

Christian (co-host)

00:03:19:08 - 00:03:36:24

Dan, when you first started to answer Russ's question, Russ got on with this question because I love what it means as a metaphor. But there's also a really practical part, Dan, that dawned on me, and that is I was imagining you're on the surface and you see a fish and you're going to go down, right? And you're always kind of coming up or down.

Christian (co-host)

00:03:37:07 - 00:04:00:18

But it's really become really clear that you're down under the water for a full minute, so you're holding your breath. And I think for me, for the average person holding your breath for a minute in a swimming pool with no other task. But simply to say to water is already a really interesting challenge. And so that idea of having a target and you really have to present yourself, you have to be present, right?

Christian (co-host)

00:04:00:18 - 00:04:24:10

You have to be with the fishes or you have to let go of the goal. But also you have to be present in that balance between holding my breath. Being conscious of your physiology and your goal, but also not panicking. You're not getting too much, getting too energetic. Tell me a little bit about that part of the training and how that maybe even applies to situations you're in above the water specifically.

Dan (guest)

00:04:24:22 - 00:04:48:14

Right. So I guess like I'm trying to think of a good scenario. All right. So it's kind of like as you're developing as a kid, right? And you're going through life especially and this is what we've seen in the teenage years, you know, those 15 to 18 and very emotional in their responses. Right. So fear is always one that sneaks in very quickly.

Dan (guest)

00:04:49:10 - 00:05:08:08

And with that, fear becomes a distraction and it becomes sort of like a loss of control. So you are no longer able to be present within that situation because of that fear. And so, you know, being exposed to little things that might scare you along the way, you learn to logically orient yourself to say, well, what is it worth being afraid of and what is not?

Dan (guest)

00:05:08:19 - 00:05:30:07

So a perfect example of this was one where I pushed myself a little too far. I was diving in a hole about 50 feet and I had been diving for about 40 minutes already. Um, and I decided, all right, you know, I know there's fish down there. And I was, again, too goal-oriented. I wanted that fish. And I swim out.

Dan (guest)

00:05:30:07 - 00:05:51:28

I dove under the water and I'm holding my breath. I hit 50 feet and there's that beautiful fish. And I'm like, Ah, here we go. And I popped that fish. And just as I shoot the gun and realize that I've got the fish, I always realize that, well, I'm also out of breath, but I can feel so there's like certain changes in your body that, you know, you're like, Oh, okay.

Dan (guest)

00:05:51:28 - 00:06:09:28

So I'm at the end here. And so you feel like the one is the desire to breathe and you get that kind of your body is sort of like herky-jerky and like trying to breathe and you're trying to quell it. So I grab the fish and I'm swimming to the surface now 50 feet. And where I am, the visibility is not amazing.

Dan (guest)

00:06:09:28 - 00:06:28:14

And so I'm looking up and I'm going right, well, where's the surface? So then that fear starts creeping in and I can feel my heart rate going up. And then I know and I logically orient myself. I go, okay, being afraid, you know, like I have to, I have to stay calm because if I lose it now, I have no chance.

Dan (guest)

00:06:28:21 - 00:06:52:15

And so it was the first time in my life that I actually conscientiously allowed my logic part of the brain to overpower my emotional part of the brain and sort of control that fear

for that moment to get through the task at hand. And I got to the surface and every cell in my body was burning with deoxygenation, and I could feel my vision sort of starting to come down through me.

Dan (guest)

00:06:52:15 - 00:07:15:16

And I said, All right, here we go. It's all, all or nothing now. So I was more or less a second away from shallow water black and I surfaced. My friend was there, you know, he made sure I was okay. And it was I think the only reason I made it was because I had that ability to sort of overcome the primitive emotion because I had been in situations like that and I knew what was going on.

Dan (guest)

00:07:15:18 - 00:07:35:08

I had empowered myself with the knowledge to do that. And it was yeah, that was, that was an eye-opener. And so I took a few weeks out of the water and you know, when I got back in, I made sure that I was a little bit more prepared and understood what I was doing. And so there was that almost catastrophic failure that taught me a lot.

Dan (guest)

00:07:35:08 - 00:07:39:01

And so it was from there that I kind of continued to grow and build.

Rus (co-host)

00:07:41:28 - 00:07:56:21

Nice and we should sell our audience as well. You're also a wrestling coach and work as a lifeguard. How have you taken any of the skill sets from either of those domain domains toward your skills as an educator?

Dan (guest)

00:07:58:01 - 00:08:18:08

Um, yes. So, I mean, even when we work on the beach, so I work Ocean Rescue here in my hometown. And so I work with a lot of kids who are 16, 17 years old, 18 years old. And what's interesting to me is that like watching the m, developing them as young guards, you know, I also get to work with some of them in the classroom.

Dan (guest)

00:08:18:19 - 00:08:40:05

It's a lot of it is confidence building and letting them know that it's okay to make mistakes and it's okay to learn, so to speak. So a perfect example. We had a rescue with a gentleman on a boogie board, who was out in a rip, and he was going off to, you know, basically out to the abyss, the ocean.

Dan (guest)

00:08:40:05 - 00:08:58:29

I had a young lifeguard, threw on some fins, and grabbed a lion's swim. That's going beautifully. But it was an interesting scenario we hadn't had before. It was there that as we enter the water, it went down to about 6 to 8 feet and then came back up to a shallow, you know, shoal. And then it dropped off again.

Dan (guest)

00:08:58:29 - 00:09:14:00

And so he kind of had to crawl over the second one. But then the way in which the lion was getting caught in the currents in that deeper part, we had to send a second lifeguard out to help him feed the line. And it was one of those it was like kind of a controlled chaos situation.

Dan (guest)

00:09:14:24 - 00:09:36:05

So, you know, the rescue is made. We bring the kid in and, you know, and the same thing in the classroom. It's like, you know, here's an imperfect situation with new variables being thrown at you. And rather than, you know, saying, oh, you should have done this, you should have done that, it was kind of like pull the kid and actually the group of kids that were there and say, okay, so what was that?

Dan (guest)

00:09:36:05 - 00:10:04:06

What happened? And allowing them the opportunity to sort of say out loud what was working and what wasn't and let them come up with the solution and why it worked. You know, when we sent out the second person to help feed and what did we want to do in the future and this, that, and the other. And so, you know, getting those kids involved in that discussion the same way you would do in a classroom when you know you're dealing with, you know, introducing new content and like a new project and they're a little bit afraid or something doesn't go that well.

Dan (guest)

00:10:04:06 - 00:10:26:03

It's like give them the opportunity to sort of discuss it among themselves to, you know, understand that one, they have a voice in it. You know, they were present. They have valuable information that's that they can be added to the conversation and you trust their understanding of it. But also it sort of empowers them and makes them feel comfortable with stepping up.

Dan (guest)

00:10:26:04 - 00:10:44:14

And so, you know, those younger guards in a few years, like they'll be the senior guards and they'll be the ones running the show and operating. And so they're going to build a continuous culture of, you know, fostering good decisions and fostering discussion and fostering learning and understanding. At one point I didn't know what was going on, but I was given the opportunity to discuss it.

Dan (guest)

00:10:44:14 - 00:10:51:17

And, you know, it really lends itself to like generational and sort of like sequential growing and learning environment.

Christian (co-host)

00:10:52:27 - 00:11:17:03

Dan, I'm really struck by a number of things. I mean, there's a whole part of this conversation just about how you have developed the mindset to confront both the preparation side, like before you go into the water, all that you've done sort of off camera. But what you just talked about in terms of collaborating with and mentoring young people, you know, I know we're going to talk a lot about education and sort of what the carryovers are.

Christian (co-host)

00:11:17:03 - 00:11:38:14

And so here's what you're making me think about. Typically, in a classroom, even if it is a really progressive, collaborative, creative experience, we as educators tend to keep the third rail or the constraints pretty tight on the young people because we have a sense of what the outcome should be. What good is, I've got to move on to the next class and 45 minutes, whatever it is.

Christian (co-host)

00:11:39:00 - 00:12:01:26

But when you're on a wrestling mat and you're a coach in training a young person at whatever his or her weight class is at a certain time, you don't control anything like we've trained you. And then once you're on the mat, it's almost entirely up to you. And the stakes are really intense. Right. And then in this kind of lifeguard training rescue scenario, you just said, like, you know, I've trained you, but we were in a scenario that we haven't faced before.

Christian (co-host)

00:12:01:26 - 00:12:21:17

And so what I'm wondering about is that idea that as a varsity coach or as somebody working with young people in the real world where the stakes are legit, there is no sort of practice versus being in a classroom where we're always preparing them for one day or preparing them for a future, preparing them for a thing in theory.

Christian (co-host)

00:12:22:00 - 00:12:41:13

Tell me a little bit about that, because there must be literal carryovers, like as a coach in the classroom, but also there must be just the sense that in the real world you're willing to mentor, to coach, to create that space for discernment and discovery. Would you just go there somewhere or riff on that a little bit?

Dan (guest)

00:12:41:22 - 00:12:51:10

Sure. So, all right. So you are asking how does the real-world sort of scenarios of coaching and lifeguarding and developing children translate into the classroom?

Christian (co-host)

00:12:52:02 - 00:13:10:18

I guess I'm wondering whether or not for you those are different domains. And I'm wondering to what degree we see our young people as fully capable of confronting complexity in the real world. But in school we often maybe minimize. Right. What they can respond to or our role.

Dan (guest)

00:13:10:28 - 00:13:41:19

Right. Well, I think in the real world, you know, so working at works with the volunteer ambulance, working with the ocean rescue, coaching, wrestling where there is that where the opportunity for real-world sort of exposure and then real-world learning where as you say, the stakes are high. That's it's easy to find moments to help have those discussions and sort of, you know, let the kid sort of sift through what they experience and why.

Dan (guest)

00:13:42:08 - 00:14:10:19

So that's it's easy. I would say, in the classroom, as you say, there's more of that time constraint and all that. It's I think that having those experiences in the real world, as a coach and as a trainer and things like that, you find more opportunities in the classroom. You see those little moments, those little nuggets of opportunity, and you sort of jump on those as opposed to jumping on, you know, oh, they don't know what, you know, sell cell membrane does.

Dan (guest)

00:14:10:27 - 00:14:35:21

It's like I'd rather focus on, you know, the opportunity for real-world growth and missing deadlines and, and you have those tough conversations with kids about like I just had a conversation with some of my students the other day about, you know, if you come into a, you know, an exam and you're stressed out of the exam, and, you know, there was a little bit of pushback.

Dan (guest)

00:14:35:21 - 00:14:50:14

It was too soon. It was not too soon. I said, okay, well, it's one of those where it's like, well, let's gauge and see where you are. My objective here isn't to, like, bury you with grades or bury you with an exam, but it's like, okay, so like if it went well, great, let's look and figure out why it went well, and if it didn't go well.

Dan (guest)

00:14:50:14 - 00:15:08:21

Okay, let's take a second and discuss why it didn't go well. So, you know, do we know how to, you know, time manage? Do we know how to break up certain tasks throughout

our day because the time you know as we learn and think global school time task orientation is one of the biggest things that kids need to learn?

Dan (guest)

00:15:08:21 - 00:15:38:04\

And so rather than harping on the content only in the grades only, it's like, okay, well let's, let's use it as a platform in a forum to figure out how we can prepare cells not just for this class, but for like life in general, and then give them the opportunity to sort of like have those open discussions and be willing to listen and take time away from the class in order to enhance sort of like the life preparation stuff because, you know, some of my juniors and seniors are going off to college and no one's ever asked them, hey, do you know how to study?

Dan (guest)

00:15:38:12 - 00:16:01:07

Or like, do you know how to like, you know, solve a problem that you're not necessarily comfortable with in a class? Or do you know how to, you know, organize your time? So that way you can, you know, still maintain like a good, healthy routine, but also, you know, get the content and the knowledge that you need. But it's those, you know, those opportunities don't really present themselves all that much in the regular classroom.

Rus (co-host)

00:16:01:07 - 00:16:24:05

Working with you, as long as I have, I think you're one of the best educators. I've worked with it building a really great rapport with the students and having them really trust you and have faith in you as an educator. And for educators and teachers listening to the podcast, what advice to the many who are starting out is new in the profession...

Rus (co-host)

00:16:24:14 - 00:16:55:15

What advice would you give those educators in terms of building rapport and building trust with students? How do you go about saying what's your I mean, we've talked already, you know, in the first kind of 50 minutes have flown by. Everybody talks about, you know, the idea of patience, the idea of using skill sets from other domains. What advice would you give to young up-and-coming educators regarding particular rapport with students and building that trust and relationships?

Dan (guest)

00:16:55:15 - 00:17:28:02

Okay. It's interesting. So this is one that like changes as you age. So as a young teacher, there's always, always like, you know, you had you have to create a, you know, a barrier because you're so close in age. But I mean, all right. So the way in which I approach like, for example, think global school in that was the I guess my job was you know, organize the boarding make sure that there were protocols and the kids knew where they had to be and when they had to be.

Dan (guest)

00:17:28:02 - 00:18:06:25

And then just keeping consistent with that. So like fairness. But fairness, right? But as we learn and think of a school like, you know, having a million rules doesn't necessarily work because then you have to, you know, like constantly call people on rules and it's like there's no growth there. So I would say that one, humility because you're not perfect, so you can't expect them to be perfect, barely willing to listen to some of the best sorts of, you know, working bonds and relationships I've had with students, I didn't actually have to say much.

Dan (guest)

00:18:07:03 - 00:18:31:28

They would be going through a struggle or challenge or, you know, dealing with an issue. And I mean, I would literally just sit there and be like, okay, if talk. I remember walking back to the classrooms or to the dorm rooms from the classrooms in a country where the student and they were having a day and they were saying all sorts of stuff and spouting off and they were upset.

Dan (guest)

00:18:31:28 - 00:18:55:06

And, you know, there were some tears. And I just calmly walked next to him, no judgment, you know, like you're dealing with something right now and just let them have at it. And then, you know, when we got to the back towards the dorms and I said, okay, how are you feeling? Are you done? And they kind of, you know, swipe the nose and kind of looked at me and we're like, yeah, you know?

Dan (guest)

00:18:55:06 - 00:19:17:19

And I said, okay, well, give yourself a minute, clean yourself up. And then you go on with your day, you know? And if you know, it's they had kind of solved their own problem by talking it out anyways. I didn't have to be. It is like an all-knowing individual. They just need someone to actually like have a wall for them to bounce ideas off of, you know.

Dan (guest)

00:19:17:21 - 00:19:41:13

So I think the, you know, this idea that teachers are infallible, you know, you know, we're all capable of being knuckleheads ourselves. The same way our kids were as well as we all went through those transitions in life. So kind of like approaching that and realizing, you know, obviously step in and be firm when there's a line that's being crossed in the sense of like someone might be getting, you know, themselves in trouble or hurt or whatever.

Dan (guest)

00:19:41:29 - 00:20:01:06

But for the most part, from the day-to-day stuff, it's just listening and be willing to be, you know, a human standing next to them. So once you get that, then, you know, they're willing to share things with you, and then you learn how to ask, you know, good questions and increase dialog and don't be afraid to, like, compliment them.

Dan (guest)

00:20:01:06 - 00:20:21:03

I mean, some of these, like some of the kids we worked with, they're like five times smarter than I am. So it's like, you know, you can say that, you know, like give them positive return for the awesome stuff they do, even if it's a little thing, you know because that's it's the little things that you want to pick up on that they're like, Wait, that was a good thing.

Dan (guest)

00:20:21:03 - 00:20:31:24

And you're like, that was like an amazing thing. Like, do more of that. Like, that was awesome. And then, then they start feeling more confident in themselves. And then it's like the sky's the limit at that point.

Rus (co-host)

00:20:31:24 - 00:20:55:00

Yeah, it's funny because I think we, we, we noticed that a lot. I, I've noticed it a lot in my time in education. It's incredible how quickly you get into that cycle of focusing on noticing the negatives and accolades and praise quickly falls off. If you're not mindful of it. I definitely noticed that in my time for sure.

Dan (guest)

00:20:56:28 - 00:21:11:07

Oh yeah. Well and that and the other one goes with like if they're doing something wrong it's like, you know, it's okay to correct them. Never hold a grudge, never hold a grudge, you know, like, you know, if you have a kid who's acting up one day, you know, that doesn't mean they're going to act up the next that, you know.

Dan (guest)

00:21:11:07 - 00:21:25:16

So it's it takes a lot of self-control to be like, all right, they had it. You know, they were out of kilter. They were off-key yesterday. They said something inappropriate. But the next day, you still say, hey, good morning, how are you doing? You know, so greet them as a human being, a part of the community.

Dan (guest)

00:21:25:16 - 00:21:44:04

It's like, you know because we're all going to have a day where we all say something stupid. I'm definitely guilty of that. But it's one of those where it's like we also have to have the humility of being like, right. Well, you made a mistake yesterday, but that was yesterday. So let's focus on today and move forward.

Dan (guest)

00:21:44:21 - 00:22:01:23

You know, I think like, I'm just thinking of like small-town life. You know, I live in a small town. Everybody knows everything about you. And so we all have dirt on each other. But that means that we've all done something stupid. So we can't really, like, call anybody out because it's like, well, I've done something stupid myself, you know?

Dan (guest)

00:22:02:02 - 00:22:20:20

And so you learn to kind of just like, Oh, all right. Made a mistake. All right, moving on. You know, continue the process forward because otherwise, we sit there and, you know, think that we're perfect and they're not and then or they think that you know, this thing is perfect. All that perfection gets in the way of that.

Christian (co-host)

00:22:23:18 - 00:22:50:01

Dan, I'm curious about your transition to think global school. You had experience in the classroom, you taught internationally, etc. you probably came in, you know, super excited about what TGS represents. The travel, you know, being with young people and peers from all over the world. And you probably had some assumptions about maybe some of the things you even talked about how to treat young people, how to kind of mentor and coach.

Christian (co-host)

00:22:50:01 - 00:23:10:01

And, yet you came into this new small town. Would you just talk a little bit about what that transition was like for you? I'm also curious, when you came in, to what degree was project-based learning a piece of versus like the fullness of what TGS was at that moment? So what was it like in those early days for you?

Dan (guest)

00:23:10:24 - 00:23:36:17

So in the early days when I first got hired on, I got hired on with Russ and we were not thinking of a school that was a project-based learning school. And so at that point, I was like 26 and I have a young face. So I probably looked like I was 18 and I was living with the kids 24-7 but also teaching grade ninth-grade science.

Dan (guest)

00:23:36:17 - 00:24:03:09

So it was a little bit similar to what I had been doing in terms of academia, but it was very different for me in terms of like being a, like a boarding school, sort of like pseudo father, like, you know, boarding dad. And so that was a new challenge for me. So then having come back to think global school, you know, a couple of years later for the project-based learning component, the, you know, the travel part was cool.

Dan (guest)

00:24:03:28 - 00:24:37:29

That's obviously an interesting thing but I was more interested in the project-based learning bit. You know, the travel bit was just like an added bonus for me and I think that that may have been a good thing for me in that role because, you know, the travel part, I wasn't focusing on where I was going, I was focusing on what I was doing and the engagement with the kids and it was more or less like a grand experiment of getting to figure out how do I get kids to develop and process information and, you know, and like what pitfalls.

Dan (guest)

00:24:38:07 - 00:24:58:23

So it was like every module we built and went through, we learned ourselves, you know, better iterations of what it was. But you also got to see within the conversations with the students in that, you know, like what challenges they had and what works and, you know, to overcome them. And then how can we concretely define all of those things?

Dan (guest)

00:24:59:00 - 00:25:18:05

So that way we can make it into more of like I don't say regiments, but more like a clear proto process, you know, so that the kids, new kids coming in like they got more efficient at getting to the, you know, sort of point where we could sort of let them free flow on their own.

Dan (guest)

00:25:18:05 - 00:25:46:19

You know, my favorite part about the global school was the fact that like a senior, I could walk in and give a senior any driving question, and they and just like step back and they would just go. And so, you know, that was like a mark of success for me in the sense that like, you know, the kids were, they were confident, they were capable, and they had clear, clear sort of like tools within their toolkit to approach any problem, any scenario in any country that.

Dan (guest)

00:25:46:24 - 00:26:11:06

So that was like the fun part to me. But I mean, you know, now project-based learning is one of those things where I'm like all about it and pushing it. And it was definitely a big transition going from like content-based learning to, you know, I guess approach or um, you know, the project-based and sort of the process-oriented things I much prefer project.

Rus (co-host)

00:26:11:06 - 00:26:40:21

Can you just give us an overview of how you in your view, how do you take a student who is very much from the traditional system and onboard them into project-based learning when all they've perhaps known is traditional system rote learning and exam-based education right now?

Dan (guest)

00:26:40:21 - 00:26:44:10

So like the schooling process?

Rus (co-host)

00:26:44:10 - 00:26:45:08

Yeah, sure. Yeah.

Dan (guest)

00:26:45:19 - 00:27:16:09

Yeah. So, um, again, the grading systems of, of traditional schools, you know, especially kids who were very, you know, they wanted to be successful in that the, their only way of gauging success was this numeric or this grade or whatever. And so when they came to think global school, the first thing was we didn't really focus on the grade because we didn't give quizzes, we didn't give tests.

Dan (guest)

00:27:16:09 - 00:27:36:02

You know, there was no like me sitting down and going, You got an eight out of ten on this assignment. None of that. And so right off the bat, it was taken away as a demarcation of success. And so, you know, then the struggle became they're like, well, what does it mean to be good? And so then we got to sort of like build in through our daily routines in that.

Dan (guest)

00:27:36:11 - 00:27:59:04

All right. Well, let's I want to hear what you think, and I want to know your logic and reasoning behind it. I want to know how you have analyzed this situation and then when they you know, when they performed it well, it was kind of like a, hey, high five, you know, and it was more of an instead of an extrinsic motivating factor of like a ten out of ten or whatever, it was like a hey, like that was amazing.

Dan (guest)

00:27:59:04 - 00:28:30:14

Like you did a really good job and you worked your tail off for that and it was hard. And you, you overcame that. Then you kind of started to see that like that. That turned from extrinsic motivation into that intrinsic stuff, which then all of a sudden they started to realize like, Wait a minute, if I can do this and sort of and this is the stuff that we also highlighted in conversations, but it was like if I can do this on my own, I can, I can, I can actually do a lot of really cool things, you know, and then they, you know, open up, open-ended questions were no longer sort

Dan (guest)

00:28:30:14 - 00:28:50:21

of like daunting and scary to them. That's the transition came into like open-ended questions were like, ooh, I can, I can do some things with this, you know, and you got to see them sort of like, I like to attack problems like that, which was really cool. And I would just kind of sit in the back and have like a smile on my face, like how that works.

Dan (guest)

00:28:52:07 - 00:29:10:21

So I, I remember having an exit interview with one of the students and they were like, we were talking about analyzing, you know, and so like, you know, and we sort of clarify what analysis was just to give them something concrete to hold on to so that they can have a process moving forward, knowing, all right, I need to analyze something.

Dan (guest)

00:29:10:21 - 00:29:36:15

What does that mean? And so we gave an asset-based function of where we're exit interviewing and it was the student had like they had done it, but they weren't sure if like they're like, wait a minute. And so then they're standing there and they're looking at their work, their process portfolio, and they're talking to me and they go, I analyze this because e and then they were like, Look, I broke it down into these bits and pieces and I looked at each individual piece and this is my explanation for it.

Dan (guest)

00:29:36:22 - 00:29:53:25

And like I really learned a lot about individual things. Then I put it all together and then I figured out how like a tweak and they were like so jazzed up. And I was just like, this is great, you know? And so, yeah, that, that kind of return on investment, not just for you, is the educated because you feel like you've done something positive for the kids.

Dan (guest)

00:29:53:25 - 00:30:15:13

But like seeing that, like that confidence and that like, like just pumped on life and like, yes, I know what I'm doing, I know how to do it. And it's a transferable skill. Like this is one that I can then take with me to anything. And so those, those are the students that like in the next iteration, the next iteration, the next iteration, they get better and better and better.

Dan (guest)

00:30:15:13 - 00:30:25:01

And then they're like, the sky's the limit at that point, you know, like now they feel like they can, you know, they can approach anything. And it's really nice.

Christian (co-host)

00:30:25:18 - 00:30:45:12

Was there a pattern for students at TGS? And Ross, I appreciate your point earlier about the fact that they come most of them come with a more traditional experience in school, what it means to do well, where they fit in, and what content is all of that. There's certainly plenty of TJS kids that come from Montessori backgrounds more alternative or even unschooling backgrounds to a degree.

Christian (co-host)

00:30:46:14 - 00:31:10:00

But, you know, they they're surrounded with a culture of people who are imperfect but are all in. Right. Like everybody, for better or for worse, is moving in this direction. And all of the structures in this sort of casual conversation support it. And it's still hard. Like there are still these moments where a kid has to trust and trust that her voice matters, get up in front of people and take a risk on something.

Christian (co-host)

00:31:10:09 - 00:31:40:24

I'm wondering this maybe for both of you, Russ included, like, is there sort of a moment where you're like, we know for a lot of young people, they're going to hit this moment. And once they hit that moment, all of a sudden it just gets easier, faster. You talked about confidence and you talked about a toolkit, things where there's like there's sort of clarity, but also there's this organic human factor which you are both kind of maybe talk about, like what allowed you to know that a teacher's kid was now truly a TGS student?

Christian (co-host)

00:31:40:24 - 00:31:50:26

Or like, what was that moment in learning and exploration presenting? Is there a pattern of sorts?

Dan (guest)

00:31:50:26 - 00:32:12:19

Ooh, I'd say when they failed miserably at something and they were like and they kind of were like, well, okay. And they didn't take it. So, like, personally, they kind of were like and they could tell you that failure that, you know, that struggle and be like, well, you know, and they would instead of looking at it as a failure, they'd be like, All right, well, all right, now that next time, I definitely got to keep this in mind.

Dan (guest)

00:32:12:27 - 00:32:34:24

And they were already analyzing and digesting, like what they did wrong, but in a way of growth, it was like failing up and there was no more sort of, oh, no, I failed, like let me crumble. It was kind of like, oh, wow. Well, it did go as planned. So that was I mean, it was okay to do that in our school, you know, and it was it happens.

Dan (guest)

00:32:35:27 - 00:32:49:00

It happens in life, happens all the time. And I think we kind of were okay with it. It was like, Yeah, then go as well. You started it and they were like, doubt and you know, but they could say it with a smile on their face and be like, Well, what you learn and they're like, Well, I learned A, B and C.

Dan (guest)

00:32:49:23 - 00:32:55:08

Yeah. So I thought for me that was always a good thing.

Rus (co-host)

00:32:55:08 - 00:33:21:00

I think as well done it. I was on Matthew Green's podcast this morning. He runs a podcast out of Australia and I was talking about exactly that, the grading system. And I think because we removed 81 to 7, I think when you move them into a system that is novice specialist mastery, it's so much more in line with what we do as human beings.

Rus (co-host)

00:33:21:00 - 00:33:42:06

You know, you head to a yoga studio, you pick up a baseball bat, and you go in a wrestling match. You know, you're not an E or a D, you're not even in you know, you start off as a novice, you then develop specialist skills, and the n eventually you might teach others or create a unique style or a unique approach which is more mastery.

Rus (co-host)

00:33:42:06 - 00:34:16:05

And I think that shift for me and once the shoes began to understand that, and when that grade in mentality and that narrative falls off their radar, you really see the growth become exponential because they're not chasing these grades vastly limits a young person because, you know, you think of the end goal. For example, in the U.K., where I'm from, it's like, well, students live in the GCSE system, which is exams they take at 16 with 13, 14, 15 A's and GCSE.

Rus (co-host)

00:34:16:05 - 00:34:34:18

That's ridiculous. I mean, what is that? You know, no one's in everything. Like, it's not you know, it's just so for me, it was when that shift that narrative mental shift happened. So the mentorship happened followed by the narrative for me with the grading system. And that was big for me.

Dan (guest)

00:34:35:19 - 00:34:52:14

Well, with the grading system, it's like let's say we put a grade on stuff, you know, in terms of learning, right? So if I put a 1 to 10, that means that there's a limit. That means that there's nothing beyond that point. And so if you start training kids into the idea that, hey, once I get to ten, I'm done, you know, that's it, I'm perfect.

Dan (guest)

00:34:52:29 - 00:35:08:14

Like it's, you know, that puts a cap on what they're going to learn, you know. So like, as I said at the T, just kids all the time. If I was to sit here and lecture you and test you, whatever I have rattling around in my little skull like my squirrel brain is limited. Like, you know, I can only give you so much.

Dan (guest)

00:35:08:20 - 00:35:32:05

And let's say that, like, my explanation or my teachings of it, you only get 80%. That's that. We're going backward, you know. But if I open the door and I let you guys, you know, approach it and sort of like, I mean, we have knowledge at our fingertips we no longer need to memorize stuff. You know, it's just the use of technology nowadays and the sharing of, you know, the compounding interest of knowledge that has occurred over the last century.

Dan (guest)

00:35:33:03 - 00:35:53:04

You know, we have access to everything. But now let's process through it. Like, let's learn how to use it. Let's maybe see if we can add to it. You know, as I was saying to my students the other day, I said, if you know, if you think about Einstein, Einstein's body of work that he added to the body of science was like a lifetime of work, you know?

Dan (guest)

00:35:53:04 - 00:36:12:14

And I could teach some of his years, years and years and years of his work. I could teach you in 40 minutes, right? So it's like what's more important, teaching you what Einstein figured out or teaching you how to think like Einstein because now you can now think like and so now you can add on top of what he added, you know, because like there's this misconception that we already know it all.

Dan (guest)

00:36:12:23 - 00:36:31:07

We know we have no clue. There's, you know, we're still figuring it out. And that's like the mastery projects that we did. We asked, you know, asking the kids like, okay, you know, between research, AP research and mastery, well, what is known? Figure out what is known and then go back and figure out, well, what's not known and then try and add to it.

Dan (guest)

00:36:31:19 - 00:36:46:14

Now, you know, we're growing now we're going further and, you know, hopefully leaving our squirrel brain teachers like me in the dust because I only know so much and I can only experience so much and I can only share so much.

Rus (co-host)

00:36:46:14 - 00:37:11:25

So what do you think? What do you think? Know, just very quickly, just because Dan's now shifted back to the US and I know we'll focus on that a little later in the podcast, what do you then think are some of the barriers? So everything we've talked about regarding project-based learning, making it into all this, I wouldn't just call it traditional systems, all the systems.

Rus (co-host)

00:37:11:25 - 00:37:19:12

Why do you think uptake of non-exam-based education is slow and kind of a gargantuan task?

Dan (guest)

00:37:20:16 - 00:37:51:13

Oh, so many tiny little variables. I would say. I've been thinking about this a lot. Right. So it's one of those where how schools are measured of their success has to be quantified often. So there is that need to quantify everything in public education. Right. Because, you know, I mean, it literally goes back to like tax dollars and, you know, school rating systems and what neighborhood people want to move into and all that.

Dan (guest)

00:37:51:26 - 00:38:15:09

And, you know, there that component of it, there's also that and this is what I feel is like the biggest one. It's the culture around learning that and that's a hard one to build into an external community. It's easy to build into a community like what we built. Like we built that culture from the ground up and we set the tone and it worked absolutely amazingly.

Dan (guest)

00:38:16:04 - 00:38:38:26

I think what we achieved was something that, you know, every society should aspire to be like because, you know, we really took away the fear of learning. We really, you know, practice what we preached as educators and the growth of our kids. And like the messages I get from my graduates and how they're doing in life, I mean, we like knocked it out of the ballpark.

Dan (guest)

00:38:39:19 - 00:39:00:20

I get these messages from the kids and like just explode with pride because I'm like, you know, more and more about their efforts and, you know, but like, I'm just happy that we were in some way able to foster what they're clearly demonstrating to us, you know, but I don't know, project-based learning is, you know, some people would say the financial part and that's not it.

Dan (guest)

00:39:01:23 - 00:39:19:06

Some people would say time, you know, we don't have enough time to do this. I'm like, no, that's not it. You know, those are just things that people say are barriers but really aren't. You know, you just got to be a little creative with your scheduling. I really think it's the culture and the quantification challenges.

Christian (co-host)

00:39:19:06 - 00:39:36:22

Dan, you and Russ, great question. By the way. I think that point, you know, we can talk about like the ranking, like kids are going to go more likely to go to these colleges because they're perceived as coming from the school district where a kid gets this

particular grade, you know, they're checking their portfolio and so they're more competitive.

Christian (co-host)

00:39:36:22 - 00:39:58:06

But you also mentioned things like real estate values. You know, that that school district, because of that kind of quantities, you know, can see this as a community worth living in. And so in that, you're making me think about the idea that the storytelling, the stories we tell about what success looks like or what young people explore, it's easy to give a score about a Friday night football game.

Christian (co-host)

00:39:58:06 - 00:40:17:12

It's easy to give a score about matriculation rates to colleges. It's easy to mention, you know, the number of kids who get three or four or five on the APs, it's more difficult to tell a story that somebody can understand quickly about a kid's curiosity or about a group of young people and community partners that wrestle and debate and then come to a better conclusion.

Christian (co-host)

00:40:17:27 - 00:40:42:04

So I'm wondering about to the degree that, you know, in a place like TGS, the story is told with one another. You know, young people, administrators, counselors, educators. And of course, your community partners are retelling and building a story together. Therefore, a culture. But when you, as you said, you introduce the external community. So a school and the school district, right?

Christian (co-host)

00:40:42:04 - 00:41:05:04

The voters, the grandparents who graduated five decades ago from that same school, if you would, I'm wondering to what degree storytelling, not marketing, and pitching, but the ability for a community to hold a story of learning. True. Tell us a little bit about what that means to you, because you're deeply embedded in your community, right? You grew up working on the beach nearby.

Christian (co-host)

00:41:05:04 - 00:41:12:22

You've got people you care about if it's a small town, as you said earlier, tell me a little bit about storytelling within the community so that people trust and go there with you.

Dan (guest)

00:41:13:05 - 00:41:36:18

Right? So, yeah, so it's one of those where it's like if you think back to like your grant, you know, my grandparents' era in that, you know, when they talk about their schooling in that there's always is fond memories of like, you know, this event, that event, you

know, this teacher, that teacher, what they learn, they never actually retell like, you know, that math problem in this class that I learned how to, you know, break down.

Dan (guest)

00:41:37:07 - 00:41:56:21

They never talk about like, you know, what they learn in biology class. It's always more of like the anecdotal lessons that they learned along the way. I'm a perfect example of that in the sense that, you know, half of my education came from school, and the other half came from working in and around the community. And so, you know, like, you know, like lifeguarding.

Dan (guest)

00:41:56:21 - 00:42:19:07

I cooked at restaurants, you know, I did landscaping and I worked with a myriad of different people. And what was cool to me was it was the culture of learning and the culture of doing well. Right. And so I was really, really lucky that like the restaurant I worked at, Saw Jack's, half of my educators were the older generation that came in the back door.

Dan (guest)

00:42:19:13 - 00:42:36:02

And we're just like pontificate about life and tell me these crazy stories about their youth and then like they would tell me these, like, absolutely amazing stories of, like, how they're alive to this day. They don't even know. And then on their way out, they turn around, they go, Don't be stupid like me, you know? And like, you know.

Dan (guest)

00:42:36:02 - 00:43:02:12

But if you did mess up at some point in life, they were the first ones to be like, Oh, so you learn the hard way, huh? The other Yeah, I learned the hard way. And they're like, All right, cool, get back in there. So it's, you know, I feel like and this is this segues into like what project-based learning can do in terms of rebuilding that is that if let's say we were to do project-based learning in school here and don't think of it as like the first year the second year they would have like the 20th year, you know.

Dan (guest)

00:43:02:18 - 00:43:19:03

Now what happens is, you know, you get people, people always come back to their hometown and live nearby and they have kids nearby. And I've seen this just in lifeguard I mean, a lifeguard on the beach for 20 years. And some of you know, some of the kids that I've seen when they were like four or five are now lifeguards with me.

Dan (guest)

00:43:19:03 - 00:43:40:11

And so I've seen them grow. I've seen them, you know, become adults with project-based learning and the opportunity to present what you're learning to the town through the

public. You know, because the town is paying for this education, right? But it's also like giving the town an opportunity to see what stock of character and person is coming through, as well as like what are kids learning.

Dan (guest)

00:43:40:11 - 00:43:58:14

Bridget Like, I feel like less and less now. We see the interconnectedness between the generations, right? And so if you have project-based learning and the older generations come back to your school and they see what you're learning and they see, you know, and they can, they can compare it to how they learned what they learned in their projects.

Dan (guest)

00:43:59:00 - 00:44:20:00

You're now you're generating good conversation. Now you're, you're it's almost like giving this older generation an ability to talk to the younger generation and be like, Hey, this kid's doing something really cool. Would you to work with me? And now mentorships occur, you know, you know, now, like as you're walking down the street, someone might say, hey, like, I saw your project the other day, that was really cool.

Dan (guest)

00:44:20:00 - 00:44:44:08

And then it sort of reinforces the community's commitment to education and really allows the kids the opportunity to grow. And it's sort of like a self-fulfilling cycle of, of, of growth, you know. So I think with project-based learning and small-town communities or just communities in general, it's really important, you know, because like if you think about schools nowadays who goes into schools, teachers, and students, that's it.

Dan (guest)

00:44:44:15 - 00:44:55:06

Everybody else is almost prevented from entering. It's like, no, no, no. The community in every commits, it's a growth center.

Rus (co-host)

00:44:55:06 - 00:45:19:01

Yeah, that's true. That it's they are very locked down institutions right now. Dan, as you now have obviously left, I think local school this summer, you've come back into your regional education system. What are you curious about as you move into the next five years? Where do you think education's going and what kind of what gets you up in the morning?

Rus (co-host)

00:45:19:03 - 00:45:23:04

Yeah. What kind of gets you madly curious as you look forward to the next five years?

Dan (guest)

00:45:23:04 - 00:45:47:28

Right. More and more I hear the same sort of or similar dialog around sort of, um, you know, college, college is far too expensive in the United States, right? It's I mean, I just heard the other day someone was like, yeah, it's like \$80,000 a year. And I'm like, huh. You know, that's if you were to do four years of college, that's a mortgage, you know, and you haven't even earned a career yet, you know, yet you're not guaranteed a job.

Dan (guest)

00:45:47:28 - 00:46:04:20

So it's I feel like more and more kids are sort of looking at colleges like, huh, maybe, maybe not, you know, I can't afford it. And I had some of those conversations with some of our students. It's like, you know, the affordability is a real big factor. You know, not everybody comes from tons of money.

Dan (guest)

00:46:04:20 - 00:46:26:01

Yeah. It's not always guaranteed success. I know people who have finance degrees who are like welders right now. So I feel like you know people are there is a dialog about like, all right, well, what is our goal? You know, so I've heard stories of, you know, say a hundred kids go off to school, you know, and the school is considered a success.

Dan (guest)

00:46:26:12 - 00:46:47:08

But then no one ever reports back and like how many of them stayed and are feeling as though they're confident within that next step of academia. And I feel like, you know, there's an unspoken sort of data point of like, let's say 10% of those kids go off for a year and they struggle mightily because they're either not prepared or they're not mature enough.

Dan (guest)

00:46:47:20 - 00:47:07:06

I would be a perfect example of someone who is not mature enough. When I went off to college, I did a year and a half and left. I left for a year. I needed time to grow up and, you know, both physically and socially and emotionally, I was a kid, you know, I was a but I was considered a good kid and a good student because I got straight A's in high school, you know, but like, by no means was I ready.

Dan (guest)

00:47:07:15 - 00:47:47:02

So, you know, if that's the case, then, well, all right, well, now we need to prepare kids for something other than college, you know, and we need to give them opportunities. So I'm hoping that you know, with project-based learning and even little bits and pieces of it, I can incorporate I can illuminate the kids like what their strengths are, you know, what, what they might be interested in, what other job opportunities are there out there and sort of, you know, take the mask off and look around and see like what what's available to them other than, you know, certain given avenues and then give them the opportunity to feel confident in choosing

Dan (guest)

00:47:47:03 - 00:48:08:23

any other pathway. You know, um, it's so, I mean, I guess I'm an idealist in that sense, but I think it's, there's definitely a practical approach to it internships and like bringing back things because like when we were doing a project, we'd always try to bring in an outside expert to speak to the kids about it, right?

Dan (guest)

00:48:08:28 - 00:48:23:07

Yeah. And then often those outside experts would be very enthused with, hey, these kids are pretty cool, you know? And then they would be like, Hey, do you guys want to do something else? Like, you want to work on the side, you want to do an internship and you get that apprenticeship component to it.

Dan (guest)

00:48:23:16 - 00:48:43:15

And I feel if, if kids had more opportunity to be exposed to that apprenticeship style learning, then there'd be more people on the outside of their schooling looking to pick them up as they came out. You know, it wouldn't be such a struggle of a transition from high school to like, you know, real-world or college. So I think that for me, that's a big one.

Christian (co-host)

00:48:43:17 - 00:49:19:29

Yeah. Dan, I really appreciate your pointing to a much bigger conversation about the relevance of college and what the cost-benefit of it is. And I think behind that, there's a cultural truth that is being challenged dramatically right now. To what degree is that next step to the only next step that we think is meet success and I really appreciate that idea that a young person, her value, or his value isn't necessarily tied up with that next level of schooling.

Christian (co-host)

00:49:20:08 - 00:49:45:16

It is to a degree that can they be relevant and useful and find it and find a valuable path of their own within the next steps. And so to me, that's a much bigger, more worthy conversation than even PBL. But you did something really nicely there about saying part of what allows PBL to be valuable is the fact that a young person is going to have to identify areas of interest or curiosity.

Christian (co-host)

00:49:45:23 - 00:50:05:02

They're going to have to struggle, they're going to develop relationships that the community itself has a potential becoming interested in what that young person or that, you know, community young people are doing. And so I really appreciate that. I think there's a lot to explore there. I have a question for you kind of a come Tuesday morning question.

Christian (co-host)

00:50:06:01 - 00:50:32:14

You have been in a school that when all in on PBL and as you said, you guys crushed it. You did. And the school is the work you did then is leading to more versions of success. You're also I'm going to say this as a father of a 10th grader and a father of an eighth grader and somebody who taught for more than two decades, you are the kind of educator without knowing what PBL is, would have crushed it in a classroom or a science lab of your own.

Christian (co-host)

00:50:32:26 - 00:50:49:24

You would have been charismatic, you would have been caring to the kids. You would have been rigorous. You would have looked for interesting meanings. There's a guy like Dan in every school. There's a team of, you know, maybe spread out in every district of people like you that just sort of represent the best of the craft.

Christian (co-host)

00:50:51:01 - 00:51:14:10

So we know a school that goes all in can do it, and we know individual educators do it all the time. My question is sort of the “come Tuesday” question if you're new to this. The school that you're in, the department you're in. Right? You're dealing with the realities and the needs of the moment. What would say that a school can do that makes it possible for a group of educators to start that process together?

Christian (co-host)

00:51:15:09 - 00:51:33:09

And it's not about how much money they spend. It's not about blowing up their existing high school. I don't mean that. I mean that metaphorically, but just rebuilding and designing. What is your advice to a school or a group of educators that say, we want to make a move in that direction? We have to work with the constraints of resources we have.

Christian (co-host)

00:51:34:11 - 00:51:51:22

But I'm curious about the professional collaboration and the peer, the teams of educators working that isn't dependent upon one passionate educator or an entire organization that goes full and wears that honorable middle ground. And where would you start?

Dan (guest)

00:51:52:00 - 00:52:03:06

That's a good question. I would say I'm trying I'm thinking back to Rus, what country was it where we did the assumptions? Was that Panama?

Rus (co-host)

00:52:04:24 - 00:52:05:24

That was Panama. Yes.

Dan (guest)

00:52:05:27 - 00:52:33:00

Assumption. Yeah. So I like that one where, you know, first is sort of like having the conversation of like all right, what are we assuming that is happening within our classroom or what are we assuming is working or not working right? And so first, by identifying assumptions and the challenges, we kind of put everybody in the mindset of like, right, hey, maybe, maybe there's a better way to do things.

Dan (guest)

00:52:33:00 - 00:53:01:26

So starting with that, but also like with leadership, um, I feel like it takes, it takes open-mindedness, creativity, but also leadership says it's okay to not have it go perfect the first time around. Um, you know, that's, that's always because everyone is, is very people who are in teaching for the right reasons and, you know, people who are coming to work every day, they want to do a good job.

Dan (guest)

00:53:01:26 - 00:53:35:09

And so, you know, the same, the same expectations that we have of our students and project-based learning. Like when it comes to if you apply that as an educator, project-based project, or project-based education, you have to have that same opportunity of not being afraid of having something go wrong. And you know, having that opportunity to run a module or run a, you know, a big project and not have it go perfect, but then have that opportunity to then go back into to the think tank of your peers and your, you know, you know, your leadership and be like, okay, well, that's it.

Dan (guest)

00:53:35:09 - 00:53:56:25

Or That didn't work and why? And then be able to then go back and retry it. So it's one of those where it definitely takes a lot of confidence on the, you know, whoever is in charge and not be afraid of the sort of stepping out of the comfort zone because it's like too often it's like as soon as we get away from the tried and true, well, we know this works.

Dan (guest)

00:53:56:25 - 00:54:13:15

It's like, cool. We know this. But that doesn't mean we have to keep coming back to what we know works, right? The whole point is that we're challenging our assumptions of does it really works and does it really works that well. How do we then step out of that in a controlled way? But how do we step out of that and allow mistakes to happen?

Dan (guest)

00:54:13:25 - 00:54:49:09

I mean, in every single module that we ran, we got feedback from the kids. And I tell you, that is one of the funniest things, is listening to those kids give you feedback at home and can they be blunt and brutal? And it's one of those it's like, you know, if you ask kids for feedback, number one, you have to understand that they're like, okay, I'll give

you feedback that they don't necessarily sometimes they don't know how to word it, and sometimes it comes out a little sharp and you're like, Oh, well, okay, you know, but you have to, like, learn how to sort of like, not take it personally, not take it, you know, negatively,

Dan (guest)

00:54:49:09 - 00:55:05:12

and not look at it as a failure. You just go, okay, I'm going to see what you say. Ask clarifying questions about that feedback and really get to the root of the problem. But like, you know, I feel like and this goes back to like where we, we started this conversation of like how do you develop a good rapport with your students?

Dan (guest)

00:55:05:12 - 00:55:29:27

It's like if you can show them that you're willing to step into an uncomfortable zone, too, you're sort of doing it by example. And I really do think that they appreciate that, you know, because you can't expect students to step into an uncomfortable realm of learning and not to sell yourself. You know, they do appreciate it as well as that next module that you run and they see that you tweaked it the way that they felt was better.

Dan (guest)

00:55:30:05 - 00:55:49:28

And they see that you make that conscientious effort for them, you know, that that's like a real sign of respect that you show them and then they will then, in turn, show you because it is it you have to be respectful of, you know, we can't assume that we know how every person learns perfectly and we can't assume that we're going to nail it the first time.

Dan (guest)

00:55:49:28 - 00:56:11:10

And when it comes to that, you know, having those discussions about growth, whether it's you as the educator, them as a student, you know, now you're opening up that dialog as opposed to closing it down with, I'm right, you're wrong or you're right, I'm wrong. So it kind of it makes that gray zone a little bit more productive.

Rus (co-host)

00:56:11:10 - 00:56:11:29

Dan, as we head down, as we come to the end of the podcast question. I get it all the time, so I'm going to give it to you. In all the years of travel with TGS, if you could go back to one country, which country would it be and why? And I know the alumni we're listening to and the current students were listening to this one, so.

Dan (guest)

00:56:37:12 - 00:57:00:19

Okay. Oh, all right. So everyone always asks me, what's your favorite country? What's your favorite country? And so I have two favorite countries, but for two different reasons.

So my one favorite country was Botswana, and I liked it because we were low-tech and, because obviously, the subject matter was up my alley. I was thrown into the deep end because it was my first term on site.

Dan (guest)

00:57:00:20 - 00:57:31:24

We were building it as we went and it was a real example of great dialog among the educators to like start that growing process where we started in Botswana. It's where we ended up in Greece was like night and day. So it was really cool for me to see and do that and as well as to sort of exemplify to the students, you don't have to have the technology to be able to think that like honestly like everyone is immediately trying to go to tech and I'm like, tech is awesome.

Dan (guest)

00:57:32:04 - 00:57:52:18

If it is used to amplify what you're learning. But it's not the most important thing. The most important thing is learning how to use this, you know, in an efficient way. My second country was China in Shanghai, and that was the one where we as a school, we had a myriad of challenges that were thrown at us that term.

Dan (guest)

00:57:53:17 - 00:58:17:25

And I know it wasn't the most successful for everybody, but it was one of those where, you know, everything that could have gone wrong went wrong. And what was really cool to me was to see how well the students, you know, adapted to that adversity as well as like stepped up to some of the challenges and sort of like, you know, no one ever remembers when anything goes right.

Dan (guest)

00:58:18:00 - 00:58:42:07

You know, they always remember the stories of when everything goes wrong, you know, like, you know, that's that's to me because that's when you go back and you kind of think back to, how did I handle that situation? If it goes right, you're like, okay, it went right. Sweet, you know? But when it goes wrong, you're like, okay, how did I handle that situation when that hurdle was thrown at me, you know, and I either did well or didn't do well in that situation.

Dan (guest)

00:58:42:07 - 00:59:14:09

Either way, you learn something about it. And so I would say that those were the two that really stood out in my mind, you know. And then, of course, that one thunderstorm an omen where everything went to hell in a handbasket and we got dumped on. And I could have I could not have been a prouder pseudo father to see those kids step up and just handle that situation, because we're getting like hurricane gale force winds blowing our tents away and it was all hands on deck and challenge and adversity level a million.

Dan (guest)

00:59:14:09 - 00:59:22:28

And they absolutely stepped up. So yeah. So those are the two countries in the one scenario that I always refer back to the people.

Christian (co-host)

00:59:22:28 - 00:59:45:10

This a great reminder that adversity and challenges are not only where interesting learning is, but also when you reflect back and the things that meant something. And I appreciate that. So my last question to you is, you know, there's the full school year still ahead of you, right? We're just about ready to enter October. You're still on the front end of this new school and probably a million things you need to pull off.

Christian (co-host)

00:59:45:10 - 01:00:07:15

But let's imagine you get to name a really incredible PBL project that you're going to invite kids to, you invite some of your colleagues, maybe from different departments, even you're trying to connect with folks in the community that you know pretty well are getting to know. Well, what would be something in the next, you know, this, this school year or maybe in the next school year that you'd like to explore and take a risk on?

Christian (co-host)

01:00:07:15 - 01:00:10:15

But it requires kids and colleagues and the community to join you.

Dan (guest)

01:00:11:03 - 01:00:31:17

Oh, okay. Um, I'm trying to think now, do I want to do this with my middle? Because I teach middle school and high school. So I've got eighth graders who are bubbly, full of joy in life, and curious about everything, but, like, very all over the place still. But they're absolutely a joy to work with. They're so funny.

Dan (guest)

01:00:32:12 - 01:01:16:06

And then I've got my seniors who are, like, off to college, who are mentally I feel like some of them are like, you know, halfway in and halfway out of, you know, because they already transitioning successfully. Um, I mean, I'd probably start with the little ones and I would, I would create some sort of projects, something to do that slow, something that requires, you know, time like some sort of gardening or, or applied sciences where they get to, you know, how can I generate revenue for a science class, you know, utilizing community garden or something like that.

Dan (guest)

01:01:16:06 - 01:01:35:09

So that way it opens it up to kids who are interested in, you know, the like growing things and planting and that that slow, meticulous care. But also kids who might be interested in

more of like the marketing component or some kids who might be interested in the art and how can they exemplify it in a more creative fashion.

Dan (guest)

01:01:35:14 - 01:01:57:20

So, you know, something that opens it up and then you can bring the parents in that in and say, like, listen, like I asked this question and I got 15 to 20 different ways in which these groups of kids approached it. And that's something that we need to foster. Because then the idea of there's one way to do it or not, it removes that.

Dan (guest)

01:01:57:20 - 01:02:22:10

It kind of goes, you know, like watch their creativity and also watch their enthusiasm because you gave them the reins a little bit. And so, you know, bubbly little 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds are hormonal and crazy and having fun in life. You know, they can still show you some really cool thinking and in that and then they'll whether they memorize what a mitochondrion is or not, they can still say, I liked school, I liked learning.

Dan (guest)

01:02:22:18 - 01:02:42:10

And I think a lot of parents when they talk to me as an educator, you know, the thing that they want most is that their kid is enjoying learning in the process of learning. So it's like if I can do that through the content of science, but open it up a little bit for kids and let them sort of play within science as a platform.

Dan (guest)

01:02:42:10 - 01:02:48:25

But I think on their own then we're winning and we're cooking with gas.

Christian (co-host)

01:02:48:25 - 01:02:49:07

Amazing.

Rus (co-host)

01:02:49:12 - 01:03:01:05

Dan, it's been a delight to have you on the podcast. Thank you so much. Work and our viewers find you if it's anything like social media, anything where they can see your work, where you are now in terms of location.

Dan (guest)

01:03:02:16 - 01:03:28:20

Sure. So I work at Mount Sinai School District, Long Island, New York. My Instagram handle is @GarveyLifeScience. I'm not exactly the best at social media. It's mostly

pictures of the fish that I catch in the garden that I grow. And if you're interested in that, that's fine. But otherwise, yeah, just the east end of Long Island.

Dan (guest)

01:03:28:20 - 01:03:32:07

Come out to Slow Jack's and say hello.

Rus (co-host)

01:03:32:23 - 01:03:35:26

Awesome. Dan, thank you so much. It's absolute pleasure. Thank you, Dan.