Drew Mayerson, Szofi Wiksell, David McGrath

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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. 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, hello, everybody. I am very excited, as always, about our next episode of Learning Unboxed, because today, we are going to have the opportunity to talk with three college students from the Ohio State University who have been participating, or have participated, or are right now, in this moment, in the midst of a program called OnRamp, which is a corporate innovation idea accelerator driven by innovative students at the Ohio State University.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:20] And we're going to have the students themselves give us sort of the overview of what the program is. But I'm really, really excited to be, joining us today is Drew Mayerson, who's a fourth-year scholar student at Ohio State, and he is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration through the Max Fisher College of Business. So, Drew, welcome to the program.

Drew Mayerson: [00:01:43] Thank you for having me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:45] And joining Drew is Szofi Wiksell, who is a sophomore at the Ohio State University with a double major in marketing and public policy. And Szofi is our student that's currently in the middle of the program. So, Szofi, welcome.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:01:59] Hi. Thanks for having me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:01] Perfect. And joining as well is David McGrath, who was in the program a couple of years ago, and is OSU student studying finance at OSU. So, David, welcome.

David McGrath: [00:02:13] Happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:14] Excellent. So, just a little bit of back story for our listeners, so I've actually been hearing about the OnRamp program for a couple of years now from some work that we have been doing in the

K-12 space, and trying to actually bridge alignment between what happens in high school experiences, and then the opportunities that are made available locally at Ohio State through both the scholars program, as well as OnRamp and hoping to get more and more students into this program. And so, as we sort of step back and think about what the opportunities are, Szofi is going to give us a bit of an overview beyond the fact that this is a corporate innovation idea accelerator at Ohio State. So, Szofi, tell us a little bit about OnRamp to sort of set the stage for us.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:03:02] Yeah. So, the big premise that OnRamp runs on is something that one of the program managers, Christian Lampasso, is really big on, which is the fuzzy front end. And it's essentially like if you picture a line and there's a squiggly line going all sorts of volumes all over it, that's what the fuzzy front end looks like. And the idea behind it is at the beginning of any innovation project, there's a lot of confusion.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:03:27] And what you initially think will be the solution to some sort of problem creatively is almost never the solution, and you should look in the entirely opposite direction. And it's all about stumbling around the fuzzy front end of innovation and doing research into all sorts of different tailspins until you eventually find the solution that best suits the pain points of whatever corporate sponsor you're working with. And the really unique thing about the program is it's essentially a student-run and there is no preference in terms of majors.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:03:57] So, I've worked with people in engineering, I'm in public policy, people in environmental science. And so, when you're stumbling around this fuzzy front end, someone with a background in environmental science is going to look at it a lot different than me as a marketing major. And so, it's essentially working together and being confused together until all of your research culminates into an innovative solution.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:22] Yeah. And I think that's one of the things that I love the most about this program, is the fact that it's so not just multidisciplinary, but multidimensional as well, right? And so, as I like the fact that if you've got a company coming in and you're trying to solve some big issue or innovative product idea for them, that the kiddo at the university who's the history major, has as much to contribute as the engineer, or the product designer, or whatnot, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:50] And so, I think that, that's a really brilliant way, not only to teach folks to be collaborative, but to bring different viewpoints in. So, I love that fuzzy edge. That's awesome. So, David, you were in the program a couple of years ago, and what I want to know is two things from you, the first one is give us a sort of sense of where the heck do these corporate partners come from? Right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:14] So, what kind of corporate partners are we talking about in terms of where these sort of innovations come into? And then, the second part of my question, and sorry to toss you a two-parter here, but you're a junior at this point, so you should be able to handle this, is, so the experience of going through the program, how has it made a difference for the rest of what you've done as part of your undergraduate experience?

David McGrath: [00:05:40] Sure. So, I'm going to start out with your first question. Most of the, I guess, ideas or corporate sponsors that are on board are either that initial problem statement, the thing that's a part of that fuzzy front end usually comes from Honda themselves, or maybe in my case, one of Honda's energy partners, NG, and essentially kind of my time to the program, we were working through what they call the connected, autonomous, sustainable future of the automotive industry, so a lot of the ideas pertained towards those.

David McGrath: [00:06:09] And then, at the beginning of the eight or 10-week program, you start with that problem statement, and then kind of work through that fuzzy front end to get towards that solution. And in my experience, specifically, I went through a phase two, so a lot of ideas in the phase two get handed off from some initial insights or validation from a phase-one project that happened previously. And then, kind of your second question, if you could repeat it really quickly.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:34] Yeah. So, basically, I wanted to know, so you went through the experience of participating. And for most of the students, as I understand it, it's not uncommon for it to be sort of part of your freshman, your sophomore year sort of space that you get to have the experience. And I would assume that what you experienced or you learn by going through the OnRamp program actually had an impact on what you've done subsequently as it relates to the way you've thought about or looked at the rest of your work in your undergraduate sort of education. So, what was the impact of that program for you?

David McGrath: [00:07:10] Oh, yeah, most definitely. I think above all, when I ever think or approach solution to anything, I don't take it at face value for what it is. I take a step back and really think through that fuzzy front end framework. And really, in the world around me, in anything and thinking back to what the root problem, with the root cause is, and then kind of following that investigative, wandering, looking at the validation, the work that arrived to get to the solution that you did. It's just kind of a lens or a perspective that I kind of view everything in my life. That's definitely something that's really stuck with me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:44] So, a real scaffolder experience, so that's awesome. Drew, I want to just sort of help our listeners have an understanding of sort of the driver, I guess, if you will, behind this program. And so, one of the things that David mentioned that I should have said right at the get go, that OnRamp is, although lots of different industries and companies can play in that space, it is really a collaborative opportunity between Honda and Ohio State University, but specifically Honda R&D. So, lots of folks out there may not realize, Honda is a massive company with lots and lots of different components. And Honda R&D is not the same as Honda Manufacturing, which I assume that you guys have got lots of those pieces. So, sort of explain that sort of intersection. And so, why would the Honda R&D want to create this kind of program?

Drew Mayerson: [00:08:44] Yeah, thank you for that question. So, I think the biggest value add that we have as students that gets talked about is, every time we approach one of their problems, we're coming at it with a fresh lens and not the lens of somebody who's been in that industry for however many years and done it the same way or done it the way that the company has done it for that long. So, we come out with a fresh lens, a new set of ideas. And like stuff you mentioned, we have people from all over, and I think, being an honor, I thought it was the most diverse skill set group that I have been a part of in college.

Drew Mayerson: [00:09:15] And being able to provide that for companies has been really beneficial for them. And I know that they've really valued the work that we've produced and come up with some really innovative solutions that they hadn't considered. And I know especially in the program I worked in the summer with Szofi, a big thing that they talked about is that engineers like to figure out how to make a solution happen, but you don't always necessarily have a solution in mind. So, us being able to come up with a solution and kind of give a roadmap, and then have them be able to work it out was really beneficial.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:44] Yeah, absolutely. And what a cool experience. And I think it's just really awesome. And so, this summer then, Drew, I'm going to stick with you here for just a second. So, this summer, because we're in the midst of a global pandemic, your participation, was it virtual?

Drew Mayerson: [00:10:00] Yes. Yeah, all virtual. It was originally supposed to be in-person, like everything else this summer, but moved online, used some really cool project management software and some cool

collaborative team building spaces online. And we were able to do some really cool work, being in pretty constant contact throughout the day. And it was a really awesome experience. I thought we did a great job adapting to online work and it really was pretty conducive to the way that we were able to break things up, and hop online, and work together. So, it was an awesome experience.

Annalies Corbin: [00:10:27] So, you walked away from that sort of fearless, right? And anything comes your way, you're ready to go?

Drew Mayerson: [00:10:33] Yeah, definitely. And I think with everything now trending towards online, at least in the short term, and probably with long-term effects, it gave me a really good baseline for what online work can look like and really gave me a lot of confidence in pursuing jobs to be like, I've worked in the space, specifically within the lines of project management, had a lot of success with it. So, it's been really helpful in looking for full-time work and all that as well.

Annalies Corbin: [00:10:57] Yeah, absolutely. So, Szofi, I want to talk a little bit about the project that you worked on this summer. And not talking about the particular sort of ins and outs, I know that there's obviously all kinds of R&D secrets and whatnot that we can't really, really tap into here with any of you, but talk to me a little bit about sort of the nature of the problem you're trying to solve and how, you get into this collaborative team, I'm just trying to really help our listeners sort of understand the way you actually get to interact, not just with your own team, but with the broader team, the other influences coming out of OSU, but more importantly, what that client, how did that work?

Szofi Wiksell: [00:11:39] Yeah, sure. So, initially, we were all given a different task. So, for example, like Drew and I were on different teams. Mine was more in general terms of like an untapped market and wanting to expand into an untapped market. And so, obviously, the first thing we had to do was a lot of research on our own, like not even considering interviews or anything at that point yet, but more just general research into the problem. I'm really not a big car girl, so I honestly had no idea what they were looking for me to do and felt kind of at a disadvantage because I honestly know nothing about the industry.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:12:17] But there was a guy on my team, Thomas, who was super into cars. And so, the gaps that I had in knowledge about cars, he had, and the gaps that he had in knowledge about marketing, as we were trying to tap into different market, I had. And we had a lot of different combating strengths and weaknesses on the team. So, we started from there with that research. We kind of tailored the research to our own strengths. So, we are told to do research into the size of the market, future trends of the market, stuff like that.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:12:47] And so, we all took whatever facets of that research were best suited to what we already understood. And from there, it was bringing all that information back to the Honda executives present and seeing what information they respond to positively, what they really didn't want to get into. Because if we did a bunch of research into the market, and we're like, oh, this would be a cool avenue of the market to proceed in, and that's one that they wouldn't want to consider, we kind of had to nip it in the bud right at the beginning of the project.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:13:17] And so, once we were given that feedback after our preliminary research, it was interviewing customers, finding out what they wanted in Honda from this particular segment, although we couldn't say we were working with Honda, and it was seeing what the target market that Honda had already defined for us was looking for. And a lot of that also is research, but a lot of that was interviewing. And then, from there, it was more basic ideation.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:13:43] It was looking at all of the interview responses, and research we've done, and the feedback we've gotten from Honda, and seeing what like few key ideas culminated from that. So, what customers were saying over and over, what they were lacking over and over, and creating multiple proposals based on the pain points that we identified, and then taking those proposals to Honda midway through the summer, and seeing what they did want to proceed with, and what they didn't want to proceed with.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:14:12] And they ended up giving all of us either one idea or one idea that was two of our projects combined, and having us work from there to polish it up, looking at the financials of it, look into the marketing of it, feasibility, future projections. And it ended with all of us presenting one strong project that had been thoroughly vetted throughout the entire summer, tailored specifically to the pain points they wanted to reach to our specified target markets. I hope that explained it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:43] Yeah, that was absolutely awesome. And I'm sitting here thinking, wow, the learning that took place. I mean, I don't know if you guys fully appreciate the experience that you were able to have, but I've been working with Honda R&D for folks for a number of years now, and I know that they are just wicked smart. They're amazing, innovative problem solvers all on their own. And I can also tell you that one of the things that I have been hearing from them and from the folks that facilitate the OnRamp program at OSU is that Honda repeatedly comes back, and says, oh, my gosh, what we're getting out of these students is just kind of mind-blowing, that they're constantly surprised by the depth and skill that you bring to the conversation.

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:34] But more than that, I think one of the things that, it's just back to something Drew had said earlier, it was sort of the freshness of what takes place, right? And so, as you guys then do those presentations and you toss these ideas back to Honda, so for Szofi and Drew, as David sort of explained previously, you were doing a phase one, I assume, right? So, you were the first initial sort of space, and the summer as you worked through then, I assume Honda's going to do something with all of the awesome proposal that you ultimately vetted.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:14] So, David, when something happens with all of that, and then Honda says, hey, we like an idea, we want to move it forward, that's sort of where your group then came in on another project, not the same one, because the difference in time, but what does your team then do? So, you move from that initial, with all the research, all that sort of phase-one work, and then suddenly, an idea is going to be carried forward, what happens next?

David McGrath: [00:16:41] Yeah. So, kind of as you roll over transition to the phase two, what happens is you do some of that, you kind of look back towards the research that went into phase one. So, maybe looking back to conversations, or validation, or kind of research that previously have gotten done, and then you essentially build on that. You transform that into a more comprehensive idea or business model. And one tool that we used quite often was the business model canvas.

David McGrath: [00:16:41] And that was really a very holistic way to think about every aspect of the proposal or of this model that best fit Honda's needs. So, looking at the end users or end market, or how you actually get to them, deliver that solution. How are you going to market it, all those kinds of things, really, it all comes together in phase two and you go in much more depth with everything so that when you present it, you can come through with a very well-thought-out and well-supported solution for Honda.

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:37] Awesome. And obviously, through all of this, at the very least, not only are you having an amazingly sort of wicked experience, but you're gaining a lot of pieces that ultimately become part of your resume, they're part of your career building, as Drew indicated, it makes it easier when you're going out to look for a job, these sort of next pieces. But I would also imagine, Drew, there were some surprises along the

way in your experience, right? So, what went on in your session that was a bit of a surprise for you, or maybe, it was even something that was just like, oh, my gosh, I would have never, ever in a million years been able to have this kind of experience or this one particular thing that was a game changer for you? What were some of those things?

Drew Mayerson: [00:18:27] Yeah. I know Szofi talked a lot about the fuzzy front end.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:30] I love that term, by the way. I don't know where that comes from, but I love that.

Drew Mayerson: [00:18:34] Yeah. Yeah. No, it's great. And I think there's a lot of truth in that. And in the beginning of our project, we had a more specific kind of prompt when we started. But even with a lot more direction, we still bounced around a ton, which was not something I really expected right off the bat. When we got our kind of challenge, it was like, okay, I see pretty clearly where this is going to go. And then, right away, I was like, okay, I have no idea anymore, completely lost in the weeds.

Drew Mayerson: [00:19:00] We've talked to so many people who have said so many different things, we're going to have to try a lot more. So, that was something that I definitely didn't expect right off the bat. And one of the things that I think is really interesting and you wouldn't really expect in a program like this maybe is that we were always told, our end responsibility is to the consumer, like we want to build the best solutions for real people that they will use, and not necessarily just a piece of Honda or the company that we're working with, which is a really interesting distinction when you're doing a project with a corporate partner.

Drew Mayerson: [00:19:34] Like a lot of times, it's, make sure you give them what they want. But we were very specifically instructed to make sure that we were following what consumers wanted to see and what was going to be really impactful. And I think that was really powerful. And I think that's really, really beneficial in the real world to see, like you can build the best solution, but if people don't want it, it's not going to take hold. So, I think that was something I wasn't expecting at all and really got a lot out of and thought that it was super impactful in building the solution that we ended up presenting.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:03] Yeah, actually, I love that. I think that's probably one of the best parts from hearing the experience. And so, David, I want to circle back around to you as that follow-up for what Drew was just talking about, because you're far enough away from your own experience in OnRamp that I'm hoping that a piece of what Drew was talking about, the fact that the instructions around the goal is consumer-based, not the company-based, right? That's a product of an accelerator experience.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:45] It's very, very different than the day-to-day interactions that, back to Drew's point, you often would have with a client or a customer that you're trying to serve in that sense, right? It's a very different approach. So, talk to me just a little bit about, what I want our listeners to really understand, the purpose of an accelerator and the fact that the OnRamp program is not only providing the students with the experience and the company with new insight, but there's something else in the suit, if you will, right? What are those components?

Drew Mayerson: [00:21:20] Exactly. I think you're right on. OnRamp is super unique because it allows you to kind of color outside the lines. You can arrive at a solution that might not necessarily be what Honda or other corporate partners want to hear, but if it's backed up and well-supported by the research and all the work that you've done, you've done your job for honor. And as I get back to my time in the program, some of the conversations I was able to have in navigating that fuzzy front end were not experiences I'd be able to get anywhere else.

Drew Mayerson: [00:21:50] I know one example comes to mind where with my sustainability project, we were able to talk with some of the folks over at Cornell, how they handle sustainability, how they approach that at their university. So, having experience like that where I'm able to talk to people or interact with people that I might not necessarily have come across or been near in any other situation is just really, truly invaluable.

Annalies Corbin: [00:22:13] Yeah, I would imagine that that's the case and valuable in the sense that I suspect you will reflect and use it over and over again in your career, whether it be directly or indirectly, right? Szofi, one of the things that you mentioned early on was the fact that because this summer, you, and Drew, and the rest of the folks in your cohort with the global pandemic, you had to do this work virtually, so I don't know that you guys even managed to get to 99P. I don't know if you've been in 99P yet. David, was 99P built when you did the program or had it launched yet? Yeah. So, for our semi-cohort, we were in the 99O space.

Annalies Corbin: [00:22:52] Yeah. So, for our listeners, 99P is Honda R&D's sort of outside of the company walls innovation space. It's a place, quite frankly, where exactly what we've been talking about can happen, it can come together, all kinds of innovations can happen. It's right at the west campus area of Ohio State. It's right on the innovation corridor of all the great things that are happening here. And they literally built a space where you can be innovative without the confines, I guess, if you will, of being inside your corporate center, which oftentimes, in innovation, you got to step away from what you know and the environment that is your absolutely every day.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:29] So, Szofi, one of the things we talked about was the fact, again, that you and Drew had to go virtual. You guys had to get creative, the program had to get creative. And I would assume that some of that creativity came from the participants themselves. You used a completely different set of tools because you couldn't go to 99P. Share with us just a little bit some of the tools that you used and why you thought they were effective because that's one of the questions I get all the time. What are the things that we should be using to help us be innovative? And that's a whole another conversation, but share a little bit about the tools, Szofi.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:24:01] Yeah, sure. So, the biggest platform that we use, and I also used when I had OnRamp in person, so that was kind of a cool crossover is Mirro, which is essentially a software where you can like create virtual boards of a sort. So, you can make post-it notes, different shapes, different boards. You can map things out virtually essentially. And it kind of functions like Google Docs does when you share a Google Doc where you can all access it at the same time, you can only use it at the same time.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:24:31] And it's a really good visual tool for laying out your data because all of us sitting on a Zoom call talking about things we saw in interviews, it's a lot easier to take information that we can see in front of us than we're just talking about because it's really easy to forget what the last person said. But it's one thing when you say, oh, yeah, all of our interviews have the same information versus when you see 10 post-it notes all saying the same thing in one cluster rather than three in another.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:24:31] So, that was really helpful towards generating insights and seeing what commonalities or gaps we had because we could visually lay it out like that. Another thing that we used a lot was organizational software because we thought it was really conducive to our team in particular. So, we had a Google Drive folder with probably 10 different folders in it. One was just interviews in different forms and different interview questionnaires we had. One was week one and our research from week one.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:25:26] And we indexed all of our information like that so that whenever we were referencing something in a presentation, if Honda had any questions, they didn't know where a specific insight was from, they could specifically go back and find it in our data. And knowing exactly where all of our data was at the

same time, we thought was also really imperative to being successful in innovation because we always knew where the insights we were generating were coming from and that we had enough validation behind them. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:53] So, all kinds of tools that basically made you better organized and to be able to visually see all the same information at once and for folks to be able to think about it a bit differently. Yeah, absolutely. I think that we will just be making use of those more and more as time moves on. No question. I want to, as we get ready to sort of close out our conversation, ask all of you the same question. So, I'm going to toss it at Drew first. So, that means that David and Szofi get to think about it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:28] But part of the role of the work that we do at PAST is to try to make sure that we get students ready to take on the same opportunities that you've just participated in, right? And so, my question to all of you is, did your high school experience prepare you adequately for being able to step into OnRamp, and hit the ground, absolutely running or were there things that you didn't have that you wish you had?

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:01] I mean, the purpose of my question is not to say that your high school experience may not have been adequate because it may well have been, is to really get into the gems of, what did you not have that you wished you had that we could, as we move forward in sort of thinking about in the post-COVID world, an entirely sort of new approach to teaching, learning, and the future of work, quite frankly, what would those be? I mean, blank slate, you're going back to your high school, and you say, if only, or I wish, or I want to share with you, what is that thing? What would that one or two things be, Drew?

Drew Mayerson: [00:27:32] Yeah, that's a really good question. I think my high school prepared me really well for like the academics of college and like put me in a spot to kind of take advantage of all the different opportunities here at Ohio State. And I wouldn't say anything, I think Stivers specifically prepared me for OnRamp itself. I think what would do that for people, like I think something awesome about OnRamp is that you didn't need any prior knowledge on anything to come into OnRamp.

Drew Mayerson: [00:27:58] It was all like, you learned the skills that you needed for that week, and then it was about going out, executing, taking risks, thinking independently, and trying to be creative in everything that you were doing. And I think it was really important to have that psychological safety that was created there. And I know Chris, Jen, and Paul really always talked about, like if we had a risk we wanted to take and we could back it up, like they would help us defend that and stand by us when we took that risk.

Drew Mayerson: [00:28:27] So, I think, really was awesome to come in and know that there was no prior information needed to do it and to know that it was really all experiential learning and to get your hands dirty. Like there was nothing we did that high school kids couldn't do, you know what I mean? Like nothing we did was so technically advanced that a high school kid couldn't hop on the phone, ask the same questions we did, and work through that framework. So, I think it's a lot about just like trusting people to go out, and execute, and building those teams where they think they can really perform at their best.

Drew Mayerson: [00:28:56] And a lot of what we did was just using our own personal skill sets, and like backgrounds, and ideas, which is something that's pretty applicable. So, I think anytime you can get high school kids, college kids, anytime you get real experience, that's always been so much more impactful for me than any time I've spent in the classroom, to be able to go out, and work on a project myself, and work with a team, and have deliverables, like it's been a lot more impactful. So, yeah, I think any time people get real-world experience and just learn how to take risks, not everything has to be standardized and information-based.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:28] Yeah, absolutely. I love that. Thank you for that, Drew, because it just solidifies everything I say all the time over and over again. Let's go hands-on. Let's go real world. Let's just do this thing. I love it. Szofi, same question to you. If you were to go back, what would you say to your teachers in terms of what you needed or what was really awesome that got you ready for or just whatever you'd like to share?

Szofi Wiksell: [00:29:53] Yeah. So, I'd like to say thank you to my English teacher of three years because he pushed me to join the debate team in high school, which is actually part of the reason I was so excited to do OnRamp because I spent the majority of high school every single weekend debating in front of people, whether that be large crowd, small crowds. And the whole premise of the debate event I did was pitching ideas and solutions, and researching the implications of different ideas and solutions, which I feel like played really, really well into what OnRamp asked for in terms of skill sets and like what they like to see in students.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:30:30] But when I walked in at OnRamp the first semester I did it, it was spring of my freshman year, I was put into a group of three guys, and all three of them were older than me, had done OnRamp before, and I was like a little marketing and public policy major. And two of them were engineers and one of them was a math major. And I just felt like I really didn't fit in and like they had a lot more to offer than I did in terms of, they were all working with numbers, and they had all done OnRamp before, and they were older than me, so I feel like not my confidence necessarily took a hit, but I was less self-assured than I would have been if I would have been working with people my age who are new to the program.

Szofi Wiksell: [00:31:11] And I think in high school, if I would have been given more exposure to working with college students, especially since a lot of the classes I had my freshman year are with older college students or with college HTAs, I would have been a lot more comfortable in that environment. So, if during the college application process, I would have been able to work with a college student or anything like that, I think I would have been a lot more prepared for the environment and a lot more self-assured in pitching ideas to students who are more experienced and knowledgeable in those areas than I was.

Annalies Corbin: [00:31:43] Yeah, thank you for that. So, that's a really, really great insight. We advocate all the time that early college experience does exactly all the things you were talking about. It's a confidence builder as much as anything else and just exposure, right? I've seen a thing, I've done a thing, and so it's no longer so scary. So, yeah, awesome. Thank you for that. David, same question to you. If you were to go back, what would you say to your school about things that you needed to be successful in post-secondary?

David McGrath: [00:32:13] Yeah, I think, really, two things come to mind. And the first one goes off of what Drew said, the psychological kind of safety of being able to put yourself out there, pitch ideas, take risks is a cornerstone of OnRamp. And I think with 99P, that innovation space, they have the catchphrase that is success is 99% failure, right? And having that type of mentality or kind of freedom to fail and take those risks, I think, is really a phenomenal part of that experience. So, I think that's the first thing, having that environment where you can do that.

David McGrath: [00:32:51] And then, the second thing I would say is, in high school, I think I was of kind of the same mindset I'm now, kind of like to think about the problems, the innovative solutions, but OnRamp is really unique, in that one, it's an outlet for all that kind of thinking, and ideation, and everything. But two, it also has a concrete structure or framework to actually put those ideas and thoughts into action. So, I think if I could go back to high school, I would love to have a space where I could present those ideas, bring up those ideas, and then, two, have actual steps where I can implement or actually work on a real-world solution that comes from those inklings or first thoughts.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:34] Yeah. Thank you very much for that. I think there's so much truth in that. And again, it all boils down to the opportunity to have this type of innovative experiences. And the hope, of course, is we can collectively find ways to give those opportunities and experiences to more and more students along their journey. So, I want to thank you all for joining us today and thank you for the work that you do. And I hope that one day, to see you guys passing all that great experience on. So, thank you for being part of the program today.

David McGrath: [00:34:09] Thank you for having us.

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:11] Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, 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 @Annalies Corbin, and join me next time as we stand up, step back, and lean in to reimagine education.