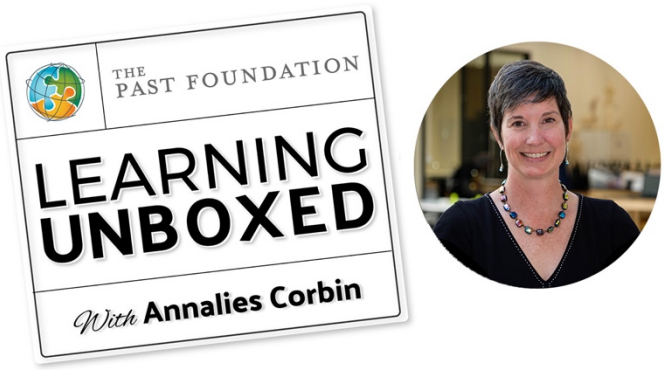

Carmen DeLeon and Leslie Dorsey

Carmen DeLeon: [00:00:00] It's imperative for our brighter future that we have folks who are invested in science, whether or not they decide to be scientists and that people of all backgrounds feel included in science, not just what they see through scientists.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:19] 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: [00:00:53] Welcome to today's program. I am excited, as always, because today, we're going to be talking about outdoor science education and how it all ties back to university programs, training of teachers, and getting kids excited about being in the great outdoors. And joining us today, I have two colleagues who are going to be talking with us about the ins and outs of the program tied to this great outdoors science endeavor. So, joining us today is Leslie Dorsey.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:23] And Leslie is a former MOSS grad student, and she's going to explain that to us when we get here in just a little bit, and is currently with the University of Idaho. She is a naturalist, field instructor, AmeriCorps member over time, and I'm sure a variety of other things that have come into play in her work, currently involved in implementing a brand new K-12 program in partnership with a variety of local school districts. And so, welcome to the program, Leslie.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:01:55] Thank you.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:57] And joining Leslie is Carmen DeLeon. And Carmen is also here to talk with us about her work. She's an experienced science educator and wildlife conservationist. She's also a STEM education specialist. And currently, I believe, residing in San Mateo, California. Welcome, Carmen.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:02:17] Thank you so much. Good morning.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:20] So, happy to have both of you. And so, let's start with a very high level, because the program that we're talking about is near and dear to me, because it's housed at my alma mater for our listeners. As far as the University of Idaho, graduate myself, I was super excited, actually, to hear about this program, which may have existed when I was there. We're not going to tell everybody how old I am, but I don't think that it was. So, Leslie, could we start with you? Give us the sort of 100,000-foot view, and sort of set the

stage, if you would, for what this program is and how the university sort of is involved with this particular work? And then, we'll dig into the details.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:02:59] Yeah. Absolutely. Are a graduate program through the University of Idaho, housed in the College of Natural Resources. And we've been operating on our McCall Field Campus for about 20 years now. And the program started small with just a handful of graduate students working with just a very small number of local K-12 students. And over the years, we've grown into having a full cohort of 20, 24 grad students here for a year long residency working with students that are here on our campus every week throughout the school year.

Annalies Corbin: [00:03:39] And for those that don't know, and lots of folks haven't been to Idaho, but if you go to Idaho, that's awesome. It's a wonderful place. But McCall is epic. It's gorgeous. It is the perfect place in my mind for this program to be housed. It's pretty exciting. We'll talk some more about that. So, Carmen, talk with us a little bit about sort of your involvement. You're a graduate of this program, yes?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:04:08] Yes. I graduated in the winter of 2013, so I've been out for a couple of years and I stayed really close with our MOSS network. We're, of course, a team, a family, and we follow our cohort members through everything we do after graduation. So, we stayed very much in close touch and have been in contact with MOSS grads. I continued to just enjoy this partnership with our program and staying as community members together.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:38] Yeah. And that's always one of those key pieces, I assume, that as part of that role then, as a former graduate, that you serve as a mentor to some extent of folks as they are now starting their journey in that program as well.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:04:52] Yes. And I think that's an important part of the MOSS experience, that even though we have a relatively short history for a new program, that we still have this network of folks who we can tap into and learn from. And in the outer education world, I always tell people it's never goodbye, it's a, we'll see you later, because it is a small world out there.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:15] Yeah. That's the perfect way to think about it. And so, just a little bit of context for our listeners, and Leslie, I'm hoping that you'll dig into a little bit of the components of this for us. This is a one year intensive professional degree, a Master's of natural resources in environmental education and science communication.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:35] And I love the fact that that's the way that this was crafted, and that the students completing this program, they earn credits in field science teaching, place-based education, place-based ecology, team leadership community, leadership in science communication, and a lot, I assume, of very critical integrative thinking, design thinking, and I assume an awful lot of problem or project-based, very applied, hands-on sort of approaches. So, share with our listeners then a little bit about sort of how aware the folks who get involved in this program come from, because I assume it's not just, hey, I want to be a science teacher, but maybe there are some passions and similarity, I guess, amongst the participants.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:06:22] Yeah, that's absolutely true. We have a pretty wide variety of coursework for the grad students to work on while they're in our program. And the same can be said for their backgrounds coming into the program. We don't have a particular prerequisite undergraduate degree, have grad students from just a wide variety of undergraduate experiences, from political science and Spanish majors to early education, fishery science, or something more specific.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:06:53] And the grad students come to this program because they feel like they want to expand their skills across different disciplines. So, I like to tell everyone, we're kind of like a liberal arts degree of Master's programs. We do a little bit of everything, pretty interdisciplinary, but our intention is to help create generalists versus people who are really specific in Master's or PhD programs. So, we want students who are able to think critically about problems, use data and literature to back up what they're learning, and digest and argue that from the evidence.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:06:53] We want people to understand systems and principles as they apply to the natural world, and think about how humans impact those systems and are part of it, and how to be a good community member and citizen of a place, and also, a member of a group, and how to disagree quietly with other people with those wide varieties. Then, we get a ton of diversity in our grad program, which is absolutely wonderful, and people don't always agree with everything, which is great.

Annalies Corbin: [00:08:07] And do the students have to come to Idaho or is this a degree program that's open more broadly, virtual? And I assume some things have changed, obviously, with pandemic. It has impacted post-secondary sort of around the world, but I'm just really curious, because I can imagine our listeners going, oh, my gosh, this program sounds amazing, but I can't get to Idaho. Is there an option or is it place-bound?

Leslie Dorsey: [00:08:31] We are a place-specific, so it's residential, in-person, hands-on, experiential. So, being in McCall and part of the community is a big part of that learning.

Annalies Corbin: [00:08:42] So, that's wonderful. And again, if anybody gets the chance, McCall is such a gorgeous place. I mean, it makes so much sense to me why you would put this kind of program in that location and being able to utilize the community as a whole, as well as the ecosystem in which that community is nested, makes a tremendous amount of sense to me when you're talking about really sort of instilling in folks that sort of synergy between place, and the environment, and the opportunity from a teaching and learning standpoint. So, I really applaud the program for that. That's awesome. So, Carmen, share with us a little bit about sort of what you did with your time in McCall, as it relates now to what you do specifically in your job in California.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:09:24] So, where my journey was when I entered MOSS is that I was a wildlife biologist. So, I specialized in Avium Field Ornithology. I still volunteer with the National Park Service to monitor, conserve, and protect migratory raptors in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. And what that left me with after coming out of that program was I had done an awful lot of science and I was looking for that connection. How can my science make an impact on the world if I do not know how to share it with other people?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:10:00] So, personally, I don't know how to teach people science and engage them in science. And then, looking at the bigger picture, how do scientists as a community engage with people, with students, with future scientists, with science interests, and making sure that all of those communities go together? So, I came to MOSS very confused, because I showed up saying, oh, my goodness, I don't know if I want to be a scientist or an educator. How will I ever choose?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:10:33] Because I came in with that myth that it was a choice, that you cannot be both, and that if you generalize, you will not succeed at either. And how I overcame that myth was having a really strong cohort of both students and mentors who allowed me to be perfectly myself, my data-driven, data-interested, I want to go outside and measure some dirt half on my mind, and they allowed me to break down

that barrier to say, yes, you can do that authentically while also teaching a young student and while also teaching each other.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:11:12] As Leslie mentioned, not all of my colleagues were fellow scientists. And I knew that was going to be true, and instead of that being a weakness, it was a strength. So, here, we were gathered together trying to rattle off statistics in our yurt on the edge of Payette Lake and making sure that it was just as important that somebody was out there reading the coding for our statistics as the other student who was making sure the fire was staying fed.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:11:40] And that community aspect really helped me to overcome that barrier of feeling like specializing and generalizing were opponents to what I would ultimately become. And not surprising since, obviously, I'm here. Success story, I really did gain a lot of support in realizing that those two fields go hand in hand. And it's imperative for our brighter future that we have folks who are invested in science, whether or not they decide to be scientists, and that people of all backgrounds feel included in science, not just what they see through scientists.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:12:20] So, the MOSS program, and the environment, and community really perfectly prepared me for what I'm doing now. I'm a STEM education specialist at a museum called CuriOdyssey in San Mateo. We call ourselves the science playground and zoo, because we're also breaking the barriers of traditional education by embracing those MOSS characteristics of being hands-on, asking questions, trying things out. And we also have that general specialist. Are we a museum or are we a zoo?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:12:53] And really, those are two things that should go hand in hand. So, that collaboration between community and science continues in my work today as we're just kicking off a new program this week, where we're going to be working with more students in our community to broaden opportunities to learn about STEM careers. My new initiative is STEM Corps, and I'm definitely leaning on all of the integrative hands-on approaches that we had at MOSS to be able to bring science to communities that have perpetually been excluded from this field.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:13:29] So, that's my major role right now, is taking a critical look at the whole science education industry, especially in our local San Mateo County, and looking at who's been included, who's been excluded, and most importantly, why? And I think MOSS really shows us that for folks who may think of graduate school and academia as being in a laboratory or reading books all the time and may not feel like they belong, MOSS breaks down those barriers to say, well, academia is theory, but it is also practice and both are equally important.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:05] Absolutely. I appreciate that very much. The back of everybody at PAST business cards says, taking theory to practice, right? And so, the practice part, we recognize as critically important. So, Leslie, I want to ask you. Is Carmen a typical student? The profile, so we started Carmen's piece of this conversation with, I wasn't sure if this was going to be the right thing. Did I fit? I was wondering, I was a bit lost in terms of sort of where, what I wanted to be able to do.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:36] And it sounds like through the program that Carmen not only found her groove, and found sort of the jazz, if you will, of all the things that got her excited, but figured out then how to take that and apply it to a future that she's really excited about, clearly, very excited about it. So, awesome work that's happening, but is that fairly typical of the students that find their way into the program? And if so, why do you think that is?

Leslie Dorsey: [00:15:02] Absolutely. I think that's very typical. In the first few weeks of our program during orientation, we have to talk about imposter syndrome, and people show up, and they're like, oh, my gosh, I'm instantly surrounded by all these incredible people who know so much more than I do on various topics. And it's very natural for people to be like, what do I bring to the table? Am I in the right place with the right fit?

Leslie Dorsey: [00:15:28] And as time progresses, people realize that we all have different strengths, and experiences, and connections, and networks that we're bringing to the shared learning community. And there's definitely a situation where grads come into the program thinking they know what track they're on, what they're going to do after the program, and they meet other people, and spend more time with the faculty members in classes and different professional networking experiences.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:15:58] And all of a sudden, they're like, oh, man, I was really prepared to be an X, Y, Z professional after this program, but now, I feel like I'm capable of doing so many different positions and so many doors to be open. Now, what do I pick to do in my life? And the people are so capable and prepared to do such a wide variety of jobs and careers after this program, that sometimes, they end up going totally different direction, but following their passion, because they're able to perform in any of those things.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:16:33] So, yeah, it's a common experience. Sounds pretty typical to me that she came in, was ready to like sharpen her skills, didn't know exactly where she was going to fit in with science, or education, or both, or how that would look, and then has all kinds of different opportunities in her current job, different directions that she could go in. I like to think of our graduate students as sort of ninjas in the professional workforce.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:17:02] Because they are really flexible, and able to shift directions, and call on those interdisciplinary and wide variety of skills that they get in the class experience. So, peer leadership, small group leadership, small business workings, the ecology of a place and how the systems work, education, pedagogy theory, people are ready to incorporate all these different experiences and can do so many different jobs within the organizations they get hired for.

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:36] Yeah, that's fabulous. And would you say that the majority of the students who come into the program are coming in because they are already K-12 educators and would really like this experience to get them more confident, whatever the content they happen to be delivering? I assume science for many of them, but not necessarily. I would also assume that folks find their way there that are not necessarily what we would assume or the majority of the participants who were coming in like Carmen, they're a research scientist of some description, a field scientist, who are then looking to have some type of role or impact in public outreach and engagement in K-12 education, or beyond, or maybe a balance of the two.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:18:21] Maybe some mixture of the two. Depending on the year and the makeup of the cohort, that ratio certainly shifts. But I'd say we have people who come to our program who have not done a lot of K-12 education and don't necessarily want to be K-12 educators after our program. And we are maybe counterintuitively still a good fit for those people, because you have your skills, your science skills, and you work on them in this high communication setting.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:18:51] And if you can teach a sixth grader what how photosynthesis works outdoors, and get them to feel invested and connected to this land, and then this community, and feel like they need to take care of that into the future, I feel like you can tell anyone anything and share any amount of science information. And so, those skills are just transferable to the broader public in the future.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:19:17] So, we certainly have grad students who take their intensive time with kiddos for the year and transform that into adult education or community-level education careers, not necessarily just teaching kiddos. And on the flip side, there's a good percentage of people who have been working with kids, and know they want to continue in honing those skill sets, and complement that with a strong natural resource systems understanding to get kids invested in the natural world and caring for their place.

Annalies Corbin: [00:19:53] Yeah. It sounds like it's a great fit for many folks. And I never, ever say no to the opportunity to sort of hone those skills of transferring information, right? Because you're going to be able to utilize that very, very broadly. So, I love that communication component, as I said earlier, of this program, because I do think it's critically important. We have an awful lot of teachers out there who aren't great teachers. We have a lot of great teachers out there who are fabulous teachers, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:22] And oftentimes, the gap in between is just an opportunity of having an experience to learn how to deliver a little bit differently and how to engage. And then, suddenly, we find, those folks become some of the best teachers you've ever had. But the flip side of that is we have an awful lot of folks out in the STEM disciplines broadly, I'm looking at Carmen, I'm thinking about the fact that I have no doubt, you're great with the public and an educator.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:47] But imagine, we all know in our own science fields, our colleagues do amazing knowledge, really, really cool research, completely tangible and accessible, and yet hampered, because they can't communicate with the world broadly. So, I'm curious, Carmen, as you think back of your time in the MOSS program, was there a moment that was profound for you as it relates to the way you think about your work right now? And I know I'm putting you on the spot, so I apologize for that, but only a little bit, because I really want to know.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:21:20] I'm laughing because there is. There is, but it's not a moment in time. I would say, it was a smattering of time, like a tidal wave, that once I was washed within it, I realized what was happening. Our leadership, Professor Gary Thompson, is the person who guides us through some of the big picture skills that we learned in group dynamics, how to manage scenarios, how to take in the big picture and take in the small picture.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:21:51] And one of the things that a famous question I always ask him is, Gary, can I break this question, and ask a different one, and then answer that one instead of what you just asked me? So, of course, looking at the education side of being a student, that was a good fit for me, to have somebody who wouldn't oppose that. And one of the questions, I asked him on repeated times just because I think I was frustrated or confused.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:22:18] I said, Gary, I wrote this in my journals, and I asked him in class, and I put this in my homework assignment, and I've read this, and I still don't know, how do you become a leader amongst leaders? How do you lead in a room full of leaders? And I begged him over and over again, and I was like, Gary, this reading assignment didn't help me figure out the answer. I would say, I climbed that rock, and I sat on it, and I thought about what you told me to think about, and I still don't know the answer.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:22:55] And that was what I realized I was asking, which I don't know if he realized what I was asking or if he was just really confused by the question, because the first answer, he said, he was like, well, I don't even know. He's like, you're going to have to figure that out. What I was asking was, how do you lead when everybody around you is so capable, and has so many strong opinions, and has their own ideas of success?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:23:27] And what I realized I was asking about myself is to see who wants to listen to the bird biologist who sits on a mountain side by the Pacific Ocean in Marine and suddenly wants to save her part of the world? Yes, there is a niche group of people who would sign up just with that description of what I'm talking about, arguably a bigger niche of the world that would run the other way as fast as possible.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:23:56] So, I realize, that was the heart of my question, was really about self-discovery and what kind of a leader I was amongst just the world, the community here in our little cohort in this town, being in the town of McCall, knowing that I probably wanted to head back to the big city in California. I grew up in San Francisco. So, for me, it was really about finding my place. So, my big realization was I think I'm asking about who I am and where I am. And fittingly, we teach that to our students through place-based education.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:24:34] Who am I in this ecosystem? Who am I in this landscape? And how am I so directly influenced by everything in the water, and the air, and the land that has been stewarded for so many generations before I even knew what it was called? And I was asking that both on a cognitive level as well as a physical level. So, my realization came about when I figured out what my question actually was and when I identified that I came to MOSS, because I am an ecologist and I was able to say that with confidence, I am an ecologist.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:25:14] And being an ecologist to me means that I am somebody incredibly in tune with both the animals, and plants, and other living beings in this habitat that I see how they change, and that I can bring that passion to the decisions that I make and the decisions that I influence. Really bubbling down to leadership is influence, and asking myself, what kind of an influence will I have on this field, on this world? And that whatever I call myself, I really define that title. So, it's really hard every time somebody asks, what are you, as it was even for this interview?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:25:56] Okay. Well, I think I'm a science educator and a wildlife conservationist, because if I just say I'm an ecologist, well, that's more confusing. So, it's about identity and self-discovery. And I don't think that's something that's possible in the typical Master's program or from any of my colleagues who I've gone to undergraduate with or met along my career. None of them have had that same type of self-discovery opportunity, as we're able to have at MOSS. Living on the edge of the wilderness gives you an opportunity to introspect and to concentrate at a level that I had never experienced.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:26:37] Yeah. And I wanted to tag on to that, just that I think one of the more powerful experiences for our K-12 students who get to come to our campus, we've alluded to McCall being awesome, our campus is located on the shores of an awesome, deep glacial lake and we're surrounded within state park, under a state park. And this park is our classroom. We've got all kinds of wonderful, little ecosystems to explore. And the K-12 students that come stay with us for about a week, and I think the powerful situation or learning opportunity that comes for them is just that they are capable of doing all kinds of things.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:27:19] Like they are capable of snowshoeing and being outside for six full hours, no matter what the weather is, no matter the temperature, whatever the situation, it's raining or snowing. They're able to hike all the way to a march, and they're capable of capturing data that is meaningful, and they're capable of like absorbing that and forming opinions, and they're capable of communicating with their peers in a productive way. And those are just like awesome experiences to watch these kids have, is that they're able to be a community member, do science, and get connected to this place while they're at it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:08] Yeah. Absolutely. We see that with a variety of programs over the years that we've run at PAST, that as soon as you believe that the kids, the minute they walk into your environment, whatever that happens to be, that every single one of them is capable, I often say, capable of solving the

world's greatest problems. The reality is they can. We just oftentimes don't give them the opportunity, the tools, the experience, the environment to immerse themselves in which they can explore the depth of their own possibility.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:34] And so, there's something to be said about the power of that. So, thank you very much for that. Leslie, one of the things I can imagine that folks that are listening to this are thinking is, okay, this is amazing, but what happened to this program over the last year that we've all on the planet been struggling with? So, how did the program adapt or not adapt as it related to continuing on within the midst of a global pandemic?

Leslie Dorsey: [00:29:02] We were deeply fortunate to be sort of set up to handle a pandemic. So, we've learned over the last year that some of the safer places you can be are outdoors, and we're thankful that so much of our education just occurs outdoors already. So, we were able to have a cohort of graduate students come to us in person. They live residentially on our campus or in McCall and taking classes in person. A lot of the classes, we shifted to outdoors. We've done all of the recommended guidelines of distancing and wearing masks 100% of the time, even outdoors.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:29:42] And our staff, and faculty, and grads have been able to get tested every other week throughout since we have been continuing to engage as people. And then, our K-12 programs were unfortunately not as situated to continue with traveling, buses, overnight experiences in a tiny like open cabin, summer community like experience. So, we unfortunately had to take the year off of that, and pause, and let the schools kind of figure out what they needed to do for themselves for the year.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:30:19] And so, we found ourselves in a situation where we had all these teachers without kiddos to teach. And our local school district, the McCall-Donnelly school districts decided to do hybrid learning environment this year. So, the kiddos were in school every other day, alternate Fridays. And so, every other day, there's a bunch of kiddos with no teachers. So, we were able to use some of our established connections and relationships, and collaborate.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:30:51] And we formed a partnership where the kids could get on the school bus in the morning, and if they weren't going to school that day, they would just continue and ride it over to our campus, and get dropped off, and spend the day with our grad students as their field instructors. And so, the kiddos have spent three sessions, a fall session, winter, and we're just starting spring after spring break.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:31:15] And we've got kindergarteners through fifth graders here every other day, so there's been kids here every day throughout the week and we've been outdoors the whole time. They've been exploring, and running, and jumping, and doing all that fun kid stuff, and just getting that much needed social interaction. During the pandemic, we really, really focused on social and emotional learning, because we also didn't want to really do an awesome, amazing, stellar job at teaching too much curriculum and science content or other curriculum, because this is not the full population of kids that are coming to MOSS, that go to school.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:31:58] And we didn't want to give them sort of an unfair advantage for being part of our program. So, we definitely focused on exploring, and skill sets of working together and listening to each other. And they've been working through it. It's been pretty awesome to work with the same kids week after week after week, because usually, you've got a snapshot in time with just one week at a time with the group. And generally, we never see them again. And so, working with the same kids and watching them build some of those skills over time has been really wonderful.

Annalies Corbin: [00:32:35] Yeah. That's spectacular. And I would assume that they were components of this sort of pivot that you made, and amazing that you were able to do that and have so much ongoing time with students and local communities, but there have to be components of that that I would assume that could be rolled into ongoing. There's a lot of complaints, obviously, about the pandemic and how that's impacted sort of K-12 and post-secondary as well, but the reality is we've gotten a lot of things that we've learned. The learning curve was steep for us all, but there are positive components that have come out of this.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:09] And I would assume that's the case for both of you. And so, I always want to end the program by thinking about, what is that for the big job that you have for folks that are listening, and thinking about how can I take some of what I heard Leslie and Carmen talking about today, and incorporate it into my own journey? And so, Carmen, I'm going to toss to you first, just to ask you that question. If you were sitting down with a teacher or a research scientist contemplating how can I be better plugged in, if you will, in the outreach and engagement component of whatever it is that might work world has to offer, what would you suggest to somebody?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:33:47] I would suggest that folks look at what they're perceiving as limits around them. Sometimes, we are in situations where there are unfair obstacles to being able to communicate what we want to communicate or learn what we want to do. And when I take a step back, and I work with other scientists or even with other educators, and try to sort out these problems, a lot of times, we find that while some of those barriers are things we can't control and that are systemic problems that will work together to overcome, that other barriers may be perceptions.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:34:23] It may be because somebody told you, you have to teach this a certain way, or maybe because you won't be seen as a credible scientist if you reach out to kids before you reach out to adults or teachers. And I really encourage folks to look at those limits. Is it because somebody said this will make you less of anything, less of a scientist, less of an educator, less of a professional, less efficient?

Carmen DeLeon: [00:34:52] Because efficiency is a big misperception. And efficiency to me is inclusion. And sometimes, that takes longer, but efficiency is not about speed. So, those are the main questions I ask. What are your perceptions of efficiency? And what are your perceptions of the barriers that are holding you back from being the best educator and community member you can for the cause and the mission you're representing?

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:19] That's awesome. Thank you for that. So, Leslie, same question to you. One piece of advice for folks thinking about these things.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:35:29] I think there's a phrase tossed around MOSS a lot recently, which is disturbance is potential, and hope is happening when you're out of your comfort zone, not when you're in it. And after being established program for so many years, at least from my perspective, I felt pretty comfortable with the curriculum that we were covering, and the methodology, and like all of the things. We were in a good groove. And I think this opportunity of a pandemic came through to help us to reexamine basically just how we function, and what we do, and what's important, and how we carry out those things.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:36:12] And I think with the kiddo groups, so much learning comes from situations that are maybe not your first choice. We probably wouldn't have chosen to have groups, mixed-age groups of kindergarteners through fifth graders together with one instructor trying to teach at all levels if we weren't trying to keep family pods together to limit contact. And so, that was a tricky scenario for us. And we learned so much from that opportunity that we wouldn't have probably chosen for ourselves in any other situation. So, always trying to be positive, and look at the bright side, and treat every situation as a learning opportunity.

Annalies Corbin: [00:36:57] Absolutely. I want to thank both of you ladies for taking time out of your day to share with us about the MOSS program and the impact that it's had both on your professional careers and on the community at large. So, thank you so much.

Leslie Dorsey: [00:37:11] Thank you. It's great chatting with you today.

Carmen DeLeon: [00:37:13] It's really a joy to revisit the MOSS experience any time.

Annalies Corbin: [00:37:18] 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.