Cara (00:01.326)
Welcome. It's a pleasure to see both of you this morning. And if you could begin by introducing yourselves. And Kathy, why don't you start us off?

Kathy Schultz (00:12.684)
Thank you for the invitation. I'm Kathy Schultz. I'm a professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder. And I teach anthropology and education and I'm connected to the Crown Institute for Wellness.

Cara (00:31.886)
Thank you. And, Rue?

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (00:36.858)
Hi, I'm Jerusha or Rue Beckerman and I am the director of the Art of Teaching MS Ed program at Sarah Lawrence College.

Is that, that's it. Okay, that's what I do. Yeah. And I'm also faculty there, so I do, I teach as well as running the program.

Cara (00:51.854)
sounds great.

Cara (00:58.798)
long -term progressive educator as well.

Derek Gottlieb (01:01.246)
Excellent. Well, thank you both for being on the show. The first question that we open with is basically asking the two of you to reflect on what has brought you to thinking about teaching as an art, as a vocation, as a practice imbued with dignity. Our topic today nominally is about the teacher shortage and

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:02.33)
Yes.

Derek Gottlieb (01:30.174)
the sort of hypothesis underwriting bringing you two together talk about this is that there is something about there is some connection between the value, the social value of teaching and the fact that people don't want to do it anymore or whatever. So could you tell us a little bit about how you have come to study teaching in the way that you do? Rue, would you like to go first and then we'll go to Kathy?

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:59.578)
Sure. So I guess I'll start with my first teaching job, which was right after I graduated from college. I worked as a teacher at a daycare center in Manhattan, and I worked with infants and

toddlers. I actually followed one group of children from the baby room up to what we call the big kid's room, which was three to five year olds. So I got to...

follow this amazing, beautiful developmental continuum with this same cohort of children over all the years that I worked there. And that was, I took that position because a friend of mine from college, her mom was the director of the center and offered me work in New York City, which is where I wanted to move. So it was not a plan that teaching was gonna be my career at that time. But it was really working with the mentor teachers I had there and with my director that I came to really understand.

the intellectual depth of teaching as a profession, which was something I hadn't considered in quite that way, especially with such young children until doing that work. And then it just came through so powerfully to me. And I think I knew I'd always loved children, but it wasn't until doing that work that I saw what a deeply intellectual role it is. And in integration with how...

deeply emotional it is at the same time. And that was really appealing to me. So I then went to Sarah Lawrence myself as a graduate student to get my master's degree. I was really interested in learning more about all of this and I decided that I was really interested in teaching elementary school. So I went to the art of teaching program myself, which I really fell in love with. It was just a wonderful way to continue to.

deepen the values I was starting to build as a teacher and sort of extend them into thinking about different age groups and more sort of formal school settings and what that would look like. And then after that, after I finished my master's, I worked at a public school in New York City for a number of years with second and third graders and later fourth and fifth graders. And I was very lucky and this is something I'm sure I'll talk more about in relation to other.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (04:17.786)
questions that we're going to discuss, but I was very lucky in the school that I worked in at that time that there was a lot, a lot of autonomy that I had in designing the curriculum that my students would have. There were standards, of course, that needed to be met with both within the school and from broader governing bodies, but within that we had a lot of flexibility and creativity. And for me as a teacher, that was a really important.

way for my role to feel and look. And then I left teaching children when my own first child was born. And I started working first at Westchester Community College and then went back to Sarah Lawrence as faculty teaching aspiring teachers, where I've really had the privilege to sort of...

visit a lot of other schools through my students' student teaching placements and sort of stay in touch with the different contexts they're working in and the different ways that teaching as a profession feels in those different settings and also how that's changing more and more over time. I've lost track of what the question was at this point, but that's sort of the history of how I got to where I am now, which I think was loosely what you were asking me about.

Cara (05:18.894)
Which, yeah, that's also my favorite video.

Cara (05:26.766)
It's also my favorite video. Yeah, I love it. it's hot. no. No, no. No. I don't want to get on my phone.

Derek Gottlieb (05:34.718)
No, that's what was... Yeah.

Derek Gottlieb (05:40.094)
Yeah, loosely, yes. Kathy, a similar question. How have you come to study the teaching profession in the way that you do?

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (05:42.586)
You

Kathy Schultz (05:49.068)
So I'll just start where Rue started and say that I was one of those kids who always wanted to be a teacher and taught my dolls and taught my little sister. And then taught for, as an adult, taught for 10 years in Philadelphia and then became a teacher educator. How I became interested in the issue of the dignity of teaching is fairly straightforward. I've always been interested in sort of uplifting

teachers and making sure that teachers weren't bashed from the very beginning at the time I was a teacher and also graduate school and in university settings. And I was interested during the early months of the COVID pandemic in the United States when teaching started to be regarded as heroic work. And for the first time, instead of teachers being denigrated in so many ways, teachers were really valued by

parents and by the press and by families and caregivers. And there was just sort of this golden moment, even though the pandemic, of course, was terrible, where teachers were in children's bedrooms and in living rooms, and parents were saying, my goodness, this is such difficult work. How do teachers do this with 30 or 130 kids? I can barely keep my one child focused on school. But that was short lived. And

Cara (06:53.262)
You need to go see them. You can't just sit there and just watch them. You need to go see them. You need to go see them.

Kathy Schultz (07:16.844)
As we all know, parents and families wanted kids out of the house sooner than teachers were ready to go back to schools. And as teachers were reluctant to go back to schools to protect

their own health, parents and the society at large became insistent on that and also began once again blaming teachers.

Cara (07:29.934)
Thank you.

Kathy Schultz (07:45.9)
for schools being closed and teacher unions for schools being closed. And now we're in, instead of being in this golden age where teachers are respected and parents have their sort of eyes opened a little bit to see how difficult and complex the work of teaching is. And instead of giving teaching the dignity that it deserves, you know, there's more restrictions on curriculum and on what teachers can teach.

Cara (08:00.642)
Thank you.

Kathy Schultz (08:14.252)
more involvement by parents in a way that's intrusive and not trusting what teachers know. So I began thinking about how did this flip happen? How did people go from giving teachers such dignity to really the opposite, taking the dignity away and telling teachers what to teach and what not to teach? And at first I wanted to study that flip and I realized probably people wouldn't be able to describe it as well. And instead I really wanted to understand,

the moments in teachers' lives where they felt dignity. And so instead of sort of looking at the question that people often ask, which is why are teachers so disrespected? Why is nobody going into teaching? Why are teachers paid so little? I was really interested in the small and large moments of where teachers had experienced dignity as part of it.

Derek Gottlieb (09:10.494)
Excellent. Thank you very much. There was a piece that a co -author and I published in Kappen in the first months of the pandemic. It was about how accountability policy is out of step, now more than ever. And it was all about the fact that, look at how teachers are being valued. Look at how this contrasts with the way that they're officially valued. And in rediscovering that piece, just a couple of months ago, I was like, I barely remember this little blip.

Cara (09:28.502)
Yeah.

Derek Gottlieb (09:38.558)
and like what that was like, the context in which this was occurring. So that really speaks to me. Kara.

Cara (09:44.206)

Cathy, I was going to ask you mentioned parents a few times as the people who were affording dignity or affording attention. But I know it goes beyond parents for you. Could you say a little bit about sort of where the dignity is? What are structures or people in society that are maybe not affording dignity to teachers? And then I'll add another question.

Kathy Schultz (10:07.98)
Thank you. So what I have done is I've been talking to teachers about these moments of dignity that they've experienced and I've talked to now over 50 teachers, some small teacher groups and but mostly individual teachers who have taught most of them over 10 years, some of them 20 and 30 years. And it's very interesting the range of ways that teachers talk about where they got dignity from. Sometimes it is from parents and

Often it's from interactions with children and I can sort of tell stories about that. It's in the 90s in Philadelphia, there were structures that gave teachers dignity. There's an initiative called the Philadelphia Teachers Collaborative and that was an incredible opportunity. Teachers groups are places that teachers find dignity and sort of structures that support teachers out of school as well as in school.

principals sometimes give teachers dignity. They sometimes take it away. But there are ways in which teachers share power or trust teachers to innovate and develop their own curriculum. So it really, it's so interesting to talk to people because it's very varied and that's been exciting.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (11:25.018)
Hmm.

Cara (11:25.774)
Thank you. So speaking broadly, what have you found out about your using the language of dignity or teaching as a vocation? And we often ask sort of through your research process, but Rue, I'm thinking about your research as being a teacher, educator, and being somebody in schools as well. So what have you found about the...

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (11:48.602)
Mm.

Cara (11:55.214)
the art, the dignity, the vocation that is teaching. Rui, you wanna start us off?

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (12:01.402)
Sure. So I think in our program, we really value the idea that our students are co -constructing their own knowledge in our discussions with each other about their work in classrooms and about readings, but also really primarily in their experiences with children and host teachers in the field. And it's very central to our program that that teacher -made practitioner knowledge is

really the most important information that teachers have in thinking about what is the best approach for the particular children in their classroom at any given time. And I think I have noticed in recent years that it feels that our students going out into a variety of different urban and suburban schools, a lot of different diverse contexts,

across the board are often really surprised at how little autonomy and dignity and ownership their host teachers have within the context of their schools in many cases. Now, that's not always the case, of course. And many of the teachers that we place with are still finding ways to keep children in the center and to hold on to things that they know are of value, even when principals are taking away dignity, as you mentioned, Cathy.

Cara (13:23.086)
Hey! You're making me feel like... I'm not actually a monster.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (13:28.89)
So I'm thinking a lot about, I had a student this last semester who was in a very diverse suburban public school classroom in a fifth grade. And his host teacher, who's incredible, has been teaching for at least 30 years. And he described going to this staff meeting where they were talking about

Cara (13:35.566)
You're people, you got your own name!

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (13:58.554)
Amplify, which is this awful, I'll just say, program that the teachers don't like and felt wasn't giving them valuable information about their students. And some of these really veteran teachers were asking the administration of the school about alternative ways to get the kinds of assessment information that Amplify was supposed to be giving them. And the response from the administration was,

was something along the lines of, well, Amplify says this works and they say that their research backs it up. So we don't know if your knowledge is equally valuable, but we're going to go with what Amplify said, basically. And my student was so shocked and disheartened and sort of in disbelief about this. And they ended up making their whole thesis project sort of in response to this. And it was really about...

the valuing of teacher -made knowledge and teachers as knowers and how lost that is in many places. And then the other story that I am thinking about in relation to all of this recently is, so in addition to our program, I also run this alumni practitioner inquiry group. This year we focused on the theme of re -centering humanity in teaching and

So there's more to say about that. But I also sit on the board of a staff development center at a local suburban, again, diverse suburban public school district that has these, there are a variety of, I believe they're called, I believe they're just called staff development centers that are funded

by New York state and then usually co -funded by the school district. There's only a few of them left.

Cara (15:47.374)
Did you have this type of game where like, did you have like, this type of game where like, which is sort of like a phone? Which is a phone, but it doesn't do anything except play video games? Did they have that back then?

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (15:50.522)
But this district has one and basically what they do is there are a bunch of teachers in the group from the district and then a small number of administrators and other people, but it has to be a certain percentage that are just classroom teachers, K to 12. And then I'm the higher ed representative on this board and they organize and recruit and run.

Cara (16:12.078)
There's this type of video game where it looks like a phone but it actually just plays video games. It doesn't do anything else. It doesn't function to do anything else.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (16:13.658)
professional development by the teachers in the district for other teachers in the district. And it's all integrated with various requirements the district has for the teachers' professional development hours. But very importantly, almost all the programming is designed by the teachers and shared with their colleagues. And it's been a very, very hopeful and exciting experience for me to see that kind of grassroots work happening in public schools. And...

And it came to mind immediately because I have been blown away with what I would say is the dignity of the teachers that are in those conversations and doing that work. And it's just been really impressive to me. And I feel really lucky to get to witness that happening. And then also, it's been a window into some things that have surprised me. So recently, thinking about autonomy and curriculum development,

Cara (16:49.614)
I'm here. I just said, great. I said, great. You were.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (17:11.578)
Recently, some of the newer teachers in the group were talking about how hard it is to fit in all the different scripted programs into the day that they're being asked to use at this point. And I think we're all pretty familiar with the status quo of scripted programs and more and more menus of programs that get added to address various things that are supposed to be happening. And the...

but they're all sort of separately and discreetly packaged by different companies. And so it's really inefficient because it's not integrated in terms of the content across subject areas and stuff like that. So the teachers were complaining about this. And some of the more veteran teachers

in the group said, you know, pretty recently, I think even maybe 10 or 15 years ago, we used to do this ourselves. We used to design this within the district ourselves. And we would look at what are the...

topics and standards that we need to address and how can we look at that from an interdisciplinary place and think about a curriculum that gets to all these things in this really rich interdisciplinary way that's also of course more efficient because of that. And so you have more time in the day to be more flexible and be more adaptable to what's happening on a day -to -day basis and who the particular children are in the classroom. And they

were talking a lot about how it was a lot more work, but it was also a lot more rewarding and a lot more creative. And they kept using the word creative over and over. And it was really interesting to me because I think I had gotten to a place of feeling like nobody even remembers when teachers did things that way. And so it was sort of simultaneously hopeful and depressing to think, well, this is like a very sort of traditional,

Kathy Schultz (18:54.604)
Nothing. Nothing.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (19:04.41)
suburban public school district, and even here in the very recent past, there was something very different happening with the way curriculum is made in schools. And I think that that piece of the ownership that you take over what you're teaching because of that is so central to any feeling of dignity that I have had as a teacher. And I think most teachers would agree with that.

Cara (19:31.214)
Thank you. And Cathy?

Kathy Schultz (19:35.788)
So, Ru, I love what you've been saying and so much of it echoes what I've been hearing from teachers. There was a time and the purpose of my project is to get back to that time and to think about how to do that. But to go back to the question, dignity is an unusual word. And for a lot of teachers, when I've sort of opened up these interviews, they've said, dignity is not a word I use.

And a couple of teachers even said, I don't even think I'll have stories to tell you. But it is a word that captures a lot I found. And I guess, you know, in terms of what I found that's so interesting, I mean, there's a lot that's interesting that I found. But one of the things is the different ways that people talk about dignity. So some teachers talk about dignity being in the work and dignity being internal.

something that they have, something that grounds them, while other teachers immediately think of dignity that they've been given when they've been given something, awards or recognition in some way. And sort of toggling between those two ideas is quite interesting. But I thought there

are two stories that sort of illustrate really different kinds of dignity that I thought capture not all of what I've heard because I've heard

from 50 different people, I've heard 50 different kinds of stories. But one story that really struck me was from a teacher who just retired after teaching for 30 years, mostly in a small school in Vermont. And what she told the story, I mean, sometimes people have stories ready for me and sometimes the stories come from talking. But she said, this was when she had ready for me. She said that,

in the late 1990s in her small Vermont school, there were disciplinary problems. And the teachers were talking with the principal about what was causing it. And most of the teachers decided that the cause of the disciplinary problems was that teachers didn't have American flags in their classrooms anymore. And the students weren't saying the Pledge of Allegiance. And so their solution was,

Kathy Schultz (21:59.5)
that at the weekly assembly, they would begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. Well, this teacher had previously taught at a Quaker school, been at a Quaker camp, had been attending a friend's meeting in a nearby town for many years, and she didn't believe in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. And it turned out that she was the only person in the school that held this belief, even though it was a relatively progressive school in the late 90s.

And so all the teachers and the principal were behind this idea. And the principal just said to her, well, just don't stand up and say the Pledge of Allegiance. I mean, you can just not, you know, during the weekly assembly, you can just not do this. And so that's what she decided to do. And she talked to her students and told them why she was doing it. And she, you know, so every week, everybody but this teacher, I think one week, one student stood up with her.

I mean, sat down with her. But she, in making this decision, felt really alone in the school where she had found such community and a little bit scared. But in the end, the sort of practice died away. I mean, people just sort of forgot to say the Pledge of Allegiance, or it sort of just became not something that they did. And she, in she sort of looking back at it, concluded that,

her making that decision to stay seated reflected her sense of dignity as a teacher. And that just seemed like such a powerful story and that what really gave her dignity was that public choice to stand for something. And I think it was the publicness of her decision that gave her the dignity. So a very, very different story was just a story that somebody told to me.

was from somebody who was a long time, first an organizer, then a teacher, then a principal, then she worked in the district office. And this was in Philadelphia. And she said, now this is quite a long time ago. She was working in the district office and she got a call from the DA's office. And the DA said, I have a case in front of me. There's a young man here who's up for murder and he's going to be either given the death penalty or life in prison.

Kathy Schultz (24:26.828)
And when we asked him who would be able to talk about your life, he said, my eighth grade teacher. So she absolutely remembered him. He was a special needs student and he was somebody who had such a presence in the classroom. He unified the classroom. And she remembered one story which she ended up telling where she was teaching in a very diverse neighborhood. And at that time, there were fights between the Puerto Rican kids.

and the Palestinian kids. And there was a shooting, and this child came out of his house and cradled a dying child. So that was a story that she really remembered about sort of the deep compassion that this child or eighth grader had and also brought to her classroom. So she went to the court and she, it was an all white jury and the,

the student now young man was an African American man, she says in her words, and she told the story of him in her class. And she said she cried throughout the whole thing and he got life in prison. And, you know, her conclusion was you just never know the kind of impact you have on students' lives. And what she talked about then was the sacredness of being a teacher and that being a story of dignity. So.

I think those go with Rue's stories of how just how vital teaching is and teachers are.

Derek Gottlieb (26:09.566)
Thanks both of you for those accounts, those stories in general. I'm inclined in trying to resist interacting with sort of each one, but I'll just say the following one thing to Rue's story and then use an interaction with Cathy's to transition to the sort of next section. I had my own very first classroom in a middle school the same year that No Child Left Behind went into effect.

And my memory of that year was my memory of myself that year was of being utterly overwhelmed at my own unpreparedness, my sense that I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing and had no real way to figure it out. And like they were going to close the classroom door behind me and I was going to be responsible for what happened. And how could that possibly be the case? And I heard older teachers, more senior teachers.

grumbling about the new No Child Left Behind requirements coming in and, you know, needing to make adequate yearly progress. And it made so little sense to my mind, that is their complaints, because I was like, but this simplifies everything for us, you guys, come on. Like, this is, he's telling me how to do it right. How can this be a problem? And in hearing the Amplify story, two things come to mind. First of all, the way in which...

Kathy Schultz (27:24.812)
Ha ha ha.

Kathy Schultz (27:29.452)
Yeah.

Derek Gottlieb (27:36.286)
policy since 2002 has continued to sort of tighten the ratchet in terms of the kinds of evidence that matter. And so stifle even the legibility of something like teacher knowledge as it's as teachers are being like, we need different information than this. We would like better evidence in order to operate on. They're like, I'm sorry, this is like this is this is how it works. And simultaneously thinking about like the curriculum development.

issue and how this is living memory now that is fading out of existence and the interaction there with sort of a policy environment in which standards are put in place but they're not technically tied to curriculum supposedly to make it possible for teachers to continue to do this stuff but as standards get more and more minute the amount of work that it takes to

Kathy Schultz (28:09.612)
Thank you.

Derek Gottlieb (28:35.006)
design curriculum in accordance with those becomes overwhelming and income, some outside private groups offering to sell teachers or districts, even worse, things that require no particular sorts of planning and lo and behold, without any actual labor being taken off teachers' plates, teacher autonomy just disintegrates. There's a recent book out, a relatively recent book out by Morgan Polikoff called,

beyond standards and what he's advocating for essentially is like, he's like, the situation is terrible. Teachers, but the situation is terrible because classroom teachers have too much control and it's too inequitably distributed basically. The problem is that teachers are on their own in designing curriculum and that means that students who need the most help are the least likely to get good curriculum. And so what should happen is that the state should take...

greater control and critical. To me, this is an insane inference, just like the absolute opposite of the inference that one should draw. But the situation he's pointing to is quite real. It's just caused by policy, not whatever. To switch over to Kathy a little bit, this is not how this podcast usually goes in which I talk quite so much. But Kathy, I'm struck by the story. I'm struck by two aspects of your stories.

Kathy Schultz (29:36.46)
Right. Right.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (29:49.082)
Mm -hmm.

Derek Gottlieb (30:01.63)
The first being that the story about the Pledge of Allegiance, first of all, I thought that was going to end differently. I thought it was going to be something like, you know, the idea that obviously behavior problems are cropping up because we're not in the Pledge of Allegiance. I thought it

was going to be like the one teacher is like, it just says, I can't get on board with this. This violates my own deeply held beliefs. So I'm going to sit and then behavior problems get worse. And then she gets blamed or something like that. Matter of fact, so glad it didn't go in that direction. But.

Kathy Schultz (30:08.332)
Thank you.

Kathy Schultz (30:13.004)
You

Cara (30:25.422)
Mm -hmm.

Kathy Schultz (30:25.708)
Right.

Derek Gottlieb (30:31.486)
Her identification of her own dignity with this seems to tie in for me with a relatively hoary idea of dignity being exactly the kind of thing that is a right to one's own religious expression in exactly the sort of opt -out way that this teacher demonstrates is supposed to be underwritten by...

the individual human dignity in exactly that way. So it seems like a perfect example of that kind of dignity. And the other thing, and this is really the transition to the actual question I wanna ask is, the question that I wanna ask is how do basically theory and theoretical constructs enter into the work that you do? This is sometimes we ask this in terms of like a philosophical lens or whatever. I'd like to broaden it out to incorporate theory more generally.

But I found it very interesting listening to your narrative that when you approached teachers with questions about dignity, they were suddenly like, I don't know if I'm going to have a story for you. Whatever it was that they were, that they thought dignity was, or that they thought might speak to that word was not something that they felt like they had experience with. So the way that I would like to ask you this question, Kathy, or just to start with this is.

How did you experience and understand you sort of bringing a dignity lens into conversation with teachers' experiences? And what did that reveal to each side of this conversation that is you and them about what dignity is, what teaching is?

Kathy Schultz (32:16.62)
That's a complicated question. I came to Dignity because I was writing about distress, distressed and policymaking. And as I came to sort of thinking about how distressed, which is rampant in this country and the world, about how that has shaped policy in many different ways. And I knew when I was coming to the conclusion of this book that I was writing that I

needed to come up with some kind of conclusion, like some kind of solution, right? And the solution I came up with was that we needed more compassion and dignity and that the distress that was pervasive, and I wasn't really talking in this book about the distrust of teachers, but really distress that's baked into the policy decisions in the schools. And

I think I chose the word dignity because it does have sort of deep philosophical roots in thinking about the humanness, right? I mean, human dignity is what you pointed to, and I know Kara has thought about that a lot. But I didn't want to sort of stick with the word respect, which is where a lot of people go to, or sort of thinking about

the ways that, I mean, another word I think that sometimes teachers use is value, how am I valued? And there's something about dignity that has historical meanings. I sort of had read a lot about teachers in the South, this is 75 years of Brown v Board of Education, and thinking about the black schools where there was dignity in teaching then for the black teachers and.

I've done some interviews with black teachers about that and other people have done far more work and wonderful work on black teachers and teaching like Michelle Foster. But I was, I guess I just, I do think that there's something about the kind of position that I believe teachers should have in society because education is so critical for

Kathy Schultz (34:38.86)
our future and for the future of our democracy, that dignity seemed to be the word to me that captured that as I was reading and thinking about ideas. And I guess the other thing is that a lot of people write about disrespect and how teachers are disrespected. And I, in some ways, wanted to try to find what's underneath that, to understand

that even though teachers are disrespected in the kind of stories that Ru was telling, underneath that there are moments of dignity that teachers have felt. And I wanted to try to uncover what those moments were.

Derek Gottlieb (35:21.79)
Thank you.

Cara (35:23.822)
I think of, Cathy, what you're doing is looking at the teaching profession really broadly. I mean, 50 people, and I know you just started this. That's a huge amount of interviews that you've been conducting. And what does it mean to re, as a philosopher does, sort of reorient what the ethos is that we're organizing around? And Rue, I think of your...

position as being very interesting because you're teaching from and have been educated from a teacher ed orientation that starts from a different point and it certainly communicates with the wider society. But as I understand it, the art of teaching has really held fast to.

this is what schooling should be organized around this and then we'll be responsive to where students are going into the field. So I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit to what is the philosophy and the position that the art of teaching is oriented around and then how does that look when students come in contact with structures that are focused on other things such as.

not human dignity, but the human as capital or something like that.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (36:52.986)
Mm hmm. Yeah. So, so our program is really centered first on knowing each child as a complex individual. And so in the first semester of our program, students take a course that I teach called Observation and Documentation, which is really structured around around Patricia Karini's work, Prospect Descriptive

process and the students develop a descriptive review of a child in their fieldwork placement over the course of the semester. And so that's a very close child study that looks at the child's physical presence, disposition, relationships with other children and with adults, and interests, preferences, and ways of thinking and learning. So it's really about looking very closely at one person and...

getting to know them across all those areas. And then as a final piece of it, they think about what is teaching practice that would be responsive to who this child is? What would make your classroom inclusive of this child in all of these ways that we're thinking about, as well as their cultural, linguistic, racial, ethnic identity, and the larger community that.

they are a part of within the school and outside of it. And so to me, that course and being the beginning of the program is really sort of everything grows from that. And then alongside that in that course, we do a lot, and all throughout the program actually in all the classes, we do a lot of...

having the students reflect on their own childhoods and their own schooling experiences and share that with each other. And that does a lot of things. First, most importantly, I think it just reminds them what it feels like to be a child. And then also, it's a really powerful way for the students to get to know each other. And then the relationships they build within their cohort of graduate students just deepens and enriches.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (39:07.13)
and enriches their learning through the whole program in lots of ways and often forever after that. I mean, many cohorts in our program stay in touch as professional colleagues throughout the rest of their lives. Doesn't happen every year, but it happens a lot. And I think that those, that sort of vulnerability of talking about their own humanity and their own experiences in childhood is a big foundation for where that comes from. And in hearing from each other, they also are reminded of the,

broadness and diversity of different children's experiences, which I think is a really important thing for them to bring forward into any teaching setting that they're going into. And so then many of the other courses that are more about curriculum content and developmental psychology and all these other things that they learn about in the program, they can sort of touch back to the touchstone of

of descriptive process in relation to all of those things. And we talk a lot in our program about how having this sort of deep sense of your own values as a teacher is something you can bring to any teaching setting, no matter how restrictive it is or how much it feels like you're pushing against the values of what the school is trying to do.

no matter what you bring with you your own sense of what is important to you. And you can use that to negotiate with what you're being expected to do and figure out how to do that. And I think every teacher and every student we have has a sort of personal threshold for what they feel they can compromise or not to go into different settings and where they're gonna feel comfortable.

Cara (40:55.086)
Thank you.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (41:00.666)
And then really importantly, I think our students in their second year are in a broad range of schools in New York City and across the metro area. They are almost always all in very diverse public schools. And then within that second year of the program, they are...

talking about that with each other all the time. So they're getting the benefit of their own placement, but then also really close conversation with their cohort about all the other placements that the other students are in. So it's sort of in a secondhand way, it gives them a really good sense of other things that are out there, which that perspective I think is so important for pre -service teachers who often don't have a broader context of what's out there and who've been sort of in the...

in the cozy protected space of our program before that. And so that's really important to us because we really strongly believe that the kind of education we're talking about, the kind of stance towards children and teaching is the best thing for every child everywhere. And so we really want to make sure we are thinking about how do we bring those values into any context and think about what we can do. And so we talk a lot about how do you take...

scripted program and try to adjust it to center the child more, to try to bring children's experiences and interests into what you're doing. And we work with a lot of wonderful partner host teachers who are doing that in lots of different ways. And I think we really talk about relationship and love as being really the most important prerequisites. And so,

are the host teachers that we place our students with. Many of them are teaching scripted programs in regular traditional public schools, but they are doing so from this stance of love and care where they are continuing to center children. And I think it's seeing firsthand the examples of that, that is what really makes our students see that that is possible, even in settings that feel so different from what we are talking about in sort of the ideal world of our.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (43:23.066)
our seminar classes. Yeah.

Cara (43:27.374)
I think that's so powerful. I was at my child's home from school this week and we went to the children's museum and there were children from a local school all wearing the same t -shirts and they the teachers were generally really I mean these were pre -K children. The teachers were really mean like they were just all they were doing was critical. There was this big dinosaur that moves that my son was like videotaping with his camera and.

the kids were supposed to do a photo shot in front, you know, they were doing a photo thing in front of the dinosaur and they all were climbing to look at the dinosaur and the teachers were like, get down, we're taking a picture. And of course these four -year -olds want to look at this moving dinosaur. And then there was one woman who was just kind and she was the only person who the children spontaneously started talking to. And it was so different. I mean, same rules.

Kathy Schultz (44:09.996)
Yeah.

Cara (44:25.262)
Same curriculum, she was still telling them not to run in this space where really they could run. That's what the Children's Museum is designed for. But it made such a big difference and I was so appreciative of how you can do different things in different, even in the most oppressive environments, this woman had a totally different dynamic with the kids. So thank you for highlighting that.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (44:48.962)
Yeah. Yeah, well, I think, sorry, just to follow up on what you're saying there, I think that one of the most powerful things about doing a descriptor review of a child, which I hear from students every year, is just the more that you know about someone, the more you grow to care about them and want to advocate for and protect them. And so we talk about, this is not something you're going to do for every child in your class. It's...

Cara (44:53.166)
Yeah.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (45:18.266)

way too time consuming for that. But it's especially the children who you're struggling with the most, either because you feel that they are not visible to you, you're having trouble getting to know them, or because they're really pushing your buttons and driving you crazy. Those are the children to take more time within this way. And it's very transformative of how we understand each other to do that work, even though it can be very hard to admit that that's the case. I think when we are...

Kathy Schultz (45:27.18)
you

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (45:47.994)
stuck in this sort of tunnel vision of the extremely, as Derek was talking about, the extremely overwhelming exhausting amount of stuff that teachers are expected to do. It's very hard to take a breath and try to look at things in another way. And we don't want to think that it would be different if we did that. Sometimes it's just easier to keep going with the same pattern. But.

But really, we are changed in how we understand each other when we do that kind of close looking and valuing of who the person is. And it can make really concrete, practical management kind of changes in how you're doing things. And I think that applies to any setting. And yeah, we do talk a lot about, you might be in a really progressive setting and have a teacher who's really unkind. And you might be in a really scripted,

you know, program filled charter school that's, you know, beholden to every single requirement and that's their main focus, but you could have a teacher who just loves the children in her class. And that, you know, I think that's another important thing that we talk about is that it's not about a particular approach really, and that it's about human individuals and relationships.

And that's very different from a lot of teacher preparation programs, I think, that are worried about getting to know what's this particular methodology right now. Now, of course, it's important for our students to be up to date with research in the field and theory. And we do a lot of reading and talking about that, too, that really importantly informs what we're doing. But ultimately, you're the person who's in the room with the children and going to need to make a lot of decisions. So, yeah.

Derek Gottlieb (47:46.59)
Yeah, this is all quite wonderful. In transitioning to the last couple of questions that we ask are about, you know, what are the implications of your findings and the things that you're studying for on the one hand, the system as a whole, and on the other hand, for individual teachers. And as I was listening to your responses, both of you, to the last question, individually, I was like, okay, this is gonna break down like this. Like, Kathy's gonna be speaking to the system.

and Rue is taking a more individual approach. But the longer I listened, the more that I was hearing that both things are involved in both of your work, you know, obviously. But like when I hear, particularly Rue, when you're talking about the way in which children that you are

struggling with tend to be the ones that require more of your engagement, which sort of fosters or produces or generates,

a greater relation of care, it's so counterintuitive to our systemic incentives, which is essentially a question about dessert. Who deserves your attention? Can we meet these requirements in such a or can students meet basic behavioral requirements? And if they can, then they're admitted to a very sort of standardized setting. And if they can't, well, they shouldn't be in school at all. And this is a completely different.

response that is not just individual, it requires individual time and effort and caring, but generalized to the level of the system, it's an entirely different approach to thinking about how to educate children. And with respect to Kathy's story, I'm so moved by the question, by the fact that a teacher, what made me think Kathy and system is the fact that Kathy's story involves a teacher being called into,

the criminal justice system to testify on behalf of somebody that she has not seen in years and years and years. And that aside from the actual official processes that are involved in this particular way, the role of the teacher comes out in that story, it feels like to me as an official and unofficial keepers of memory, not just of who people sort of actually are.

Derek Gottlieb (50:12.478)
but of their trajectory at a certain point in time. Teachers have unique access to this sort of thing. And this is something that your example, the intersection of the educational system and the criminal justice system, not in a school to prison pipeline sort of way, but is officially, unofficially recognized at the level of the social. Once again, I am talking a lot.

Cara (50:24.654)
Mommy?

Derek Gottlieb (50:40.478)
What I would like to hear about is where you see the interactions between the topics that you study and let's say systematic, systemic constraints and affordances first. And then after this we'll transition to sort of thinking about what individual practitioners might take away from your work and your conversation. Kathy, can I start with you asking about systemic affordances, et cetera?

Kathy Schultz (51:07.244)
Yeah, of course. So I actually think that one of the things that I'm learning is that there are a lot of important small changes, potentially some large changes that can happen, but that it isn't simply a single solution like we need to pay teachers more to give them more dignity. I mean, that's true. Teachers should be paid more. It should be a profession that's recognized in a very different way. But I do think that there are...

smaller changes that can be made at the school level, at the district level, at the, I mean, the federal government doesn't have much to do with education policy. But in terms of really thinking about, again, a lot of the same kind of things that Rose has been talking about, about how to give teachers autonomy, how to position teachers in a place where they are given the kind of,

dignity that they deserve. So that's all very theoretical. And I was part of a conference yesterday, an international conference, and there was a speaker from Singapore. And one of the suggestions she made was that we need to think about teaching in relation to the youth that are going into teaching now. And one of the things you hear about a lot is that people don't want to...

young people going into jobs don't plan to stay for very long and will sort of have many, many different jobs over time. And that stands in great contrast to these retired teachers I'm talking to who were in the classroom for 30 years. But the solution this person said, which I have been thinking about since she said it, was what if teaching, restructured teaching so that you could dip in and out of it? So instead of thinking that,

you know, somebody leaves teaching after five years has left teaching. Maybe they've taken a break from teaching and we structured teaching so that it's easier for them to come back into it. And that made me think about like, what are ways that we can think about teaching for the in the moment? Like who are people going into teaching and how do we think? What are the policies and practices that we can think of that really support people to be the kinds of teachers that

Kathy Schultz (53:33.132)
all of our children deserve. And I think that's a really different way of thinking about it. Just very quickly, one teacher that I talked to who was somebody who taught in an early small school, in one of those schools where the teachers completely developed their own curriculum. And the teachers there basically taught until their 30s or until they had children because it was just...

too all -engrossing, like it was too exhausting. But he stayed for about 12 years and then he's gone on to a lot of different jobs and he said his last job, which he really liked, was as a teacher coach. And if somebody in Oakland, in a city, and if somebody asked him what he did as a job, he would say his job was to keep people in teaching.

which is such an interesting way to define what a teacher coach is in a large public school system. But he said that he really thought with teachers, what would keep them wanting to stay in teaching for a couple more years? And it made me think, like, I wonder if we had people in schools whose job was to keep teachers in teaching or to ask them if they wanted to take five years off of teaching and then to keep thinking about...

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (54:28.186)
Hmm.

Kathy Schultz (54:55.5)

what it would mean to come back to teaching. I mean, one of the things that the person said to me, who had told me the story about the court involved youth was after I testified, I decided I went to my district office where she was working in the district office doing curricular work and said, I want to go back into the classroom because she realized that,

where she had had such a huge impact changed somebody's life, like in the past and in the present, was as a classroom teacher. And so I guess in a policy way, I would really like us to think about how do we have policies that that support teachers to be the best kind of teachers, the kind of teachers we want, we would want for our children and the best kind of teachers.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (55:31.322)
Okay.

Kathy Schultz (55:53.516)
for as long as they want, but also in different kinds of ways than we might be thinking about it now.

Derek Gottlieb (56:01.694)
Thank you so much for that answer. Roo, same question.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (56:06.553)
So I guess when you first asked the question, I was thinking about, you know, another big thing we talk about all throughout our program is sort of what we know about children's development more broadly and sort of childhood in general and how that looks and how that's changed a lot culturally. And so we do a lot of conversation about that leads the students to questioning.

so many things about our system of education as a whole and how incongruous it is really with what children need and physically, socially, and all these other things. And so that's another important sort of systemic and political lens that is really feels very urgent to a lot of our students. And many of them are already thinking about wanting to get involved with policy levels work even before they've started teaching.

And so it's interesting, Cathy, that what you were saying about keeping teachers in teaching, I do a lot of convincing them to spend some time in the classroom before doing anything else, which I find to be a little harder in recent years, actually. And just in general, I mean, we know that there are so many, there's such a shortage of teachers, as we talked about early on. And...

Kathy Schultz (57:15.692)
Right. Right.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (57:32.634)
that keeps getting worse. Teacher preparation programs nationally have continually low enrollment. So recruitment is always a big issue for us. And I do think that all these things we've talked about, it's sort of the lack of autonomy, the low pay, everything we know about what has

made teaching a less appealing profession lately is a big part of that. And then there's also this sense, I think, of

these big systemic problems and how do I get right to addressing that, which some of our students at least are sort of anxious to get to. And I'm always encouraging them not to skip the classroom part because I think that is so important in informing any further work that you're going to do. So.

That's one thing I was thinking about. I mean, obviously in my role, what I think about is how can I prepare individual teachers to at a classroom level start to push back on some of these systemic things and work from within the system. So that's mainly my own focus. But I was just thinking about my own leaving of classroom teaching and what you were saying, Cathy, and that I didn't think that I wasn't going back when I left, but it did.

every year it feels increasingly impossible to imagine going back to that, even though there's a big part of me that really misses teaching children every day. And every time I visit students in the field, I feel a little bit jealous of their teachers because it's just such, it's such a powerful, meaningful, important role to play in those children's lives. And the depth of that is really...

Kathy Schultz (58:58.828)
Yeah.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (59:17.657)
unique as a profession, I think, in many of the ways that we've been talking about. And so as much as on a practical level, I don't think that that's in the cards for me. I do still really miss it a lot. And so I was just thinking about that sense of dignity, that as a teacher of children, I felt such a sense of pride to be this important person in their lives.

Kathy Schultz (59:43.404)
Thank you.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (59:45.594)
And I feel that way with my graduate students too, but it's not quite the same. So that's just something that was occurring to me as we were talking about that. And then I was also just thinking about my role as a parent, which is something that I haven't talked about yet. And I know we're probably almost out of time, but I have a third grader and a kindergartener myself. And so I've been thinking a lot about these things from that perspective in the last few years too. And...

Just again, with my own children's teachers, the thing that I'm most wondering about going into parent -teacher conferences is always just, do you care about my child? And does he feel safe in your classroom and happy and loved? And it's funny to be in the role that I'm in and constantly talking about all these things that I really feel deeply about, what curriculum should be, how schools should be structured.

Kathy Schultz (01:00:27.724)
Thank you.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:00:43.258)
And yet when it comes down to it with my own children, that doesn't feel that important to me. It really just feels like, are you safe and cared for? And it was interesting this fall when I went into our first conference with my son's teacher this year, who we adore. She's absolutely wonderful and he's had a fantastic year. My husband and I went in and he's not in the field at all. And after the conference, he said,

I don't understand why parent -teacher conferences now are just like a list of the programs that they're using. And it was interesting to hear his outside perspective on that because it wasn't a surprise to me, sort of. But it was really like, this is just sort of a run -of -the -mill parent who doesn't need you to list these. That doesn't mean that much to most parents. But there is this real sort of like,

Kathy Schultz (01:01:18.092)
Thanks.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:01:39.962)
defensiveness and coming from, I think, the accountability movement and all this stuff we've talked about, that it feels like the stance has become, we need to defend that we are covering all of these urgent needs by these products we've purchased. And that's how we're doing that. And this is definitely nothing against teachers. This is what is being handed to them and what they're being asked to talk about. But as a parent,

Kathy Schultz (01:01:54.06)
Thank you.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:02:10.17)
I care a lot more about what do you know about my child and, you know, do you like him? You know, those are the things we're trying to figure out in that conversation. And so, I don't know, I guess I was also just thinking to try to loop back to what the question was here, that there's such a disconnect at this point between what both teachers and families really want for children and what the system or the policy is presenting.

Kathy Schultz (01:02:37.58)
Right.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:02:39.834)
in in name of addressing those things, but in fact, not really, you know, it's just gotten so far away from that. And so I don't know where I'm going with that. But that's that's some of the things I was thinking about while listening to all of you.

Derek Gottlieb (01:02:56.318)
Yes, I mean, exactly. The policies designed to produce one kind of outcome, like better education for all, by virtue of the way that they think about or make us invite us to think about what education is, work actively against the the realization of the things that they are aiming at. It's. I mean, literally in the sense of being misturned, misoriented, perverse, it's yeah.

I, while you were telling the story about the parent teacher conferences, I was thinking about, you know, my brief time as like a fancy schmance, private school, high school English teacher whose parents, like the parents in those contexts were very much conceived of themselves as having purchased a certain kind of gilded pathway to elite university education. So what they wanted in those, in that setting, this was a very new money school, was,

verification that that was happening for their kids. So like this list of programs would have been exactly what they were wanting. I taught at a different fancy schman's old money private school shortly thereafter and was all anxious about one student who was not doing as well in my course as they could have been. And like the fact that their parents were going to be all over me about this. And they were like,

I don't, we own four car dealerships or whatever. Like this kid is gonna be fine. Give them the grade that they deserve and keep teaching them well. I just wanna know that like this child is capable. So it was massively, massively different. I think about the anecdote that you were telling about the listing of programs and I start to think that like teachers who are not only being trained to think that this is what good teaching is, that is to implement programs with fidelity and raise test scores and all that kind of stuff, don't have as much of an opportunity.

to get to know the kids in their classrooms as they might have before that. And so listing the programs that they're doing can be a way of protecting themselves from getting questions about, is my child feeling safe and cared for? It's a way of seeming to be discharging their responsibility as teachers under a certain kind of understanding.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:05:12.474)
Yeah, and actually, can I just add one thing? I want to also say that there's a lot of privilege in my not really being concerned with how my kids are doing academically. So I'm not trying to blow that off. I'm very aware of that. And what you bring up about what people are looking for in different contexts, I think, is really important.

Derek Gottlieb (01:05:26.75)
Sure, sure.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:05:39.642)
I think at the same time though, even for families who are really concerned about their child's academic progress, whether that's because of socioeconomic circumstances, family education, or because the child maybe has learning disabilities. So there's particular things that they're

really worrying about and wanting to ensure are happening. I still think though that listing programs is not an effective way to communicate that to most families. So that's another thing I want to bring up is that,

Kathy Schultz (01:06:03.98)
Yeah. Yeah.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:06:09.114)
It's not that it doesn't matter how your child's progressing academically. On a core emotional level, for me, that's not the primary thing, but of course it matters. But I think that there are much more authentic and meaningful ways to communicate that. And that I agree that listing a program is a way of being able to sort of cover your bases about that.

without having to really engage in a more complex conversation about what's happening in the classroom, maybe because you don't feel confident to do that. But meanwhile, most families aren't going to understand what the subtext is of what you're meeting. It's sort of interesting because it's like, it's sort of covering yourself to people within the field, within policy and within your administration, but it doesn't really translate.

to the context of families who aren't educators themselves.

Derek Gottlieb (01:07:12.446)
That's a perfect place to transition. That's a perfect transition to the final question about like what ought practicing teachers to take away from the kind of work that you do and the kinds of things that you study. What both of you have talked about are the role of teachers as sort of mediators between institutional pressures of various kinds, whether policy or sort of more directly institutional, and the actual people with whom they interact with as students and families, coworkers, et cetera. And...

no matter how tight the policy prescriptions or institutional mandates become.

teachers have some degree of autonomy in terms of, there's always the capacity to be kind as we have talked about in this conversation. There's always sources of potential dignity as Kathy is studying. Could you each speak to that a little bit? What ought practitioners in the field ought to, what ought they to take away from your work or think about in light of your work? Kathy, can I?

Start with you again.

Kathy Schultz (01:08:20.94)
Sure. I mean, one of the things I haven't talked about as much is that a very common thing for teachers to say is, in order for me to treat young people, to treat children with dignity, I need to feel dignity myself. And so, and that is just so important because we all want dignity for children and we all want dignity for the teachers. But to understand how...

how intimately connected they are, I think is quite important. And so for what can teachers do? I think it's creating humanizing spaces for themselves and for the children that they teach. So, you know, one teacher talked about how she is a high school teacher still, and she talked about how she always has music on when children come into the space. And another teacher talked about...

how there was a lot of death in her community. And so she has an altar for students to put photographs of people in their community who've been killed. Teachers talk about sort of the ways they find dignity in their relationships with other teachers, either in school or out of school, or the ways they find dignity in their relationships with students. You know, one teacher talked about...

the kind of close work that she does with high school students in writing college essays. And, you know, so I do think that there are ways in which, you know, we use the word humanizing spaces a lot, but I think that's really captures it, you know, and I think, you know, we talked about teaching with love or finding love within that and care within that space. I do think that that's what I would want for teachers, but I also,

really think a lot about the kinds of things that teachers say about finding dignity in themselves, you know, and really not necessarily looking for outward examples of dignity, looking for the moments where they will get awards or their principals will say, you've been doing a good job, but finding acts within their own work that gives them dignity and...

Kathy Schultz (01:10:42.38)
hope and momentum going forward, because this is a hard time. I mean, we're really, teachers are teaching in a very hard time. We're living through a hard time. Teacher educators are working in a hard time. And I do think that acknowledging that and looking for moments where we can really connect with each other and with the children that teachers teach.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:11:11.898)
So I think that we talk a lot when our students are graduating and then with them as alumni when they come back for our inquiry group about just the importance of finding at least one colleague who you can trust and connect with in no matter what setting you're in. And sometimes it might be someone not in the school that you're working in, but even in a different school.

although even better if they're in your school. Because so much about what makes teaching sustainable, I think, is being able to share your perspective and get the perspective of someone else who you trust. And that collegiality is really important. It's important for children in their learning to have those kinds of social experiences, and it's important for us too. And so...

We talk a lot about that as a way of sustaining and that finding community in all the ways that you can, professional community and other forms of community. As far as sort of small things that can happen in classrooms, I mean, there's lots and lots of examples I could think of, but.

I'm coming back to this idea of humanity because that was the theme of our series this year. And so we had a lot of conversations about that. And so I was thinking about that a lot with my own children this year and sort of what were the things about my son's teacher that felt different to me or felt like places where she was making space for children. And so as one example,

for the classroom jobs that she had, instead of having sort of a regular rotating list, she got to know something that was a strength of each child in the class and created a classroom job about that. So that they each were sharing something of their own interests and expertise within the context of the classroom and calling it a classroom job. And so it wasn't taking up a lot of extra time in the curriculum.

Kathy Schultz (01:13:11.244)
Thank you.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:13:25.178)
But it was I think a really important and valuable way for them to all get to know something about each other that they knew about and cared about She also and this has been the case actually for several of my son's teachers. She made space for him to Bring things he'd was working on at home into the classroom and you know and it was often like you could work on this for the first 15 minutes of the day when we're

doing sort of settling in transition time. So again, it wasn't in lieu of some major content area, but it made a really important connection between that sort of the things that you care about outside of school are welcome at school too. And I think that's a small and important thing that you can do for kids. And I feel like I had a couple other examples in.

mind as we were talking. But I think a lot of it is also sort of in terms of dignity. I was thinking about just talking with children about why you're doing what you're doing and inviting them into the conversation more. I think especially new teachers often have this fear that if they reveal anything, they will lose all their authority. And in fact, it's quite the opposite in my experience. I think you develop.

authentic authority by trusting children and by relating to them on a human level and affording them the dignity to be part of the conversation. And that doesn't mean that they're going to be part of all the decision making that happens. But even creating a conversation about it where you sort of owe them an explanation, I think, is a really powerful tone setting in classrooms that has that.

has really great repercussions in terms of just the feeling of the whole space. And then there's many ways to sort of connect questions or interests that kids have to things that you already

were going to do. So that's something we talk about also in terms of working within scripted programs. It's like if you look at the main ideas that are supposed to be addressed here, many of them are things that kids might ask you about anyway. And so why not?

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:15:44.474)
invite those questions early on and then maybe address those topics in a slightly different order or more framed in the language of the way the kids were asking about it. And so then you ultimately might not even be doing a particularly different project, but it feels like the kids have more ownership of it and it feels like it's something they cared about and were interested in and you'll get a lot more investment and focus from kids by doing that, I think. So I don't know if you wanted such.

specific kinds of examples, but that's just scratching the surface of some of the ways that this can happen. And it's interesting, we are hosting a conference next fall at Sarah Lawrence, and I'm gonna run this panel of teachers. And what I've decided I was interested in talking about was sort of what are some of the values of what is called progressive education?

that actually we kind of all take for granted as common ground that we think are good teaching practice. Because I think there are many examples of that that people don't even realize are rooted in that history and that aren't particularly controversial. You know, things like let's have the kids sit in a clustered bunch of desks and talk to each other instead of in rows is one example I was thinking about. Or like let's do a project that involves

making things in different media, you know. So what are some things like that that teachers who don't identify as progressive educators are doing and valuing without having named it in that way? Because I think it's really a value for us at this moment in time to sort of recapture those things and advocate for them if we're going to make any progress from where we are now.

Derek Gottlieb (01:17:38.174)
I love all of that. All of that is so wise. Your most recent sort of example there of like, of thinking about the things that we take for granted, there's also a huge amount of opportunity to sort of renew our own sense of the values that are implicit in these practices that we take for granted. I think about, you know, John Dewey's criticism of traditional education, the desks and rows thing, that's all he's doing is looking at the...

Practices in front of them and being like what does this say about what we think? Human beings are in the way that children learn something very similar to be can be like we cluster deaths together Maybe there was a reason for this generations ago. Why do we keep doing it? Now what does this say about what we think children are as something to sort of reject? I I also love and I just want to echo this on in as like slightly different in a slightly different way the the intense wisdom that you

are speaking to when you're talking about especially newer teachers thinking that to share explanations or rationalizations with their students is somehow giving up authority. The

distinction that came immediately to my mind is Hannah Arendt's between power and authority on the one hand. What they're sacrificing by sharing reasons is a dictatorial kind of power. That's really what they're giving up. But

and trusting students with reasons is precisely the fostering of the authority that they think they are sacrificing. And it takes a couple of years to learn and trust yourself with that, in my experience as a teacher. So thank you both so much for taking the time today to talk to us. It has been a real, real pleasure having you on, hearing your stories and your thoughts.

Kathy Schultz (01:19:31.692)
Thank you.

Jerusha (Rue) Beckerman (01:19:31.77)
Thank you so much for having us. This was wonderful.

Kathy Schultz (01:19:35.148)
Yeah, we appreciate the opportunity.