

46 - College Conversations

Speaking to Students about College and Career Readiness

Original Air Date: 5/4/22

Purpose: The purpose of the transcripts is to provide readers and listeners with a written version of each episode of the UAGC Center for Early Childhood Education's Early Childhood Chatter Podcast so they can follow along with the audio content. www.uagc.edu/ece-center/chatter-podcast

Audience: Current Active & Enrolled Students

Episode Transcript

Host Dr. Shipley: Hello everyone and welcome to Early Childhood Chatter with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Heald. We will upload a new episode every other week on Wednesdays.

Host Dr. Heald: Twice a month, we will come to you with a 10-minute professional development that you can quickly listen to for new ideas to try.

Don't forget to subscribe to this podcast to get notifications about future episodes.

Today we have with us Dr. Emily DeVore, and she is currently the Director of Elementary Education in a mid-sized school district in Southern California. She's been in this position for three years.

Prior to that, she was an elementary principal and an assistant principal for 13 years. She's also an adjunct professor at the University of Arizona Global Campus and a No Excuses University Associate. She is also the author of College Conversations, 140 Ways to Engage Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade Students for College and Career Readiness Success.

Emily, thank you so much for joining us today.

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: Thank you so much. I'm happy to be here.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Emily, we're so excited to have you, and I love your title, which is College Conversations. And it's going to be about speaking to students about college and career readiness at their earliest ages. And I, too, believe that this is so important, and I do it constantly at home with my nephews and cousins.

But I don't think it's happening everywhere all the time, and it is a vital part. So why is this something that you decided to write a book about, in your opinion?

Dr. Emily DeVore: ****Speaker:**** Yeah, well, first of all, thank you again. It's such an honor to speak with you, and your audience today.

So how this book came about is, I completed my doctoral research on how a culture of college and career readiness, is focused at the elementary school level. Too often, these concepts of college and career readiness are addressed explicitly through the secondary level, through advanced placement courses, college-ready classes, guidance counselor sessions, and things of that nature. However, through my research, I discovered how these concepts can be addressed even conceptually to preschool-age students and beyond.

So based on my research, it couldn't be assumed that college and careers are being openly discussed at any level with students at home and really loosely at school even. So, I experienced this even in my research and speaking to current practicing educators and their stories about how the idea of college was not explicitly taught to them. So, I sought to

find a way to bring these conversations to the classroom and provide an equitable opportunities for all scholars to experience discussions about college and career at all grade levels.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: I love that. We're starting them so young and we're getting them prepared for truly becoming a lifelong learner, and that's so important in our society today. So, for our audience, what is a way, because many of them are educators, teachers in early childhood and early elementary ed, what is a way that they can actually do this in their classroom or environment settings?

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: So, the best thing about college conversations is all the planning is done for you, and every teacher loves that.

So, college conversations is really designed to have a 30-minute structure of having college conversations each month. Resulting in students receiving hours of topics over the years and things of building character, planning for success, investing in college, goal setting, how to make good choices, academic behavior, challenges, college concepts, college acceptance, and college commitment. And just taking 30 minutes a month to explicitly discuss these concepts of college can really make a huge difference. The great thing about the text of college conversations is all the lessons are based on grade levels that are developmentally appropriate.

So, in there, we're not asking a kindergarten student to complete a college application. We are asking that of a sophomore or junior, but not of a kindergartner. But we are providing those students conceptual tools so when they get to 10th or 11th grade, they have already seen that and have practiced what it means to apply for college.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: I love this because not all students have that backing at home because some families don't have that knowledge of how to apply for college or where to go or even what college means. So, can you give me an example of what a structured college conversation looks like?

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: Yeah, for sure. I'm going to give you a pre-kindergarten lesson on the topic of academic behavior.

So, in this section, students of all grades are taught about behaviors that include hard work, collaboration, studying, note-taking, type of academic behavior such as that. In the pre-kindergarten lesson, it's really all about structuring a conceptual understanding of what an academic scholar would look like. So, the teacher might display a picture of the students on poster paper and then label their parts.

So, like they may label their head and their hands and their legs. The teacher can then share and have conversation about how our hands are used to hold a book or to hold a pencil. How our minds grow as we learn new things, or to help us remember our ABC song, or our morning song that we do each day and how our heart holds our love for playing with our friends and socializing as part of the academic behavior.

So, all of these conversations are about building an understanding of academic behaviors, as we evolve throughout our years of learning, and it starts at preschool.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: So, I'm so intrigued. I just want to bring this into the curriculum at all levels and just really start to have that intentional conversation getting all of our students excited about the future of learning.

So, talk to us a little bit about what is included in your book. Yeah.

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: So, the book is structured to have 10 topics that I mentioned earlier. There's 140 conversations, because every grade level pre-kindergarten through 12th grade has a lesson on each of those topics.

So, the first chapter is on building character. So, if you teach preschool, you're going to look at the preschool lesson on building character. But if you teach fourth grade, there's going to be a fourth-grade lesson in building character.

So, for a pre-k through fifth grade school, for example, the best way to make this a system within their school is to dedicate a time. For example, the school that I was at was the last Friday of every month, after what we had was a flag

ceremony or a pep assembly at the last day of every Friday. So whatever grade level you're at, you have 30 minutes after that flag ceremony, and you are learning your college conversation lesson.

And it becomes the theme throughout the month. And then you and the conversations, also include continued conversations at the end of each topic or at the end of each chapter. Because we don't want to talk about character on Friday and then never talk about it again.

So, there's six or seven different ways that you can bring the topic up again, in various lessons throughout the month.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: It's intentional. I just love how it's intentional.

I'm sorry, Dr. Shipley. I just wanted to say.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: No, I love it too.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: That format for someone who might not know how to tackle it is just something that gives them all the framework for it.

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: Absolutely. And then as I addressed, the lesson planning really is done.

That's what I like so much about it. Not that I encourage this. However, a teacher can open it five minutes before the students walk in, and be prepared to have the conversation.

Because it's about having a conversation. It's not about having a lot of materials. And so, it's how do we just engage in dialogue? Now, mind you, there are some college conversations that do have materials, maybe a text or a children's book that is addressed.

Or as I mentioned earlier, drawing on a piece of paper, a student that we then label. But it doesn't have to be intensive planning or preparation.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Yeah, I love this.

And I didn't mean to interrupt Dr. Heald, but where can you get this book? Because I know our listeners, because I'm right now like, where can I get this? I love having these conversations with all children. What do you want to be when you grow up? What college do you like? What are you, you know, do you want to live in the dorm room? Give them that fun aspect of things that they could do while they're at college, because that's so important. Because again, kids aren't getting that at home a lot.

So, as teachers, we have to start that and then teach our families about how to talk about it at home too, right?

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. And that it's a preview to what hopefully will come in the future about what college conversations look like at home, as well as school.

As I mentioned earlier about the research I did for my doctorate, it's not explicitly taught at home, regardless of the resources of the family. Sometimes it's just assumed that that's what you're going to do is go to college, but you don't talk about it. That's just what you're going to do.

And so, it happens at all different sorts of families. So, the best way for schools to get hold of this book is it can be purchased through the No Excuses University website at noexcusesu.com. You can also reach out to me, if you have any questions about the structure or the ordering of the book, and I'd be happy to help. And you could reach me at emily@noexcusesu.com.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Oh, wow.

And we will put the contact information in the show notes, so you can access it there also. So, we always leave our readers with three takeaways. Ms. Emily, can you leave our readers with three things that you want them to just walk away with from this listening session?

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: Absolutely.

We all have a college story, is going to be my first takeaway. Think about your own and identify how college conversations were or weren't part of your story and be willing to share that story with your scholars and your colleagues because we all have a unique college story that is worth hearing and providing. Second would be that college and career conversations can and should start at the earliest of ages.

And then the third is, we are not responsible for determining the future of our scholars, but we are responsible for ensuring that they are all well prepared. So, college conversations ensures that they have those skills to be successful in whatever they determine their future to look like.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: 100%.

I love that. So, Dr. DeVore, as we wrap up, what is one challenge that you have for our listeners today?

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: No matter the age you teach, start the conversation now. We don't teach our children to not touch fire when they're a teenager or how to ride a bike only when they're able to use two wheels.

We start early and we are intentional in how we scaffold that learning as they grow. So, college conversations does the same thing. And I hope that all your listeners are able to grab a copy to implement in their classroom right away.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Emily, thank you so much for being here today. This was amazing information and I can't wait to grab your book.

Dr. Emily DeVore Speaker: Great.

Thank you.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Thank you.