

Popular Podagogy: Episode 3

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00:08 Nathan Chaney: Hello and welcome to Popular Podagogy. I am your host Nathan Chaney. Previously on our podcast, we've been joined by a couple of researchers from the Queen's University, Faculty of Education who is the sponsor of our podcast, but we're gonna switch it up a little bit today. Today we are joined here by Paul Hannah, who is a retired administrator from the Upper Canada School District. Paul, how are you doing today?

00:31 Paul Hannah: I'm great, thanks for having me in Nathan.

00:32 NC: Yeah, thanks for coming in. So we're gonna start off by talking about the fact that while we are on Queen's and you are a Queen's alumni. So I just wanted to ask my first question, which is, can you tell us about your favorite moment from your time at Queen's and maybe give us at least one funny story that you might not tell your students about.

00:52 PH: I had a lot of favorite moments. Favorite moments, meeting people and making new friendships. Many of those. But a funny story was... Is about a day I was walking down University Avenue, University and Union, walking along... Something caught my eye and I looked up and there was a Volkswagen Beetle, up in a tree. I mean, way up there. And it was nestled in the crotch of this tree and this Volkswagen was in the crotch and even it was up there really high. So we figured out... We got talking and somebody told us it was done by the engineering students. The night before. But I was just amazed at how did they get it up there. What kind of machinery did they use? Yeah, they're engineers, probably a pulley, but like what did they have? And then we all realize this is really stupid. Worse, we're standing right underneath this Volkswagen Beetle up in a tree, that's an old tree. Who knows, it could snap any minute. So we all of a sudden step back and got out of the way, marvelled at it for a while and moved on. I never heard anything about it again. The next time I walked by it was gone. But it's not the kind of thing in science class that I would tell my students about when we're looking at pulleys that, "Hey, you could put a Volkswagen up in a tree, 'cause I know it can be done." No, I wouldn't share that with the kids.

02:10 NC: Well, that's the kind of creative project-based learning that we have here at Queen's where we spend nights trying to figure out how to put cars in trees, and then gawk at it the next day, I guess.

02:20 PH: It was amazing.

02:21 NC: So you went to the faculty of education here, you did your bachelor education of here...

02:25 PH: No, I did my Bachelor of Ed here, and then took about 15 years, and then I went back and got my Bachelor of Ed at York.

02:33 NC: Okay, and then how did you get into teaching after that? What made you decide to go back?

02:37 PH: Interesting story. All my life, I always thought I would like teaching, but I got into another career and decided to leave that. It's kind of funny. I have a couple of stories that maybe fate maybe pushed me in this direction. Let's go back to Queen's. Back in '72, when I applied. I had left school. I left after grade 12, and I just wasn't liking high school, so I went out to work for a year and

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decided, "No, this is not for me, I'm gonna go back to school." I thought, "Oh okay, how am I gonna do this? I'm gonna have to go back to grade 13." I left high school 'cause I just didn't like the groove. And I thought, Oh, okay, well, I was getting myself around to it. I was working in Toronto, came home for the weekend and picked up the newspaper and I was just going through it. Saw this thing, this notice from Queen's University where they were offering a special program to let 50 people in who had grade 12, had been off school for a year and were working, and wanted to go back. I mean, that's what I wanted to do.

03:36 NC: That's pretty much set up right for you.

03:37 PH: Wow. So I went, "Okay, let me apply to this." And I got in. I was thinking maybe fate pushed me that way, a little bit. Working for 15 years, and I kept having this recurring dream and it was happening a lot it was... I was in school and I had this awful feeling that I had some kind of unfinished business, and I always woke up from that dream thinking I was back in school and I was behind in my work, and I had overdue assignments and I was a little stressed about it, in the dream, but it was, man, recurring all the time. After work I decided, "Okay, I don't wanna do this anymore. I wanna try teaching." So again, York was offering this special program where you had to be out of school for quite a while. You had to be in your 30s and I applied and got in. So it was just kinda... And I kinda stumbled upon that one as well. So when I see, I think on a couple of occasions fate pushed me this way. I do, it's because the way it happened, that opening that newspaper, seeing the thing for Queen's, and then finding out about this York program, and it was a special program. And everybody in it we were all in our 30s. So it was just kind of both times fate opened the door for me, it was a little weird. But that dream, as soon as I got into York, was doing the education thing, they stopped. And I've never had them again, so I don't know. Pretty weird.

04:58 NC: That is pretty weird. That's pretty cool though. That you had...

05:00 PH: It is cool. It is cool.

05:00 NC: That you had that opportunity that there's two programs, completely different universities, these completely different opportunities and...

05:06 PH: Right at the time that I wanted it to happen.

05:08 NC: Right at the...

05:08 PH: I think, it just was weird.

05:09 NC: Yeah, no, that's really cool. So then you became a teacher and you taught for 10 years.

05:15 PH: Yeah, it was about 10... Let me see, 1990 to... Yeah, about 10 years.

05:20 NC: So did you find that having a previous career first actually helped you when you were...

05:24 PH: Oh yeah.

05:25 NC: When you were getting into the teaching field? Like how would that have helped you?

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05:28 PH: Well, I've been out in the world more, done a lot of different things, rather than going from kindergarten to being a teacher, I had some time out, and I think I had a great appreciation for education, public education. 'Cause you always... You always appreciate things more, when you get away from them.

05:48 NC: Right.

05:49 PH: And you're away from them, and you learn to miss them and that, you have a greater appreciation, so.

05:54 NC: And then you transitioned into an administrative position. So when you transitioned into your administration position, looking back now, if you could give yourself some advice as you were switching into that position what do you think that would be?

06:06 PH: Listen to people more, you know. I listened to people a lot, but give them the opportunity to really excel at what they did. And I worked on that, but I would do even more. And just be aware of what's going on. Read about pedagogy. Pedagogy if you want. Guys like Michael Follen...

[overlapping conversation]

[chuckle]

06:21 NC: Thanks for the plug. We appreciate that.

06:24 PH: Yeah. Yeah. Guys like Michael Follen. Read that stuff, but also to, get into the ministry Documents. We have some amazing Ministry Documents now that weren't there when I first started teaching. Like, "The Learning for All", "The Growing Success." Those documents, really know them. If you wanna be a leader, you gotta know that stuff. And I didn't know it as well as I should have. But in hindsight, my advice would really dig into those. And in the courses we have at Queen's, there's the "Extra Resources" page, and there's some amazing... Whoever put that together, there's some amazing documents there for any teacher. If you go to that page and go through all those documents, you're gonna be a stronger teacher, you're gonna be stronger leader and you're gonna know what you're doing. And so I guess, my advice is really know what you're doing. 'Cause if you're gonna lead people, you gotta be able to walk the talk.

07:10 NC: So as a shameless plug, that's one thing that I think actually AQ and ABQ courses do really well, is that they kind of gather all of these different resources that are out there and they're available, but they highlight the areas that are really important for teachers to actually take. We're not changing the world. We're not showing you something that's not already in existence. What AQ and ABQ courses are doing is we're actually putting all of these resources in one place to make it easier. 'Cause teachers are busy. It's really hard to go out and find all of these different... 'Cause the Ministry Documents, as you said, are there. But it's not easy to go and find all of these different documents and then find other resources and additional resources on top of that. And so, that's one thing that I would say, when I was taking an AQ course, and when I see people taking AQ courses and the feedback that we get from those courses. That's something that I would say is, really quite positive is how all of these resources are in one place, and it makes it easier for them to gather that. You're retired now?

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08:04 PH: Mm-hmm.

08:05 NC: You said you started teaching in...

08:08 PH: 1990 was the first year...

[overlapping conversation]

08:09 NC: 1990?

08:09 PH: Yeah.

08:09 NC: So how did the education system change from 1990 all the way... And I know this is a big question, but up until when you retired and how would you recommend... 'Cause it's going to continue to change, it's the nature of education. How would you adapt to those changes and how do you recommend to teachers that they should continue to adapt?

08:27 PH: When I started... When I was in teachers college, whole language was the big deal. There were some strengths to whole language, but it didn't work out all that well. And we dropped it. So we had whole language going on. It was hard for a lot of us to get our heads around it, 'cause we weren't taught that way.

08:44 NC: So for people who might not know what whole language is, can you give a 30-second synopsis?

08:49 PH: Well, it's kind of like a laissez faire... Give the kids the books, and they'll figure it out. They'll be able to do it. It wasn't an awful lot of direction. And there was less emphasis on phonics and that sort of thing. And I wouldn't say a program should be all phonics, but there wasn't a balance. That's the whole thing about education and in many things in life. You have to have balance. I came out of teachers college not knowing an awful lot about how to teach kids how to read.

09:19 PH: Really important. And we had the common curriculum. That wasn't in for very long. It was brought in by the NDP government. And I think it was in place for just a couple of years. And it had some brilliant ideas, brilliant activities, really cool things for kids to do. However, there was very little direction. By the end of grade three, kids will know how to do this and dah, dah, dah, dah. Okay. Well, there's a problem there by the end of grade three. So you've got grade one, grade two, grade three. So what do you got, Little Billy goes to school in Kingston, and they teach these particular expectations. Goes to another school somewhere else in the province and the school maybe they didn't do that, maybe... You know what I'm saying?

10:00 NC: Yeah. It's really hard.

10:01 PH: It's really hard. So as a teacher I went... I don't know. All of these things are really cool, but I can only do so much in one year. I don't know if that's gonna jive with the school in another city, or in another school in the district. So it left a lot of openness there for teachers, and it just... It didn't last very long. The Harris government came in and they brought in the curriculum that we

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have now, which I think is a really good curriculum, and it was more laid out. Grade one, here's what you're gonna do. Your overall, your specific expectations. So that if a student went from one district to another... I mean, there was some real continuity there.

10:38 NC: That might be the first time in my life that I've heard anyone give credit to the Harris government for doing something positive for education.

10:43 PH: Yeah, and I'm no big fan, let me tell you that.

[chuckle]

10:46 PH: However, I'll give it where it's due.

10:48 NC: Yeah.

10:48 PH: And I think it is good curriculum. And we still have it. And I really don't hear of teachers complaining about the overall and the specific expectations we have. They're good. They're solid. So yeah, it is good curriculum. But Mike Harris didn't write it.

[chuckle]

11:00 PH: He just has some good people there to do it. So it wasn't a political thing. Well, actually, there were some political things in the curriculum that I disagreed with, in the social studies and things around environmental issues.

11:12 NC: And that's a whole other podcast. We can save that one for another time.

11:15 PH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But anyways... But getting back to it, they've tweaked it over the years and I think we have some really... The Ontario curriculum is acknowledged all around the world as being really top notch. So we'll give credit where credit's due. So where was I going with this? How things have changed, yeah. So with that more accountability was brought in for teachers and I'd never heard of rubrics before. It used to be... I need to have a task and...

11:38 NC: Which is crazy to think about, 'cause that's... I went through the faculty of education a little while ago now. And all we were, or all that happened to us is that we were just hit over the head with, "Rubrics, rubrics, rubrics. You gotta use rubrics everywhere you go. Assessment is important."

11:52 PH: That's what drives instruction.

11:54 NC: Right. Yeah.

11:54 PH: So the rubric thing, wow. A lot of teachers had meltdowns over that.

[chuckle]

12:00 PH: And I just spent a lot of time getting my head around it, and so did parents.

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12:02 NC: Yeah.

12:03 PH: But when you think about it, out in the real world, if... I used to say to the parents, "Your child plays hockey," right? "Yeah, yeah." So if you went to your son's coach and said, "How's my boy doing? You wouldn't be happy with the coach saying, "Well he's at about an 80%." You wouldn't want that. You'd wanna him to say, "Yeah, he stick handles really well. Maybe he needs to work on skating backwards. He has a good overview of the game. He knows the rules and all of that." That's like a rubric. And that's how you do it in real life. That's how you assess things in real life. This notion of, you got 90, or you 80 out of 100. In what? And was it knowledge and understanding? Was it an application? No, those test results didn't tell you anything...

12:45 NC: Right.

12:45 PH: Other than how your child did out of 180, against the other students in the class. So that really sold be on the idea of rubrics, 'cause it made a lot of sense and it gave more information about where the students were. The other thing too is I've always been a big fan of Bloom's taxonomy, the higher level thinking, right? And you can't really get a judgement on that from a number 75%. If you go through those rubrics they naturally lend themselves to the levels of thinking. Makes a lot of sense. So that, getting back to your question, the accountability piece was really good. And frankly, I spent a lot of time getting my head around that. Getting around the expectations there's a lot of them.

13:25 NC: Mm-hmm.

13:25 PH: You have to bundle them together, you just can't teach one at that time. So there's a lot of work involved with that. And the report cards, oh my God, we went from one page report cards to longer ones where you had to do a lot of comments. And the comments had to follow the rubrics. So there was a real learning curve for teachers, so that was one of the changes.

13:44 NC: Mm-hmm.

13:44 PH: Getting through that. And then there was a lull for a while. That's when I went into the spec ed role. They gave us time to consolidate and put it all together. So there was that, around 2000 maybe 205, maybe a little, 2005, a little later. And then they came out with Learning for All.

14:03 NC: Yeah.

14:04 PH: And Growing Success. And I loved that. Because it gets into this notion... And the IEPs. Yeah, that's another thing, IEPs weren't all that common when I first started. Now we have a lot of IEPs, and justifiably so. So the Learning for All, the Growing Success, the differentiation is something that then we had to really get into, because before we were asked to program for all these kids but weren't really given the tools, we weren't given the documents, but the ideas in those documents now really make it easier for teachers to put that together. And do it in a sensible way, in a way that you can do within the time constraints you have. So yeah, those are the changes. We're at a good place, I think, in Ontario right now with that. When you marry... I'm a big fan of Howard Gardner too.

14:51 NC: Mm-hmm.

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14:52 PH: The multiple intelligence...

14:53 NC: Yeah.

14:53 PH: And preferred learning style. When you look at Learning for All, Growing Success, and you bring in Gardener if you want, it's a lot easier to program for these kids appropriately and to get them through Bloom's taxonomy, which is so important.

15:08 NC: Right.

15:10 PH: The corporations, they're saying, "We want critical thinkers, this is what we want." And the path is there. And I think Ontario should be very proud of its public education system.

15:20 NC: So we had one of our researchers from Queens on actually a little while ago, and she talked about the importance of play-based learning in early childhood education.

15:30 PH: Yeah, yeah.

15:31 NC: And one of the things that came up was the idea of how it actually promotes that critical thinking, and a lot of the presentation skills, and oral communication skills that go along with that and how that ties into the education system. And when we are in a traditional education system we weren't necessarily teaching those skills. So I think a lot of what you just talked about as the changes in our education system along the way it actually ties in a lot with those ideas, right? Is we're teaching those higher level thinking skills, we're trying to get to those higher level thinking skills. And there's definitely been resistance to those...

16:03 PH: Sure.

16:04 NC: Types of ideas as well. And it's funny how you say how much resistance there was to rubrics because now rubrics are such a part of everyday schooling.

16:12 PH: Absolutely.

16:13 NC: But the idea that they weren't always there, it might be surprising to a lot of people. So I think that's a really interesting way of looking at it, and adjusting that way.

16:22 PH: Well, they just, on top of that.

16:24 NC: Yeah.

16:25 PH: It's funny, I was on the internet looking at something and I saw this picture and it was a picture of a factory and it was just rows of women on sewing machines and that's what they were doing, and there was a picture of kids from the '50s in rows doing the work by themselves. And that was the model. Back then, Industrial Age, tail end of it, people really didn't have to be all that critical in their thinking.

16:51 NC: Or collaborate.

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16:52 PH: Or collaborate. And so, our school system is always going to be a reflection of what's going on in society and what's going on with corporations and the work. And that's true. We train kids for work. But we also train them for their mental health.

17:09 NC: Right.

17:10 PH: And all those things. But it's interesting, it was the industrial model and the industrial model is not gonna work for us anymore. So all of that and the play-based learning, I'm a big fan of that. Man, you go to a kindergarten classroom [laughter] Wow, it's busy.

[laughter]

17:25 NC: That was my exact response, actually.

17:27 PH: It is noisy. But wow, those kids are really producing lots of construction sites, they're building things. There's a lot of noise and it's pretty cool to go in and see, but I wouldn't want to teach...

[laughter]

17:39 NC: I know, that was I believe my exact response when we were talking last week, very last time.

17:43 PH: Yeah [laughter]

17:44 NC: So just really quickly, you touched on a lot there. How would you recommend teachers adapt to changes in the education system? 'cause they are coming. And teachers, we know one of the most important skills it's to be adaptable, but that doesn't mean that it can't be a challenge sometimes.

17:57 PH: Yeah.

17:58 NC: So when you're up against one of those challenges, when you're up against having to change the way that you think or the way that you look at particular ways of learning, how would you recommend teachers address that?

18:08 PH: Lean on your colleagues. If you're by yourself you're not gonna stay afloat. Well, yeah, you can, but it's gonna be very difficult.

18:16 NC: Right.

18:16 PH: Lean on your colleagues, work with them, collaborate, do those things and you'll survive and you'll do well and you won't feel alone. That's the bottom line, is to lean on your colleagues. Stay positive.

18:28 NC: Yeah.

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18:28 PH: And love the kids.

18:29 NC: Mm-hmm.

18:30 PH: Love those kids, everything else will fall into place.

18:32 NC: So, really quick, we're gonna get to a couple more things before we get to a bit of a break. So you currently teach AQ and ABQ courses for the Continuing Teacher Education Department at Queens, we've touched a little bit on that so far this podcast, but what are some of the challenges that are associated with teaching other teachers, particularly in an online environment?

18:51 PH: Honestly, I don't find a lot of challenges to be honest, because they're all professionals, and they're doing it for a good reason. A lot of them are going into leadership, they maybe going to be principals, and so they're on top of it. And then there's a lot of young teachers starting out wanting to upgrade. And they're enthusiastic, and they've got it all going on in terms of working hard and being collaborative, and all that. So not a lot of challenges that way. The challenges are helping people who are not used to online, you gotta help them a lot in the beginning. Once you get them going, after a week or two, they're on a roll, but they'll miss things. And I've been doing this for a while, I've been doing this since 2005, so I could sort of anticipate what's gonna happen with some people, and I'll say, "By the way, you might wanna look at this or go to this or check this out." And that's...

19:46 PH: It was a bigger challenge then, but now, like I said, I can sort of anticipate things that are gonna come. And yeah, no, it's like I say; the people who are taking these courses, they're in the right headspace, and they're doing it for a reason, 'cause they're giving up their time, it's costing them money, but they have their eye on the prize, whatever that is; upgrade, more qualifications to get a job or to get a leadership role, that sort of thing, so it makes it easy.

20:16 NC: Alright, we'll be right back. But first, we're gonna have a quick word from our sponsors.

[music]

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[music]

21:20 NC: And we're back with our guest, Paul Hannah. So Paul, you were recently highlighted in the CTE newsletter, which if you are not already subscribed, I highly suggest that you subscribe. We just send out some professional development resources and lesson plans from our instructors, so it's a really good resource, you can find that on coursesforteachers.ca. But now that I've done my

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shameless plug, when you were on the newsletter, you gave out quite an interesting lesson plan. So can you just give us a quick overview of the lesson and why you think it's valuable to the students in our changing education system?

21:52 PH: Yeah. It was a lesson on making inferences, and it was part of a school improvement plan push to get more collaboration going with teachers and to get kids better at making inferences. It's one of the things that comes up in EQA results every year, without a doubt. It was always amazing, you sit down to look at it, and you knew that the kids were lacking in making inferences. And those are important things. Well, kids make inferences every day, they learn very quickly. And I've put this little lesson plan. They learn that looking up and seeing clouds moving in and birds scattering around the sky, you can make the inference that it's gonna rain, because you've seen that before. Inferences are a big part of life, and an important skill, so we put that lesson together. And I put it together with Cathy Bow, who is also an instructor for Queens. So I was in a rather unique situation, I'm collaborating with Cathy in school with our own school community, but I'm also collaborating with her from time to time quite a bit on courses, 'cause we teach the same course; so we have a good working relationship that way. And I put that with her and another teacher, they were sharing a class, 'cause Cathy's also a spec ed teacher, so she was sharing this grade 1,2 class with another teacher.

23:11 PH: So we put that lesson together, and I really liked it, it was fun to do, and I got a chance to go into the classroom and do a little bit of teaching too, which was really nice, to get back in with the kids, and it was all about making inferences. And I had... A few years before, I was home one day with the dog, and I got this idea to start taking some pictures, and it was all about him losing his toy out in the snow. I made all these pictures, and as the story unfolded, I wrote this little book, but it was all about Angus, my dog, making inferences. And so I was able to take that book that I had, 'cause I took all these pictures and put it in and it's called, "Angus Finds Chippy," and just loaded with inferences that he makes. So as I read to the kids, the kids were able to make inferences, but they were making inferences about the dog making inferences. So it was really neat. And for them, it was very close to home, 'cause it was my dog, and they knew I had done it, so it...

[overlapping conversation]

24:12 NC: And any time you can make it personal like that, kids are always way more invested, they get a kick out of it.

24:16 PH: Yeah, yeah, and they did, they sure did.

24:18 NC: So in the lesson plan, you talked about how the... Not to give too much away, I want everyone to go read the lesson plan and see everything, but you talked about how, after the lesson plan, you had some students who actually started making inferences in their day-to-day school days and their lives, can you give us a little bit more information about that?

24:38 PH: Yeah, in that class there was a lot of sharing about what kids do at home, out on the yard, on the bus. And these kids were coming up with stories about making the inferences. And we put a big emphasis on vocabulary, and so they were able to articulate their experiences using the vocabulary, which I really liked. But it was the... One story came to me, a little fellow was sent down to my office, and he'd had a conflict with some of the other kids, but in the conversation with him, I was able to find out that he had made a lot of inferences, and through his inference making,

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the conflict didn't escalate as much as it may have normally would have. So that was really cool, to see the kids talking about their inferences at home with their brothers, sisters in their family, out at a soccer game, on the bus, or out on the yard having some conflicts, so we know that it worked fairly well. Yeah, it was quite rewarding, and it also...

25:36 PH: Because the student was talking about making inferences from the body language, that really tied into some drama stuff, drama activities, especially for older kids. 'Cause let's face it, what is it, 70-75% of communication is body language. And when you're doing body language, you're making inferences like crazy, right?

25:54 NC: Mm-hmm.

25:55 PH: So, yeah, it was a fun exercise and rewarding for us to do.

26:00 NC: Well, that was the part that I really took away from it is it's great when students get what your lesson is and they're using it in the class and using it in that kind of context, but whenever you are outside of a classroom setting and you can see that the students are actually taking what they learned and applied it, it always makes it a little bit more authentic and real and it hits home a little bit more for you as a teacher 'cause you know that you've actually connected and gotten through to them, so...

26:26 PH: I was... Sorry, I interrupted you.

26:27 NC: No, not at all.

26:28 PH: The credit goes to Cathy and Carrie because they work that class so well. And they have those conversations and they're able to reinforce things in an authentic way, so kudos to them for that.

26:39 NC: Yeah, absolutely. We're gonna move now to what we think is our favorite segment, which is the classroom confession segment. So if you haven't tuned in before, this is an opportunity for our teachers to come on and talk about something that their students or themselves have done in the class that might be a little bit embarrassing or a little bit funny. And if you've taught in the classroom or if you are going to become a teacher you'll have lots of moments like these, and you kinda learn to appreciate them and you'll remember them. And a lot of the times your students will remember them. So, Paul, do you have a classroom confession for today?

27:18 PH: Yeah, I do. Not so much a classroom, in my office as a principal. But in my office as a principal I always saw myself as a teacher, I was always looking for teachable moments, but [chuckle] this one was really funny, for me anyway. I had this little guy who used to, he needed a body break every day at a certain time, he would come down to my office and we would go out into the building and if the gym was empty I'd have him run around the gym, and I would time him, and so we were keeping track of his timing, and that's what motivated him. But really what it was he needed to run off some steam. So we'd do that or we would do, if the gym was full we would do safety inspection. So it was as important job that he helped me with.

27:56 PH: This little guy was down a lot, and he was down one day just as the national anthem was playing, and my window was open a bit and I had this balloon, a helium balloon, that was floating,

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and it was a balloon with a Canadian flag. It was just amazing, the anthem came on and the wind started moving the balloon and it looked so much like it was dancing to the national anthem. And, wouldn't you know it, when the national anthem stopped the wind stopped and it stopped moving. And this little guy was looking at it with me and I said, "Look at that's dancing, the balloon's dancing to the national anthem." And he was just blown away by it. And he left and went, "Oh, okay." Next day he comes back down to my office, looks out at the the balloon and he goes, starts he singing O Canada. And the balloon is not doing anything.

[chuckle]

28:50 PH: And he starts singing louder. And he's at a point where he is singing so loud. My door is open. This a school building built in the '70s, so it's open concept, we had no doors, it was wide open. Yeah, I can just hear his voice echoing all around the school. It was hilarious. So I stood behind him and I was blowing the balloon to make it dance.

[chuckle]

29:15 PH: He said, "Mr. Hannah, I made it work!" And I said, "Yeah, yeah did. You know, like wow, that's so great." And he left. And I'm, "Oh, what am I doing here?" Kinda fooling this little guy and deceiving him, but at the same time there's magic, right?

29:30 NC: Right.

29:30 PH: And so who am I to spoil that magic for this little guy, because his eyes were so wide and he was so proud of himself. [chuckle] Next day back down again. [chuckle] And singing as loud as he could and it kept up for a little while, but eventually, the helium went out of the balloon and it sort of disappeared out of site, out of mind. And he stopped doing it, it was all well and good. But I was a little conflicted about, "Okay, should I be fooling this little guy?" But man, that magic was just so great for him, he needed that. The thing is, we tell them there's a Santa Claus. So, yeah, the balloon was dancing to O Canada, it was a very patriotic balloon and it was great. It may not be funny to some people, but if you knew this little guy, and he's so cute, and just to see him do that, but to raise his voice and sing louder.

30:18 NC: Well, and it gives him something that he can hold on to, and it probably made his day that day, and it's one of those things that down the road he might look back and say, "Oh, what was I thinking and what was I doing."

30:30 PH: [laughter] Yeah, yeah.

30:31 NC: But in the meantime it was something special for him. So I'm sure that's...

30:34 PH: Yeah, yeah. And a few people on staff knew what was going on then when was happening and if they were down they'd stick their head and they see me standing behind the little guy participating in this big deception. But, no, it was cool. He was a great little guy, he wouldn't hate me for it so I don't have a guilty conscience, but it was really cute. It's those kind of things that you have to hang on to it and go with it, and go with the magic, 'cause that's what it's all about for some guys and girls.

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31:03 NC: Yeah. So normally when we have our researchers on here we ask them if they have anything to promote or to plug. Do you have anything that you wanna talk about that you're doing right now?

31:12 PH: Well, what I'm doing... I'm retired so I'm keeping myself busy, so I'll plug that. When anybody goes into retirement, keep yourself busy.

[chuckle]

31:20 PH: And I'm doing the Queen's courses, and I love teaching the Queens courses. I love it because it keeps me on top of it. They're good courses and I find them really interesting. It's gonna be a long time before I can let go of education because that dream, you know that dream I talked about earlier, Rick told me, "You gotta be teaching," so I'm still involved with that. And, yeah, I'd recommend people to just keep doing the professional development because that's what I'm doing, and I don't have to. Well, the money doesn't hurt.

[chuckle]

31:55 PH: But you know what I mean. It's good for me and I do like it. I like the content. I like staying on top of it because public education is so important and we have to do what we can to keep it alive and keep it strong. And for teachers to do what they're doing, they're sacrificing a lot of their time and putting a lot in, so kudos to them for doing that professional development and strengthening public education 'cause without it we'd be in a lot of trouble.

32:29 NC: Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you, Paul, for coming in today...

32:33 PH: My pleasure.

32:33 NC: And spending some time with us and sharing some stories. We really appreciate it. And I haven't done this on the first two podcasts, but we wanna make sure we have a special thank you to our producer, Candace, who cleans up everything that we do on here and makes it sound presentable so...

32:47 PH: You make it sound good, Candace.

32:48 NC: Yeah. A big thank you to her. And we hope you enjoyed this episode of Popular Podagogy. You can find us on Apple Podcast, Google Play and Stitcher, as well as on the CFRC and Faculty of Education websites. Please subscribe and if you like what you're hearing give us a review and rating and we'll see you next time.

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