

LIVE SPECIAL – UTS FASStival December 2024.

This episode is a little longer than the other 18 episodes as it was recorded live on the UTS campus with a f2f audience.



Transcript.

Jane Hunter:

Welcome, everyone. Just before we start, I would like to acknowledge the lands on which we're gathered this evening. The lands of the Gadigal people of the sovereign nation. This land was never ceded.

Yesterday we were lucky enough to interview one of Australia's leading teacher education experts. Her name is Associate Professor Marnie Shay. She's from Queensland, the interview with her is going to be on Series three, which is available now. People like Marnie have done deep work trying to make the voice of Indigenous education heard. But more specific to really have an impact on a strengths-based ways which potential Indigenous students might think about a career in teaching.

My name is Jane Hunter. I was a high school teacher. I've also worked in the education bureaucracy, but and I've taught in teacher education for many decades now. I have around 40 years' experience in education in a range of settings, and I have loved my work as a teacher. It really saddens me that we're at this moment in time where there are large challenges, but we have ways, hopefully, of offering some solutions. And tonight, we're going to hear about some solutions in the episode that we're going to go live with.

Now, I'd also like to introduce my wonderful colleague, Don Carter. Don was a former inspector of English in our schools. And like me, he was the head teacher of English and he's been in teacher education in a variety of places.

Between us, I think we have around 80 years or so of education experience to draw on. Like me, Don shares a passion for education in schools, and the ways in which teachers need to be thinking about their practice.

I'd like to introduce Amy Gill. Amy is our main guest this evening in this live broadcast. Amy is from Youth Off the Streets. She was a former mainstream teacher, and she now teaches in special assistance schools. Amy's work in Youth Off the Streets really targets students and you'll hear much more from Amy about the work that she does in a moment, where students has not been a great place. Youth off the Streets has six campuses in New South Wales and currently more than 200 students are enrolled in six campuses across 14 different sites. Welcome, Amy. The schools are scattered across Sydney, but to the north - on the Central Coast and to the south around Wollongong. Welcome, Amy and thank you for making yourself available at this time of year when everyone's pretty ground down by the year's activities and is looking forward to a welcome break.

I'd like to introduce William Verity from Verity Media. We've worked with William for over a year now and it's been a positive experience. He's a wonderful producer and editor; was a broadcaster. He's worked in the podcast space in universities for more than ten years, and we feel so fortunate to have had William teach us about what good podcasting might look like. We read a few books to start us into the space of podcasting - I'm not sure that we've necessarily refined the art, but we certainly have really welcomed his tutoring and mentoring of both Don and me. Thank you so much, William.

Now I'm going to hand over to my colleague, Don. Don is going to talk to you more specifically about our podcast and just why we set about creating this audio resource; publication of series 3 is just around the corner.

Don Carter:

Thanks very much, Jane. And hello, everyone. Thank you for coming. This podcast started nearly two years ago when Jane and I were talking about certain issues in education, thorny issues, and we wondered how we could get more people involved in the discussion. We talked about things like school funding, student test results, the public versus private school ongoing issue, co-ed versus single sex education. What would be worthwhile to get a variety of voices involved in conversation. It was Jane who said, well, why don't we think about doing a podcast? I'd never done a podcast. I listen to podcasts. So, why not? And, between us, we know a lot of people in education.

As Jane pointed out, we've been around for a long time, and we could gather different perspectives on education, not just the perspective from the classroom or from policies. If you've listened to any of the podcasts, you'll hear that we interviewed Jason Clare, the Federal Minister for Education, in a series 2 podcast. We're able to talk to him about some of those issues. It was great to speak with him before and after the interview - he and his advisors sat with us and talked for about 20 minutes.

We also interviewed Adrian Piccoli, who is New South Wales Education Minister from 2011 to 2017, and Adrian had some interesting things to talk about. He was a Coalition education minister and said that the most difficult people he had to deal with were his own Coalition colleagues because he was negotiating with the unions. He got on well with the unions. He'd nurtured a good relationship with

the unions. And some of his colleagues didn't like that. They were saying to him, why don't you bash the unions? And he was saying, no, that's not the way to go about it. When he was opposition leader, not leader, education spokesman for two years, he developed those relationships with all the key stakeholders. Thus, by the time that Coalition came to office, and he was education minister, he had positive and ongoing relationships with them. It didn't always go smoothly, but you'll have to listen to the podcast to find out more about that.

We also interviewed Ken Boston, who used to be director general of New South Wales Department of Education, plus the director, or the equivalent OFSTED in the United Kingdom plus another role in South Australia. Ken had some very interesting things to say about policy, about controversies and how they were resolved. We also got to interview classroom teachers in the podcast - we hear from their perspectives on the day-to-day routines of schools, what impedes their teaching, what enhances their teaching, what things give them pleasure with their teaching.

We also interviewed Corrina Haythorpe, who's the president of the Australian Education Union. She gives some really interesting stories about her negotiations with Departments of Education across the country. We also talk to teacher education, academics and they talk about their research - so you can see there's many different perspectives, different levels of insight, if you like, into education as such. It's been an interesting story to tell.

As Jane said, it's been great working with William. He's made it enjoyable and fun. But we want people to listen to the podcast because we think that people will get a lot out of them. And now with three series, Series 3 about to be released and six in each series, you've got a smorgasbord of 10 episodes of stimulation. I would really suggest that you have a listen to them, and I'm also really pleased that Amy Gill is with us this evening. I've had the pleasure of working with Amy and her team in Youth off the Streets, and they do such important work. Amy will talk more about that shortly. But now, I might stop talking. And William, you're going to talk to us about how to make a podcast.

William Verity:

Thank you. Thank you so much, Don and Jane. My name is William Verity, I'm from Verity Media. I've worked for the ABC. I've done a lot of podcasts over 10 years - specialising in podcasts for universities and for social justice organisations, and I've done various types of podcasts.

I guess the first question I would mention is why you would do a podcast in the first place and not just because it's fun. Well, I remember doing podcasts when I was seven with a little tape recorder with my brother. So that's really my main motivation. Podcasts are a sort of bit of a sideline for me in terms of the money that I earned, but they're probably the number one thing in terms of enjoyment of the work.

I really enjoyed working with Jane and Don. It's been an educational process for me to hear about the issues in education. At times it's been quite depressing, I have to say. I did say at one stage say to them this is a bit of a depressing podcast as there are lots of issues in education. However there are solutions too.

I guess what I'd like to share is, do a podcast because it's enjoyable, because it's fun. Second thing is what kind of podcast a podcast - it can be anything you want. I've done everything from, say, a five-minute podcast for Odyssey House, which is drug rehabilitation service, where I've talked to people who have gone through their program and it's simply their voice talking about their experience with drugs, with drug addiction and recovery. They can be powerful – that one was only 5 minutes.

We're living in a media saturated environment. We're all time poor. But this is something that we can share on a website, on social media. We're not asking very much from people - but they can be all the way through to 45-minute investigative pieces. Obviously, that will affect the budget. The budget can go from very small to very large and it depends on how much production you want to put into it. If it's simply just putting a microphone in front someone's face and say, tell me a story, that's a cheaper way of doing it, or you can have multiple voices and music, and a lot of high-end editing, it depends what your purpose is.

Podcasting has strengths and weaknesses. The weakness with any audio is it requires people to invest in it. It requires people to say I'm interested enough in the idea of this and I will download this podcast, I will put on headphones and I will listen to it. I remember doing some work for Legal Aid a couple of years ago and we did a whole load of kind of Humans of New York style kind of social media posts. And we did a podcast series too. These were 25-minute podcasts. I remember my colleagues saying, Oh, look, the social media posts are far more effective because they've got so many, you know 100,000 views. Well, sure they do. But a view of an image, a view of a social media post is kind of like, you know, give me one social media post that you saw yesterday, and you remembered.

Whereas once you start to listen to a podcast or once you persuade someone to invest, to actually to download it, you've got them for 10 to 25 minutes at a time where they're almost certainly doing something else, but often it's something else that is fairly mindless - that could be going home on the train, driving, doing the washing up, but you have them in your head. And for me, there is nothing more immediate than audio.

When I first started doing audio with the ABC, I was working for Radio National and my producer was very experienced - he retired just last week, he said: 'audio is a visual medium'. And what he meant by that was that the voice in your head, you must describe it, describe where you are, you paint a picture in words in sound. And if you can do that, you've got someone captured. You've got the person literally inside their brain in a way - I don't think any other medium works that way. Certainly. I mean, I'm a writer, too. I love writing, but writing doesn't do the same thing that I think really works with podcasting in an academic context. It's a powerful way when you're looking for funding to, say, it's work that engages community.

And I think that's what we've done well with 'Talking Teachers', and I don't know how you would have done this any in any other way to engage an education community - to engage a community of politicians or education policymakers, or classroom teachers and how you would do that in a public way, which you put out there, which can then be consumed by a global audience, if you're lucky. But certainly, school leaver students who want to come to UTS who are thinking, do I want to come and study education, you can say, well, listen to this. These are these are the people who are teaching

this course, and these are the kind of ideas that are being engaged and these are the kind of contexts they have in the industry as well. And I think that's powerful.

When people come to me and commission a podcast, it's often for showcasing their research to a wider audience. It's for donors. It's particularly, say, in a non-profit, in a not-for-profit organisation. If a donor comes along and says, you know, what do you do? I want to give you some money and you might say, here we are, this is what we do. These are these are the voices of the people that we engage with. These are the voices of the people that we that we support. The other kind of advantage of audio over video particularly is that there's a degree of anonymity. So particularly, say, for instance, if you're dealing with drug users, I have done two podcasts like this in different contexts, you can use someone's first name, you can still get that kind of that immediacy, but they have their identity protected - to some extent.

The first thing I like to do – is ask what kind of podcast would you like to do? What's your purpose here? The podcast that we've done with 'Talking Teachers' is a straightforward one. It requires a minimal editing, we have an intro, which you heard at the beginning, we have an outro and then we have a little bit near the end - when the interview is over. Don and Jane will then do a bit of a wrap up asking, well, what do we think of that interview? What were the interesting bits? Where can you go now - if you want to do if you want to hear more about this particular topic – look at the show notes of related articles and papers the expert has written plus other members from the LLE group at UTS.

I'll finish with reminding people having made your podcast the big deal then with podcasting is finding an audience. As with all kinds of media, the easier it becomes to put something out there, you can put something out there - this podcast will be going on Apple, it'll be going on Spotify, it'll be going out on all the podcast platforms. It will be accessible to anybody, anywhere in the world, as are the other 5 billion podcasts - that have been published this year.

The most successful podcasts I've done for academic institutions have been those where there is an existing community. I did a series for University of Wollongong. We got 20,000 downloads each episode, which is pretty good. The key to getting an audience is to tapping is to be able to tap into your community. People must have a reason to come. It seems to me that universities already have a community, you have a community of students, you have a community of colleagues. But in addition to that, and this is where we have work to do, is there a community of teachers and a community of educators? What we need to do is to work out where teachers like to get their information, whether it's online, or it's a website, whether it's other podcasts that we can maybe partner with. That's really where the hard work is, finding the audience and identifying your community. Unless you're Joe Rogan is not broadcasting, it's narrow-casting.

You're talking to a particular community about things. This is not going to be of general interest. It will be of interest to people who are in the education sphere. And that's going to be a strength, I think, because once we identify where those people, where the people, educators, particularly in New South Wales, but in Australia, get their information, that's where we need to get our podcast out too.

Jane Hunter:

Excellent. Thank you so much, William. Where you can see we're very lucky to have William. He has such a deep background in understanding broadcasting, and it's just been a real joy and I often think when you are an academic, you're writing articles, doing radio interviews, you're preparing for conferences, writing books. The way journals subscription and access are set up, you often pay to read peer reviewed papers and so on.

I think getting messages out about education through multiple different channels and that means that, for example, that you could write for places like *The Conversation*, or you might write an opinion piece for an online education forum.

I think a podcast is an excellent way of appealing to a much broader audience. Our podcast episodes have been downloaded thousands of times. We need to keep working on that, it's some because the market is quite competitive. However, I think for what we've been able to achieve in a short amount of time has made an impact. I'm just wondering before we go on the talking – I wanted to ask how many of you have listened to an episode of 'Talking Teachers' previously?

Excellent. (Most hands go up). I have a little a card here which has a fantastic QR code to access it. But if you just put that into your search engine - Talking Teachers - UTS - it will pop up straight away. I am inviting you to do that. But it's great that some of you have already been online and listened to episodes and perhaps you'll be even more inspired given the fact that Series 3 with 6 new episodes is about to go live.

For the remainder of our time this afternoon, we're going to interview Amy Gill. Don and I are co-host so we do some research, contact our expert, once they agree we prepare questions and a run sheet for the podcast recording – that is the format that we use. It's the two of us and one expert. And of course, William is always with us in the room to keep us on track and guide us. and so on. If we make an error, we can redo it. So tonight - it's going to be a simulated exercise. And then, towards the end of this recording we are going to have a live 30 second rant - only you our audience are going to participate in that.

Now the rant is a moment for our guest to speak about something they're concerned about in education. And it was very interesting when we interviewed Marney Shay just a couple of days ago, she said, well, she didn't really see herself as a *ranter* and she didn't necessarily want to rant. So that was that was a different way of conceptualizing the idea of what it means to rant and whether it's a worthwhile exercise. She talked about the fact that it is about wellbeing, and I guess in this time in the world we should all be thinking about our own wellbeing, our personal wellbeing instead of getting locked into cycles of negativity - it's a great idea, not to rant and instead be positive

After we've interviewed Amy, I would like you to rant if you would like to, or you might like to just share something that you're very proud of, that you know about schools or education and what experiences that you've had to date with regard it might have been a favourite teacher. Minister Jason Clare always talks about that favourite teacher. That's the first thing that he did when he was elected as into office, and then made education minister. So, we're going to give you an opportunity for just 30 seconds. Maybe it might be a little bit longer. Sometimes we're a bit generous, but it's not

30 minutes and we have a whole range of percussion instruments to give you the times up sign. Fine. So, let's see how we go with that. Then we'll give you a moment to ask any questions of any of us about the content that we've covered this evening - that's how we will conclude our evening.

Without any further ado, welcome. Amy.

Amy Gill:

Thank you, Jane.

Jane Hunter:

Amy, can you just tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be working in *Youth off the Streets*?

Amy Gill:

I've been teaching now for 24 years. I don't have 80 years of experience. I started in mainstream education. I'm a drama music teacher by trade, as I like to say, but became quite interested in working, particularly with underserved young people in the education space. I had a real passion and a sense of purpose around working with those young people. And I think the most challenging young people deserve the best teachers.

I really strive to increase my expert knowledge around special education. So I completed a master's degree in special education that specialised in behaviour before I moved into this space and now I am researching pedagogies for at risk young people to keep them in mainstream education.

I've been with *Youth Off The Streets* for the last seven years. I started as a teacher within this space just after I got my highly accomplished teacher's accreditation. It was interesting. When I moved over from mainstream education into alternative education, I felt like a fraud - quickly - and I didn't feel like I was having much success in those first few weeks in working in such a different and challenging environment with young people, with complex trauma.

Most of our young people have complex trauma. And I remember driving home one day from school and I got the phone call to say that my highly accomplished teacher's (HAT) accreditation had gone through because that had happened during my transition from mainstream to alternative education. And it was a pivotal moment to remember that I had the tools. I'd just forgotten to use them. Like when you're stressed or when you're, you know, under pressure, working with complex young people, you can sometimes forget what tools that you have. I do have the tools and I am a great teacher and I, need to just change my approach.

From there on in, I was hooked on what I was doing. I then moved schools post-COVID. I piloted the first hybrid program in New South Wales called the Solo Program, which targets long term school refusers. We found that some long-term school refusers started to engage during the COVID period because they were able to stay within the safety of their own home. We used some case studies to

build a program, a pilot program, which we tested and had great success with, and that's still running today at our Macquarie Fields campus with the goal was to get them back to five days a week face to face school. It's been really successful and a different approach to education.

As a school manager out there, I've moved into a seconded role for the last two years working on that education model. We're running an evidence-based, research-based education model. But instead of just looking at the research, we're looking at what works here in our space. Because if we try to do school the same as mainstream, we're trying to solve the same problem with the same solution. My role has become permanent as the Deputy Principal of Innovation and Impact.

Don Carter:

Congratulations on that appointment, Amy. It's fantastic. And I think you're downplaying your expertise in drama. You're more than a drama teacher. In fact, you appeared at the New South Wales parliamentary inquiry last week into the arts and drama. Now, for those of you in the audience who hadn't heard about this, there's a big investigation into the arts in New South Wales and how it's being taught and there's a lot of controversy at the moment amongst drama teachers and music teachers because they're very unhappy with changes to the curriculum in New South Wales. Amy, you were invited to speak because of your expertise. Can you tell us about that inquiry and the sorts of things that you said?

Amy Gill:

I was invited to speak back in July. So, the inquiry's been open for quite some time and I was asked to represent Drama New South Wales, So I'm on the Committee for Drama New South Wales and the Vice President of Professional Learning. I encourage everyone to be members of their professional associations because they do great work in advocacy, professional learning, a whole range of different spaces. I went with my colleague Dr. Christine Hatton, who was representing Drama Australia, and we went and spoke about the enormous benefits and the research base behind drama education and what it provides our young people with.

We made multiple representations, including equal access to the Arts, increased exposure to creative arts in initial teacher education, particularly for our primary school teachers that have just a little taste here and then are expected to go out and teach that, you know, advocating for it to be mandatory in the early years. It's bizarre that it's not mandatory in a time in a child's development where we know play is so important, yet the Arts is not mandatory.

There were a few things that we have advocated for at that space and when NESA released the draft Year 11 and 12 Creative Arts Syllabuses for drama dance music a few weeks ago. And there has been a massive uproar within the community about those documents for several reasons, and I could speak about this at length. So, tell me when you've heard enough. But essentially our key concerns and what we took to the parliamentary inquiry was firstly around the transparency of the development of the curriculum documents. So, we have several experts within our community, Sydney HSC markers, research, etc. that have stood up and said, you know, we're not okay with this. And this is saying we've consulted the experts, we've talked to the experts. We had quite a public

person resigned from NESAs, quite a public figure after the syllabus was released, which is concerning because it says to us that the experts have not been heard or listened to.

So that's the first point. And we're still unpacking that with NESAs this week. So that's an interesting process. They also put Year 11 and 12 syllabus releases in term for right when HSC marking was occurring and teachers that are exposed to HSC marking. The reason this they gave us for that is that teachers don't have a lot of work to do. When Year 12 finishes which I found quite insulting to be honest and I don't think have has a really rich understanding of what teachers are doing on a day-to-day basis. So, we've called NESAs to extend the have your say period, which Minister Prue Carr has told us they will not be doing. We've called for a rewrite of the entire syllabus, for it to be removed, both the drama and music syllabus needs a complete rewrite with a second *have your say period*.

Don Carter:

Are they going to do that?

Amy Gill:

The CEO of NESAs, Paul Martin, told us quite clearly and stated at the parliamentary inquiry that they would not be doing this at this stage. However, we're still advocating for that because there are some key concerns. So, for example, you can do the drama, just see the way it's currently written in that draft syllabus without performing for your HSC exam at all. So that in itself just says what a debacle the rest of the document is. Interestingly, and I don't know if either of you have insights in this, but when we met with NESAs last week, we raised concerns about the verbs and the verbs of we're taught a very important and the verbs, you know, sort of disintegrate as we move into year 11 and 12, they go backwards in the complexity of what we're asking people to do.

Don Carter:

To just explain to people what you mean by 'verbs'.

Amy Gill:

It might say experiment with Year 9 or Year 10. And then we're back to just describing, say, for example, 11, 12, you know, well before then, the rigour is not going up. But interestingly, NESAs told us the verbs are no longer important. So there's all these really interesting and underpinning issues that are there within in those documents or the researchers whose research is referenced in that document wrote a joint letter saying they would like their research retracted from that because it did not reflect best pedagogical practice. And that's just touching the surface.

Don Carter:

I've just had an idea. I mean, you should have your own podcast instead of 'Talking Teachers' called it *Insulting Teachers*, and you can include some of the things that are happening now.

Amy Gill:

Yes, that would be great. Look, I do think it's insulting. And one of the things we really talked about with student voice and we met with NESAs and we actually asked about the rationale behind some of the changes. They tell us it's not economical. They said that in front of the parliamentary inquiry and have, you know, firmed up that point all the way through.

However, the external performance has been removed. So, it's done internally in the schools and there's no mark has been sent out across the state so we can take that how we want. But I think what was I going to say, the interesting part when you're sitting with NESAs is, you ask them well, can you give an example of the experts you have consulted, the critical friends, as they call them, you know, in that tag team what affected the syllabus document? Can you give us an example of feedback that you got that affected changes in the document? They couldn't do so. And then asking about student voice and the human voice is really important to me. How much student voice goes into the development of the syllabus. And that kind of stumped them a little bit, and they had to just decide which staff member was going to respond to that. It really concerns me that students aren't being spoken to and teachers aren't being spoken to.

Jane Hunter:

That's really fascinating and thank you for sharing that. It will be interesting. Perhaps when this podcast is rebroadcast that your very candid comments I think will be heard and let's see if they reverse the decision. But they seem to be on a trajectory now, I would suggest, within several curriculum areas and the rationalization for what they're doing simply isn't there. The notion of 'consultation' is very concerning.

Anyway, we could probably spend another 20 minutes just talking about that, but we're not going to do that. So, I want to hear now from you, Amy, because of the rich background that you have in the schooling work that you've done, not only in mainstream, but particularly with *Youth Off The Streets*, what are the main concerns for young people at the moment and the young people that are at the schools?

Amy Gill:

Youth Off The Streets caters for young people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. That's our primary group that we target. Interestingly, there's lots of research connecting school business to homelessness starting to come out, which is touching the surface on that. But school business, so kids that are dropping out of mainstream or not attending school or school refusal seems to now be there's clear links within the research into homelessness that they're indicators of homelessness. So, we're working in that space and we're working with young people with complex trauma. The most prominent issues, I think at the moment for those young people, I think firstly having an integrated service delivery model is a concern and something we're working towards strengthening within our organisation. And by that what I mean is that often there's multiple services working with a young person, including an education service or school, and there's no consistency in that.

I work with young people might be wards of the state that might have four or five caseworkers just in the time they're with us at school. What we're advocating for is having a wraparound service model that's consistent, particularly through their time of schooling, because all those changes and interruptions with complex young people makes it even more difficult for them to attend school. So that would be the first issue.

The second issue is around crisis accommodation. Often, we'll come to the end of the day, a young person might walk in for the day and we can't find them a bed for the evening, so they might have had to due to violence or a whole range of different reasons why they might be looking for accommodation quite urgently. And there is not enough beds in Sydney - particularly - for young people under the age of 16, it is near impossible to get a bed and so they are sent to hotels that are often quite unsafe for them. If they're on a visa, we can't even get them a hotel. It's quite complicated.

So, there's that issue, but also the issue of domestic family and sexual violence. Most of our young people, I would say over 95% of our young people have experienced domestic family and sexual violence or are still living within domestic family and sexual violence. We're the only schools that we're aware of that have targeted domestic family and sexual violence workers within our schools, delivering a specific education program, showing the cycle of abuse to young people so they can identify where they need to step out. We've just employed more DV caseworkers because of the urgent need in that space. And there are no deficit-based services targeted specifically at children. They're often targeted towards the adult women in crisis, but not specifically for children. And particularly unaccompanied children. So, children that aren't with their parents. If I have my daughter and I'm in trouble, I can access services, my daughter gets those services. But if my daughter's no longer in that family unit, there's nothing for them to access. And that includes intimate partner violence. So, 15-year-olds that are in a violent relationship with a partner or living outside the home, and there's not enough research in that space. That's an area that we need to dig into much further.

Don Carter:

I know some of you students because we've been conducting a research project at one of your colleges and some of your students spoke at a conference here at UTS a couple of months ago. So, I know some of their capabilities, but you know much more about them and their achievements. Can you just give us a snapshot of some of those achievements?

Amy Gill:

Yeah, sure. I think one of the things that really shifted for me when I moved into this space was my concept of success. And I've been reflecting on this and it's a real struggle for staff when they come into our space as well.

I bring my own ideology and belief around what success is and for my family it's going to university, and I was the first in my family to go to university, but this was something that was valued and aspired to. But what I've learnt working in this space is success is very different for every individual,

even the people sitting in this room. Now my ideals of success are going to be different to Don's, different to Jane's, etc.. And so what we do is we really look at what success means for that young person and their family and that differs across cultures as well. It's different for our First Nations families. We have a high percentage of First Nations, young people of 20% population in our school to some of our Anglo families that we're working with.

So, for some of our young people, their goals might be when they come it's - get my RoSA get through Year 10. But we find that shifts and changes. They start seeing themselves as learners. So they'll go, yes, maybe I'll stay on to Year 12 and then we're getting them through the HSC and they're the first in their family to get through to completing their Year 12 certificate. I'm incredibly proud.

We've got graduation week next week, which is exciting. But we do have some students that aspire to go to university. I had an ex-student walking to one of our campuses last week. She travelled up from Tasmania. She's coming to a music concert in Sydney and then jumped on the train to our Central Coast School and she was one of the first young people that I taught when I first came to *Youth Off the Streets* and she's doing a Bachelor of Justice at University of Tasmania. She's in her final year and she was so proud to come in and tell us all she has achieved. She's also going to represent the University of Vietnam in a sustainability conference next year. And yes, it was exciting - she was just absolutely glowing – we offer a scholarship program and aftercare for our young people.

When they finish with our school, we have a scholarship and mentoring program they can go into and she's part of that. The young person gets her education subsidised, but she also gets ongoing mentoring and support, which I think makes a difference when you've got a young person who's first in the family from a difficult background going to university because it can be a very different environment and place for them.

Jane Hunter:

Amy, if you had a or a couple of sentences, what would those sentences be if you were able to send them on an email or perhaps speak to Prue Car or Jason Clare, our state and federal ministers for education - you can choose one or the other.

Amy Gill:

Yes, let's send it to both of them, because I've been writing to them a lot lately. So, from the drama space, but also from the work that I do. One of the things that's been come up this year for me and from the research I think is now starting to indicate the importance of this is student voice. And I've been thinking a lot about whose voices we privilege in education and often the voices of the young people I serve are not heard, which is ridiculous when it comes to educational reform, because they're the students that mainstream education has failed.

And so, you would think if you wanted to improve it, you'd speak to those that it didn't work out for and done. You did a great job of that by inviting our students to talk to the New South Wales Council of Deans conference a few months ago and a new podcast like 'Talking Teachers' privileges other voices.

But whether it's privileging student voice in curriculum design, whether it's privileging the voice of potential teachers living in rural Australia around the initial teacher education, are we asking the right people about what the solutions should be?

Jane Hunter:

Fantastic. So, that's a few sentences. Sorry, maybe it's getting paragraphs, but I think that was wonderful. So, I need to you to record that and write it. Yes. Wonderful. Well, it's that time and thank you for joining us. People who drifted in, which is lovely - you weren't necessarily here when I was talking about the rant. It's time for the rant. A special feature of each *Talking Teachers* podcast is the 30-second rant. We're going to have a group rant maybe.

If anyone would like to volunteer to rant, we have a microphone, and it doesn't have to go on for 30 minutes. No 30 seconds is fine a minute or two is perfect. But we'd love you to talk about something in education that is really concerning you now. It might not necessarily be in the school's sector. It might be to do with universities, it might be to do with early childhood, but you're also welcome to not rant. You're welcome to protect your own wellbeing. As I was saying before when we interviewed Marnie Shay and she talked some really positive things that are happening in education. So, it's over to you. Would anyone like to start the ball rolling on this?

Don Carter:

And can I say that if you go on for too long, we've got symbols here. We'll sound the symbols. That'll be your signal. Yeah.

Natalie (audience member):

Hi, my name is Natalie. Thank you for, like, very nice insights. I'm a first year undergraduate student, and so I've just come out of school something I want to talk about is - I feel like at school, there's not much of a focus on, as you were saying, student voice - like student issues like specifically related to students each other, like, for example, bullying judgment among students or even sometimes like the judgment of teachers towards students.

I feel like there's that constant focus on delivering content and the syllabus and the curriculum, but less so on the student experience overall, because it makes up like 13 years of our life. And once you go to uni, you can't wipe out everything that's come before that school. So, if you've had a bad school experience, that's like going to affect you at uni and you don't solve at uni, it will affect you and your future. I feel like that's its the emotional side of education is very neglected.

Jane Hunter:

I think we can have some symbol clapping for that, Don. That was very disappointing. I didn't get to use the symbols at all and that was very well timed, well done and well said, I must say.

Indeed. Would anyone else like to have a bit of a rant or maybe talk about something that is going well in education?

Jennifer (audience member):

Thank you, Jane. My name is Jennifer, and I'd like to second and support Natalie in her statement, because I think it's true that teachers now are so busy and so overwhelmed by all the things that are put upon them that they forget that the student that they're there for, is the student. That's what we're there for.

And I think that the pressures of producing results and that even now, unfortunately, the time of K to 6 in primary school used to be a time of joy, of experimenting, having fun and playing and learning about friendships and break ups and all of those things – it's a normal part of life. And now the poor little things are just put back into the machine, into a tunnel. You're going to do well in maths. She's going to do well in science. She's going to do well in English. The other subjects don't matter at all. I'm a performing arts teacher and I really object to that in a strong way. But I can also understand that teachers feel that pressure and they're getting it from their leaders, there needs to be a reawakening. I agree with you there. We need a reawakening, a revolution.

Jane Hunter:

Thank you, Jennifer. And there were no symbols. Everyone is being very obedient. Yes, very succinct speakers this afternoon who else would like to have a rant? Thank you.

Leslie (audience member):

Thank you. I'm Leslie, and I'm here with my colleagues, Robyn and Susan. And it would be very remiss if we didn't pick up on student voice. But we'll continue from the closure of your session with our focus on our book, which talks about the languages, the background languages of our students, and how the harnessing of the riches of that is contributing to student well-being and achievement. There are three comments for you in a line that were not scripted, and we have no knowledge of each other. We honestly say that, but we're delighted to be able to segway from your session very nicely from that.

Jane Hunter:

Thank you so much. Leslie, would someone we'd just have one moment longer to have someone else who'd like to do a bit of a rant? Perhaps not. Okay. So just before we finish and we will play our outro at the end, I'm just wondering if there are any questions that people might have about any of the content or anything curious about. Go ahead. Natalie. Yes.

Natalie (audience member):

Are there volunteer opportunities with *Youth of the Streets*?

Amy Gill:

Yes, we do have a volunteer program and we also have a mentoring program, so you can volunteer in a whole range of different spaces. One of these spaces would be assisting in the classroom. We often get a lot of retired teachers that come in and might do one on one literacy work or numeracy work with the young people, for example, or cooking school lunches. We provide three meals a day.

We have lots of volunteers coming in, assisting with breakfast, morning tea and lunch. We also have our mentor program. The young person I was speaking about before, she has a mentor, they're all volunteers and my dad volunteers at one of our schools in our IDRIVE program, which is teaching kids how to drive. If you imagine you're homeless and you don't have any parents to take you out driving, how do you get those hours up? We have volunteers that come and do those hours with our young people. Though he did say the other day he nearly died on the ride and was quite stressed when he rang me. I don't know if it's great that my dad's doing that, but it's fantastic for our young people. S Please go to our website [Youth off the Streets](#) - a nice little plug – there you'll be able to see how to volunteer.

Jane Hunter:

Thank you.

Just like to thank everyone for coming this afternoon. I'd like to thank Amy.

Thank you for having me and William.

Don Carter:

And you, Jane, because this was your brainchild two years ago, well done on 18 episodes. As Jane said the easiest thing to track Talking Teachers down is type into Google UTS Talking Teachers, and you will find it all there.

Thank you, everyone.