

00:00.73

Gary Gray
All set?

00:01.98

Angelique & Kenisha
Yeah.

00:02.55

Gary Gray

Awesome. Welcome to Corridor Conversations, the podcast segment of NCTE's Classroom Corridors, sharing expertise and inspiration from elementary teachers and authors. I'm your host, Gary Argray Jr. And today, we are with my Canadian sisters today. I'm so excited. I'm so excited. We're with Kanisha Vino and Angelique Thompson from Canada, authors and educators.

00:29.67

Gary Gray

How are we doing? How we doing today? Mm-hmm.

00:32.16

Angelique & Kenisha

We're doing all right. I mean, we're at a conference today, ready to really manifest and kind of inspire educators to really understand what literacy and play look like as they are can be merged together in beautiful ways that allow for children to have joyful experiences.

00:49.53

Angelique & Kenisha

So I think because we're here in a place where we actually are able to do the work, yeah we're excited. It drives the conversation even more and we're excited to engage.

00:59.77

Gary Gray

And we talked about this a little bit earlier before we popped on.

01:00.01

Angelique & Kenisha
yeah

01:03.69

Gary Gray

I'm just going to get out the way. I'm just so happy to see both of you today. I'm so happy to see both of you. I'm sending all the positive energy your way in your presentation, through your writing, your, you know, just whatever it is.

01:17.62

Gary Gray

I'm manifesting that all to you right now. So I appreciate you guys so much.

01:21.33

Angelique & Kenisha

I appreciate that.

01:22.74

Gary Gray

Thank you. Thank you. So tell me a little bit about how, why early literacy? Like what, push you towards that. I know for me, I had a few educators in my family, but i think it was a lot of the coaching that may have happened for me, but what was it for you that got you into education?

01:41.57

Angelique & Kenisha

Do you want me to start? I grew up in a home where ah I am the oldest of two children and I always was an overachiever in school.

01:52.82

Angelique & Kenisha

However, my brother was dyslexic and he grew up at a time where there was very little supports. I was raised in the Bahamas and so there were very little supports for him and I watched my parents advocate furiously for him to have the right to access the the tools and the strategies that he needed.

02:17.97

Angelique & Kenisha

And it was such a just juxtaposition to see educators who um had treated me so well because I was that compliant, engaged, responsive student um really ah

02:25.13

Gary Gray

Mm hmm.

02:32.94

Angelique & Kenisha

attributing my brother's ah challenges to to him. It was his fault. It was something that he needed to do, not the the instructions that they needed to shift.

02:44.55

Angelique & Kenisha

And I saw the brilliance of who he was at home. Like he was so, he was so hands on. he could take things apart. He could tell you things about ah anything technical, but no one tapped into his strengths to

meet his needs.

03:00.63

Angelique & Kenisha

And as a young Black boy in our family, we wanted to make sure that he would thrive.

03:00.66

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

03:05.87

Angelique & Kenisha

And as his big sister, I thought I fought a lot to make sure that, you know, he got the access to what he needs. So I decided to go into education because I knew that there was there was another way to do this at home.

03:19.72

Angelique & Kenisha

We would play games and he would get it. We would do things in kinesthetic ways and he would get it. We would practice over and over again, but not in a rote way. And I would see that light bulb go off and that drove me.

03:32.87

Angelique & Kenisha

to be an educator because I knew that there were different approaches that we could take at a and an early age. And then I was just inspired in my university career. I came to Canada, I went to York University, and I was inspired by incredible educators that were passionate about literacy.

03:50.07

Gary Gray

the

03:50.39

Angelique & Kenisha

And that drove me to continue to be better. And now as a mother of a young but young boy who is a fluent reader but still experiences challenges.

04:01.44

Angelique & Kenisha

um I've been very passionate about the importance of a literacy programming that's reflective of children, that meets their needs, and that supports them in playful ways.

04:01.29

Gary Gray
Wow.

04:12.80
Angelique & Kenisha
So that has been my driver, yeah.

04:13.27
Gary Gray
Wow. Wow. wow

04:17.50
Angelique & Kenisha
Yeah. My experience, some of it parallels that of Angelique's, but um
For me, i think I grew up in a family that really prioritized and
valued education.

04:29.70
Angelique & Kenisha
Reading was something that was essential in our family and it was
something that was always fostered.

04:30.27
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

04:35.92
Angelique & Kenisha
So whether we had books in the home, Whether I was in a library, I was
always surrounded by books in some way, shape or form. um It was
something that was very integral to our family.

04:47.80
Angelique & Kenisha
We do come from a family of many educators. My grandfather was a
principal in St. Vincent and my mother, along with many of her
siblings, taught at some point in time.

05:02.03
Angelique & Kenisha
and so

05:02.69
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

05:03.32
Angelique & Kenisha
um Education was very much something that was central to my mom's side
of the family. And so I always found myself immersed in a book, always

being able to escape to different worlds and different understandings and perspectives. so I was able to always take a book and just be captivated by it. And so that was something that I always did as a child, but similar to Angelique, my sister also had challenges and she had a learning disability. So it was very difficult for her to access reading in the same way. um And so for her, she struggled quite a bit specifically because the two of us were both in French immersion programs.

05:42.39

Angelique & Kenisha

And so friend for for for me, French immersion came a lot more easily in terms of understanding the language and being able to understand a new language more than it was for her. For her, it became a lot of of huge struggle and a challenge for her. And like Angelique's family, like my mom advocated fiercely for her as well.

06:03.68

Angelique & Kenisha

um But it came to a point where she had to leave that program. And so what I noticed as a child is that oftentimes when I was reading or I was exploring the language of French, Oftentimes the text never actually reflected my experiences. So I never saw texts that actually represented characters that looked like me.

06:25.21

Angelique & Kenisha

And, you know, having been in the system for so many years, I just thought that French was exclusively for particular people that didn't look like me.

06:34.17

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

06:35.33

Angelique & Kenisha

And so it wasn't until, um you know, when I was in high school and university that I started getting exposed to different um worlds, different countries, and the fact that they actually spoke French as a first language.

06:49.54

Angelique & Kenisha

And that kind of opened up my world to understanding that French isn't, and francophonie is not just for particular bodies, like it is seen across the globe.

07:00.57

Angelique & Kenisha

And so for me in terms of teaching, when I went into teaching, I went into teaching because it was something I was very passionate about. I loved being with young learners. um I loved seeing them light up when they opened up a book and they understand the messaging within that text.

07:16.65

Angelique & Kenisha

And so I wanted to see that for my students. And so when I got into teaching, I wanted to make sure that my students actually saw themselves represented and mirrored in the text that they were reading.

07:28.07

Angelique & Kenisha

And so that was very important to me. And it was very difficult at the time to be able to find texts that were diverse and spoke to different identities. And so if we didn't find it, we made it, we created it.

07:40.25

Angelique & Kenisha

We co-created texts that actually had them see themselves. within books that they created, right? Where they're they were invested in that learning.

07:47.01

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

07:49.59

Angelique & Kenisha

And so for me, it was that was something that was very important. I wanted to make sure that the students that were in front of me were able to learn that language, but to see that they could see themselves within that language as well through the texts that they read.

08:02.71

Angelique & Kenisha

And so that was kind of something that kind of drew me um to the profession because I wanted to be able to rectify the the harms that were kind of done for my sister, myself, within education.

08:10.91

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

08:14.18

Angelique & Kenisha

And so that's what kind of drew me to the profession.

08:14.71

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

08:17.27

Gary Gray

Wow. The funny things that trauma can do to us, hey, and it's unbelievable.

08:20.50

Angelique & Kenisha

Yeah. It's very true. It's very true.

08:26.03

Gary Gray

It's one of those things that you, you know, in the strangest times, it can do the worst to you. It can bring out the best in you. I want to, you know, shout out good teachers, big sis, ma, family, and, mean, texts that reflect us, like, so important. And You know, it's a conversation that I feel like we continue to have over and over again.

08:53.27

Gary Gray

um People tend to believe or think they know or understand what that looks like. But at the same time, students are still not having access to those types of books as well, um which makes it very, very difficult for those students to feel that sense of belonging, to love reading and writing specifically.

09:05.05

Angelique & Kenisha

Yeah. Yeah. Yes.

09:14.87

Angelique & Kenisha

Yep.

09:15.83

Gary Gray

um And fall in love with those educators, those authors that look like them. If they don't see those individuals, how do they flourish in literacy, right? And it leads directly into our next question of like when we are building foundational reading skills, right?

09:33.43

Gary Gray

How do we choose those books and also honor students' diverse identities and languages? Like we just talked about that. What are the things that we do, I'm sorry, that you do as educators to to make sure that happens?

09:47.80

Angelique & Kenisha

Well, I think we'd be remiss if we did not actually bring into the space the work of Rudine Sims Bishop, Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop. And so when we think about text and selecting text, we want to make sure, yes, of course, that it mirrors the experiences of the learners that are in front of us, right?

10:05.38

Angelique & Kenisha

So as I had mentioned earlier, we do see that there are diverse, you know, experiences that are had, lived experiences in our spaces of teaching and learning. And we want to make sure that when students are reading texts or they're engaging with texts, that they actually are lighting up when they see someone that looks like them, when they see someone that embodies certain characteristics that actually really do represent their experiences, right?

10:31.58

Angelique & Kenisha

And so we want to think about experiences that mirror them, but we also want to think about windows and books serving as windows where they're able to explore different perspectives and different ways of knowing.

10:43.86

Angelique & Kenisha

Right. But we also want to make sure that it also serves as sliding glass doors where they're actually entering and to worlds of imagination that draw them into them into Vyman- spaces and places that they would never have imagined right, and so we want to captivate learners by thinking about the different ways in which we can support them through texts that.

10:44.25

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

11:04.86

Angelique & Kenisha

Nisha Vyman- are responsive to their interests, who they are their needs, and so I think it is really important when selecting tax we are obviously selecting tax.

11:15.18

Angelique & Kenisha

that speak to their needs and their difficulties and challenges within reading that we want to address. But we also want to make sure that we're inviting things that they love, things that really speak to who

they are, or things that are going move their prior knowledge in ways that are going to shift their thinking or allow them to engage in social activism.

11:36.97

Angelique & Kenisha

So we think about just how texts can really inspire them to be the the change that they wanna see for the world, right? And so when we think about texts, we think about the fact that they are reading texts, but um they are making sense of their worlds and texts allow them to enter into that.

11:44.42

Gary Gray

Absolutely.

11:53.27

Angelique & Kenisha

it It serves as that bridge for understanding the world.

11:57.40

Gary Gray

absolutely

11:58.49

Angelique & Kenisha

I am a firm believer that learning does not happen without relationships. And so I really believe in order to select texts that reflect the identities of our learners, we have to get to know them.

12:13.40

Angelique & Kenisha

We have to partner with families and caregivers. because identity is very complex. um There are many intersections to identity. And I think it's important that we ensure that we aren't making assumptions about the communities that we are serving as well and what we think will be a great book for this child.

12:31.10

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

12:34.58

Angelique & Kenisha

um

12:35.07

Gary Gray

Yep.

12:35.67

Angelique & Kenisha

As a mother of a young boy who was interested in anything science and robotics, I found my son's teachers selecting books like Let's Read About Basketball, and he had no interest in that.

12:50.91

Angelique & Kenisha

So I say relationship, we we get to know who the learners are, what languages they speak, what families they come from.

12:51.34

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

12:59.68

Angelique & Kenisha

And that helps us to be able to identify books that will reflect experiences for them, but also inspire them, as Kenisha said, with those windows into other other spaces.

13:07.34

Gary Gray

Absolutely.

13:11.36

Angelique & Kenisha

I also think that educators, so Louise Dermansparks speaks a lot about critical analysis of text as well. So paired with what Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop says is we have to also be critical of the books that we are putting before learners and what implicit messages are sent Who are the characters that are centered?

13:25.34

Gary Gray

absolutely

13:30.89

Angelique & Kenisha

What are the messages that are being shared? What what is it that we hope to provide experience with? And we want to remember that there's there iss a danger in that single story, right?

13:43.33

Angelique & Kenisha

This has been spoken about, and we want to provide those opportunities for lots of books to be paired with a diverse range of experiences, but also provide that space for children to be co-authors and to share their stories.

13:43.67

Gary Gray

Mm hmm.

13:58.49

Angelique & Kenisha

There's power in that co-creation of text, which inspires children to understand that their stories matter. And i so so I think it is very, it it is integral to our program that we are still providing quality read alouds.

14:14.22

Angelique & Kenisha

I know that we are in a time where there's been a lot of shifts and in literacy and there's a more structured approach to instruction, but there is still power in us modeling with good quality text that's reflective of diverse communities.

14:15.99

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

14:30.44

Angelique & Kenisha

And it doesn't matter if you think all of the learners in my classroom are all the same, right?

14:36.09

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

14:36.45

Angelique & Kenisha

They're all the same. They all look the same. That is that is a big misconception. when we don't think about identity as being multi-layered and really critically analyzing the books that we're we're um supporting the children within our program.

14:45.46

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

14:51.35

Angelique & Kenisha

And to add to Angelique's point, I think it is important to really understand the complexities of identity. But I think in order to do that, you first have to understand yourself and your own identities to be able to understand what that means in relation to others, right?

15:05.44

Angelique & Kenisha

So I can't quite know what it is that I'm going to select that's going to support my learners if I don't understand and unpack the biases that come with my identities and who I am and what I know.

15:05.63

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

15:16.35

Angelique & Kenisha

right And so I think it is really important that we know ourselves and know ourselves in relation to others um and what that means in terms of the biases and assumptions that kind of rear themselves within the experiences that we have in teaching.

15:30.19

Angelique & Kenisha

right And so I want to make sure that I am constantly unlearning some of those biases to ensure that I am selecting appropriate material for my learners and for the children that are in front of me.

15:42.56

Angelique & Kenisha

But I also, you know, when I go into like, I think Angelique and I can both speak to the fact that when we enter spaces of learning, we are measure of an educator is to first look at what books are being offered to the students.

15:56.37

Angelique & Kenisha

Right.

15:56.20

Gary Gray

Absolutely. Mm

15:57.53

Angelique & Kenisha

And so when we go into those classroom spaces and we look at those texts, it is important that we have texts that are diverse and do speak to the different identities. but it's equally as important to actually do something with the text, right?

16:10.77

Angelique & Kenisha

So there are a lot of people that will display and offer texts that they don't actually really dig deep into, right?

16:10.76

Gary Gray
hmm. Mm

16:17.59
Angelique & Kenisha
Like, so they're not allowing children to make those connections.

16:17.74
Gary Gray
hmm.

16:20.51
Angelique & Kenisha
And the children, if they are really immersed with those texts, will have conversations and share those things with you, right? Without you even having to ask it.

16:28.02
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

16:29.47
Angelique & Kenisha
And so, you know, what is within a class is equally as important as what is not seen within the class and that delivers messaging as well. So if I see texts or if I don't see texts that speak to particular identities, that says a lot about an educator, that delivers a lot of messaging in terms of whose voices are actually seen, recognized and honored within that space.

16:38.56
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

16:52.78
Angelique & Kenisha
and which are not. And what does that mean for children, right? So we really think about the importance of what's selected, but we also think about what is not selected and what does that mean as well.

16:56.17
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

17:04.57
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm. I can see why I'll do what you do.

17:11.99
Gary Gray

I mean, i think you said you said so many amazing things, and I want to hit on a couple of them just because I think they're so important just to to go back on. The idea around relationships, like I'm such a big relationships person. I teach lower elementary grade two.

17:30.14

Gary Gray

I coach usually middle school or high school. and like when you know a relationship teacher when you see them and you just can see how students act, their full self around them, they feel like there's a lift or this load off their shoulders.

17:38.02

Angelique & Kenisha

Mm-hmm.

17:41.72

Angelique & Kenisha

Mm-hmm.

17:44.48

Angelique & Kenisha

Mm-hmm.

17:46.84

Gary Gray

And I think once that relationship is built amongst a teacher and a student, that student will run through a brick wall for you, right?

17:55.56

Angelique & Kenisha

Mm-hmm.

17:55.50

Gary Gray

They will try absolutely anything because that that trust is already built.

17:58.66

Angelique & Kenisha

Mm-hmm.

18:00.12

Gary Gray

Right. And then the idea around teachers looking at themselves, which I think I think it's I think it's definitely a teacher's role to do that. I also think it's the institution to remind us to do that as well. Are they giving us access to information and people to help us do that? You don't know what you don't know.

18:20.02

Gary Gray

Right. And if we aren't giving access to people, if people aren't coming in and helping us do that type of work, how is that teacher supposed to know what to do if they've been kind of going through the motions their entire life?

18:28.31

Angelique & Kenisha

That's That's all.

18:30.96

Gary Gray

I think it's so important that we share that again because I think sometimes we feel like we're doing the right thing. But in hindsight, there may be some things that we can change to be a little bit better for our students. I think it's so, so important.

18:43.54

Gary Gray

um You guys talked about this a little bit as well. And the second question was like teachers are under a lot of systemic pressure. i mean, i say that lightly, but there's a lot of pressure going on for educators, right?

18:59.04

Angelique & Kenisha

yeah

18:59.00

Gary Gray

How do you coach adults to lean back into the playfulness and joy? i think play is I mean, we talked, I talked about this a lot in a few other podcasts and with my colleagues, like I feel like it slowly drifts away as you get older, even as an adult, or like itching to find places to just play or just be.

19:23.19

Gary Gray

um Talk a little bit about how how do you coach adults to lean back into that?

19:28.78

Angelique & Kenisha

Yeah, so I think ah what Kenisha and i always try to talk about is that the science of reading, which is a like there is a large body of research around what we know works for children and reading and the science of clay

19:47.66

Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

19:48.09

Angelique & Kenisha
and what researchers has told us about play, they are they are friends. They should be merged together. We believe that play is a vehicle for learning. We believe that it is it provides access for us to help children engage in repetitious experiences to practice skills in ways that are going to be developmentally appropriate.

20:15.54

Angelique & Kenisha
We know that play provides opportunities to support the developmental domains like the cognitive, the social, the emotional, the physical, and that children need that.

20:26.51

Angelique & Kenisha
There's so much research around that. And so I think for educators, I think one of the things that we speak about, and again, it goes back to relationships and engagement, and a big driver for reading is that motivation, right?

20:40.02

Angelique & Kenisha
That motivation to read.

20:39.89

Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

20:41.70

Angelique & Kenisha
And so we try to coach educators in understanding that the two don't have to live in silos and that the two can be merged together. And in fact, when we see children engaged in playful experiences, that we see that this is where they transfer those skills that we're teaching them explicitly.

20:59.63

Angelique & Kenisha
believe So we believe that explicit instruction can happen in a classroom, but that there are playful ways that we can approach that instruction to ensure that children are able to be immersed in the literacy work that they're doing in ways that are going to be most effective.

21:18.01

Angelique & Kenisha

And so I think a lot of the conversation comes around, like, what am I doing?

21:18.41

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

21:23.85

Angelique & Kenisha

Like, what do I know research tells us I have to do in terms of a routine, but how do I do it in ways that I know are going to be best received by learners? Because engagement is a key driver.

21:36.45

Angelique & Kenisha

And so we we try to think about what are those small shifts along the way that we can do in that routine. So if we're doing auditory drills, we're doing it in a fun way.

21:46.62

Angelique & Kenisha

If we know that the children, they love music because they're communicating those things to me. Maybe we're going to rap about it. Maybe we're going to dance about it.

21:53.64

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

21:54.50

Angelique & Kenisha

like How are we going to, at every point of that structured literacy lesson, try to weave in things that tap into, Lawrence Malaguzzi speaks about the 100 languages of children that they speak.

22:08.20

Angelique & Kenisha

and how education steals the 99, how do we bring back the 100 languages to tap into ways to access literacy?

22:11.67

Gary Gray

the

22:16.12

Angelique & Kenisha

And it's not impossible. And what we see is that children thrive even more when the program allows when the program is rooted in evidence-based approaches, but in allows for that vehicle and that driver.

22:27.51
Gary Gray
Absolutely.

22:30.18
Angelique & Kenisha
And we see the skills manifest a lot quicker because children are able to to be immersed in it, to be engaged in it in a repetit ah repetitious way, but in a way that isn't disengaging, it isn't rote, it isn't drill, drill, drill.

22:45.95
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

22:46.87
Angelique & Kenisha
But it's done in a palatable way. I'll pass it to Ganesha because I'm sure she has a lot to say about that. no I think you kind of shared a lot of things that we would both say. But I do think that, you know, when we think about play, play is really that avenue for academic rigor, right?

23:02.06
Angelique & Kenisha
It's the highest form of research.

23:02.08
Gary Gray
Mm-hmm.

23:03.52
Angelique & Kenisha
And that's what Albert Einstein says. And when we think about play, we know that it serves as an entry point for differentiation. Right. And so as Angelica shared, those one hundred languages really live within the things that we offer through literacy based approaches.

23:18.80
Angelique & Kenisha
When we think about foundational skills, we obviously want to address things like like phonological awareness and phonics and fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. And when we are really trying to get students to access those understandings of foundation foundational principles and skills, we want to do that through playful means, right?

23:37.97
Angelique & Kenisha
Like we can do that through reading a text and getting children to

maybe retell that text using hands-on experiences, using loose parts to be able to show us what it is that they are thinking.

23:38.38

Gary Gray
The.

23:49.69

Angelique & Kenisha

Right. And that serves as that bridge and that access point for them to talk about and have conversations to connect with text. Right. And so when we think about inspiring educators, we know that there are a lot of pressures.

24:03.38

Angelique & Kenisha

There are a lot of expectations that need to be met. um But I think in the work that Angelique and I both do, we first start by like inspiring. Right. And so when we inspire, it's through actually doing that.

24:15.98

Angelique & Kenisha

People understand what that means for children. Right. We also have to think about like the why. Why is it that we are doing this for learners? We're doing this for learners because it's urgent.

24:27.31

Angelique & Kenisha

They have a right to be able to read. And so if it's a right, we need to be able to provide that for them in ways that are gonna be accessible and developmentally appropriate, right?

24:29.76

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

24:38.44

Angelique & Kenisha

And so um as we think about really inspiring educators, we get them to engage and play connected to literacy. If we read a text and we're getting you to predict what's going to happen next, we might provide you with materials to do that so that you understand this is what your children and your students might need to be able to process their thinking a little bit better.

25:01.43

Angelique & Kenisha

Right. And so um I think it's it's first being able to inspire and give them ideas. But when we are working with educators, we model

first. Right. So we model what's effective for children.

25:13.64

Angelique & Kenisha

We know what's best for children. We know what's most responsive to them. um And we know because they tell us, right?

25:19.48

Gary Gray

Exactly.

25:19.76

Angelique & Kenisha

They're very honest.

25:23.61

Gary Gray

right

25:25.58

Angelique & Kenisha

They will tell They will tell you the business of the classroom. They spill the tea all the time. Right. So we listen to them. Right. And so if we know that something isn't working for them, we pivot and we adjust.

25:32.97

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

25:36.42

Angelique & Kenisha

Right. Because we know that there's we have to shift our approaches. to what we're offering them. And when it is to, we're not saying that we we think that routines and um skills are so important, but it's the how.

25:41.71

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

25:49.17

Angelique & Kenisha

How do we offer that in a way that's going to invite them to experience it joyfully, to be able to retain information?

25:54.80

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

25:56.49

Angelique & Kenisha

They have to enjoy what they're doing, right? They have to make those connections. And so we do believe that play is that vehicle for learning. And, you know, our document um for curriculum are used to say, um, play as a vehicle that rests at the core of innovation and creativity.

26:11.87

Angelique & Kenisha

And so how do we merge that with literacy, right?

26:11.73

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

26:16.12

Angelique & Kenisha

And so um when modeling for educators, I think it is important for them to actually know what that experience is like. So we do it with them first, and then we actually support them in being able to do it together, right?

26:29.56

Angelique & Kenisha

So let's let's let's plan this together. Let's do this together. Let's see how the children respond to what it is that we're offering them. What do we have to shift? What do we have to adjust? And then we get them to, you know, take on those skills and own those skills and be able to do them themselves in a way that's going to inspire children to continue to love and be motivated to learn to read and to engage in literacy in ways that really are going to shift things for them.

26:57.18

Angelique & Kenisha

And I think play has gotten a bad rap.

26:57.10

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

26:59.98

Angelique & Kenisha

I think people think that play doesn't need to be intentional. Like play, like just let them go. a lot of families, I know teaching in my classroom last year, I was in a kindergarten classroom and I had ah a parent come in and say,

27:07.25

Gary Gray

Mm-hmm.

27:16.28

Angelique & Kenisha

are they only going to play? Like what what is happening in here, right? Because the classroom is There's a lot of offerings around the classroom.

27:22.33

Gary Gray

who

27:25.13

Angelique & Kenisha

um But ah in having those conversations even with families, because We get a lot of systemic pressure, but we also get pressure from families and rightfully so because children have a right to learn how to read.

27:33.99

Gary Gray

Sure. Mm-hmm.

27:37.52

Angelique & Kenisha

But again, it's how we do it. And we engage in conversations even with families around when you saw your child do this, these are the skills that they were demonstrating.

27:48.24

Angelique & Kenisha

And it is a way for us to see the transference of skills. I don't want them to just be able to do the skill when they're sitting with me and I'm modeling and they're repeating it back. Or if we're at a small group table and they're in this closed context, I want to see what they're going to do in the world.

27:58.71

Gary Gray

the

28:03.85

Angelique & Kenisha

I want to see what they're going to do at home. And I've had families.

28:05.91

Gary Gray

who

28:06.73

Angelique & Kenisha

come back and say, oh my gosh, they were doing this at home last night.

28:09.14

Gary Gray
Exactly.

28:10.07

Angelique & Kenisha
like My daughter just did a book review.

28:10.33

Gary Gray
Exactly.

28:12.11

Angelique & Kenisha
She read the the little decodable herself and then she decided to get her materials and and play it all out for me. And that was so great.

28:18.55

Gary Gray
Yeah.

28:19.79

Angelique & Kenisha
So these are the things that are so important, right?

28:22.68

Gary Gray
I love that.

28:22.96

Angelique & Kenisha
Yeah.

28:23.65

Gary Gray
I love that. And I think it all goes back to relationships, right?

28:27.06

Angelique & Kenisha
yeah it does. Yeah.

28:27.54

Gary Gray
but How are we building relationships with our colleagues to share this knowledge? How are we spreading this information to families so they understand what we're doing in the classrooms.

28:38.07

Gary Gray

And all those things can lead to small shifts of the great work that educators are already doing, right? And adults need to play to understand play, right?

28:44.51

Angelique & Kenisha

Can you hear it?

28:47.14

Gary Gray

So if we aren't playing, if we aren't experimenting with how education can look based off of all the past and how we were brought up as ah as students, it's going to be very difficult for us, right?

28:59.55

Gary Gray

Very, very difficult for us to like implement those things into the classroom. um I could talk to you guys all day, but I know people are knocking. I could just see it

29:10.25

Angelique & Kenisha

Thank you.

29:12.86

Gary Gray

But I want to thank both of you so much for just spending time with us today. um Let's stay connected. Again, sending all the ah vibes your way, and we will definitely talk soon.

29:26.84

Angelique & Kenisha

And we send those vibes right back to you. We think you're doing brilliant work and we're so inspired by all the things that you're doing in writing and moving people's thinking. So thank you so much for what you do as well.

29:37.90

Angelique & Kenisha

Yeah, it was a pleasure.

29:38.38

Gary Gray

No, thank you.

29:39.30

Angelique & Kenisha

It's just like having a conversation with family. like

29:41.30

Gary Gray

ah love that. We are We are family now. We are.

29:46.20

Angelique & Kenisha

We appreciate you so much. yeah

29:47.74

Gary Gray

this is awesome.