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## Reflection on Interview with Kathleen Bach

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KB: So just one after the other? What do you remember most about your secondary school experiences? Is that just seventh to twelfth?

SH: Yeah, that is kind of what I was thinking. Mostly, for where you've taught because I think that that would be...I would think that if that was what I was teaching a certain grade I would remember that myself the most. Like, my personal experiences in that grade.

HT: So, your sixth through eight then?

SH: Yeah, sixth through eighth.

HT: I guess, whatever, yeah I don't know. Because you've taught sixth through eight right?

KB: Sixth, Seventh, and eighth is secondary school

HT: Yeah

KB: Cause what I've taught, I remember sixth grade. I have no clue even where we were living when we were in seventh grade. I moved 35 times.

SH: Oh wow.

KB: Um, I did stay in the same school from seventh to twelfth grade.

SH: Okay

KB: And, we were in a school, St. Mary's Star of the Sea in sixth grade. That was the last time I was in Catholic school. And, I guess I have pretty fond memories of it. Um, I don't remember a lot from it. I remember a little bit more from Quantico, Virginia, which is where I went seventh to twelfth grade.

SH: Okay

KB: They were really small schools, both of them. We had a graduating class of 42.

SH: Wow, okay

KB: So I don't know how that compares. I can't tell you what experiences would be in a fairly large school. But it's good because this (gestures to the classroom we are in) is about the size of the classes I had, somewhere from between 23 to 31 per class.

SH: Okay

KB: So it's fairly small. But to be honest, I think middle school is not a grade you remember a lot about. Do you remember your middle school?

HT: Um, yeah I remember not a ton about the classes. I remember the teachers.

KB: Yes

HT: I don't remember necessarily like what we learned.

SH: Right

KB: Now most of it will kind of be a blur. I liked learning. I had good teachers and I really liked learning and so one of the reasons I even went back to teach at the secondary level was when I was teaching freshman level in college...

SH: yeah

KB: I already had people that um.. I wouldn't have let them out of 12th grade.

SH: Really?

KB: Their writing abilities were not what I expected from college level. There just seemed to be a real inconsistency in it and I thought, "Wow you know really, I should teach probably younger"

SH: Oh, okay.

KB: than college, Maybe that would work out. And I thought about teaching high school and ended up teaching middle school at the Highlands

SH: okay.

KB: Which is right near UD. I taught as a substitute, a full time substitute for a teacher who went out on maternity leave for a year there.

SH: Okay

KB: And I was there, and I taught middle school because that's what was available. But I was always like "Oh I'm gonna teach high school" . But then, I actually liked middle school kids.

SH: okay

KB: So I was like, "You know, actually I like teaching this grade". I think they're fun. Um, their a little bit kooky kidlike and then they're also trying to be grown up.

SH: yeah

KB: So, it's like drama all day long. But, I like them because they're still at an age where they will listen and they will take a lot of instruction from a teacher. They're not to the point where they're like "I'm so cool I don't have to listen to you" yet. So this, I've only taught in Catholic schools.

SH; Oh, okay.

KB: So, that's I don't know if that's too limited for your project.

SH: Oh, no not at all.

KB: But that's what I've taught in. Okay, well that's what I wanted to teach in. I did not want to teach in public school.

SH: Ok okay.

KB: That's what worked out here. And it worked out pretty well. I probably remember more about college. I went to college at University of South Florida in Tampa and

SH: Oh, okay

KB: And, then graduate school was in, um, University of Arizona, in Tucson. But not in education. I'm actually a forensic anthropologist.

SH: Oh, wow.

KB: So, I did those guys (points to skeleton in her classroom). Curtis (name of the skeleton), he has a mask on and gloves. I put gloves on his hands so he can keep from getting the flu. We have a bunch of flus. So, that's what i used to teach in college. I taught anthropology but, as you may well know, they have a lot of adjuncts .

SH: yeah

KB: Now, so there's very few full time and they get away with having a lot of adjuncts teach. So that's not a full time position. So there's not like benefits, health care, that kind of thing and stuff like that. So, I didn't want to do that again. So this time around, now I'm teaching here. So, I'll leave that there so that you can ask me those questions so you know what's in there.

SH: Thanks. Um, so we talked a bit, we talked a little bit about your teaching experience. Is there anything else you wanted to add to your, to what you said about where you've taught at or what you've thought about it?

KB: Is there something your teachers want you to know about? Um, what I know about teaching now is especially in Catholic schools, they're not set up for accomodations, like you don't get, um IEPs.

SH: okay

KB; But, so if you send your child here, they're not going to get formal accommodations, but we do accommodate anyway, because you have to.

SH: right.

KB: You have to. If they can't take a test in 45 minutes, they have to have double time or we, you know, want to have time, that's what we have to do. So we'll have places where they can go and take tests for longer. Um, if they have, we have a lot of kids, which seems to be endemic, like ADHD and ADD and other things. I would say that's primarily what we have to do. But, so we accommodate them anyway even though there's not formal accommodations and we'll try to adjust as much as we can to meet what they need. But the parents know that by coming here- if you went to a public school they would have a lot more funding for, um having things set in place, you know, formalized. You probably know a lot more about it than I do because I haven't ever done it.

SH: Uh-huh

KB: Just in Catholic school. So, um, I liked teaching college a lot. I mean, that was fun. It was mostly at junior college level

SH: Oh, okay

KB: And, so I taught a Tomball college university, or Houston Community College. The one near you (points to Helen) and one out on Woodlands and everywhere. So, but that's my experience. It's not a lot. This is my third year in secondary.

SH: okay, yeah.

KB: That's what I was wondering, I was like "I don't know if I have enough to give you an overall view, like somebody like Thelma could who has over 30 years of teaching.

SH: No, it's honestly just like your experiences and whatever you experienced.

KB: Oh, well that's what I experienced.

SH: Yeah

KB: Um, Some of them are a little bit tough because I think we have something going on now and it's hard to tell if it's the parents or the kids.

SH: Okay

KB: Um, it's difficult for me to tell where they, what they, if there's something that needs to be accommodated and what is something that they just don't want to do. I have difficulty trying to tell the difference between that. That's a little tough.

SH: Right

KB: Like, some of its, just they don't want to take the test. They just don't want to do the work. So, for me I'm still learning to really be able to really tell what it is.

SH: Yeah.

KB: Because a lot of times, they'll kind of fool their parents a little bit about it.

SH: Yeah

KB: "I can't do it, I can't do this" and it's like "Oh". Like I have one girl that her parents told us from the beginning that she can't take tests with scantrons. And, we're like "Okay". They said "This will make her all wiggled out, she won't be able to do it. She can't keep track of this stuff". And so we said, you know "YOU can write it on your test. But let's do this. Let's practice with scantron so what we'll do, is if there's ever a discrepancy between your scantron and what your wrote down on your paper or circled on your paper, we'll always give you the benefit of, you know, writing on the paper".

SH: Oh, okay

KB: "But let's practice with scantrons because you're gonna have to use them sooner or later. So let's just do that". And that girl's whip at it. She's never had a problem. She's always getting high grades.

SH: oh, okay.

KB: So, but what are we supposed to say? Like "maybe you should tell your parents you can do this on a scantron just fine!" Because she's they've always had this thing where she doesn't have to use a scantron, but she's really good at it!

SH: huh!

KB: So we kind of do it like that. There's weird things like that that i don't know what to do with that.

SH: Let's see. Are there any differences that you're aware of, of the level of education that you've had to complete as opposed to the teachers that you had when you were in school?

Kb: Well, I don't know how many of the teachers had masters degrees versus, what is it, a bachelor's in education?

SH: Yeah

KB: A bachelor's of science? What do they do? Do they do a BA?

SH: Yeah, its a BA.

KB: Okay. Um, I don't quite know. I know I have a masters and the math teacher does down here. Mostly anybody who's forty and under has a masters.

SH: Okay

KB: But, some of the older ones just have a bachelor's but they've been teacher for 30 years so they know everything. So there's no discrepancy there. I think now days they have people getting a lot of masters degrees. I don't know if that's to increase what you get paid. There's so much you have to learn now. And all of the continuing education classes you take. I mean, we take them constantly and in Catholic schools we have to take theology classes as well, online, at University of Dayton. So I'm always at night doing those classes and then doing the work her.

SH: Oh, okay

KB: I think they require teachers, if i had to guess, you probably have to know an awful lot about child psychology and learning disabilities that you probably did thirty, forty years ago. I think.

SH: That makes sense.

KB: But i don't know if it just wasn't recognized when I was younger. I don't remember ever anybody having special things being done.

SH: Right

KB: I don't know if it's because nobody knew about it or they just didn't do it. I don't know. But we have to know an awful lot about what makes them tick. What difficulties they have. I know an awful lot about every one of my students and what goes on at their homes. Their home environment, where they come from, things like that. That probably gives us a lot of insight, for why they behave.

SH: Yeah

KB: Like when they do something, you know, I have a background in my head of, well I know what they live with, if that makes sense to you.

SH: Right

KB: And I would not have guessed that you know that much when I started teaching, but you end up knowing an awful lot about your students. A lot about their lives, who they hang out with. These people in here, they've know most of each other since kindergarten.

SH: Okay

KB: So, there's all kinds of stuff. And like I said, some of the teachers, they went here themselves as students. So these people know each other from way back. And so they know the students and some of the students are children of their friends and stuff so it just goes way way way way back.

SH: Right

KB: So I just think teachers need to know, these days, so much psychology and so much just outside of the teaching. You can't just know your subject because you know, I took tests just to make sure I could teach all branches of science from seventh to twelfth grade and I can do that but you have to learn all kinds of stuff about learning and making lesson plans and reteaching and I did alternative certification because that's not, I didn't come up through education. Adn it didn't matter that I taught college for years and years and years.

SH: Really

KB: I still had to get certified and I had to take certification classes.

SH: Oh yeah, all that psychology stuff.

KB: Oh yeah! And the pedagogy and everything.

SH: Oh yeah, okay.

KB: adn at first i was thinking "Oh that's not fair I already have three degrees why do I need to go and do this?" I can see now why you have to. Cause it's a totally different ballgame than teaching college. College you walk in and you say, you know, "You either learn it or you don't. Take the test or you don't. It's your dolar. It's up to you". But here you're not just teaching them stuff, you're also helping them grow up.

SH: Yeah

KB: And that's like, big time responsibility, cause you're part of their life. You know, sometimes it's daunting. It's really daunting. You don't want to make a mistake. You know, or do it wrong, or, but I guess we do occasionally.

SH: Yeah.

KB: I don't know what to say. Are you going to start soon? Is this your last year of school?

SH: Um, I'm a junior right now.

KB: Oh.

SH: Yeah, so I'll do student teaching next year.

KB: Oh, where do you guys student teach? Is it different places?

SH: It's different places all over Irving, yeah.

KB: Oh, Irving?

SH: Yeah

KB: Well, I will hope for you to get a good one.

SH: Thank you

KB: Some of them are tough. Irving, I guess is better. The supervisor I had over at the ACT office told me to be careful about Dallas, DISD.

SH: Oh, Okay

KB: Not Irving, but DISD. So. I mean some of them in Irving are pretty nice. Like Valley Ranch. What are you going to teach?

SH: I'm a biology major.

KB: ARe you?

SH: So, science.

KB: are you going to teach high school?

SH: Uh, middle school.

KB: Middle school, oh okay!

SH: Yeah, like you!

KB: Oh okay, cool! I like them. I think they're funny. The elementary school teachers on the other hallway, they'd be like "I'd never teach middle school kids on a bet" and I'm like "I don't want to teach little bitties"

SH: Yeah

KB: That would drive me nuts, if I couldn't get them to understand or something. So, I don't know, they're funny. They're really cute kids and they're a lot of fun and if you like middle school kids you can have a lot of fun with them.

SH: Oh good

KB: So, I like it a lot. I don't know if I would go to high school now.

SH: Yeah?

KB: I still keep thinking back and I think "No i would probably still stay at middle school". I think you would like it

SH: It seems like a lot of fun.

KB: It is. It is fun. We have a lot of good times

SH: Good.

KB; I mean, I had kids in here just before you came, back and forth looking for stuff. You know, they go to extended day programs, so a lot of them will be down the hallway or they're doing something and they're constantly in and out of here checking on something or doing something. So they're, it would be good. **Cut off at 17:41. To 17: 52**

SH: All right. Let's see. Are there any issues or concerns that you have to think about now that weren't maybe as big of a concern when you were in school?

KB: What issues were important to teachers when you were a student? Huh! Yeah, I don't know that I knew anyone when I was in school up to, probably all the way up through high school, I didn't know anyone who came from a broken family, a divorced family, single parent families. Any combination thereof, except for, you know, the very standard issue, mom, dad and two kids. They were almost all like that. Everybody's mom stayed home and so I think that is way different now because we deal with kids who have very, sometimes unstable homes, or whatever they're home is, it's affecting them in school.

SH: Okay

KB: I mean, constantly, and when something goes on, the assistant principal, who's the person who finds this all out, who knows. She'll tell us and you know, we have to look at the files and see because we have to keep in mind what' going on at their house because you can really see how it affects them. You know, in my rooms, I know whose grandfather just died. I know whose dog just died. I mean sometimes, it's just the dog. But, you know, it affects them and you'll see them, if we know something went on at home, we watch them, make sure that if they get upset

or if we see them get all teary eyed or something. **Cut at 20:00 min to 22: 48.** I think it's like, the psychological stuff and I had just parent teacher conferences the other day and nobody wanted to talk about their grades. And I told Thelma, she's the department head of the middle school. And I told her, I said "At the end of it, I felt like I'd been a psychologist because all the parents wanted to talk about was 'Here's the reason why my child is totally upset all the time or here's why my child acts out in class or here's why my child won't behave'". And I sat there the whole time thinking "Doesn't anybody want to know about their grades?" And the whole thing was "Here's why my kid does this" and that's good but I think in a lot of cases it's making excuses for everything. Because this on kid, you know, several detentions. And she's like "He's upset because he can't sit with his best friend at lunch" and I'm like, "This is the reason for all the misbehavior? All the detentions, all the stuff he ends up with?" So, some of it is very very real. They need to have a little extra TLC for whatever's happening. You know, family just busted up or something happened or somebody died or who knows? All kinds of stuff or they have a real issue with ADD, if they're on or off medication. All kinds of things. And then, we also have ones who, and I hate to say this, but there's an awful lot of "It's everybody's fault but the students".

SH: Right

KB: "It's your fault because you gave them a bad grade" and not asking "How can my child get a better grade?" It's like "Why did you give them a bad grade?" And it's like "Well, because they earned a bad grade." And so it's a curious thing and I don't have lot of experience with it because I haven't taught at this level for years and years, like Thelma, she's the one who's taught for thirty years. So she has an incredible experience. Adn often, I ask her, "Is is different than it used to be?" And she's like "Oh yes, very different". If they weren't doing well the parent would come in and say "What do i need to do so that they're behaving better in your class or their doing what they're supposed to or they're keeping up with their work?" and now it's "Why aren't you giving my child a better grade?"

SH: Right

KB: and most of the time, I will be like, "Well because they didn't turn anything in". And I was like " I can't even help them get a better grade if they won't turn something in". So they say and I see it being a really frustrating thing because there's not an attempt sometimes to fix it, it's just "Well you have to excuse him for acting this way. This is just what they do".

SH: Right

KB: Or, something. And I don't know when that started. I don't know. And I don't know. I suspect it's more the parents than the kids because the kids learn from their parents. And it's just a frustrating thing. Right now we happen to have a group that it's happening a lot with. So it get frustrating to be like " I can teach them a lot of stuff but its not going to happen if they won't do the work or turn in the work" and they seem not at all bothered with it. I asked them, "What happens if you don't pass eighth grade? You know, what do you do if you're going, you go to high school if you don't pass? Well you can't!" Not necessarily to a private high school but you can for public. They might ask you to take these classes over the summer that lets you get back up to speed or something.

SH: Hmm

KB: But I'm quite curious about it.

SH: That's interesting. I didn't know that.

KB: And we just moved from Massachusetts so I don't even have the whole ins and outs of the whole Texas school system.

SH: Oh, yeah

KB: So it's very different, still. So I have to keep catching up all the time with, "What do you do with this? What do you do with that?" So it's a little different that way. You, educated at your age probably will have less difficulty with it because you will be trained differently so you will be trained to deal with that from the word "Go". So I expect it will be easier for you than for somebody like me who started teaching secondary at an older age. I think.

SH: We'll see. I'm sure there's different things that pop up every time.

KB: Yeah, you're teacher voice just has to be... It can't be low. It can't be very soft. It has to be, not commanding, but it has to be there. Like, very much there. They'll probably tell you to lower your voice a little bit. Lower the octave just a bit. But I know when I first did it, I can remember my supervisor saying that. "You've got to get your teacher voice!"

SH: I didn't know that was a thing! Huh!

KB: Yes, apparently so! She's like "And stop saying please!" And I was like "Okay". So it was, you know, she's like "You ask them too many times, you need to tell them"

SH: Okay

KB: "Don't ask them, tell them" and I was like "Okay cause I just..."

SH: Teacher voice used on me!

KB: Yes, and tell them, don't ask them. Because they need more structure than I thought they did. I kind of thought, "Well I don't have to do all that. They should know. They're old enough to know this that and the other thing". No. no nono. yOu have to tell them everything

SH: Okay, huh

KB: When to sharpen your pencil. Where to put your pencil. What we don't do in class. And that includes Don't get up and go wandering around the class throwing away things, going to talk to your friend. You have to go over the list of every single thing they cannot do. And here's how we do it. So I thought middle school would be a lot less of that. But you'll be much better off if you, spend the first week honestly telling them procedures and what we do, here's how we do it, here's how we do it, and here's why we do it. You know, here's what we do and here's how we do it, and we're practicing.

SH: Okay

KB; That was so so true and I really didn't believe it. I was like "Oh, I don't have to tell them everything"

SH: Yea

KB: Well first year I didn't and it was a disaster!

SH: okay

KB: A big disaster! I was a mess and so now I'm like "Okay, I'm going to go through everything. Even stuff you think is stupid"

SH: Yeah.

KB: But you have to do everything. Everything you think. How to turn in a paper. Where to turn in your paper. When? You know, how to pass it back. We have to do passing back papers too. We pass it back like this (shows how to pass them back) because otherwise everybody in the front row gets up and goes to the person in the back row to *give* them their paper. HOnestly.

They had no idea! So all this stuff my supervisors had taught me it was absolutely correct. I didn't believe them, but you'll believe them after a couple months. You really will

SH: Okay

KB; And then after that, you will never ever ever ever ever again not teach them rules and procedures on the first week of school.

SH: Okay

KB: Because you'll be lost if you don't. Absolutely lost. You lay down the law. There's none of that "You don't smile 'til Thanksgiving" thing. Have you heard that one?

SH: I've heard it

KB: Yeah, that's not true but you do have to kind of keep pretty firm boundaries before you let anybody go out a little bit.

SH: Right

KB: Or, it's just very difficult to get them back.

SH: yeah

KB: It's just really, it's far harder to call them back from where you let them go to then never to let them go there at all. So if you do all those things it all works out. Every year that I do it, it gets much much better.

SH: Okay.

KB: But I had to learn. Teacher voice, do the rules and procedures. And they actually do want that structure. Middle school kids need it. They really need it. They're gonna go out of bounds every moment they can. So while they're in there, they actually feel like they know what to do do. So you can't let them go on their own. I think Helen had to listen to me tell her all kinds of stories at first

HT: Yes, it was interesting. I felt bad

KB: Well, and I didn't know because i didn't know and I didn't have a big bank of experience. And I was like "What's going on?"

SH: yeah!

HT: yeah, they were pretty awful.

KB: Yeah, some of them were pretty awful and it didn't help me being brand new because I was supposed to student teach with that woman.

SH: Yeah

KB: And she just never came back

SH: Oh my gosh, wow

KB: And they're like "Would you like to do the class for the whole year?" And I'm just sitting there thinking "You know I'm, this is my first year, right?" and they're like "Yes, that's okay". And, yeah, so I got lucky doing it but I had to learn the hard way on some stuff.

SH: Yeah

KB: So there's times when I wish, if I was gonna teach, I'd had a lot of education classes.

SH: Okay

KB: That would have been really helpful and I know that having been trained as teachers, the other three on this hallway, they know things that I don't know and have had to learn the hard way because they were trained in education. And I got some, but not a lot. I'm trained more to be an anthropologist. You know, that helps with cultural things.

SH: Oh yeah, I bet.

KB: Because I know a lot about that, but I don't have the education background. I've had to do it by experience. But, you know, it's all worked out now.

SH: Yeah.

**Cut out 33:16 to 35: 48**

KB: I think really the behavior of kids is probably the bigger change.

SH: Okay

KB: and i don't know why it is though, I'm still trying to figure out what's going on, but it just cracks me up how many parents come in and give us a big long list of excuses about why and even sort of "I know you have this set in place for disciplines but my child's not going to do that". And you're like, "Well, why are you going to a school like this that has a fairly strict disciplinary program" and we have some that are just like "They're not going to do it". Well okay then.

There's not much you can do about it.

SH: right

KB: I mean, you really can't. Let's see this here.

SH; Technology.

KB: Oh, yay!

SH: So how do you think it's affected you teaching and then how the students have learned?

KB: And, where do I see technology in the classroom in the future? Um, actually we've had lots of discussions on this. And technology makes a whole lot of things a whole lot easier, it's easier for me to get resources, you know, all kinds of things. If I want something, some new lab, or something different for the classroom or better experience. Like, the other day I pulled up some scavenger hunt that I'm going to give them tomorrow. And I look online for all kinds of things, worksheets, everything. And it's great that way, you don't have to stick with just the book. As long as you're teaching the curriculum, you're great. I use the computer for all kinds of videos, all kinds of instruction, they can work on the board and do problems so the whole class can see. Those are great things.

SH: Yeah

KB: But, I think it's better, and they'll disagree with me, I think that the technology is better in the hands of the teachers then it is in the hands of the students, like in middle school.

SH: Oh yeah, okay.

KB: I think they're still too young not to be dazzled and distracted by it. Because every time we hand them out- we have banks of iPads and computers over in the science lab- and so if we need them, we just check them out through the schedule and say "I need thirty iPads for something". And, so we get them to use and we have a whole computer lab and fabulous computers down there, you know, moveable touch, screen, everything. They're really really great. So they get a good education in coding and learning to use it and everything. But in the classroom, and maybe this is just my experience, but I still think they're too young because they play with it more than they work with it.

SH: Okay

KB: And, I think in high school, absolutely. That's when they're old enough to use it for what it's meant for, use a whole lot of stuff for technology and learning in the classroom. At the middle school, I think you can use some but they still benefit more from hard copy books and writing. In fact, one kid, and this surprised the heck out of me the other day, he said "I would still rather read the book than look at it online" and I said "Really?". I said, "Why do you think that is?" And

he said, "Well, it's not as rushed if you look at the book". And I said "Does it make you feel rushed if you do it online?" and he goes, "Well sort of, you know, it's just not the same" and he said, "I feel like it's slower". And this is one of the kids that has ADD and he works really really hard to do things and concentrate. And for him, it's more distracting and I think it's just adding to distraction levels.

SH: Yeah.

KB: At this level. And he said he would still rather read a book and write. And I think it slows their mind down a little bit and they can actually concentrate and focus better. When they're online, there's a lot of distraction to go and push that button to go and play with YouTube or something. I mean, we have a good filter here, but we don't filter everything and as much as they like to play with them and do things with them, they don't know a lot about computers. They just don't.

SH: Right

KB: I know more than they do. And I had to learn, we didn't have computers all the way through graduate school. There was no such thing as a PC for me. We didn't have them. They did not exist. There wasn't even internet. There was nothing. And so I've learned it all as an adult and I still know more than they do. Because they don't really know how the computers work, but they know how to play with them. And I kind of disagree with, I think they should have computer class and they should learn to code and they should learn how to properly use the computer for education but we don't have them full time in class and they so far have not gone to dedicated devices where everybody gets their own, or they're supplied. Do you get supplied them or did you just have your own computer?

HT: In high school? In middle school we didn't have it.

KB: Middle school you didn't have it?

HT: No. We had computer classes, like that we'd go to for lab, yeah. In high school, we had to have a laptop.

KB: Yes, so a high school I agree.

HT: But we were so distracted in high school and even in college, people don't, I mean a lot of professors don't let us have laptops.

KB: They still like you to write and stuff?

HT: Yeah in like most of UD classes, or maybe half.

SH: Yeah.

KB: And I know everybody loves, they have to get, I mean we have a constant barrage from administration that we have to use technology for everything. And they said something, like in junior high, "Well Kathy uses it all the time in science and that's great. But we have to use it more in English". And I was like now, "Well wait a minute. There's a place that it more easily fits in science. Because you're using it, you know, for, we have a lot of equipment that we can connect to it wirelessly, and use monitoring equipment for experiments". And I said, but "Why do you need a computer for Romeo and Juliet?" And so writing, learning the skill of writing and communication is so important that I really think messing with a computer just distracts them from it. It doesn't help, I think writing and reading out of a plain old book is so valuable that if they ever give it up just for the sake of "Oh, we have to be so technologically advanced" I think that they're throwing out the baby with the bathwater. They really really really are. I have no problem with technology. I think it's fine. I think it's great. I use it in my lab all the time. I use it

here all the time. But we're doing things that lend it to itself. But if I gave them a computer? They're going to play with it.

SH: Yeah

KB: And they do. I have a virtual lab they're going to do tomorrow. And I'm just going to see how it works. And I also have to run hard copies of it because they play and they mess and they fiddle around with it and they don't concentrate like they do if I just gave them a little wind up car and told them to calculate the speed and acceleration. They actually get into that. They get down on the floor. They're playing with things and they actually do a fabulous job doing it hands on. Every time I do a virtual lab and I do it every once in a while to make everybody happy, I don't think they go as well.

SH: Okay

KB: I really don't. And so everybody's begging to me "We have to have this really technology based thing". The parents want it, the parents have no idea. It doesn't help. It doesn't really help your kid. You don't need it. You could do it with a piece of chalk and a chalkboard and you can do fine.

SH: Yeah

KB: But, I think that get a lot of that. Because of all this "Oh, it connects them to so many resources". Like, that's fine but they still have to know how to do it they themselves. They have to learn first of all, how to write properly and communicate. And they don't know how to do it because there's spellcheck and there's all this stuff and we still, I had them do a science project and then they had to code it down in the computer lab. So it's like, they make a website for their science project.

SH: Hmm

KB: So it's really cool.

SH: Yeah

KB: And I still have everybody copying big pages out of something and putting it into their science labs. I said, "Guys this is plagiarizing." "Well no, I only took this much or I changed a couple words". And I said "If I type it into google, and your experiment comes up as number 1 or number 2, that's too many words the same". So they're still not learning to write themselves. And so, I just see that happening and I really really hope that schools don't get like "Oh, we have to have all this technology or we're not on the cutting edge of education". Yes you are

SH: Mhmm.

KB: Yes you are. Just the book. The book, a piece of paper, and a pencil and you'll be fine. Even if they don't like it, but they're so distracted, why are we distracting them? Maybe because I'm an old fuddy duddy. But there just doesn't seem to be a point. You can use it in math, you can use it in science and I think that's great, that's wonderful, and in computer classes, but you do not need to have that thing on 24/7 just so you can get an education.

SH: Yeah

KB: Maybe your teachers will like that. I hope

SH: No, I think that's really interesting. Like, to have a perspective from a teacher that's actually teaching middle school kids.

KB: I was surprised to hear it from a student in middle school

SH: Yeah, that is surprising.

KB: It was surprising and I asked them even today "How many of you use your online book?" and nobody. I was like "Why do you not use your online book?" "Well it's just easier to take the book home". And I said "But, do you never want to use it? You know, is there a reason you don't use it?" "No" they just don't. And I'm like "It's right there. If your parents really want you using technology all the time, you can do it"

SH: Yeah.

KB: And they don't. So, but very interesting. But you hear stuff, "Technology just makes education so much better". It really doesn't.

SH: Okay

KB: I just don't think its that that useful. Even though I use it a lot. But it makes my teaching much easier. Now, making the teaching much easier, absolutely. Absolutely! That makes that great. You will get stuff from people that already did it really really well so you don't have to do it. And you get all kinds of resources. But for them, not so much. They're not old enough.

SH: Yeah

KB: Us, yeah. Them, no.

SH: And we kind of talked about parents involved in the educational process, is there anything that you wanted to add to it?

KB: We have a funny little cartoon down in the teacher's lounge and it shows education 1961, education 2011, i think it was. It's an older cartoon, but it's in there and the 1961 picture shows the student and its parents and the teacher in a conference and the parents are showing the kid the F on the paper and saying "Why did you get such a bad grade on this paper?" And the teacher's sitting there, you know, listening to the parents get after the kid and then in the 2011 one, the kid's sitting there like this and the parents are yelling at the teacher, going "Why did you give my child an F?" So, that's kind of it.

SH: Yeah

KB: When something goes wrong, they want to know why we gave them a bad grade and they don't understand as much they earned a bad great. I didn't give it to them. I'm grading what they turned in and this is what they turned in and so a lot of, they will come after us first. Now, not everybody. We have some parents that are like, "You just let me know if little So and So is not doing what they're supposed to and we will make sure that they do what they're supposed to." There's a lot of good parents like that that are like "We need them to do the work they're supposed to do" and they will do it. They're great. They're wonderful. They're really supportive and they help and so we know who those are. But usually their kids are doing their work anyway.

SH: Yeah

KB: It's the ones that don't do work but they come in ask us what's our problem. And I find that kind of unusual because they seem to think that we're giving them willy nilly or something but they'll be like "I don't understand". At the beginning of this year we had all the seventh grade students parents coming in going, "Well they had straight A's in sixth grade and now they're getting Bs and Cs". Well, "We grade differently than they do upstairs in elementary school. It's different". You don't get all the time you need for every test. Like, you can take part of it in class and then do the rest after school or at lunch and take 3 or 4 days to do it. We have very strict limits and this is what you have to do. And we tell all of them, "It's just an adjustment. They'll be fine in a couple months. You'll see. They'll be able to do everything that we ask and they'll do it

well and they'll be fine with it. It's just difficult now". But we want to tell them, "Let them fail now. Let them have a hard time now in middle school. Now's the time to have trouble with this stuff. You don't want them having trouble in high school." You want them to learn what they have to do to do their work the way that they're supposed to. Not the way they want to cause they'll ask constantly, "Well why can't I just do it this way?" "Because I said to it this way". Part of this is you learning to follow directions, not just because I want it this way.

SH: Right

KB: It's for following directions. You have to learn that what you want is sometimes not important. It's showing that you can do something the way you've been told to do it. Not necessarily having to have a reason for it, but do it because you were told to. That's it. That's the end of the lesson. Just do it. And so we're like, "Look, middle school's the time". They can safely fail there. They can mess up, not get it right, have to start over, do everything and really come out on top. And some of the kids I had last year that were not very good in some other subjects, they're just powering through physics and stuff this year.

SH: Uh huh. Yeah.

KB: They're amazing. But last year they would have sat there and whined about everything they had to do. But in a year's time, they're completely different and they're ready to go.

SH: That's great

KB: It is, it's amazing. So it's like, "Look, we see this over and over again. Leave them alone. They'll be fine. Tell them to do the work and in six months they'll be a completely different kid. Don't worry. They all go through it and they all get through it".

SH: Yeah

KB: But the parents will be like, "Oh it's too much, it's too hard" or we constantly hear "They're stressed out. They're stressed out" and it's like, "Well yeah, they're stressed out because it's new and different and they don't want to do it and they have to and it's stressful". It's stressful. But it won't kill them and they'll be okay. Just let them stress out a little bit.

SH: Yeah

KB: You know, and quit telling them "Well you don't have to do it because it's stressful". So, i think that that's what they need.

SH: Yeah, yeahh.

KB: This is a safe place, you know. I told one parent, "It's not like I think I'm teaching at Harvard. I know it's middle school. I know what middle school is. And i also know what they need to go to high school with because my son went to high school and he wasn't quite prepared for a few things and I don't want your kid to do that. I want them to be more ready for the things my son might not have been. And it's going to be hard". I mean you guys know how hard high school is. All the social stuff that goes in there? You've got all that to deal with, plus all of your school load.

SH: Yeah

KB: You might as well learn to do stuff the right way and then you have part of it done already and then you don't have to stress on that part. You can deal with the other stuff.

SH: Yeah.

KB: So, it was like, "I don't want your kid to get out of middle school and just be another kid in high school. I'm trying to make them the best kids in high school. Not just go to high school, but to be the best ones". So when they go to high school, they're like "Oh those kids that come from Mary Immaculate, they're really good. They're ready to go"

SH: Yeah

KB: And we do hear that. I can't claim credit for that except for last year because I was only hear starting last year. But it's really true. You don't want them to just make it through, you just want them to be really really good. And most of them really really are. But it's fighting with them all the way. But it's worth it. It's fun. You'd like it.

SH: Good

KB: That's something you'll enjoy. **Stop at 53:50**