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Oral Interview Project: Dr. Katherine Mansfield

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1 **HM:** Okay, so my educational background-- is very odd. Um, so, I have a Bachelor's in Biology
2 and Chemistry.

3 **CL:** I didn't know that!

4 **HM:** I know-- it's, it's weird! Um, a bachelor's in Biology and Chemistry and a Ph. D. in
5 English. Basically, um, I think what I figured out after I got my Bachelor's degree was that I just
6 wanted to be a professional student. But that doesn't pay very well-- there's not really a career
7 path for that.

8 **CL:** Mmhmm.

9 **HM:** So after I graduated with my Bachelor's degree I knew a lot of things I didn't want to do.
10 With a Bachelor's degree in biology and Chemistry, at that point, you could work in a lab--
11 because I knew I didn't want to do pre-Med or pre-Nursing, um, you could work in a lab, you
12 could do research, something like that. But it wasn't-- those things sounded isolating to me.

13 **CL:** Yeah...

14 **HM:** So, um, I thought about, like the person who, the career I really admired or the person who
15 I really admired was my English professor. I had to take one English class as a science major and
16 I just remember thinking like "her life was so interesting!"

17 **CL:** What class was that- do you remember?

18 **HM:** It was Victorian literature!

19 **CL:** Oh, yeah. I'm in that right now!

20 **HM:** Surprisingly-- but I think, she was just a great teacher. And I think also I majored in
21 science because it was what I was good at in high school, everyone told me I was a math and
22 science person, so I really didn't think too much about it. I think because I was good at it, it was
23 easy for me, my dad is a chemist, it was just natural. I didn't really think.

24 **CL:** Yeah.

25 **HM:** I remember coming home and telling my family "I think I want to get my Master's and Ph.
26 D. in English and be an English professor!" And they were like "What? You're not an English
27 person. You're a science person!" I'm pretty sure my dad said something like "Well, if you want
28 to ruin my life" which he totally regrets now and says he never said that-- but I remember him
29 saying that! Um, so I didn't even know- you can appreciate this as an English major...

30 **CL:** Mmmhmm.

31 **HM:** I tell my high school students this and they kinda don't get it. But I didn't even know that--
32 this is how dumb I was-- that to apply to a Master's program in English, you have to at least have
33 minored in English. I had one class. So I had to go back, and for a year, I had to take 15 credits
34 of English each semester.

35 **CL:** That's...a lot of papers. A lot of reading.

36 **HM:** YES. And I tell students like, I had five English classes that I had to do all the reading for
37 and papers, and they're like "yeah, whatever..." and I'm like "No, no, no, no-- Like you don't
38 get it!"

39 **CL:** Oh my gosh.

40 **HM:** I was having to read Shakespeare plays and 16th century literature and I think I had a
41 literary theory class and Old English

42 **CL:** That one's especially tough-- especially if you had only gone from one class, and not really
43 understand-- Because I think it, because at my school we have a very strong Core, like you have
44 to take a lot of different things, I know you have to think very differently for different tracks and
45 I can't imagine switching to 15 credit hours.

46 **HM:** Yeah, and I wasn't taken seriously either, because all the Master's students, all the students
47 who were English majors, when I finally got into the Master's program-- they thought I was the
48 outsider, like, "No, you're a science major. You're not supposed to be here." Well, wait a
49 second, I can do this. Well, it was a lot of conversations about "Well, Heather's really not
50 supposed to be here," like, "No, pretty sure I am supposed to be here, I'm getting my Master's in
51 English, I can do this." and what I came to figure out, why I loved English, I love writing, I
52 absolutely love writing, I think the analysis you apply toward Literature is the same part of my
53 brain that I used in science. So, it's that logical thinking, analysis, it's the same thing...it's just a
54 different discipline. But yeah, that's how I ended up, with this weird background. But I think,
55 how I use that as an educator, I've always taught a class at DSHA, that was one of my
56 stipulations as Academic Dean. I always want to be in the classroom, at least one class,
57 sometimes I taught Anatomy & Physiology, sometimes I taught an English class, sometimes I
58 taught-- one time I taught AP Bio, a section of it. Right now I am teaching a Junior/Senior level
59 English class, Contemporary Literature, but I always tell my students "There's some of you
60 sitting here who say 'Oh I'm not a math and science person, Oh, I'm not an English person' eh
61 eh-- I'm living proof that you don't have to separate yourself. Yeah so that's-- that's my-- that's
62 how it's affected my role. I would say, at the very root of what I love about my job is that I love
63 being in an industry, so to speak, that is all about learning. Like to me, I have this insatiable
64 curiosity. Like, I wanna learn about everything, I think everything is cool, I wanna learn more
65 about that and that and that, and I love learning from my students, from my colleagues, from
66 parents.

67 **CL:** Yeah...

68 **HM:** I think it's super fascinating. Like I try to think, what would it be like to go to a bank and
69 be a banking person. And I know that it's a job that's needed and I'm so grateful to people who
70 do it and I'm sure people look forward to that, but I'm like... I-- what would that be like?

71 **CL:** Especially when you have so many opportunities here. And well, I do remember, from my
72 experiences in the classrooms here... it's very, um, you may have -- I had Wendy Pawlyshyn,
73 and she was very lecture-based, but even in her most lecture-based class you still had a lot of
74 discussion. So I can only imagine from the standpoint now, looking forward at a career in
75 potentially teaching, how much you can learn from talking with the students...so much, so. That
76 makes sense to me.

77 **HM:** Oh, yeah. Definitely. Yeah, yeah.

78 **CL:** Can you just speak a little about, um, your, like what kind of high school and grade school
79 did you go to?

80 **HM:** Yeah, so I'm from a small town in Iowa, so we only had a public high school. It was very
81 small-- there were only 98 people in my graduating class, so we had the smallest class ever at
82 Carlisle high school. And it was very-- it was definitely a mixed bag of... well, in my graduating
83 class I would say maybe half of us went to college, half of us stayed around, worked on farms,
84 did other blue collar jobs, took over the family business-- maybe it was like an auto body shop.

85 **CL:** Did your high school provide, like, more vocational...

86 **HM:** Not really. Because it was, um, we had a shop class, but that was a requirement. Like you,
87 to graduate you either had to take Home Ec. or Industrial Arts. I took Industrial Arts because,
88 you getta play with power tools-- I mean, how cool was that? But yeah, we didn't have any A.P.
89 classes, we had the equivalent of the advanced Biology class for seniors was like an A.P. Bio
90 class. But you know, interesting enough, my Calculus class senior year, so that was like the
91 highest level math class, it was all boys and maybe two girls. Me and one other girl, and that was
92 it! And in my physics class, it was all boys and two girls. Sherri Van Dalsum and I were the only
93 two and she went on to become an engineer, but we were the only two girls-- like all the other
94 students, all the other females dropped out of math and science, some after, some after
95 sophomore year, because I think you only had to go through two years, through Algebra II.

96 **CL:** Do you think that's changed? In the school system?

97 **HM:** Yes. Yes. I know it has.

98 **CL:** I know here, for sure, there's no question at DS, but... which is amazing, but... um, have
99 you ever seen those-- there's a block toy that you can buy for little girls and it's like engineering
100 for little girls, it's fantastic!

101 **HM:** Haha, yes! And in high school at the time, I think I didn't ever, um, I didn't ever question,
102 "Wow, isn't it weird that Sherri and I were the only girls in like physics and Caculus" but
103 looking back, especially being here, I think, well, I should've thought it was weird and my
104 teachers should've thought that was weird-- I mean...

105 **CL:** It was just the norm.

106 **HM:** Yes, it was totally just the norm.

107 **CL:** It's interesting. Yeah, I definitely think that's changed. Um, a lot. And, uh, I, it's also very
108 interesting I do still see that somewhat-- the mentality-- but it's almost as if the mentality is
109 presented but the girls are just pushing it aside.

110 **HM:** Right. Like "uh no, no thanks."

111 **CL:** What's next...

112 **HM:** The goal of Catholic education. Especially for secondary schools. Um, I, I think, we have a
113 great opportunity to engage the hearts and the minds. So, uh, yes, this is a very strong academic
114 school. So, the minds are gonna be taken care of, so to speak. But what I think is so great about
115 teaching in a Catholic school is that we get to engage the hearts and the souls of the girls, and
116 they don't think that's weird. Like I get to say things like "Well, what about the poor? How
117 would they be impacted by this policy decision." Or like "How could we fight for justice in this
118 area?" We get to do service. We have the opportunity to make that part of who they are-- to talk
119 about, talk about faith. You know, talk about, you know in English class, a couple days ago, we

120 were reading this novel where the characters has an epiphany, well that's nothing new, under the
121 sun, well the epiphany was like, he was trying to figure out his life's purpose and I said "You
122 know, God puts each one of us here on Earth, and our goal, our journey really is to figure out
123 what our purpose is." And you know, some days I think I have it, and like some days I'm like
124 "God, am I doing what I'm supposed to be doing?" like, "Am I using my gifts the way I'm
125 supposed to be using them." Like, I don't know some days I still question that. Like, yes! I have
126 gifts as an educator, I'm right where I need to be, this is what God's calling me to do, and then
127 you know, you have a bad day at work, or you're realizing, "That lesson just *bleh*" you know?
128 I mean so you go home and you're like "Well, like, you know, that's when you pray about it,
129 that's when you journal about it. But, yeah, I could never talk about that stuff

130 **CL:** Well, for our point of view, when you see it in a college classroom, and my school has a
131 very strong Catholic character, and we're mentioning it in my Early Modern Literature classes
132 and it-- I view it as limiting if you can't talk about those things. Especially if it's so limiting--
133 especially if it's a prominent theme. So, yeah it can be very limiting

134 **HM:** Right! Right. I love how you said that, because I think most people think that it's the
135 reverse.

136 **CL:** Right, that you're putting yourself in a bubble-- that you're constricting yourself.

137 **HM:** Right, and I think that if that's the whole person of who you are, to pretend that part of
138 your person doesn't exist? That's-- that's hard to do.

139 **CL:** Very difficult. And, I don't think it can be limiting. I mean, at my school we definitely do
140 have non-Catholics, and we had them here at DS, and I remember really good discussions. I
141 remember, in uh, Female Identity, we were talking about the role of God in a novel, and a couple
142 of the girls had really good discussions. I think it can bring you to better understandings of the
143 literature for sure. That's definitely DS, when you see other high schools, do you see similar idea
144 as the goal, or do you think that gets lost?

145 **HM:** No, I think, what I've seen from elementary schools to high schools is that, you know,
146 what we hear, as educators, we hear this from businesses, we hear this from government, telling
147 schools "You have to do a better job of training students to be 21st century thinkers, 21st century
148 workers. They have to be flexible, they have to be adaptable, the jobs that you're training them
149 for aren't going to exist..." I'm sure you've heard all this. Right?

150 **CL:** Yeah.

151 **HM:** So, we hear a lot from the outside world telling us that we have to prepare them for this
152 world that we don't even know what that world is going to be like. So i think Catholic schools,
153 what they do a great job of, is we acknowledge "You're right. We don't know what that world is,
154 BUT, we know that service and justice and compassion and mercy-- all those things are at the
155 heart of it. So let's have our students practice those skills, um, and I see that service-learning, not
156 just doing service, has become much more embedded." I think at DSHA we've done a great job
157 at this-- students are asked to reflect on the act of doing service. So it's not just, "um, okay,
158 juniors, you have to go out and do 15 hours of service this year" and you check off the box and
159 say "I did service." But there's this, "Why are we doing this, what is it grounded in, why are we

160 called to do this, how do we feel after we're involved in service, how does it feel while we're
161 engaged in service? What have we learned from ourselves?" I think that that piece of it, Catholic
162 schools get much more intentional about linking the service and the learning, or the service and
163 the reflection.

164 **CL:** Yes, I think that's true. And it's-- that kind of goes into the next question of "Do you think
165 that this has changed?" Because a lot of the things you mentioned I do think are very central to
166 why Catholic education came about in the first place, so yeah, do you think that it has changed?
167 Or do you think-- because it's almost the same as with the liberal arts-- you get at the themes of
168 what is true, and whatever changes in the world, you'll have that. Do you think that has been
169 carried through? Or how has it changed?

170 **HM:** Well, from where I sit, I think it has changed because I think Catholic schools, by and
171 large, have always known having an active role in the community, doing service is important.
172 And that was kind of enough. We're Catholics. We serve others. That's kind of what our team
173 does. But I've seen, and I want to say in the last 4 to 5 years, a shift in this intentional "Okay, we
174 do service. But why is it important? Or, what do we gain from it? Or, how does it really impact
175 the community." Because you know, Catholics are really good do-ers (sic). We're missionaries,
176 we're gonna do, we're gonna work-- we.. So I think adding the reflection piece of it is something
177 that maybe does come as natural. And I think, too, in this busy, busy world we live in, that
178 reflection is something that's like...

179 **CL:** We don't have time for it.

180 **HM:** Right! Like, "I'm happy to show up and serve at the soup kitchen because I have from
181 7:00-8:15 to do that but then I have my next thing and I have to meet with my study group and I
182 have to..."

183 **CL:** You're seeing the importance of getting it done but you're not reflecting on it.. Which I
184 think-- we changed it my senior year here. We always had to write service reflections but we
185 wrote them and then spent a theology class on it, and we talked about it as a class. And I think
186 that was very important. Because you don't realize that until.. Until you bring it up.

187 **HM:** Exactly right.

188 **CL:** This is random but do you think there's a correlation between Pope Francis coming in-- he's
189 such an advocate for social justice. I'm just wondering-- you mentioned the last 4 years it's
190 changed. He has been such an advocate for social justice.

191 **HM:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I certainly think recently he keeps reminding us. Like "walk with
192 the poor, journey with the poor, love your brothers and sisters." He's such the people's pope in
193 that way. That he's really trying to bring it back to relationships-- to have right relationships with
194 people. So, you know that kind of focus.

195 **CL:** He's also been more prominent, in media, than other popes. So I think people bring him up
196 more.

197 **HM:** Well, and I think that's-- I mean, I've only heard from the young people here, I haven't
198 heard from the young people elsewhere. Certainly the girls feel very drawn to him as a pope,
199 because, well I've heard them say "He finally gets it!" Yeah, it is, and you know, the way that,

200 again, this is only young women, that faith and growth in faith is very relational. You know,
201 processing in theology class, having a personal relationship with God... it may be intellectual at
202 some point, but it's relational first.

203 **CL:** I think you're right. With young women it's helpful to do that. Um, because women are so
204 good at relational thought, that it's a good way to process everything. Just moving on to the next
205 one. The personal thorn in my side since starting educational studies: the involvement of state
206 and federal government in Catholic education. I really didn't notice it in the 12 years of Catholic
207 school, but I have friends who definitely noticed objectives being written on the board, state
208 objectives, the idea with Common Core, all these different things. Maybe talk a bit about that--
209 how you think it's changed over the years?

210 **HM:** So, I would say, I've been academic dean here 12 years, and this is pretty myopic-- this is
211 really only DSHA. I think the role the state and federal government here at DSHA is really,
212 concretely through the Title programs. So, now there's a law-- President Obama signed into law--
213 - it used to be No Child Left Behind law. But on December 10th 2015, he signed into law "Every
214 Student Succeeds Act," the ESSA. Um, the ESSA is federal funding for basically saying that
215 every student should have the opportunity to succeed. There's money set aside in this big pot of
216 money for non-public schools. Which by and large are faith-based schools: Catholic schools,
217 Lutheran schools, etc. Some private schools but mainly, you know... And there's four titles: 1, 2,
218 3, 4. And those are separate buckets of money and with each of those buckets of money you can
219 allocate them to different things. And the way it works for DSHA is that any school in the city of
220 Milwaukee, the federal government looks at every state, and corresponding school systems-- for
221 us would be the Milwaukee Public School system, and it will give this big bucket of money for
222 non-public school usage to MPS, and MPS will divvy it up to all non-public schools in the
223 Milwaukee area. So what we use that money for is professional development. So, you know, we
224 don't have money to send teachers to conferences, and to help support their extra classes they
225 have to take, or want to take to advance their learning but Title will pay for that. So, in my mind,
226 that is a huge benefit that we use federal tax dollars to support Catholic schools-- and Title I is
227 support for struggling students. So you can use these Titles differently and the new law really is
228 much more generous in its allowances to non-public schools. You know, so, and this is kinda a
229 sticky wicket-- I don't know how my public school colleagues feel about that like "What?!" And
230 especially in the state of Wisconsin like "We're getting kicked around and now" I mean I never
231 talk to public school people about this. It's hard, sometimes there's this "Us vs. Them" feeling,
232 you know when I've gone to meetings with public high school administrators and Catholic
233 school administrators there's sometimes this-- it's never unprofessional it's just this weird
234 tension of like, you know,

235 **CL:** I feel that in my classes. It's-- you're approaching it differently. In my experience, it's good
236 to see a way it's being shown in a positive light. My experience has been in mainly public
237 schools, there's a lot of pressure there because they're getting so much funding from the
238 government that there's more obligation to do what the government mandates which is hard to
239 do on a national level, which is where the problem comes from. It's good to hear this.

240 Professional development is so important in secondary education, so that's so great to hear that
241 that's the relationship for DSHA.

242 **HM:** Yeah, right, right! So for instance, our, almost our entire math department is going to the
243 National Conference in April, and I believe it's in, like, San Diego. Some big city where they can
244 have all the teachers. But, all the breakup sessions they go to it's like "This is how they
245 implement changes, this is how they implement SMART Boards, this is how they implement any
246 new technologies with like the calculators and with graphing, this is how they figure out 'Oh my
247 gosh look at all these cool new ways that they use math.'" They basically, as they say, and have
248 you gotten to go to any professional conferences?

249 **CL:** Yeah.

250 **HM:** You go there and you just steal ideas. You're like "I'll take this, this, this, and this, this,
251 THANK YOU!" And you like go back to your school and you're implementing stuff and trying
252 it out. And that's all Title money. That doesn't get pulled out of tuition or any special fund--
253 that's all title money!

254 **CL:** That's very interesting the way you phrased that. We just watched an instructional video
255 from a traveling motivational speaker for teachers and he said "Teaching is stealing ideas." Like,
256 "Ooh, I like that... I'm stealing that." So that's funny you say that.

257 **HM:** Haha, yes! Yes. I'm stealing ideas all the time.

258 **CL:** I'm already doing it. I have a little notebook where I come up with ideas, and I have a lot of
259 stuff from personal experience. It's how-- I'm gonna try them and see if they work.

260 **HM:** Well, and that's the best thing, because your students will let you know if it's working out
261 right away like, "okay! I will never try that again. Thanks so much for that immediate
262 feedback.."

263 **CL:** Well, so coming from-- did you have any idea of the role of the state or federal government
264 when you were in high school? Anything like that?

265 **HM:** You know, I don't think that I did. And you know, the other way that I think DSHA-- you
266 know we keep an eye on all of the, all the new science standards, the next generation science
267 standards. There's Common Core, there's um, world languages, like new foreign languages to
268 tweak, so we kind of keep track of all of that, to make sure we're at least meeting, if not
269 exceeding. But we also look at, like the US Conference of Catholic Bishops have all these
270 academic standards, so we look there and say "Okay, like are we meeting or exceeding these
271 academic standards?"

272 **CL:** Well, so I'm trying to think. DS is a Catholic-- private, Catholic school-- so do you have to
273 follow any standards for any. What's the accountability?

274 **HM:** Like, technically? No. But-- because we're accredited, our accreditation organization is
275 Advanced Ed., which is an international accreditation organization. And they require that we
276 have standards written down that we follow that are objective outside. Like it can't be "Well, I
277 just made up these standards and we follow the standards called 'Heather's Standards.'" But we
278 could say "We're gonna follow the state DPI standards, or we're gonna follow the National
279 Standards or whatever."

280 **CL:** And you just pick some and commit to following that?
281 **HM:** Yeah, so for like Theology department, because there's no state DPI-- so we follow the
282 USCCB Standards, we follow that. For everything else, we try to meet or exceed the national
283 standards. Mainly because we know we'll be sending our graduates to all kinds of programs
284 across the United States. We want them to be able to compete with and distinguish themselves
285 from their classmates, so whatever their classmates are getting in classrooms, we want to make
286 sure they're-- I mean we always want to make sure we meet it.

287 **CL:** Well, and that goes with the college prep. I mean, I went through four years here and I just--
288 my eyes flew past the 'College Prep' when you read it and I'm sitting in my class about a month
289 ago, and she [the professor] is saying "Go around the room and talk about what kind of high
290 schools you came from," and that didn't process to me that that's not the goal of every high
291 school. So tells you how spoiled I am! I was sitting there like, "I need to go slap myself." I mean
292 no, I was very blessed to have such an experience.

293 **HM:** Well, and I bet when you wrote that first paper, and your professor was like "Wow, you're
294 a really good writer!" and you must've said "Oh, well that's what I do!"

295 **CL:** Yeah, I think a lot of my classmates from DS have that experience. My school did-- does
296 bring in-- because it's a new school, it's about 60 years olds, it's new, it's private, it follows its
297 own. So it brings in a lot of students who know about the school so it's a lot of private school--
298 it's a high rigorous academic standards for that. But I do know a lot of girls who say they got an
299 'A' on their first paper and no one else did. Whereas at my school they like to brag that they fail,
300 or give 'C's on their first English paper to make students work for it. So everyone's on their
301 classpage like "I just got an 'A' on my first paper-- thanks Mr. Grandy!" and I'm like...

302 **HM:** "Oh, I'm not jumping in on that one!"

303 **CL:** I totally understand that. I think it's interesting that there is no accountability, because you
304 have the goal of students succeeding that you have the "meet or succeed" idea. What about
305 testing-- because I was not as aware of testing as friends that went to public schools. In Texas
306 they do a lot of testing, so what about your own experience-- do you remember testing a lot in
307 high school or grade school?

308 **HM:** No, I think the only test I remember taking is the SAT, when I was getting ready to go to
309 college. And here, we have, we actually have what we consider a standardized test program.
310 Mainly because, um, so the way we see it there are really only two high stakes test: the college
311 entrance exam, whether that's the ACT/SAT, and that PSAT sophomore year. And that's not
312 even-- that's medium stakes. Because only 3% in the country, a small percentage, will move to
313 the level the finals and get money for that. So, so, we have, like, our freshman now, our SAT has
314 been revamped, and EXPLORE and PLAAN are gone and now it's the ACT Aspire, so we're
315 gonna have our freshman take that mainly as a practice for standardized test. What we'll do with
316 that test, each subject area, we'll look at that and say "how do our students compare nationally?"
317 We do item analysis for standardized test, so like, if the question is about punctuation and 80%
318 of our students miss it, then our English teachers will know "Okay, I'm gonna go back and
319 reteach use of the semicolon properly because, gosh, 80% of our students got it wrong." So we

320 do item analysis for standardized test that are practice for that. Sophomore year, they take the
321 PSAT which is completely meaningless because its not scored. It's practice, again. Junior year,
322 of course, is the ACT, which is the biggest one, of course. They'll take the PSAT again, but like I
323 said, I always tell girls that it's not a high stakes test because you'll either score enough to get
324 money or you don't. But it's not a college entrance exam.

325 **CL:** Yeah, so it is medium stakes, you'd say. Um, okay. That's interesting. And then, moving
326 on, I guess. Do you have any predictions for the future of Catholic schools? Seeing how they've
327 progressed?

328 **HM:** Yeah, and I think, I don't know if it's so much Catholic schools..

329 **CL:** It could just be educational system in America.

330 **HM:** Yeah, I only know this. I'm actually in a group right now of high schools. Um, a bunch of
331 high schools came together to talk about, so what we're seeing now that's definitely increased
332 since I've started is a rise in students who struggle with mental health issues. So, students who
333 struggle with anxiety, depression, those kinds of things. You know we've always had students,
334 some who might've had ADD, some may have ADHD, but the amount and level of severity of
335 students who now struggle with mental health problems have definitely increased. So this group
336 of high school administrators and counselors across the city of Milwaukee are basically coming
337 together talking, "What can we do for our students to be proactive?" So I know, just from
338 reading the research that universities and colleges are struggling with the same thing. That
339 there's a lot of concern for mental health on college campuses. So, I think, for whatever reason.
340 This is what I'd be fascinated to hear from, just young people. Is it something in American
341 society? Like, when I think back to my high school, well there was a lot of stuff. I don't even
342 think the word 'bullying' was around. There certainly ADHD wasn't invented-- that's not what I
343 mean, but it wasn't diagnosed. If there were students who had mental health struggles-- certainly
344 no one knew about it, it was such a small minority. So, I don't know. I don't know what's going
345 on. And part of it, we're asking is it just the culture of DSHA? Is it, you know, high
346 expectations? A lot of, is it strong work ethic requirements? But, like, we have such a nurturing
347 environment. It's not like it's a military school, we're not, like, yelling at them like "GET TO
348 CLASS NOW, YOU BETTER HAND IN YOUR PAPER." So, like, what do you think?

349 **CL:** I mean, I think, at DS, at least, I think that *because* it's such a nurturing environment, I
350 think, to a certain extent all high schoolers struggle. There's just so much going on in everyone's
351 heads, everyone thinks that they have this or that problem. I remember that. Everyone does.

352 **HM:** Okay.

353 **CL:** I think you just hear about it more at DS because it is such a nurturing environment that
354 girls are more than comfortable sharing it with partiuclar teachers or CMC instructors.

355 **HM:** Yeah, yeah.

356 **CL:** So I think you hear about that more. I do notice, and I notice it from talking with friends
357 who are teachers, kids who are being pulled out for different types of therapies: speech therapies,
358 and such. A lot of it commits to our culture becoming very individualized. So, everyone is very--
359 not, not in a negative way concerned with themselves, but having an awareness of themselves.

360 More of a self-reflexiveness. I think a lot of why we know so much about mental health now, we
361 can do that. I think at DS people are so comfortable bringing it up... which is a good thing, it can
362 also lead to more dramatic responses.

363 **HM:** Right, right, right! Haha.

364 **CL:** I think it's a testament to the environment, for sure.

365 **HM:** I just, I think, too. We have more students who have to leave school for extended periods
366 of time who have to go get mental health in-patient stuff. Again, when I started 12 years ago, I
367 mean, it was maybe 1 student every 3 years, I mean it was really unheard of. Now, I feel like we
368 are working with students and families, we may have 5 students, 6 students a year. That, Clare,
369 gets to be, I really like what you're saying about individualized because then, and we were just
370 discussing this, we were having this really good conversation the group of teachers of this one
371 student and her counselor and she just came back to school but she's been gone since like the
372 third week of January. Like, not physically here, third week of January to March, what's today?
373 10th? So, like, what instruction? She happens to be a student in one of my classes. I feel like I
374 haven't given her any instruction. Like, I haven't seen her since January. Like, I could give her
375 stuff to do but...

376 **CL:** She hasn't been in any class.

377 **HM:** Right, I mean, we're not like an online school where like I email you things and you do
378 them and email them back. We're a school that I want to see you, I want to look at you, I want to
379 ask you questions. So, how do you approach that? So long story short what we ended up doing
380 is, kinda, telling the family and the students "Here's the situation: We can only give her
381 Pass/Fail. We can't give her grades for any of these classes because we haven't really been with
382 her." Do we think she could only do the bare minimum-- this is a really, really smart girl-- yeah,
383 I think I could say "Read these three books and write three papers." But I haven't instructed her
384 in any of that, so it would just be a matter of completely work, checking it off your to-do list,
385 and, you know, that's been really... and there's more instances of that. Where students will be
386 gone for like 4 weeks in the middle of a quarter. And then, and like, school is just marching
387 along here. And we can save things for them but.. Can you imagine physics lab?

388 **CL:** Yeah, haha. You can't do that.

389 **HM:** Right, you can't make up a lab.

390 **CL:** Wow. That's interesting. And I think that can lead into another question: so clearly, with the
391 school, and a lot of very good schools, your objective is to instruct. It's not just: fill out this
392 chart, write this paper, and turn this in. So do you think, I'm just trying to think as the school
393 system, in American-- I do know, the schools I've been in it's been a lot of "Here's your
394 assignment for the day, get it done." I haven't noticed a lot of instruction in few classes. So
395 thinking back to your own experience-- do you remember it being strict lecture or um, like,
396 different from what you see at DS?

397 **HM:** It was a lot of teacher-led discussion with students participating. Well, you know, last year,
398 yeah, last year. The teachers-- we got to a point where, where.. We got to a point, we saw that the
399 times-- they were a-changing. We saw the tide coming at us. Let's press the pause button and

400 talk about this-- and I can send you this document, you might find this interesting. We spent a
401 year-- during Red Days-- do you remember red days?

402 **CL:** Oh, I remember red days!

403 **HM:** So, once a month, during red days, teachers volunteer from every department, and I
404 facilitated. We talked about our philosophy of instruction. We went back to the basics and we
405 said "What do we think about teaching and learning? What is our philosophy as a faculty? What
406 do we think about instructional time?" So, we read outside stuff, we researched what other high
407 schools say about it. We talked about our own experiences. So we came up with this document
408 that was basically our philosophy of instructional time. To boil it down, we believe, as a faculty,
409 that education is a process, not a product.

410 **CL:** I love that.

411 **HM:** We believe that education is about the process, the process between the teacher and the
412 student, the student and the student, that that's where the deepest learning happens. And that's
413 why we care about attendance. We don't care about attendance because we wanna nag you and
414 track you down-- we care about attendance because we want you here. Your colleagues and
415 peers need you here to learn, because they learn from you. You know, so why do we care about
416 the minutes of instruction? Why do we care about not too many assemblies? Why do we care?
417 We don't care because we hate assemblies, but because we so put a value on educational
418 instruction and want to protect that.

419 **CL:** That's great, and I love the education is a process, not a product. That's great.

420 **HM:** But yeah, we took a year of red days to hash this out!

421 **CL:** THAT'S what was happening!

422 **HM:** That's, we kinda went back to the beginning and said "What is our philosophy of
423 education?" You'll find this out, and you know this know, but you'll find this out as a teacher,
424 when you're in the middle of prepping and grading and teaching it's hard to take time to reflect
425 and like "Why am I doing what I'm doing again?"

426 **CL:** Another one of my classes that's my big focus- that everytime you assign something you
427 say "Why is this important for my philosophy of education?"

428 **HM:** That's great. But I will send you that! I will send you that.

429 **CL:** I would so appreciate reading that.

430 **HM:** Because I think it would be interesting to read.

431 **CL:** I agree I think it would be very interesting.

432 **HM:** I'm writing it down so I don't forget it!

433 **CL:** Um, and then I think, well if I'm just going to go with that... I just have a couple more. One
434 of the topics I'd like to talk a little more on is like what you just said, movement from your own
435 experience- if you see a difference now from when you first started. Parental involvement. What
436 do you see now-- and I know it might be different because DS is very different and parents are
437 very involved, what do you remember from your own experience?

438 **HM:** So funny, my sister, my younger sister and I talk about this all the time. And my younger
439 sister is a middle school teacher in Texas. She lives in Wylie. Which is north of Dallas.

440 **CL:** Yeah I can see it on the map!

441 **HM:** She works in a Gifted and Talented something or other school in the Garland School
442 District, but we joke about this all the time. Like, both my parents went to college BUT they
443 didn't take me on any college visitis, they didn't talk to me at all about college, they didn't like,
444 nothing. We didn't have the internet back then-- so when students ask "So how'd you pick..."
445 when seniors ask me "How'd you pick the college?" I'd say: "Well, I came from a family of five
446 kids, um, we did not have a ton of money. We were very middle class, upper middle class, but
447 very middle class. So I went with the college that gave me the most money to go there. I had
448 never even been there. It was a Catholic college. I knew I wanted to go to a Catholic college. It
449 was a small liberal arts college in Iowa. So that's where I went." And they're saying "Oh, well
450 that's not a very interesting story."

451 **CL:** Yeah, it's not like their "Junior Night" at DS.

452 **HM:** Haha, no! Exactly. I had to fill out all the financial aid forms, I had to do all of that!
453 Because my parents were just like "Well, you're the one going to college...figure it out!"

454 **CL:** Do you think that was typical?

455 **HM:** Oh yeah. Very typical. Very, very typical.

456 **CL:** So does that play into-- I was talking about this with a friend the other day. It's almost
457 assumed that everyone has a Bachelor's at this point. If you're applying for a job-- it's-- in
458 business, I talk to my sister, Maggie. In business, they assume you have an M.B.A. when she
459 applies for certain jobs. That's becoming the norm. Do you think the country has become a lot
460 more college-minded.

461 **HM:** Yeah, I think so. And, too, I think parents feel like, my parents didn't feel any pressure at
462 all about telling me to go to college, not go to college. I think parents today feel like they have to
463 help their kids make a really good decision, like there's a lot at stake. And, to be honest, you
464 know, like you can always transfer. If you show up at a college and it's not working out for you
465 or if you are at a college that doesn't offer the major you want, you can always transfer. It's
466 really not a life sentence. It's not like you're getting married to the college and you promise to be
467 in this marriage forever. You can sort of break up and go on to somewhere else. I do think, too,
468 that since so many people have college degrees they think "Well, if my kid doesn't go to
469 Harvard, she's never going to get a job." It's like "Well, that's not really true, either. Just so you
470 know."

471 **CL:** It's very competitive, when it doesn't have to be, really.

472 **HM:** It doesn't have to be! I heard a really great quote from a big time researcher in success:
473 People who are successful, why are they successful, blah blah blah. He, when he got to to the
474 conversation about college he said that what going to a good college, and he put this in air
475 quotes, might get you is your first job. After that, you have to prove yourself on the job. If you're
476 an idiot, a schmuck, no one wants to work with you, you can't collaborate, game over.

477 **CL:** Your college degree won't do anything.

478 **HM:** Right, it doesn't matter where you went to college, you know. And, most people in your
479 generation, and he was using your generation. He said most millennials only stay at a job, their
480 first job, for 15 months.

481 **CL:** I read that statistic before.

482 **HM:** So you're saying that I have to put all my eggs in this one basket-- I have to get into
483 Harvard otherwise my life is over... for 15 months? Like, 15 months out of the course of a 80+
484 year life? That's nothing!

485 **CL:** I remember hearing that. Mr. Lynch was very good when we were going to college
486 decisions of always saying "You can transfer." I know my brother went to Marquette High, went
487 to UD, where I go, and it's a small school, and he went onto Harvard Law.

488 **HM:** Yes! Oh my God, he was able to get into Harvard Law even though he didn't go to Harvard
489 Undergrad.

490 **CL:** He didn't go to Harvard, Yale, any of that. So I think there's so much pressure on it now.

491 **HM:** And I think students will show up here, as freshman, and they'll think "I have to go to
492 Princeton." And sometimes I ask them, do you know where Princeton is? Have you done any
493 research about it? "Well no, I know it's hard to get into." I'm like "Do you want to go there?"
494 And you know what... they're 14 year olds. What do you know about Princeton?

495 **CL:** Urgh, I remember that! You just know that it's...

496 **HM:** Name recognition.

497 **CL:** And maybe you know about the difficult course load.

498 **HM:** And it may not be the right fit for you. Like if you're a student completely freaked out by
499 competition. There are girls like that here where I'm like "Oh, my gosh. I hope that you're not
500 getting burned out here. Like, Princeton is not the place for you." There is good learning at great
501 colleges and universities all across the country. There's not five colleges you can get into.

502 **CL:** We need a banner of that to drape across the front.

503 **HM:** It's so true!

504 **CL:** I remember that in my graduating class there were a few others who went to small colleges,
505 like liberal arts colleges. But I was the only one who went to UD. But so many people were
506 going to Madison, so many to Marquette.

507 **HM:** Oh, yes.

508 **CL:** There was this idea of "The schools that this is where you go to college." And I just
509 remember being so overwhelmed like "What am I doing?"

510 **HM:** Well, and people asking you and feeling like you have to apologize, like "No! My school is
511 really good!"

512 **CL:** It helped that I had wanted to go to UD for so long, people were like "LoCoco's going to
513 UD, so it doesn't matter." But I remember when like, Lauren Hanna was looking at schools in
514 Louisiana, it's hard because I think, especially in Marquette, DS, and CMH, there's like a
515 mentality of there being, like 5 schools. You go to these schools if you're staying local, if you
516 wanna exceed expectations and be weird you go to these schools. Yeah.

517 **HM:** It's weird. And the parents believe that too. That's the problem. There are parents, this
518 happened this fall, there was a parent of a freshman, who wanted to meet with me. And she got a
519 B+ on something in English. He came in, wanted to meet with me, and was like "I hope your
520 English teacher is proud of himself because now she's not getting in college because of this B+."
521 And I'm like "It's on one paper. You realize they don't track every assignment. And it's a B+"
522 **CL:** And she's 14?
523 **HM:** And she's not getting into college.
524 **CL:** Yeah, haha, it's not even like a particular college.
525 **HM:** Exactly, and how do you, I have to professional and polite and respectful.
526 **CL:** Yeah, how do you respond to that?!
527 **HM:** In my head I'm like "You're crazy! It's the craziest thing I've ever heard."
528 **CL:** Doesn't even make sense.
529 **HM:** But then I have to be a teacher in that moment and say "Well, when you applied to college
530 did you have to submit a portfolio for all of your work?"
531 **CL:** Did you say that?
532 **HM:** Yeah! I tried to lead him to the answer of like, but he was like "Well, no..." So do you
533 know that college admissions really hasn't changed- that you don't have to submit portfolios
534 unless, maybe she's an art student going to an art school and then it would be art, it wouldn't be
535 papers.
536 **CL:** Even if you were trying to get into a specific English program, you would get to choose
537 what you submit. So that's ridiculous.
538 **HM:** So it was kind of like talking him off the ledge. He came in here thinking like "I got to
539 fight for my kid because it's my job to fight for her and if she gets a B+ her life is over! And you
540 know if he thinks that, that's what he's communicating to his daughter at home.
541 **CL:** Well, and that's where the anxiety comes from!
542 **HM:** RIGHT!
543 **CL:** That's where the pressure-- then you look at the how expensive college is.
544 **HM:** Yes! It's so expensive.
545 **CL:** So if you feel like you're not doing well there or not going to do well there and you also
546 don't want to invest all this money into it.
547 **HM:** When I went to college, I, well my undergrad was pretty much all paid for. So all I had to
548 pay for was books and a little bit of board. I could work in the summer and make enough to pay
549 for all of my books, all of my board, and having spending money. And buy a car! And that's just
550 in the summer, I didn't have to work during the year, I just focused on my studies.
551 **CL:** It's become ridiculous.
552 **HM:** I think my whole undergrad was maybe \$4,000 dollars.
553 **CL:** I have a clear memory of Mr. Dawson telling me that sophomore year.
554 **HM:** Yeah, yes!
555 **CL:** It's ridiculous, and I'm -- everyone at my school, a lot of their parents pay for their
556 education because it's a more expensive school, and I'm doing financial aid and working and

557 student loans and such but the idea that when you get that receipt of “Here’s your invoice for the
558 semester.” I’m like “This is monopoly money at this point because it’s so much!”

559 **HM:** It’s like “Really?”

560 **CL:** And that’s why I like, you’ll understand this, why I like going to a liberal arts school
561 because my major is so, I know what I want to do is teach, but if I didn’t, English is like “Well, I
562 communicate well and I write well. So.” It’s helpful that it’s not so specific that if that job were
563 to close, whatever your major is. I just appreciate that my school. Um. Last question then I
564 guess? Actually-- what did I send as my last one?

565 **HM:** The single sex. Definitely.

566 **CL:** Yeah.

567 **HM:** So in the Milwaukee area, DSHA is the only college-prep all-girl’s school. St. Joan Antida
568 is not college-prep. It’s like a comprehensive high school. But what Messmer HS, what other
569 public high school has done is they’ll have single-sex classes. So, like Messmer, started their
570 Project Lead the Way as “Here’s our girls class and here’s our boys class.” I know some of the
571 public high schools, like Homestead did one that was all-girls math class. Trying to create single-
572 sex classes within schools, because the research just keeps showing. I mean it’s been decade and
573 decades that girls especially really benefit from the single sex education. That it helps with
574 everything from confidence to identity to sense of purpose to intellectual formation, the support,
575 the sisterhood that you get.

576 **CL:** I didn’t appreciate it when -- I mean I wasn’t against it, I...

577 **HM:** You just take it for granted because that’s what you’re in..

578 **CL:** The *second* I got into my first classroom I was so grateful for DS.

579 **HM:** So what was that like?

580 **CL:** It was, so I went into freshman year at DS very shy. I didn’t talk to anyone. I wasn’t going
581 to participate. At all. And then, I don’t know what happened but obviously all girls, there’s way
582 less pressure in a classroom. I remember Mr. Lynch telling us the idea of the “Alpha Male
583 Mentality” in the classroom, and I remember going to freshman year “Literary Traditions I”
584 opening *The Odyssey* with my class that was predominantly guys. I was in a special section for
585 students who had taken four years of classical languages. So, we got assigned a professor who
586 taught English and Latin so he could talk to that more. I was one of, like, three girls. And I was
587 the only girl who talked the entire semester. My hand was up in the air, I was fine having the
588 conversation, and I could see the girls being intimidated by the class. It’s your first week of
589 classes, and I was intimidated to a point, but for me, it was definitely the confidence with
590 participation.

591 **HM:** Well, and just being like, this is what I do. I’m Clare LoCoco, as a student, this is how I
592 behave, as a student. I’m engaged. I participate. This is just what I do. I’m not going to be
593 someone different because...

594 **CL:** Because there are boys in the classroom. What I’ve noticed too, doing my observations in
595 various co-ed schools, and um, the girls are carrying little makeup bags around at 13 and
596 worrying about what they’re wearing and I just know we take it to the extreme at DS with the

597 messy hair, but it was so nice not worrying about that in the classroom. I definitely appreciated
598 that in class, for sure.

599 **HM:** Well, it's funny because my daughter is in 8th grade, she'll be coming here next year.
600 She's at Holy Family. She was just complaining last night, like "URGH. I can't wait to go to
601 class next year at DS because I feel like the boys suck all the attention from the teachers. It
602 drives me crazy." And I was like "Tell me more about that." And she said "Well, they either
603 acting up or misbehaving, so the teacher has to tell them to settle down, or they want to be called
604 on all the time that the teacher constantly calls on them. After a while I get sick of it so I just
605 give up. Like fine, fine. The teacher's going to call on Kevin, or Ben, or Ethan, whatever." And
606 this is in Math and Science.

607 **CL:** Well, it's interesting, there's a Catholic school right next to my University, called The
608 Highlands, run by Regnum Christi, it's a private school. What they do is through fourth grade
609 co-ed, and then 4th-senior year is single-sex classrooms. Lunch, recess mixed. A couple music
610 classes, so that they have interactions. And I do see a difference in a 13 year old in that class and
611 a 13 year old somewhere else. No participation. I feel bad for the girls, I notice girls who are
612 participating who get, um, teased, for being outspoken in class, by the boys. It's definitely a big
613 difference.

614 **HM:** Sooo interesting.

615 **CL:** I'm, like, the biggest advocate for single-sex education, now. And I swore I would never be
616 that person, and now I'll be sitting with friends and talking about schools and try to sneak in
617 "All-girls schools are better: confidence, identity of the females. But okay, sure. Who have I
618 become?"

619