

## Transcript

# Transforming AI Literacy in the Classroom feat. Corey Layne Crouch '13

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[00:00] **Maya Pomroy:** Welcome to *Owl Have You Know*, a podcast from Rice Business. This episode is part of our Flight Path Series, where guests share their career journeys and the stories of the Rice connections that got them where they are.

From high school principal to an education tech executive, Corey Lane Crouch has spent decades leading schools, school district teams, and inspiring every student in her classroom. As AI is becoming more intertwined in every aspect of our lives, including education, Corey recognized an opportunity to use and integrate new innovation in making an impact on the next generation of leaders. We talked with her about how she pivoted from a pre-med track to teaching kindergarten to being a student herself at Rice Business. We also talk about her new role leveraging AI and building a more equitable future for all students.

Welcome to *Owl Have You Know*. I'm Maya Pomroy, your host. And our guest today is Corey Lane Crouch, Professional MBA from the Class of 2013.

Welcome, Corey!

[01:05] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Thanks, Maya. I'm so happy to be here.

[01:08] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, we're thrilled to have you. You know, it's been a hot minute since you've been in Houston and at Rice. You've been up to quite a bit, and I'm so looking forward to talking with you about your story and your career pivots and the real dynamic industry that you are currently in, which is on the forefront of everybody's mind.

So, you were a former high school English teacher. You were a principal. And now, you are an educational tech executive. You are the chief program officer at AI for Education, which is something that I am very much intertwined with because I have children and they use a lot of AI in school right now. So, having this opportunity to talk with you about it, I think that a lot of parents and even those that are in the AI space are curious about your journey.

[01:59] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Great! Yeah. Well, I'm excited to talk about all that. And now, I'm really curious to know what you're seeing in your children and their experience with AI as they move through their education journeys.

[02:12] **Maya Pomroy:** We will get to that before **[crosstalk 02:13]**.

[02:12] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Well, yes, we will.

[02:15] **Maya Pomroy:** Actually, you started out as a pre-med major at NYU.

[02:21] **Corey Lane Crouch:** That's true.

[02:22] **Maya Pomroy:** I mean, tell me, so, from that education, that's a shift.

[02:26] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yeah. You know, I was always proud to be a good student. And I'm a lifelong learner. That's really a thread that goes through my story. And, you know, graduating from high school, I wanted to go to a fun, exciting, honestly, hard-to-get-into school. And so, when I was accepted to NYU, I was like, "Okay, great. Not going to think about anything else." And I'm going to go there pre med, but also an English literature major, because I've always loved reading and writing and literature.

And when I was there, you know, I had my chem lab on Wednesday mornings. I still remember that. I remember dragging myself to the chem lab and, like, you know, being surrounded by all these other students who were, of course, brilliant but, like, you know, very focused on everybody getting the highest grade, which I understood.

[03:24] **Maya Pomroy:** Gunners. Those are called gunners, right?

[03:25] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yes. Well, I'm still very much a recovering perfectionist. And I was, you know, dragging myself to those classes, but I also had the opportunity to get a work study job through... at the time it was called the America Reads program. And so, what I did for work while at NYU is that I was a teacher's aide in the kindergarten classroom in the Lower East Side. My week started to really shift because I realized how much I enjoyed being in that classroom with the teacher and with the students. I'm pretty sure I worked more hours than I was supposed to.

[04:07] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, that means that you have a passion for it, you know. And work isn't work, then that's passion.

[04:12] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yeah. So, I certainly realized I had some reflections and some moments. NYU is an expensive... it was an expensive school 20 years ago. It's still an expensive school. And I realized, you know, maybe pursuing education is more where my passion is. And so, that took me to actually transferring to Rowan University here in New Jersey and becoming an elementary education and English literature major.

[04:42] **Maya Pomroy:** Wow. So, it was just that opportunity, that job, that you didn't think was going to shift anything and really just completely transformed your future.

[04:53] **Corey Lane Crouch:** It really did. It really did.

[04:55] **Maya Pomroy:** It's those unexpected moments, huh?

[04:56] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Well, yes, very unexpected. But then, you know, I was like, New York City. I love New York City. I'm a city girl. I was an elementary education major. Was getting ready to graduate and some other friends had talked about the Teach For America Program, which wasn't really very big at the school that I had transferred to, Rowan University. But I was like, "The mission speaks to me. Let me go ahead and apply."

[05:23] **Maya Pomroy:** Could you tell us a bit about... because I know what it is, but for the listeners that don't, could you tell us about Teach For America?

[05:29] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yes. Teach For America is a teaching corps, where, at the time, it was really targeted toward those graduating from college. And you apply to be a part of a corps that would go to an area that really needs teaching talent for at least two years and become a part, and then you would do training. And, you know, the idea of it is, like, to serve the population, you know, with a teaching talent, but also understand education. And then, if you go off to other careers and other industries of bringing that knowledge in order to continue to advocate for some of the changes that we saw that we needed at the time and still need now.

Well, the funny thing, Maya, is I was elementary. So, sure I was going to New York City. I got my placement, and it said high school English in Houston, Texas. Had never been to Texas, didn't know anything about Houston, you know. I'd actually called the Teach For America team

and told them that I thought that they had made a mistake. I was like, “I think you made a mistake. Supposed to be an elementary in New York City.” And they were like...

[06:38] **Maya Pomroy:** “And now, I’m in high school in Texas, Houston?”

[06:41] **Corey Lane Crouch:** They were like, “No, you’re qualified to TN. You said you would be willing to go to Houston,” which I think I said I would be willing to go places.

[06:49] **Maya Pomroy:** Go anywhere, yeah.

[06:50] **Corey Lane Crouch:** But that was the next big pivot. But really, I see it as, you know, such a serendipitous blessing because being, you know, fresh out of college and I did, I went to teach high school English in Houston and I was like, “Well, I have no idea what to expect.”

At the time, it was Sam Houston High School in the north side of Houston. I think it is now... the name has changed. But yeah, Houston is such a great city. As you know, to be a young professional in and to start your career, let alone having the opportunity to be a part of the thriving, innovative education landscape there, I really think that it helped me think much bigger about what it meant to be an education and what was possible with innovation and really moving the needle toward equity and supporting communities that, historically, you know, weren't being serviced in the way that they deserved.

[07:52] **Maya Pomroy:** Right. So, how many years were you in Houston teaching high school English?

[07:56] **Corey Lane Crouch:** So, I taught high school English for, first, I taught for two years, and then I actually joined the Teach For America team for a few years in Houston and trained pre-service teachers in that role for several years. And then I went back into the classroom with a Houston-based charter network called YES Prep. So, if our listeners are in Houston, they probably know YES Prep. And went back to the classroom and was both doing instructional coaching and teaching for several more years until I became the school principal when we opened the high school.

[08:36] **Maya Pomroy:** Wow. You're a very young principal.

[08:40] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Maya, I was like, “This is going to come up.” I stepped into that role while I was in the MBAP program at the same time.

[08:52] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, wow, that's a lot on your plate. So, wait, let's back up a little bit. So, you're teaching in HISD and YES Prep. And then, so, what was the catalyst? What made you decide, "You know what? I'm going to go get an MBA at Rice."

[09:08] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yeah, so, I had shifted from, you know, HISD to Teach For America and then back to YES. And I realized now and more as I was going, I always had a really entrepreneurial spirit. Like, even in my first year of teaching, I was a baby, you know, 22-year-old teacher. I still chuckle at myself. And I pitched, like, a new summer program for credit recovery for the high school students at my school. And my principal at the time let me do it, which is also...

[09:38] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, that's great to have somebody that believes in you and gives you the agency to do things like that. That says a lot about their faith and trust in you, you know.

[09:46] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And I've had so many incredible supports along the way. But I realized that, in every role I was in, I was always coming up with, really, intrapreneurship, right? Coming up with new programs, new designs to solve problems or opportunities that I was seeing in the work that I was doing.

[10:08] **Maya Pomroy:** What were some of the problems that you saw? I'm curious. Like, what were some of the programs that you started?

[10:13] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Well, for example, when I was at YES Prep, which was in the Gulfton neighborhood — shout out to my Force family. We were the Gulfton force. As a school leader, I brought in house the local clinic called Legacy where they provided mental and behavioral health services, as well as, you know, physical health services, and created a space on our campus to have a mental health specialist and then also a nurse practitioner. And so, we started a partnership with Legacy so that my students, if something was going on with them or they needed extra support that, you know, our school counselors weren't equipped to give that regular clinical support, they could just come, you know, from their study hall or have an appointment once a week with somebody in house. So, it supported, you know, their parents didn't have to necessarily take them to separate appointments. And it just kept a lot more of our students on campus with us and really took a, like, whole child approach.

[11:25] **Maya Pomroy:** Yeah. And so much efficiency. And you were so ahead of your time.

[11:29] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yeah. And while I'm doing all that, I was like, "I heard about this Rice educational entrepreneurship program. Maybe I should apply to that, too."

[11:39] **Maya Pomroy:** Why not?

[11:39] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Cause why not? But I think, you know, I started to recognize how I always think about impact and I loved teaching and I still. You know, my colleagues will tell you every once in a while, I'm like, "Maybe I should just go back to teaching high school English because I love it so, so much." But I was always seeing the opportunity for impact, opportunity to help others shape and navigate toward, especially for our students, a future that felt where they had agency, you know, and where they could fill their own potential and be fulfilled. So, as much as I loved being in the classroom, it was hard.

And it's also when you have 1,000 students and 100 staff members and you're very community-oriented and community-based, which I believe in deeply, especially that change should come from the community. It's hard to feel like you want to meet the needs and the desires of 1,100 people through, you know, only 24 hours in a day.

So, that work was rewarding but very difficult. But still, you know, I always saw the opportunity for impact and seeing what structures in education still serve us — us being the collective community — and what structures aren't serving us, and how can we continue to evolve and, you know, innovate and grow so that we're doing better by more students. And so, I always the next thing in mind as we were going.

[13:27] **Maya Pomroy:** So, tell me about the Rice program, because it was something that, obviously, drew you in. And juggling and managing a pretty rigorous career with school, that's a challenge. So, tell me about your time at Rice.

[13:42] **Corey Lane Crouch:** To say the least, it was a time in my life when I remember thinking like, "If I can do this, I can do anything," you know, because it was my first year at Rice when I was, like, the assistant school director first for six months and then some things had changed in our organization where I became fully, you know... the way that my brain interpreted it was by myself, you know, principal, we call it a school director at the time. And I remember feeling a shift, like, during the day, at work, I was the person that was, really, the way I think of it, taking care of my school and my community and my employees and trying to make sure that we're making the most of the time, you know, talent, and money that we have available to us to serve the students and their families and the community.

And I was so thankful for the nights, this might sound weird to some people, for the nights that I had class, because I knew it was, like, nope, 4:30, have to be in the car.

[14:58] **Maya Pomroy:** Unplug.

[14:59] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yes, unplug the school director Corey, and I get to put on my learner and my student hat. And I'm a learner at heart and a student. And I felt like, as intellectually as rigorous as being in class was, it was still the time during my week where I got to sit back and learn, and in some ways, like, have somebody take care of me, like, have somebody take care of, you know, how I'm spending this time versus me having to be the one that's always shaping that for others. But the hours were long. The coursework is, certainly-

[15:37] **Maya Pomroy:** Rigorous.

[15:37] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yes, it's very rigorous. And so, it was certainly an intense couple of years. But it was an interesting way to balance my ebb and flow of the week, such that I think it was sustainable for me.

[15:52] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, it was, so, you were sitting in class and then you would go and see your students sitting in class, right? Like, that's, like, living, sort of, parallel lives to those that you were serving.

[16:03] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yes. I was also honored to have one of my staff members that was also in the MBA program. It just worked out that way. And so, at graduation, we bussed some of our students to be there at graduation and for them to see the work that we had done and everything. But my graduation photo, I will forever cherish. I am smiling so bright because it was a whole section of an auditorium of my students going nuts when they called my name.

[16:42] **Maya Pomroy:** Oh, I love that.

[16:43] **Corey Lane Crouch:** And it felt, you know, as tough as that was, I felt very much that it was something we had done together as a community and that it meant something for them too.

[16:53] **Maya Pomroy:** And their support of you for what you have accomplished, you know, is, sort of, giving back to you the way that you were always and continue to always give back to

them. That's an incredibly special moment. So, after graduation, how did you get into the ed tech space?

[17:09] **Corey Lane Crouch:** I remember really thinking that I deeply believed and we saw the evidence of it that we were helping and supporting students and beating the odds, if you will. And all of our students were accepted to a four-year...

[17:26] **Maya Pomroy:** I read that. 100% got accepted to four-year college. That's huge.

[17:30] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Which in that, you know, in the Gulfton neighborhood at the time, that far outpaced the average. So, that was deeply important to me, but I knew we were helping them beat the odds but we weren't changing the odds.

And I remember just kept thinking to myself, "There's got to be a different way to have an impact on the way the system works, so that more, like, we change the odds, more students have access to an educational experience that gives them the option to go to a four-year college or university, if they want it, or give them the option to take another post-secondary pathway if they want it." And then life things were going on as well, as they do, that was requiring me to move away from Houston. And so, I had some colleagues that had actually started to work with a program called Summit Learning out of Summit Public Schools in California.

And what I saw was that it was a program that was asking this question of, what should school design look like? And what should a school model look like based on what we know about learning and the learning science and best practices that's rooted in the community? And then how can technology support and make that happen in a way that-

[18:55] **Maya Pomroy:** [crosstalk 18:55].

[18:56] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Right, that was, like, never possible before. And I was like, "Yes, that is the type of thing that we should be exploring and pushing and really asking that question," not just, you know, how great can technology be, or how far can it take us? Yes, that's something for society collectively, but this question of, how do we really service the outcomes of all students and really keep the vision for a school and a school design in mind and use technology as a tool to help us achieve that in, quite frankly, like, a system that's still pretty archaic, like, a lot of the constraints in education.



[19:43] **Maya Pomroy:** Based on districts and, you know, so many different variables.

[19:48] **Corey Lane Crouch:** So many different variables. So, that took me to being a part of Summit Learning that we eventually spun off to become our own nonprofit, which is now called Gradient Learning. And that was really my entryway into the ed tech space.

[20:06] **Maya Pomroy:** So, this was the time... because I remember this was the time when AI was just starting to become, you know, relevant. And for me, I feel like it was during that COVID time that it really started for our family anyway, just started to gain a whole lot of traction when, you know, the kids started going back into the classroom when classrooms were open again. And all of a sudden, you've got, like, Flint AI and all of these different platforms that kids could use, and even, you know, obviously ChatGPT and everything else. And now, it's really ingrained in everything. It's ingrained in every curriculum, it seems like, and in every teacher's learning plan and all that. For me, it, sort of, seems like it happened overnight. For you, it doesn't.

[20:55] **Corey Lane Crouch:** You know, yes and no, Maya. So, ChatGPT was released to the public in November of 2022. It was the fastest-growing consumer technology that we've ever seen before. And interestingly, it, in November 2022, grew a ton during that next spring, and then took a dip, the users took a dip in May and June. at first, those in the tech were like, "Oh, okay, is it cooling off this quickly?"

But we in education know what happened. That's when school let out. That's when school let out. And even recently, OpenAI released something. But what we saw very quickly is that students and teachers, even before all of the other ed tech layer products, we call them, so those are products, like you mentioned, Flint and MagicSchool and SchoolAI, those types of products, their user interfaces built on top of the frontier models like ChatGPT and Gemini and Claude.

But even before startups were launching those products, students and teachers were using ChatGPT in teaching and learning. And so, it was, kind of, all of a sudden. But at the same it's interesting to hear you say that, it's pretty integrated, because it is highly used, especially amongst students, but the work that we're doing, what we're seeing is that, by and large, especially in K-12 education, understanding how to integrate it responsibly in a way that really supports the learning and the development of students and prepares them for a future where the technology is going to be in everything that they do and supporting teachers that are trying to build the bridge from, well, pre-November 2022, this is how I would assess my students, you

know, this is what my curriculum looked like, and now all of a sudden they have this technology in their pockets, really, that is like a magic essay button, you know, for all intents and purposes. What does that mean for how we need to evolve our practice? And that's a lot for teachers and school leaders and district leaders to think about while they're still running schools at the same time.

[23:33] **Maya Pomroy:** Yeah. Well, that's what I was going to ask, was that, you know, I'm sure that you've got a really good lens on how teachers are responding to it. Because I think that, for some teachers, you know, it's literally like walking on Mars. It's like, "I don't really know how I'm supposed to do this. And this is not what I'm..." you know, teachers that have been teaching for decades, then all of a sudden, it's like, "Well, here's this wonderful tool and you need to learn how to use it because this is the future." So, how do you manage that?

[24:01] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Well, the thing that we saw early on is that, and of course, with any innovation, you have the innovation curve. So, you have your very early adopters and et cetera. So, we have... there's some teachers and some leaders that have been at the forefront of this for almost two years now. But overwhelmingly, a lot of practitioners, so the teachers and the leaders, their first encounter with it was realizing that students were using it to do their work in ways that weren't aligned with academic integrity.

[24:42] **Maya Pomroy:** I'm going to bring that up, too.

[24:44] **Corey Lane Crouch:** "AI is a cheating tool," is a narrative that we really have to address head-on and then work to shift it. And the students tell me, too. I have the privilege and honor of, you know, doing focus groups with high school students, in particular. I was a 9th-grade English teacher. You know, I know how to get them to, like, you know, warm up and tell me what's really going on. So, they'll tell me how they cheat and, like, how not to get caught using it. And sometimes, it's like, "Well, my friend did this." And I'm like, "Okay, your 'friend,'..." So, for teachers and as a former, you know, English teacher, my heart goes out. I totally get it because you're already working so hard, and now you have to assess your students completely differently.

And they can't actually write a good essay with ChatGPT unless they know the content really, really well and have strong evaluation skills. So, you have to, you know, meet teachers where they are and then give them the space to be learners and explorers themselves, to build their capacity with the technology. And as educators, we naturally think like, "This is what makes sense for my students, or we have to, as a team, talk about how we're going to evolve our

academic integrity policy and how we're going to evolve our assessment practices while still recognizing, you know, students have to take standardized tests. They're still going to have to write essays sometimes. But how do we, you know, continue to think bigger about the skills and the mindsets, really, that they need to be successful with the technology?"

[26:29] **Maya Pomroy:** So, that's one of the things, is that, for my kids, when they use AI in school, it's not "give me the answer to this question," which is, you know, the academic integrity issue, but more of "give me five problems about this geometry concept," right? So, then it generates these problems, and then you can, you know, have more practice and figure out what you're getting right, what you're getting wrong, those sorts of things.

So, it took my husband and I a little while. I'm like, "Wait a second. I don't understand why you're using AI. Like, I don't. It doesn't make sense to me." And then when we, sort of, dug a little bit deeper and the teachers were able to explain, you know, "This is about giving your child more access to more opportunities, to more practice, to build their skill set." And, you know, that's part of it as well. So, then I was like, "Oh, okay," because it was very hard for me to wrap my brain around how you can use ChatGPT, which immediately you think is cheating, to actually... but I mean, it's, sort of, the same way that Google was at the beginning, right? Like, you type in whatever you want on Google and there's a bazillion things that'll give you all the answers.

[27:37] **Corey Lane Crouch:** And calculators in the '70s.

[27:39] **Maya Pomroy:** Right. That's a very good analogy.

[27:44] **Corey Lane Crouch:** I was not in high school math in the '70s, but based on my research, it follows a similar curve.

[27:52] **Maya Pomroy:** So, those are some of those misconceptions about AI. What do you think is the biggest misconception about AI in schools?

[27:57] **Corey Lane Crouch:** That it's about the tooling and the technology. It's not. We feel very strongly about this, that it's about building AI literacy. It's about, yes, understanding at a very basic level, you know, what the technology is, how it's developed, so that you can understand the capabilities and the limitations of it.

And then what we really focus on is both for educators and leaders, as well as for students, learning how to use the technology safely, ethically, and effectively. So, it's not just about, you know, how do I ask a question or get information in ChatGPT or NotebookLM or whatever tool you're using, but it's understanding the potential risks and how to keep yourself and how to keep others safe, which is data privacy and security. But it's also understanding that it's important to have a balance of human relationships and AI relationships, because we're getting more and more opportunity to have AI companions to support us in those things.

[29:14] **Maya Pomroy:** So, tell me some of the work that you do, because AI for education is really tackling one of the... I mean, this is one of the biggest shifts in modern learning.

[29:22] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Mm-hmm.

[29:23] **Maya Pomroy:** Right? I mean, yes, calculators in the '70s. This is another big, modern shift, and computers and all of those other things. So, tell me about AI for education and how you're really promoting this remarkable shift in learning and really giving all students the access, that equitable piece. Because there's some kids that don't have phones and don't have access to these sorts of AI technologies.

[29:49] **Corey Lane Crouch:** That's why we focus on the AI literacy piece. And we understand, because also, my change management background and understanding systems, that we need to give the time and space and resources for leaders to build their AI literacy, for teachers to build their AI literacy, for parents and caregivers to do it as well, and for students.

And so, we work with them to do exactly that — explore the tools and understand what that means for them in their immediate work and then think bigger about redesign or evolving a school program. So, we provide workshops. And the thing that we do as well is that we're tool-agnostic. We do have opinions about tools and where, you know, what's safe and what's fit for purpose and what we think isn't quite yet and how to integrate it in that way, because the technology is going to continue to evolve. But we really believe, a foundation of, which is rooted in durable skills, right, of critical thinking and evaluation and understanding the best tool for a job and how to be community-oriented, that is the work that we do. And of course, we teach people how to use the tools and drive towards outcomes with them while we're laying that foundation as well.

[31:18] **Maya Pomroy:** So, what kind of skills do students really need in an AI-driven world?

[31:23] **Corey Lane Crouch:** The million-dollar question that everybody wished they knew the answer to.

[31:29] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, I have a feeling you've got some suggestions and thoughts on the issue.

[31:33] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Well, to bring it back, I really believe that students need entrepreneurial skills. And not necessarily because every student is going to go off and start their own business, per se, but at the root of it, entrepreneurial skills is about, you know, understanding what you're trying to drive to or what's the job to be done. Seeing what's the diagnosis, what are the challenges, or, you know, opportunities to do better, and then understanding the resources that you have, and moving forward with strategy, as if it's a puzzle piece. And, you know, it's strategy but it's also about just seeing that opportunity and having the confidence and the belief in your own critical thinking, your own resourcefulness, and your ability to collaborate and build a relationship with others in order to solve a problem or drive something forward.

And the reason why I say those entrepreneurial skills, many reasons, but also, I mean, next week I'm working with a group of pre-K3 and pre-K4 teachers. Their students are going to be graduating high school in 2039 and then doing post-secondary. They're going into a workforce that we have no idea what it's going to look like. But what we do know is that, as things evolve, their ability to see opportunity and believe that they can, you know, drive toward that and that they can learn and adjust and use the tools available to them to get to that end point, that's going to be the thing that allows them to continuously have agency over the path that they take.

[33:24] **Maya Pomroy:** So, the time that you've been at this remarkable organization, what sort of feedback have you gotten? Because you said that you do workshops with teachers and, you know. So, what kind of feedback do you usually get, you know? I mean, people know that the train has left the station and either you, like, get on a raft and get out to the train or you've missed the train. Not a raft. On a scooter.

[33:46] **Corey Lane Crouch:** You know, we work really hard to be pragmatic. We're both not overly optimistic about where the technology is headed, but we're not pessimists, either. We are pragmatic. We say, "Look, it's here and it is a change. Let us meet you where you are to build some valuable skills."

So, while I believe schools and classrooms need to evolve pretty drastically to continue to make sure our young people have agency in the workforce in the future, there's also just tools and resources we can give teachers that are going to help them in their practice in the immediate. We just need 90 minutes with them. It doesn't matter if they never touched ChatGPT before, they can walk out with some practical tools that are then going to go and enhance their practice moving forward.

And that's the feedback we get. People always come in a little... well, not everybody comes in hesitant, but for those that come in hesitant, or for those that are, like, "I'm a first grade teacher, this doesn't apply to me," we're able to demystify it and open their eyes to possibility and the reality of why it's complicated for them as current teachers to integrate this in a responsible way.

[35:11] **Maya Pomroy:** So, what are you the most hopeful of and looking forward to in education in the next, you know, five years because of AI?

[35:20] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Well, I'll say two things. For young people, and you'll notice I refer to students as young people often, they are so brilliant and so motivated, you know, to solve for the things that are impacting their communities and their lives that we've already really seen how access to these tools can help them be even more self-directed in having an impact. We do something called a Prompt-a-Thon where groups of high schoolers come together over the course of a day and solve a problem in their community. And they use AI to help do the research, help put together their pitches, you know, all of those things. So, I'm just excited to see, when we get it right to see the brilliance of young people unlocked, because, I mean, I have so much faith that they're going to help us have a more abundant future with this technology.

And then the other thing I would say that I'm excited about is that I get to do this work with the educators on the ground day to day. And sometimes, when you're in product development, and eventually, as we grow, this might not always be the case, but I'm really basking in it right now because there were times, you know, in previous years where I didn't get as much on the ground time with educators that are working with students day to day and they're just trying to continue to get better at what they do, too. And so, while I bounce around the country quite a bit, it is just such a privilege to be able to sit with them in their schools and in their spaces and see what they're really trying out and how I can have a positive impact on what they're doing.

[37:07] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, it seems like your entire career has been a very positive impact, from the very beginning. And I'm sure you would have been a wonderful doctor, but I think that I'm very grateful that you ended up in this industry and in this space because it's a brave new world. And here we are, and you really get to be on the forefront of all of that.

And I'm really grateful that you took some time to talk to us about this and so much that you have done since your MBA at Rice. And there's a lot of wonderful AI happenings at Rice. So, if you ever make it back to Houston, you should come and check out Rice Business because it's really been transformative in the last couple of years for even, you know, us older people that get our MBAs.

[37:47] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Yes, I know. I am way overdue to be back, so I have to keep an eye on those events. And maybe, I can, you know, make it the good excuse to get back in Houston for a little while.

[38:00] **Maya Pomroy:** Well, it's been a pleasure, Corey. We really appreciate it.

[38:02] **Corey Lane Crouch:** Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciated the space to talk about this important work.

[38:10] **Maya Pomroy:** Thanks for listening. This has been *Owl Have You Know*, a production of Rice Business. You can find more information about our guests, hosts, and announcements on our website, [business.rice.edu](https://business.rice.edu). Please subscribe and leave a rating wherever you find your favorite podcasts. We'd love to hear what you think.

The hosts of *Owl Have You Know* are myself, Maya Pomroy, and Brian Jackson.