# Transcript

Teacher tales: career journey and classroom insights

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Introduction:

You’re listening to the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership podcast where we showcase conversations with some of the world’s biggest thought leaders in education. We also bring you the thoughts and reflections of teachers and school leaders from across Victoria.

Ben Jones:

Hello everyone and welcome to Teacher Tales, the series that celebrates the joy of teaching and learning. My name is Ben Jones and my co-host today is Jay Chew and we're joined by Kendall Aglinskas. Kendall is the Deputy Principal of Learning and Teaching at Assumption College, Kilmore. Today we are discussing our own Teacher Tale in which you'll uncover our own journey into education and give us some amazing tips and tricks to our audience. Thanks for joining us, Kendall. Let's jump straight in. Tell us about the start of your teaching journey. Where did it all start? A few years ago now?

Kendall Aglinskas:

Yeah, so it started about 11 years ago now, and I originally grew up on the Mornington Peninsula and wanted a bit of a change when I was applying for teaching jobs. So I still remember that my mother came in to my bedroom because back in those days you used to apply through the age, that was where you applied for all of your jobs. And there was a school in Echuca that had an ad out for, "Innovative school seeks daring teachers." So I thought that sounds like it's right up my alley. So I actually started my teaching jobs in Echuca.

Ben Jones:

Yeah, fantastic. So if we have a look at the school that you worked at, 7 to 12 primary school, where did we start? Did we start with some CRT or just jump straight into a contract role?

Kendall Aglinskas:

So straight in. So I was given a contract and then by April they offered me an ongoing position. So when the principal called me to offer me the job, they asked whether I'd be happy taking year 12 English as a first year teacher. And I thought, "Okay," well I'm only 21 at that stage, so I was a little bit nervous about teaching kids that were a couple of years younger than me, but had a full English teaching load.

Jay Chew:

Yeah. Hi, my name is Jay. So I started teaching 10 years ago. And before I start my teaching career, I was actually involved in this program. It's called the Into science program for undergraduate students going to schools. Getting students to be inspired to learn science. So I taught at this school, Glen Waverley Secondary College. I still remember there was this shy, very shy student approaching me at the end of the program. Because I was helping him out with some quadratic equations and he was just thanking me. It was just a simple thank you. And later he embark on a career to become a mathematician. And because of that I was inspired myself to become a teacher. So I went on, I did my graduate diploma of teaching and I started teaching at Al-Taqwa College. So I'm still there, so I have an ongoing role with the school here today. How about you, Ben?

Ben Jones:

Yeah, for me, so I started 11 years ago around about the same time as Kendall, and I started with about six months of CRT. So my job kind of for me was a little bit different. I looked at education as something that I wanted to do for a very long time. And probably got a little bug when I was maybe 10 or 11 years old. I had an amazing year five teacher, and it just shows the impact that people can have on your life. And the impact that they can have, especially teachers in the profession that we're in. So for me, I went from a long way out and thought I was going to be a PE teacher for a period of time there and thought that that would be more up my alley.

But the push of moving away from home was something I probably wasn't ready for. Enrolled into Charles State University, which was local to where I was and jumped into teaching. And as I said, did CRT for about six months and then got my first contract at an independent school Victory Lutheran College, which was in Wodonga. It was P to 12.

So there was about 650 students P to 12 there. And I started off and moved to Wodonga Middle Years College, was there for roughly about nine years. And I've been at Bendigo Southeast College in Bendigo now for about 12 months. So probably of all of us, I've moved around a fair bit and had the opportunity to work at some amazing schools. And I think that that's something that I really, really value as an educator.

Jay Chew:

That's great journey you have there. So what did you learn from that time in your career?

Kendall Aglinskas:

I think the biggest thing that I learned as an early career teacher. Someone who had moved four hours away from everyone that I knew, was that the people around you are so important and integral in teaching. And I think that's what I've really loved about the Teaching Excellence Program as well. It's actually just connecting with others around you. So I think initially those relationships that I built, there was three of us that were graduate teachers in that year at St. Joseph's College in Echuca. All of us with K names for some random coincidence. So we were a bit of the K club there and all three of us are still firm friends today. And I think just those connections that we had and walking through. Going on your first school camp and helping choreograph the school musical. And doing all of these things that you do to be involved in not only the school but also the wider community of Echuca. Those relationships are so integral and important.

And that's something that in teaching that I've made sure that I really develop with early career teachers. But also as a leader, I think it's really important too as well.

Jay Chew:

Definitely. That sounds great. So for myself, quite a similar situations, so I have to learn the hard way. So I was shown the deep end when I started as a graduate teacher. For me, establishing a very positive relationship is important with my students. I find it difficult at the beginning, but getting to know them as individuals, showing empathy, and making sure that they're able to learn in a safe classroom environment. That is something that I've learned throughout the number of years that I've been teaching and making sure that students feel respected, and valued so that they're able to engage and learn in the classroom. How about you, Ben?

Ben Jones:

Yeah, I think that time of your career is just really important in those formative years, you make a lot of mistakes. I go back to when I started teaching those first six months, when you come out of university. You feel like your university degree probably hasn't set you up for success. And you learn so much from mentors and people around you coaching who are going to support you. And I kind of back onto what Kendall just said before, the people around you, kind of make schools and they're amazing people. And I think that that's so valuable in our profession. If you're sitting out there today and you're listening to this. And you're thinking about becoming a teacher, obviously there are lots of people in the profession that can give you assistance and guidance. And I think that that was probably the biggest thing for me, made a hundred mistakes.

It could have been letting kids do group work and then no kids not completing work. It can be going on your first camp or your first excursion. It can be an opportunity to go on a sporting event or your whole school sporting event and get that into your day-to-day program. And what that looks like is what we do is pretty dynamic and it's very, very different to a lot of other jobs from the day-to-day process. So Kendall, who was the big person who assisted you in overcoming those challenges early in career? We know we all had them, but who were those big people that kind of assisted you working through that?

Kendall Aglinskas:

So I was really lucky to have an amazing head of faculty in Jackie [inaudible 00:07:13], who I'm still friends with today. She was really fantastic in not only being a mentor but also really good role model. She was a fellow year 12 English teacher. So in terms of how do I act and build the capacity of those students within that year 12 classroom when I hadn't long finished school myself was really integral for me in my professional journey. And I guess as well as Jackie, I also had Kate Fogarty who I was lucky enough to work with at St. Joseph's in Echuca, but then also followed to Assumption College Kilmore. So I've worked with Kate for 10 years now and she's definitely a role model in terms of her ability to captivate an audience, whether it be the teaching staff or the students. And just a visionary in terms of challenging the stereotypes of education. And really challenging the traditional notion of education and thinking about how can we do things that are a bit different or a bit unusual. To make sure that it's the most beneficial for our students.

Ben Jones:

Yeah, a hundred percent. I have met Kate, so I do know what you're talking about. Jay, what about yourself, those early years of teaching, how were they and who assisted you through?

Jay Chew:

Yep, definitely. I really like what you mentioned about just changing things up, not necessarily doing the same thing, again and again. For me, I was having some difficulties with catering for diverse needs of students. So I had my head of secondary and she's still head of secondary till today. So her name is [inaudible 00:08:36] and she actually helped me a lot with planning the lesson. So it's not necessary just going in and saying that students fit all, it just doesn't work. So we have lessons designed in a way that caters for different learning styles, abilities and backgrounds. Because for my school we have a community that's students coming from different backgrounds, most of them are second generation migrants. So it's very important for us to listen and sometimes listening is also very important to what they need and what the community needs in that sense.

And just changing up the lessons. Design in a way doesn't need to be the same. It doesn't need to be teacher taught, it could be just more student centered in that sense because that is what our students need. And we found that to be a lot more effective and that in a way improve students' learning outcomes at our school. How about yourself, Ben?

Ben Jones:

Yeah, I think that coaches and mentors and those people that we work with each day are those people that get us through. And for me, I had the opportunity to work with Marie Cribbers and Marie passed away about two weeks ago. So the role that she played in my career as the Principal of Wodonga Middle Years College was just... I can't put it into words, I can't account, even explain what it looked like. But the impact that she had and some amazing people that I still talk to today, whether it be Prue Younie or Andrea Wood that worked with at Middle Years College for nine years. Just their ability to keep things really simple. And I think that sometimes as teachers, we walk back into the staff room, we can be frustrated, we walk back into the classroom and we try and put our best foot forward.

But to keep it simple and understand that you've got 25 students in there and you're just trying to do the best that you can. I think that that's always something that was really, really important. So it's something that I thank them for a lot. Kind of that understanding of what teaching looks like and getting those best pieces and that best practice in place for you.

Kendall Aglinskas:

There's actually quite... Sorry to interrupt. There's actually quite a lot of studies around that coach and mentor. And that people when they're going into the teaching profession and don't actually find that coach or mentor in the first three years, actually leave teaching. So I think it's integral for not only us to be that coach and mentor to others. But to really empower others to also step up and take those leadership roles. Because I think we've all spoken about people who have mentored us. And how integral that role is when you feel included and part of a community. And you are supported both within your professional day-to-day life, but also outside of that classroom. And to have a vent or a debrief too as well is so important.

Ben Jones:

Yeah, I remember stories of when I finished university and we were setting ourselves up. And people who were moving away and they were going for ice cream on a Friday night. That opportunity to go and have that kind of debrief and that opportunity to sit down and talk to people about what their week looked like. It can be going and playing a local sport. It can be getting into the community and volunteering, but there's lots and lots of outlets for teachers out there. And we know that obviously we don't shy away from the problems that are currently happening in Victorian schools with staffing. So if you can start to create those support systems around you, whether it be a role like a coach and a mentor in a school and they have a job title. Or whether it be just someone that you sit in the office with that you can find that downtime to support yourself, it's really, really important.

And keep reaching out to each other. Because we've got some amazing teachers in Victoria and we'd love to keep every single one of them. And continue to build what we have as an amazing education system. So Kendall, if we go right back and we look at a young Kendall, what was your relationship like with school growing up?

Kendall Aglinskas:

I absolutely adored school, so I am that typical person whose.... My mum was a teacher, I became a teacher, my sister's a teacher, definitely run in the family. So I had a genuine love of learning and just always wanted to know everything, right from a young age. So my mom makes a joke that actually when we did a school dress up when I was back in prep or grade one. And it was a professional day of dress what you want to be when you grow up. I dressed as a teacher right from then. So definitely that love of learning has been with me throughout my entire school career. I did dabble with the idea of being a psychologist in about year 10. I was trying to think about what other fields that I could be involved in. But I think that love of learning is something that I've... I hope that I foster in my own students and within the school and community of Assumption College and something that holds very dear to my heart. And that I think is a super important thing for educators in general.

Ben Jones:

So you've just obviously referenced Assumption College for those people that might be listening out there. And they don't know much about Assumption and don't know much about Kilmore itself in Victoria. Can you give us a little bit of a snapshot in a short time that we have about what? Because I know it's huge and I know there's lots going on at the school having been there myself for a short period of time. And tell me a little bit about, or tell everyone a little bit about what Assumption holds for you and why it is a fantastic school here in Victoria?

Kendall Aglinskas:

So Assumption College, Kilmore is about an hour north of Melbourne. We're a seven to 12 school, college education, co-education. We've also got a boarding facility on site of about 70 students, but in total we're just under 1500 students now. So growing very rapidly in that growth corridor of Craigieburn and Wallan, et cetera. And we run something called myMAP. So it stands for Mastery, Autonomy, and Purpose, and it's a fully vertical curriculum from year seven to 12. So it's stage not age learning. The students come in, have a bit of a taster for the first half of year seven, of all the different breadths of subjects that we offer. And then can dive into their interest areas. Right from the second half of year seven. So rather than have a year 7, 8, 9, and 10, we have five different stages of learning and they're based on our school colors and as the learning intensifies, the color deepens.

Ben Jones:

Sounds fascinating, sounds interesting. I'm sure there's plenty of places you can go to find more information about it. But yeah, no, a fantastic snapshot. A school that's quite changed things up with their curriculum and how they're trying to operate in 2023 and take education forward. Jay, what about you mate, your relationship with school growing up? How was it?

Jay Chew:

Yep, definitely. So I grew up in Southeast Asia and in our family, in our culture, education is also simply very important. So my mom, she actually drop out off school because those days they do not have that kind of opportunity. So she wants to make sure that we have an opportunity to get into uni and to have a different chance or opportunities in life. So when I was young as well, we had been able to hop from one country to another in Southeast Asia. So we get to learn outside of the classroom, not necessarily just through the chalk and talk manner. But as an educator today, I would like to also change the way we approach teaching and learning. As compared to what my mom had and what I have when I was younger. And I believe the importance of empowering our students.

So that is something that we have been trying in our schools. We have been moving away from that teacher-centered learning to a student-centered learning. And we found that to be very empowering for our students, in terms of the corporate learning and teamwork learning that we have in the classroom. How about yourself, Ben? How is it like for you when you were young?

Ben Jones:

Yeah, I guess like I sit here now, I'm from a small country town in Victoria called Barnawartha, there's roughly about 400 people that live in Barnawartha. It's quite small, it's up near the Murray River in Northeast Victoria. For me, I went to a small Catholic school, we had 56 students. I knew every student by name, I knew a lot of parents as well. You kind of have that kind of real connected community. And I moved off to high school and really struggled with the transition. I moved to Catholic College Wodonga with 950 students. So I'd gone from 50 students to 950. And how it was, was just astronomical for me. I really struggled with the initial part of year seven especially.

So if you're sitting there today and you might have a student who's going through a similar process at the moment. Where they're struggling to get through year seven, I was in that position. Really struggled to have a connection with school and have a connection with people. Whether it be from my primary school who had moved to the same school as me, there wasn't too many of them, or people that I'd met outside.

And the initial kind of part of year seven was a real struggle for me. And then I was the first person to go through and graduate year 12 of my family as well and then go off to university. I kind of found my feet, I found that probably year nine and 10 were where I really found my feet. It took a few years, but the opportunities that I had at Catholic College Wodonga and then to go off to university were great.

You think about it kind of moving forward of what could have been different. And I look at a lot of the wellbeing structures and the things that are put in place nowadays. For students who might be struggling with that separation or struggling with a little bit of wellbeing when they start their school in year seven. And that journey and those things kind of went around 20 years ago, 25 years ago now. So yeah, obviously a lot has changed in the education scheme and that's so much for the better. So if you are sitting out there and you might have a student who might be in that position, get the support around them. Because it's so valuable and so, so important to them.

Jay Chew:

Great share there Ben. So do you believe that played a role in shaping your love for education and teaching in general?

Kendall Aglinskas:

Yes, definitely. So my career path, I was someone that knew what I wanted to do from an early age, knew the type of person and the type of teacher I wanted to be. And I feel like whenever someone... I get introduced to someone, I say that I'm a teacher. That's one of the first things that I tell them. And my identity is so inextricably linked with being a teacher that I don't know what I do if I wasn't. And it's so connected with who I am as a person and I think, all three of us sitting here, I can probably speak on behalf of all of us that it is a vocation for us. It's something that we do because we genuinely love it and it is so much a part of who we are. So I think in terms of that, yes, my formative years definitely helped with that.

And I had a great role model in my mother who I saw just have this love for teaching and she teaches at the total opposite end to me. She teaches prep. So foundation, I'm in year 12, so definitely different ends of the spectrum. But what she taught me was this passion and drive for learning, continuously updating her resources. Thinking about how she could better the classroom environment for the students. And changing things for the cohort or the time of day that the lesson was taking place. And those are all things that I've managed to bring into my own career and that I try to teach to others in my leadership role as well.

Ben Jones:

And I think that that's really important. Obviously backing on to what you've been experienced to is so important. And I think that everyone comes with their own prior knowledge, with their own experiences when they come into education. And whether you're starting your first day of education in 2024, whether that be as a student or a university student. Or you're starting your first day of teaching and you've finished your degree, you come with that prior knowledge and you come with those experiences that have happened in your life. And that really segued into our next part that we're going to talk to you about, which is who are you today?

So you've had some amazing roles and obviously at the moment sitting in a role as deputy principal of learning and teaching. What can you tell me about your current role and what has been the highlight of your career so far?

Kendall Aglinskas:

Oh, that's a tough question. So my current role, this is my first year in the DP role and I'm really loving it. I'm loving the connection with the staff and the ability to work with the staff I guess en masse. To really change the teaching dynamic and therefore the learning experience for students. Some things that I've had to upskill at quickly is using timetable programs and working with difficult conversations through with staff. And questions in terms of student results and things like that. So I've definitely had to upskill quickly in this role, but it's something that obviously as teachers we understand that growth is always happening, so it's never going to end. And I'm definitely a believer in that ongoing learning journey. So I'm sure that I will continue to improve in that sense in this role.

I guess the thing that I've learned the most, when I moved to Assumption College in 2016. We did a very significant shift in our learning, teaching structure and actually our leadership structure in general. So we moved from heads of faculty to what we call learning leaders. And I was one of those inaugural learning leaders in 2017 to 2019. And that was really significant where the mind shift of staff who were so used to having a faculty head who they would go to. The head of English to help with their excursions or to help choose the books that they were going to study or create resources or whatever that might be. And that real shift to actually focusing on the learning itself, the pedagogy that was happening within the classroom that is relevant to all subject areas and all domain areas. Rather than it just being so solely focused on one particular domain.

So I think that was the biggest challenge that I had, but also something that I really loved in shifting that mindset for staff. And it was probably the first leadership role I had where I was able to have more of an impact on things outside of English. So things outside of my own subject area and I could see what was happening in maths and humanities and performing arts and actually work with those staff to upskill them. In things like creating rubrics or connecting to the Victorian curriculum standards en masse and in a wider capacity. Or the way that they were using student voice in the classroom. So definitely that was probably the biggest shift and challenge.

Ben Jones:

Yeah, I think that's something that... You push on a really great point. Like sometimes as leaders in our school, we feel like we're pigeonholed into one thing and feel like we're just working in a silo in a way. But having that ability to work across... And the old word was like KLAs. But to work across different subjects at your school and work with different people and collaborate across the whole school and build those whole school initiatives is just so vitally important. Now Jay, for you, I know that you've been on a little holiday recently. But I also know as well that you've had some amazing opportunities to do some study tours around the world. For you, you're in an amazing role at the moment that you've spoken a bit about just before, but what's the highlight of the career been so far?

Jay Chew:

Yeah, definitely. So last year I had this opportunity to go to America, so I wrote a letter for this World Food Prize Global Guide Program. So it's a program for educators around the world to improve teaching in agriculture. And there's one area that I would like to improve more on. So I went to Des Moines. There was another fellow Australians as well who was selected as part of the program. It was just an eyeopener to see a different part of the world and to look at what the things that they have done there better that we can bring it back to Australia. So it's a very small town. Initially I wasn't used to it. It was literally smaller than Canberra. I was making fun... My friends were making jokes about this because when I was telling my friend that I'm going to America for the first time and I'm going to Des Moines and they say "Why?" They said, "No one goes to Des Moines."

But it was just great. And we actually attended this award ceremony for scientists, so to give off awards to scientists each year, who has done something brilliant in agriculture. And this particular scientist, she actually discover a correlation between climate change and agriculture. In terms of a strong correlation between how climate change does affect the agriculture productions. And she won the prize. And it was great that when we were in that particular ceremony, she was giving her three-minute speech. And she actually took her time and she pointed out to us who are sitting at the top of the stage. And she said that, "These are the educators and teachers matter." And that is for me... I felt acknowledged probably for the first time ever because sometimes... Yes, students do say thank you to you or at schools, the principal do say that. But we do get overwhelmed by the work that we do every single day. So it was great for us to have the break and to see that and to be given that acknowledgement. For me it was very empowering.

Ben Jones:

Yeah, that's a really great point as well. Obviously that acknowledgement that you feel quite often, it doesn't come every day. You can have a great lesson and then you have one bad lesson or one bad experience or whatever it might be. And it can quite often sour your day. We often use the term like building blocks and you're building the building blocks of good days. But to have that opportunity and have someone externally acknowledge what we do as teachers within our community is something that's so, so valuable. Obviously Kendall working in a smaller community with Kilmore, as you said, the school roughly about 1500. And the town population, what are we looking at? About 10,000?

Kendall Aglinskas:

Yeah, just under 10,000.

Ben Jones:

So working in a smaller community, how important are those relationships which you form with the wider community to the day-to-day job that you do at Assumption College?

Kendall Aglinskas:

I think those relationships are the foundation really. And we are the biggest employer in the town. So we have students not necessarily that just come from Kilmore, but that come from a wide range of places around us. So we have 54 feeder primary schools. So from a significant portion of the different areas around the Mitchell Shire, but also the Macedon Ranges Shire too. So I think the relationships of the community are integral. We have our VCAL or now VCE VM students work really closely with community partners. And it's a great opportunity for them to be involved in things that the local primary schools are doing or that the local township is doing in different areas. We have a lot of our community groups use our facilities as well, which is another way that we have those community partnerships. But I think definitely working with those around us and using the strengths of those around us is really significant.

So for instance, we have a seminar program for our year 12 students, probably like lots of schools do. Where we have a lot of guest speakers come in and we like them to be from the local township and the local community. So they can create those relationships, particularly if they're wanting to go into part-time work or they're looking to... Once they've gone to uni, because usually they live out of home to go to uni because it is a bit of a distance. That they can come back and have those relationships with the local lawyer office or the accountants or whatever that might be, and they can continue to build that.

Ben Jones:

I think that's really important, obviously coming from that small community and having that impact that you can have on the people around you. And building that trust within the community, whether it be in a sporting club or as you referenced, whether it be a small business locally. I think it's so important. Moving into the final section, the final couple of questions that we've got for you today. We know that every teaching day is different and we all sit here today, kind of ready to go back at the start of term three of 2023. But what do you enjoy about teaching? What gets you excited and up every morning ready to go for another day?

Kendall Aglinskas:

I think I might answer this in two parts. So within the classroom it's those light bulb moments. It's when I can see that something I've taught has resonated with that student and on their next draft or the next practice essay or even in their response in a class discussion. You can see that it's clicked for them and that they've had that light bulb moment. So definitely those moments are what drives me within the classroom to continue doing what I'm doing. Because as we've spoken about before, you don't necessarily get all the thank-yous or the value and the acknowledgement that teachers I definitely think deserve. But it's those moments where you know that you've made an impact. And I think in the classroom that's really important. In my role and as it's shifted over the last six years into more of a teacher mentoring and coaching role. Something that is really important to me is our early career teachers.

And I've worked very closely on a program, the graduate mentoring teacher program. We've got a three-year program at Assumption College, which I started in 2020 as part of my role as a professional practice leader. And that connection with those early career teachers and making sure they feel supported and included and connected to that community. To ensure that the drop-off rate doesn't happen and there is still that engagement with not only the profession. But also feeling that they're engaged with their colleagues and the community at large is really important. So I think that is something that drives me and those relationships, not only with the students but with my colleagues is extremely important to me.

Ben Jones:

Yeah, fantastic. Like representation of the importance of coaching and mentoring in our early teachers as we referenced earlier. It's important to get that support around you early to build that engagement in professional practice. Jay, obviously we're coming into term three, we're not far away now. We're only about five days away from the start of term four. For you, what is it that really gets you up in the morning, gets you excited, science and that type of thing?

Jay Chew:

Yeah, definitely. I really like what you mentioned about the light bulb moments. For me, it's just sometimes it's quite frustrating. You're teaching a concept and students don't get it. And then after a couple of weeks they come and they'll be like, "Aha, I am getting it right now." So that to me is very rewarding and I think that's the reason why we teach in the first place. And the other thing is that we have students, or for myself, I have students who actually came back after many years. And coming back and saying that, "I have achieved this in my life." To me, I felt at that particular moment that I've done something very valuable for these students. So there is something that I found to be very rewarding yourself. Definitely working with colleagues as well because you have friends, you have colleagues, and you are a community working together. Going through the same challenge every day, coming up with solutions. I find that to be very rewarding. How about yourself, Ben?

Ben Jones:

Yeah, I think I'll back onto both what you guys have spoken about. And the first part is that fulfillment of seeing someone in the community. And it might be working at a local fish and chip shop, might be working at Coles or Woolworths. One of the major supermarket outlets and they've gone on to achieve a part-time job or a full-time job. I've had a couple of students that have gone through and done their own university degree in teaching as well. And that's something that really makes you feel really validated and really acknowledged. About the small part that you might've played in them choosing to take on the vocation of teaching. But it's also the colleagues, it's the community, it's the ability to build relationships with people. There's still people that I talk to from the Teaching Excellence Program in 2023. There's still people I talk to from my original school in Victory in Wodonga and Wodonga Middle Years College on a regular basis.

And those people are probably no longer colleagues anymore, but they're actually friends. And they take an active interest in your life and what you're up to and how your family's going and those types of things. And I think that that's probably the one thing that if you're out there listening today and you're in the teaching profession, you'll probably understand what we're talking about. Because I feel like the ability to create that human element of education is something so, so important and it's something that everyone feels. You leave the teaching profession and it's probably not the same. You don't have those same connections with people that you have in teaching. So it's something that is so very important and so very valuable whilst you're in the profession.

Jay Chew:

Yeah, great share there. So here comes our next sermon. So we have a fast five. Morning meeting or afternoon meeting?

Kendall Aglinskas:

Morning.

Jay Chew:

Morning for me as well.

Ben Jones:

I'm in afternoon meeting, I like to sleep in. I'm someone that enjoys my sleep, so I'm in afternoon meeting.

Jay Chew:

Canteen lunch or homemade lunch.

Kendall Aglinskas:

I'm probably 50-50. We have a really good canteen.

Ben Jones:

I'm homemade.

Jay Chew:

I'm probably homemade as well. Last series you watch on Netflix.

Kendall Aglinskas:

I'm actually watching Veronica Mars on Stan at the moment.

Ben Jones:

On the train in today I finished Quarterback, which is the story of the NFL quarterback. So it wasn't too bad. Yeah, it was good.

Jay Chew:

That's cool. For me, it's One Piece. I did get trolled by my students for watching One Piece, but it's great series. Dream holiday destination.

Kendall Aglinskas:

Four wheel driving through Iceland.

Ben Jones:

Europe.

Jay Chew:

For me it's Tokyo. I have not been to Tokyo yet.

Kendall Aglinskas:

Oh, I went last holidays. It's amazing.

Jay Chew:

Oh cool. My next dream destination to visit. All right. If you were to interview someone in the education system like we have you today, who will it be and why?

Kendall Aglinskas:

I would love to interview Elizabeth Little. So she's currently at Deakin University as an academic and has been a teacher for many years as well. And she's currently doing her PhD in looking at gender in young adult fiction and the way that women are represented. And I would love to get her on for an interview.

Jay Chew:

How about you, Ben?

Ben Jones:

Look, I'd probably sit here today and I know that we sat down maybe three months ago, Jay, and started to plan this out. It's been kind of a bit of a long process. At the top of my list we had Kendall. Obviously the connection that we had with TEP 2023 was fantastic and she was at the top of my list. But I'd also say Adam Voight would be at the top of my list. Fantastic speaker, has some amazing experiences around the real schools and restorative practice and what that looks like and how to create a school. So if we could get him in, if he's listening to this, we'd love to have you in one day to talk a little bit about education and I think that that'd be amazing. Jay, what about yourself?

Jay Chew:

It's great that you mentioned about Adam Voight because he's actually working with my school to change the school culture. And that's something that we find to be very challenging. So it's just beyond not just the teaching staff, it's also the non-teacher staff at school as well. For me on top of my list, definitely has to be John Hattie. I love his book. So we got the books just a couple of weeks ago on visible learning. And we are trying to implement that in our classroom. So across the year six, a science classroom and everything that he mentioned is all evidence-based, which we really like. And we are trying to change the way we teach, the way we look at teaching and learning. And some of the things that he has mentioned in terms of teacher's feedback and students' assessment. That is something that we can actually implement in the classroom.

Ben Jones:

I think it's interesting just watching the room here because we're sitting here at 41 St. Andrews, the Teaching Excellence building. And everyone started nodding when I mentioned Adam Voight and everyone started nodding again when we mentioned John Hattie. So some popular picks out there. I think that every school's had those opportunities to go through visible learning. And to talk a bit about real schools and culture and how important and vital they are to overall school success. Jay, what's one thing you enjoyed? Obviously had Kendall today as our guest, but what's one thing you're taking away from Kendall's conversation today?

Jay Chew:

I think definitely teachers matter and I think it's very important for us to also take care of ourself at times. It's very important to give the time back to ourself. It's important, yes, to give it to the students. But it's also vital for us to also reflect, in terms of what have we done and what are the things that we can do better. And that is something that I've enjoy of today's podcast. How about yourself?

Ben Jones:

For me, it's probably been that light bulb moment and that ability to work with students on that light bulb moment. Quite often we can get kind of hamstrung with the content that we're doing in the classroom. And what it looks like, whether it be behavior management, whether it be supporting students. Or a whole class or a whole pod depending on what the setup is at your school. But that light bulb moment of having that opportunity to come back to a student and then learn the concept and then be able to apply it, I think is something that's so important. And it's something that acknowledges the hard work that we do as teachers. So yeah, I take that away from Kendall's chat with us today, which has been fantastic. Kendall, what are you taking away from your first podcast with us today?

Kendall Aglinskas:

I think the biggest thing is that we need to be supportive of one another. And we know that at the moment there's a large teaching crisis, particularly within Victoria. But obviously nationally as well around Australia and actually around the world. I don't know if you guys have been targeted by Instagram ads lately for teaching in Ireland, but I definitely have. So it's something that is happening everywhere and I think that because of that teaching shortage, it's so important to look out for your colleagues, to look out for your peers. And as we've all spoken about today, that connection that you make with others around you can really help support people. That you might not realize is going through a really tough time and questioning that teaching profession. So I think the support is really integral.

Ben Jones:

I think there are key messages to everyone out there. I think that post COVID things have changed in the education landscape. And whether you're an early years teacher and hopefully if you are an early years teacher, you really enjoyed the podcast today. But if you are someone that's been in the education field for a period of time. Hopefully you've taken bits and pieces away from it as well. And I think that one of those key things is to just make sure that you are getting around your friends, getting around your colleagues, and supporting each other. Because it's such an important role that we play in the community.

Jay Chew:

In conclusion, this podcast on our teaching experience and teaching journey has shared light on the profound impact educators made on the lives of students. To share stories, insights, and reflections. We have celebrated the joys and challenges that come with this noble profession. As teachers, we continue to learn, adapt, and grow, and our commitment to nurturing the next generation remains unwavering. Let this podcast serve as a reminder that every day in the classroom is an opportunity to inspire, mentor, and shape a brighter future. Thank you for joining us on this journey and make your own teaching experiences be filled with purpose and fulfillment.

Outro:

We hope you enjoyed this Academy podcast episode. You can find out more about our upcoming professional learning opportunities at academy.vic.gov.au and follow us on social media to stay up to date.