



Isabella Sarro: [00:00:00] Listening and learning about all the skills and tools you can use and do to help better your time management, I really found myself applying those things to my classes and actually seeing success out of it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:16] Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. This is Annalies Corbin, Chief Goddess of the PAST Foundation and your host.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:26] We hear frequently that the global education system is broken. In fact, we spend billions of dollars trying to fix something that's actually not broken at all, but rather irrelevant. It's obsolete. A hundred years ago, it functioned fine. So, let's talk about how we reimagine, rethink, and redesign our educational system.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:51] So, welcome to Learning Unboxed. We are continuing with our conversations about Middle College, and the advantages and disadvantages, the awesomeness, the pains as it relates to creating new and innovative programs and transformative education across the nation and around the world.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:09] And I'm really excited to get to spend time today actually on-site at the Mat-Su Middle College in Mat-Su, Alaska. So, I'm very excited to have three guests with me today. Greg Giauque, who's a Principal Teacher at Mat-Su Middle College. So, thank you for joining us, Greg.

Greg Giauque: [00:01:30] Thank you.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:31] And also joining are two students, Kaelle Daugherty, who is a 11th grader. Also joining us is 11th grader, Isabella Sarro. And so, we're excited to have all three of you here. So, thank you very much for joining us.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:01:45] Yes, thank you. **Isabella Sarro:** [00:01:45] Thanks for having us

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:45] So, I want to start with just a little bit of context, Greg. So, Middle College, why did the Mat-Su District say, "We want Middle College as opposed to the acceleration, or an early college, or the variety of advanced post-secondary programs"? So, why Middle College?

Greg Giauque: [00:02:07] Mat-Su Middle School District offers a wide variety of school choice. And there is advanced programs, but almost all the comprehensive high schools are multiple AP courses, as well as concurrent enrollment. They have articulated agreements with the University of Alaska

Anchorage, but as part of the natural progression, the school district has looked at what other states and what other districts around the nation have done.

Greg Giauque: [00:02:35] And so, the Middle College is the next step, next evolution in the concept. Not only does this allow our students to start taking college classes, like they have done in the past, but, now, we're going to add additional support and really help those students take that next step and jump ahead. So, with that, we have a Middle College program with staff. We offer support, guidance, as well as offering help with textbooks. In previous iterations, students would start, they basically run their own. And so, in order to increase the credit load for students, we definitely want to make sure that we also had in place those supports to ensure that our students were successful.

Annalies Corbin: [00:03:16] And the Middle College model, and its iterations across the country, and it exists in a number of different places, they're all slightly different than whether it'd be a Middle College, or early college, or some of the other programs. The successful ones are successful in part because they're able to customize and to tweak whatever the traditional model is to make it fit the local communities. So, that's a key piece to it. So, Isabella, let's start really quickly with you. Why did you choose to be in the Middle College, as opposed to one of those other options that were available to you in the school district?

Isabella Sarro: [00:03:49] I chose to be in the Middle College because I knew that, by making this choice, it was going to better prepare me for college in the future. And being here in the first semester, I really learned my way of organization, and time

management, and all those things that really contributed to being successful in the end. So, I knew that by coming here, it would make, later on, college and school easier.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:16] Right. And Kaelle, why did you make the choice for the Middle College?

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:04:22] I wanted to be able to manage my own time and see if I could do that by myself, kind of. While I do have the support of the Mat-Su Middle College, I like being able to plan what I was going to do when and, also, getting on actual college experience. AP classes, you're still at school, it's still like seven classes, and you don't have a syllabus given to you about what's due when. And I like being able to see how I would be -- like, "Okay, here's a project. It's due at this time." And either like -- I don't know. Like either I'm going to do it now or I'm going to see -- I just like managing my time.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:57] You wanted to have a little bit more control. **Kaelle Daugherty:** [00:04:59] Yeah. More control, definitely.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:01] So, would you say, were you a great student? Are you a traditional student? How do you think that you've learned best?

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:05:08] Well, I learn best taking notes and just being able to talk to like professors and everything. And then, also, just like -- sorry.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:19] No, that's all right.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:05:19] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:22] We'll come back around with that as well. So, Isabella, what about you? What kind of student do you think that, you know -- some students often do these programs because

they want and need a completely different environment because the traditional setting is not working for them for a whole host of

reasons? Some students want it because it gives them an opportunity to accelerate in a different way. They were a great student in the old setting. They're a great student in the next setting. So, where would you say that you, sort of, fit in that space?

Isabella Sarro: [00:05:50] As far as learning style goes, I would definitely say I'm a hands-on learner. You can tell me something over, and over, and over, but I'm not going to fully understand until I've seen an example of it with my own eyes or if, like, done something hands-on. In regular high school, I maintain good grades, but I wasn't as serious about it because I didn't feel like there was this much on the line as there is here with the college classes because if you miss more than three classes, you can be dropped from the class. If you don't pass, there's more repercussions from that than not passing a high school class.

Isabella Sarro: [00:06:26] And, honestly, in high school, I just didn't really care a whole lot. I just didn't really think it mattered that much. And then, when I got here, for the first few weeks, I still kind of had that high school view of things. And then, I started to quickly realize like, "Okay, this is not going to work. I need to, like, grow up a little bit, put things into high gear, and really put effort and time into the things that need to be done."

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:53] So, Greg, as you, sort of, have lived this experience for a number of years now, so how does what these ladies are explaining to us in terms of some of their journey into here, does that feel pretty typical of the way you have students arrive and make the choice to be here?

Greg Giauque: [00:07:12] I think so. One, there is no typical Middle College student. There's a huge variety. I would say there's a wide variety of students who join us. It's an application process, right. The students have to want to be here. And we have students who absolutely want to be here, they're the four-point or four-plus GPA students who've taken all the AP classes who are now like, "I'm moving on to college," down to we accept students with a 2.0.

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:38] Okay.

Greg Giauque: [00:07:39] And we have students that start out just taking six credits, and we ease them in. We also have students who come to us, and it's mostly their parents' idea. And some of those students, they said, "It's not going to work for me," and some of them decide, "Hey, I like this." So, in the aspect that both these ladies have definitely a different story of how they approached it, yeah that is typical because every student we have has a slightly different approach.

Greg Giauque: [00:08:06] There are definitely a set of common or frequently-shared attributes. One that is really common is that the students are tired of the grind of a seven-period day into high school, three homework assignments a week, right. There's 21-24 assignments a week that they're working on. They like to have their time and be able to manage our time a little bit more themselves. They'd like to be able to choose whether they're going to study three hours from noon to 3:00, or maybe they're going to do it from 6:00 to 9:00, or maybe do it when they wake up. And they can self-select a schedule that is appropriate for them and their learning style.

Greg Giauque: [00:08:41] The other one - and, really, we hear this commonly - is in our comprehensive high schools, the brick-and-mortar buildings, the hallways are packed, the schools are full, and there's lots of things that are happening, both positive and negative. And the students, really, most of them don't miss that. They like this aspect. And our Middle College program is

definitely different. We don't offer that interaction. And that is definitely something that some students, when they choose to go back to their home high school, those are the kind of things that they're missing, and they decide, "Yeah, I miss out on that that large community interaction within a building." And that is when a student leaves. That's a frequently-noted. As we do an exit interview, frequently-noted reason.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:27] Right. And so, one of the things that I think that the Mat-Su model, in particular, does very, very well, I love the Seminar aspect that has been developed here. We see lots of these programs get launched around the country. Some of them were successful, some of them partially successful, some of them very successful, and some that flounder and don't survive. And, typically, when you start to dig into the reasons behind either the success or the failures, right, one of the commonalities is the support structures that are in place.

Annalies Corbin: [00:10:00] At the end of the day, looking at our two high school students, college students here, oftentimes, it's based on how much support that you get. You are, after all, 16, 17, some students just turning 18 years old. And so, you don't necessarily have a tremendous amount of life experience. And so, having support is going to be a key factor. So, tell me a little bit - anybody can jump in right here - the Seminar structure is intended to make sure that you make it through your coursework successfully with fidelity but, also, with gaining and growing skills. So, what's the secret in that sauce?

Isabella Sarro: [00:10:46] I would say that, for me, Seminar, I look at it as more of a study hall with a teacher or Mr. Giaque as our principal teacher. We're there and we can work on what we need to. And if we need help, they're always there for our help. And one of the things that I've really noticed and enjoyed about the Middle College is the level of support we have on the high school side of things because our college professors, they're there, and they're there making sure we're just keeping our heads above the water, and we're doing good and stuff. And our advisors are amazing with that too. But at the end of the day, it's our people in the high school side who are, "Hey, how are you doing in this class? I saw this grade. Is there anything we can do to help you?" They're are just always there making sure that we're doing good, and we're on the best track possible to getting the best grade we can in that class.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:44] You want to add to that?

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:11:46] No. I think Isabella summed it up pretty well. Yeah, it's really great to just come in here and know that you have teachers there to help you, whether it's with your, like, essay, or your final project, or if you want to talk to the counselor, Mrs. Langhoff, about colleges or SAT and ACT because you still have to think about that too. And yeah, the support is really great. Yeah, it's very nice to have that.

Greg Giaque: [00:12:10] One intentional portion of our Seminar is that we don't add additional work. Since we'll get a credit for it or half credit, excuse me, and it's passed still, but we don't add additional work. So, we-

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:22] Are they getting high school credit or college credit? **Greg Giaque:** [00:12:23] They're getting high school credit for that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:25] High school credit for that, yeah.

Greg Giaque: [00:12:25] So, it's basically a GER.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:27] Right.

Greg Giauque: [00:12:28] And part of the way we operate Seminar is that each student is there, and it's an ILP, an individualized learning plan. And students may choose to work and use it like a study hall. If they need help, we will be there to help them. At times, it's for tutoring. Other times, depending on the Seminar. Our Mass Seminar is a little different than our Literature Seminar or our Social Studies Seminar. In Mass Seminar, we talk a little bit about topics of goal planning, financial literacy, stress management, intrinsic/extrinsic motivations. We could have a weekly topic that we will address for 12 weeks of the semester to help our students grow.

Greg Giauque: [00:13:17] And so, part of that process is to not just have it or in Mass Seminar, we have a tendency that students will just want to come in and do their math homework. So, we have a little expectation of this. It's not a homework, but we're going to learn some new things. And, hopefully, students will be able to take tidbits of that information, and grow as a student, and grow as a person.

Annalies Corbin: [00:13:34] And how does that translate for the student from the seminar class, the opportunity to have that backend, really a lot of support, and then stepping into the traditional collegiate classroom? How do you carry the experience of the support over here back into the everyday working in the college classes and

interacting both with students, a lot of nontrads? That's one of the beautiful things about the program here is you are not in a college class with just high school kids.

Greg Giauque: [00:14:05] Exactly, yeah.

Isabella Sarro: [00:14:06] There are grown adults in there. I was in a class last semester with a lady who is 70 years old going back to get her nursing degree. And being a high school student, I was like, "That is quite an age gap. That's pretty amazing for her, honestly, that she would do that."

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:21] It is actually quite amazing at that point in life. But awesome, lifelong learner there, right?

Isabella Sarro: [00:14:26] Yes. **Kaelle Daugherty:** [00:14:27] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:27] But, again, let me come back around and ask my question again. So, does the time that you spend in that support structure with this Seminar, does it play out specifically for you in your collegiate classes? Are you more confident? Do you feel like you're able to ask questions or different kinds of questions? Where's the gain in that?

Isabella Sarro: [00:14:49] For me, personally, I remember lessons specifically on time management. And after listening and learning about all the skills and tools you can use and do to help better your time management, I really found myself applying those things to my classes and actually seeing success out of it. And just even though, sometimes, you already know what they're teaching you, just going more in depth or just talking about it again, getting into your head, it really kind of makes you realize what you need to work on for you or what you can apply. And I think that the things that we learn in Seminar are definitely things that I can take and use in an everyday life.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:15:32] Yeah. Seminar definitely helped me be more confident with what I had because Seminar's only required for your first semester for English or Writing. It's your first semester. And so, that helped me, kind of, like, plan what time I needed to take in the day to study and, like, write that essay in that paper, and do that reading for that class. And so, it's made me more confident. It's also helped me with my planning and time management.

Isabella Sarro: [00:15:58] Well, adding on to what you said, it is nice that when you're working on an essay, it's nice to know that, eventually, you have a set time, but you'll have a teacher there. So, if you have any questions, or you need help on something, you don't have to try to fit it into your schedule or even their schedule. You have a designated set time for that help. And that's really nice.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:18] You have a moment that you could count on? **Isabella Sarro:** [00:16:20] You do, exactly. It's already planned and fit into your

schedule.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:24] That's a pretty powerful thing.

Greg Giauque: [00:16:26] And one thing that we try to build with our students with Seminar is to develop study groups with other students, and to use office hours with the professors, and use the tutoring and learning centers, as well as library staff. And so, hopefully, part of Seminar helps our students understand and become comfortable and willing to go out and seek some of those other resources out there on the college side. I really feel like, a lot of times, students may know that those resources are there, but they're hesitant to reach out. They're hesitant to explore their options. Just like anyone else, we're always worried about failure, and we're always worried about what we don't know.

Greg Giauque: [00:17:08] And so, Seminar, I really think helps bridge that gap. I know, in particular, in Math and the Sciences that I'm always having conversations with my students about study groups. What constitutes a good study group, usually, just size-wise. and how to have a good study group, and how to seek somebody out, and how to start that conversation about, "Hey, are we available? Can we start?"

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:30] So, Greg, wear your teacher hat, not your principal hat this case because we're going to talk about the other piece later. So, how is it that as you structure the support that you know these students need to be successful in that post-secondary, how do you figure out and work through that as it relates to the faculty on the other side of the equation? So, so much of success in any type of innovative program like this is around how the partnership itself functions.

Greg Giauque: [00:18:03] So, when we first moved from this campus from our previous campus, we had meetings with the faculty coordinators, the department chairs, both in Math and in the Writing Department, the English department.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:16] Those are the two entry points to the program, correct?

Greg Giauque: [00:18:19] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:19] So, just for our listeners.

Greg Giauque: [00:18:19] Yes, yeah, the two entry points. Students must test in college on one or the other.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:24] Right.

Greg Giauque: [00:18:25] And so, we met with that faculty and had conversations about, "Here's what we've been doing. Here's what Seminar looks like." And to get a little bit of their feedback, and to let them know, and make them aware. We've continued to have meetings. We also have a -- basically, it's a year. The full-time faculty meeting. They have a meeting bimonthly. And we go, and we listen to faculty, and we talk to them.

Greg Giauque: [00:18:52] And because there is a lot of academic freedom on a college campus, there is a degree of separation. So, the biggest part there is really trying to open up channels of communication and really share with faculty what it is we want to do and what our goal is. And get some feedback from them. It can be a challenge because our students are not identified as Middle College students on campus. So, unless they self-identify, faculty may not know that a student is one of ours. So, that complicates the communication. It has to go through student services and so forth. And so, that makes change a little bit slower. But I will say, we are very fluid, and we work really hard to make improvements as needed. And we're always looking to make improvements. What can we do to make the experience better? We try different things out. Sometimes, they work. Sometimes, they don't. All right. We go back. Okay. We'll make adjustments here.

Annalies Corbin: [00:19:50] Right. And then, another thing that I also consistently see across these programs that, oftentimes, especially when problems are new, there's a hesitance on the part of the postsecondary, oftentimes, more than the K12 around this sort of integrated piece, and what does that mean for me, and what does that look like because it doesn't fit within the bounds of what my expectations were, even opting in to being in that space as Professor Whatnot. So, as used as you sort of structure and think about the benefits, where are the lessons learned? I guess, that's the other thing.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:27] And I always like to -- the folks that are listening to this program are contemplating taking on and doing innovative ideas, or they're already doing a lot of innovative ideas, and they're looking for the next iteration, or the pieces that they can steal, or borrow, or appropriate. And I advocate for all of those things, right. If you find something that's really awesome, grab hold of that and see if you can make it work for you.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:46] So, from each of you, so what is the big, sort of, lesson learned? If there's a teacher or a school out there thinking about it in the K12 that, "We're going to do this Middle College thing," as a student who's participating in the program, what would you want them to know? Blank piece of paper. We're starting from scratch here. What would you do, by design, want somebody to know? You can just hop

in, anybody. Same for you, Greg, because there's an administrative and teacher side, if you had to do it again. And it's not necessarily that these are things because you would do it differently. It's largely because you have experience.

Greg Giauque: [00:21:23] So, I think, for us, the big one is our orientation. We have a required orientation prior to college classes starting. And it is really where we do our professional development for our students. We work with the college to come up with some really meaningful and worthy sessions for the students, as well as large group sessions. There are some things that I know the students probably think, "It is what it is," but what we do Title IX training. It's not the most exciting, but it is a requirement. Now, the students aren't required to do it on their own because we cover that.

Greg Giauque: [00:21:58] We also have -- there is another financial literacy piece. We worked with a local credit union. We also have our incoming junior as we talk to them about, "Okay. here's how you use your UA ID and your UA login. Here's how you access the system. Here's how you can look and get an unofficial transcript. Here's how you access a library. Here's how you print," all those nuts and bolts things that students learn in a comprehensive high school, In the regular classroom, they don't necessarily get that on a big campus. There's an expectation that you would know how to do this.

Greg Giauque: [00:22:32] We are a very large school district. We're the size of Delaware. We have schools that are -- we have high schools that have 1200, and we have other schools that are K12 combined, and they're under 200. So, we have a wide variety of technological issues. And that's just

one thing that we address. We also do some team building. That's how we get to know the students, and they get to know us.

Greg Giauque: [00:23:00] So, I really believe that having three or four days of orientation with our students integrated with both the high school staff, and the college staff, and the college advisors is really beneficial. And we've learned. And then, we take feedback. Basically, the exit interviews from the students of, "Hey, what did you like? What did you not like?" And we try to make that different. So, our juniors incoming students have different sessions than our continuing students who are seniors, just so that we're teaching them some new things.

Greg Giauque: [00:23:29] We will meet with the seniors and talk about college application process and the deadlines they're going to follow the following year. So, to me, the orientation week is really our number one tool. And that's when we first meet our students, and that's how we're setting the tone with our students of, "Here's what our expectations are, and here's what we're about, and we want to make sure that you are successful."

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:51] And so, just to clarify for our listeners that you didn't hear him wrong. The district is about the size of the State of Delaware, not some random county in the state you might be sitting in called Delaware.

Greg Giauque: [00:24:04] Yeah, yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:06] Geography in Alaska is vast. And that's one of the hurdles that you're trying to overcome utilizing Middle College to provide opportunities for students in a variety of ways.

Greg Giauque: [00:24:15] Yeah, absolutely.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:16] So, the geography here is epic. I tell folks [crosstalk].

Isabella Sarro: [00:24:20] Alaska is bigger than Texas. Texas looks quite bigger, but we are.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:25] But it's true. And it comes with a whole host of other things that you're trying to address. So, from your perspective, what is the big win that you want somebody to know who is contemplating doing this?

Isabella Sarro: [00:24:40] The thing that I would say is to be in touch with your students. And by that, I mean, here, our counselor, our principal, even teachers, and another person who works here, Ms. Kim - I don't know her role as a teacher, I'm sorry - they're connected with us through remind. So, if there are important deadlines coming up, even fun activities, or tests, or just anything a student would need to know, they always let us know. Every day, I get at least two remind messages. And it's not annoying. It's nice that we can still get a hold of our teachers, and they can still get a hold of us to let us know about things like that, and to make sure that we're keeping in touch. Even if we don't see them every day, we're still keeping in touch with them. And I think that's important.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:25:37] That was kind of like along the same lines. So, just like communication. And then, letting students know that it's okay if you're not doing well in a class that you just have to work at it and just communicating that it's not the same as high school. It's college. It's different. And teaching kids how to readjust to that, if it fits for them, but then letting them know like, "Hey, if this isn't working for you, that's okay. You can rearrange. You can adjust. You can stop doing this program." Just communication in general really.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:12] So, Kaelle, what's next for you? What happens after you've completed Middle College and high school? What are you contemplating?

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:26:22] Hopefully, college on the west coast somewhere. I really want to go to Western Washington University or Hamline University in Minnesota. Just looking at colleges. I'm not really sure what I want to do yet, but I'm narrowing that down. And Middle College is really helpful for that too is that I can explore without feeling super hesitant about things. I really like my writing classes. They're really interesting. And my history class was amazing. And then, my cultural anthropology classes, that professor, I could gush about that professor forever. I really love that class so much. And it's really awesome to be able to explore, and know what I'm good at, and what I need to work on more, in a college setting. Like Biology, had a really hard time in Biology. So, I'm know that I'm trying to work on that now and everything like that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:08] So, that opportunity to explore and know what your passion is about.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:27:11] Like I wouldn't be able to do that in high school. An AP class wouldn't really give that to me because it'd be maybe seven classes five days a week, and it's a lot, and it doesn't give me enough time to think, just in my personal experience, yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:25] Excellent. Isabella, what are you thinking?

Isabella Sarro: [00:27:29] After the Middle College, I definitely want to continue to finish college and get my Bachelors. Since being at the Middle College, I'm taking one history course. I'm in another right now. And in high school, I took an AP history course. I didn't do so well in it just based on the teaching style. It's not my learning style. So, I just didn't do well in that. Now, this teacher, our teaching and learning styles are, obviously, pretty similar. So, I have really learned this year that I love history, I want to do something in my life history-related because I know the way I feel when somebody is teaching me history. I'm like, "Tell me more, tell me more, tell me more." I want to give that to somebody else. So, I want to finish my bachelors, and then go somewhere for a masters' degree, and just do something that doesn't feel like work.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:30] Refreshing. I love what you got. You notice, I didn't ask you what you want to be or whatnot. We really shy away from that. One of the things that I truly love about these programs is exactly what you articulated that you had the chance to try stuff and to discover that you like something that you might not have traditionally stumbled upon so early in your life to be a lifelong passion.

Isabella Sarro: [00:28:54] Exactly. And to be perfectly honest with you, before coming to the Middle College, I was very afraid, honestly. Like, "Okay, this is so new. This is not like regular high school. I really have to adapt and change a lot of things." But after orientation week, I felt like I really had a good grasp of what this program was about. And from there on out, I have loved every moment of it. I really enjoy school. And as a student, that almost feels weird to say because, usually, when you talk to somebody who's in school, it's like, "Oh, do you like school?" and it's, "No." But, now, I'm one of those people who is like, "Yes, I love school," if I could not go every day, but if I could be there as much as possible, I would because I feel like the things that I'm learning are

things that I can apply to my everyday life. It doesn't just feel like busy work that you might get in high school.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:29:44] Yeah. So, that was my biggest problem with high school, just regular at school was just the busy work. And it's like I didn't feel like -- I was just chipping away at the same block every day, and it didn't really very meaningful. And I kind of lost -- like I didn't take it as seriously. Now, I'm here, and I'm like, "Okay. I'm in college. I have to do -- it matters. It matters a lot." And, yeah. And just, yeah.

Isabella Sarro: [00:30:07] And being here, I've noticed that I've matured a lot. I know that in high school, you think you're all that and a bag of chips until you get to the next grade and realize that you're not. But coming into college is very eye opening. Realizing that wow, I am extremely immature compared to these people. And I think it's really being in the college classes that's changed my way of thinking. It has opened my mind into new places I'm going to say that I didn't really know were even there. And learning is fun. Learning is fun, and I really enjoy it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:47] That's awesome. So, Greg, you couldn't have gotten more ringing endorsements. So, there has to be a lot of pride in all of this.

Greg Giauque: [00:30:58] No, absolutely. And so, I'm not going to lie. I am going to throw the young ladies under the bus in a little bit. I get two young ladies who have not had -- it hasn't been a bag of chips for them.

Isabella Sarro: [00:31:09] No.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:31:09] No.

Greg Giauque: [00:31:09] It has been a challenge. And I told them, "I want you to be honest. Share the good, the bad, and the ugly," because I, honestly, believe that's how we learn. And one thing that myself and the staff here - and I've reiterated it over and over - is we're not afraid to fail, and we learn from our failures. And we tell the kids that all the time. We also tell them, if this is not for you, it's okay. We will help you go back to the environment where you came from if that's where you want to go because we want you to be successful. We really are. My personal motto is, "What's best for kids." And we we offer what we have here. And it's an amazing program, but it's definitely not necessarily for all students.

Greg Giauque: [00:31:56] And so, really, I commend them both because it hasn't always been easy for them. And I've seen them grow. And it's all of our students as they grow, as they face challenges. Sometimes, they are successful, and it brings pride. Sometimes, they struggle. I'm still prideful. But like I said, we pick them up, we dust him off, and we are. Let's start over, we have a new plan, and let's go. And so, we try to help our students understand that life happens and that we need to be adaptable. And so, really, I do appreciate the endorsement from the young ladies. It's really on the students. They're the ones that are doing all the hard work. We're just offering a little bit of guidance here and there for them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:32:36] What's your parting shot for that principal out there saying, "I want a middle college"?

Greg Giauque: [00:32:41] My parting shot with that is go for it. Don't be afraid to fail. You're going to need to be able to be flexible. And as educators, we're faced with thousands of decisions a day in this program. It's like that. There's things that you won't be able to control. And at times, that can be frustrating, but you roll with the punches, you do what you have to do, and it definitely fits that niche for a specific group of students.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:14] It's an amazing program. I've been thrilled to be able to to watch it over the last year or so that I've been working with the university on this Middle College program and project. And so many lessons to be learned. So, I want to thank all of you for taking time out of your day and sharing with us. And for our listeners, we'll be posting all kinds of information about this program in particular. But I want to thank you all for spending your time with me today.

Isabella Sarro: [00:33:41] Yes, thank you so much.

Kaelle Daugherty: [00:33:42] Yeah, thank you. **Isabella Sarro:** [00:33:42] Thank you for having us.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:46] Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. I want to thank my guests and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media, @AnnaliesCorbin. And join me next time as we stand up, step back, and lean in to reimagine education.