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SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Shawn Marsolais, Speaker 1, Mandy Lau, Rob Mineault

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R **Rob Mineault** 00:10

Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.

S **Shawn Marsolais** 00:16

Banter Banter.

R **Rob Mineault** 00:17

Hey, this is of course a podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault and joining me today, Shawn Marsolais.

S **Shawn Marsolais** 00:36

Hello.

R **Rob Mineault** 00:38

What the heck? Where are my regular co-hosts?

S Shawn Marsolais 00:41

Yeah, I'm glad I could fill in because looks like you'd be flying solo otherwise.

R Rob Mineault 00:46

I would be flying solo. Yeah, so no, no Steve, no Lis today. So it's a bit of a different AT Banter episode. This is great. I love it. I love a changeup.

S Shawn Marsolais 00:59

Yeah, me too.

R Rob Mineault 01:00

It's almost as good as the time changeup.

S Shawn Marsolais 01:04

Oh my gosh! I don't know that that the non-time change could be such a kerbuncle. That's not the word.

R Rob Mineault 01:11

It could be the word.

S Shawn Marsolais 01:16

What's the word?

R Rob Mineault 01:17

Kerfuffle?

S Shawn Marsolais 01:18

Kerfuffle.

R Rob Mineault 01:20

It may be a kerfuffle.

S Shawn Marsolais 01:21

Okay, I think

R Rob Mineault 01:22

I think it ranks as on the kerfuffle level.

S Shawn Marsolais 01:25

It definitely has been.

R Rob Mineault 01:26

It's crazy here right now. I don't know if anybody else in the world knows our pain, but here in BC, it's the first year that we're doing this whole not not doing daylight savings time. We've opted out of daylight savings time.

S Shawn Marsolais 01:42

Basically, we did nothing, and it's caused all these problems. It's quite hilarious.

R Rob Mineault 01:48

Yeah, it's it is it's crazy. So now we have our own little time zone, our own little bubble here on the west coast of Canada, and it's not lining up with with a lot of the rest of the world. So yeah, it's just been a lot to get used to, especially for those of us who, you know, try to schedule things like podcasts. It's been a real challenge.

S Shawn Marsolais 02:08

Especially with people from the other side of the world.

R Rob Mineault 02:10

Yeah, exactly. So, yeah, thankfully the stars aligned on today's episode, but we'll get to that. But before we get to the the meat of the show, well, first of all, thanks for thanks for stepping in and and welcome welcome to the show, Shawn.

S Shawn Marsolais 02:26

Yeah, it's always a pleasure to to join you. So I'm happy to be here.

R Rob Mineault 02:31

So hey, how was your Halloween?

S Shawn Marsolais 02:36

My Halloween was fantastic. I had a little Halloween party and got to wear a costume that I have been saving for two years, and it was a hit.

R Rob Mineault 02:49

Oh, really? Okay, tell me more.

S Shawn Marsolais 02:52

So it's the best costume ever. If you know me, I really love Scrabble, and my costume was a Scrabble board, so I had I had movable tiles that have obviously the letters, but I also brailled them, so it's a an accessible Scrabble board.

R Rob Mineault 03:11

Wow.

S Shawn Marsolais 03:11

And then it had like little bags with additional tiles, so I set up the whole board with Halloween themed words, but I could also play people. I could play Scrabble. Nobody really played me though. But yeah, it was a little bit uncomfortable to wear. Gotta say, not the easiest to eat and drink in or sit. But it it's pretty cool. And I even had Scrabble socks, and I put tiles in my hair, so it said "boo" on the back of my head in braille in Scrabble tiles, it was it was great.

R Rob Mineault 03:44

You went all in.

S Shawn Marsolais 03:45

I sure did. Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 03:46

Was this a is this a custom costume? Did you make this yourself? Like where where do you get a Scrabble board as a costume?

S Shawn Marsolais 03:53

I bought it at Party City a couple years ago. Okay, but I added the braille, so gave it a little custom, you know, add on.

R **Rob Mineault** 04:02

And I'm fascinated by this now because how are the pieces, like, were they Velcro?

S **Shawn Marsolais** 04:08

Basically. So the board is a material that they stick to, and you can move them around and set them up in a grid. And it was it was pretty cool.

R **Rob Mineault** 04:18

That that is cool. Well done.

S **Shawn Marsolais** 04:21

Thank you.

R **Rob Mineault** 04:21

Now, do you feel like you you're gonna have to go as a board game next year? Now you set the standard.

S **Shawn Marsolais** 04:29

I don't know. I mean, I love I love Scrabble specifically, so I wouldn't say I'm just like I'm not a board game nerd. Although I like games, but I'm definitely a Scrabble nerd. So I don't know how I top this. I don't know. I'm gonna have to start thinking now for next year.

R **Rob Mineault** 04:44

Yeah. I have to admit, the last staff meeting when it came out about just your Wordle problem, I was I was a bit shocked to learn that you may have an addiction to Wordle.

S Shawn Marsolais 04:57

I I like to play Wordle every day. I don't know if I'd call it an addiction.

R Rob Mineault 05:03

I don't know.

S Shawn Marsolais 05:06

It's not causing a problem in my life. It's just once a day that I play...

R Rob Mineault 05:10

I don't know, it sounds a lot like somebody else would say...

S Shawn Marsolais 05:18

I think I don't want to talk about my Wordle problem. I think we need to introduce our guest here and get going.

R Rob Mineault 05:23

That's fine. That's a good segue .

R Rob Mineault 05:25

But I don't have a problem though.

R Rob Mineault 05:28

Well played, Marsolais. Well played.

S Shawn Marsolais 05:30

Thank you. Thank you.

R Rob Mineault 05:31

All right. Well, let's do that then. Let's get on with the the show today. We are really excited to chat with Mandy Lau, who is the founder of Reach and Match, which is an Australian organization that has developed some inclusive educational tools and activities for kiddos, including, of course, those who are blind and have low vision, as well as other disabilities. You know, we've been we've been actually trying to to get Mandy on the show for I don't know a few months now. So really pleased that we managed to overcome all our time change kerfuffles and get her on. Mandy, welcome to the show.

M Mandy Lau 06:18

Hi, thank you so much. I'm so happy to be here.

R Rob Mineault 06:21

Yeah, and yeah, and it almost didn't happen because we we we were emailing back and forth earlier today, and we already had our the time difference messed up. We were going to miss each other by an hour, I think.

M Mandy Lau 06:36

I know, I know, but I'm so glad that we make it.

R Rob Mineault 06:38

Okay, well, maybe if we can maybe just start by giving us just a little bit of a snapshot of of your background and a little bit about what Reach and Match is.

M Mandy Lau 06:51

Yeah, sure. So for my background: So my background I did a degree in mechanical engineering and a master of design, which is industrial design, and I love make things with my hands. And I always passionate about assistive technology and how design can improve people, especially people with disabilities, and do things in different ways, and really interesting, just learning about human potential by focusing like people's abilities rather than their limitations. And Reach and Match began as my Master's research at Monash University, and it was quite a journey because I did my Masters over 10 years, so and now it became my social enterprise. And yes, it was a very interesting journey for me because I I was really interesting. I was really interested in inclusion education and design, and years ago, I was working as an art therapy instructor to support children and adults with disabilities express themselves through arts. And from there, I I saw like children with disabilities always are isolated in the group activities, and also in the mainstream classrooms, and I just wanted to create an opportunity for children with and without disabilities. They can learn and play together, and at the same time, I also start learn about braille, and I was really fascinated by how beautiful and clever the braille system, and that's the time that I start reading and learning about the braille and the history, and also how the inclusive education system affecting the braille. Like less people learn braille, but this is really important for their like independence and also their employment, so that's a that's a starting point. Why I want to make Braille more accessible and interesting, and enjoyable and fun for all children. So that's how I started.

S Shawn Marsolais 09:14

Can you describe what the Reach and Match system is?

S Speaker 1 09:20

Sure. So the Reach and Match system is a multi-sensory toolkit. It has different components. It has four large double-sized sensory play mats, and there are four different colors: red, yellow, green, and blue. And the system also include 26 double side tiles. There are four different shapes: circle, square, triangle, and pentagon. And there are also a round bag holding all the tiles together. And the mats you can make different configurations. Arrangement. You can also make them stand out as a 3d configurations as well, and there are different lots of different ways to play. For example, one side of the mat is tactile patterns, so each color of the mats has a very distinctive pattern. For example, the red mat has a red dots, tactile red dots on the mats, and the circle tiles also had the little red dots on the tile. So different shape of the tile can match with the mats, different mats. So kids can play differently. They can matching the little patterns on the tile matching with the big patterns on the mats, and they can also sort by colors and shapes. And each tile also has different sound as well. So I'm keeping a tile with a circle tile, and also this is a square tile. And the other side of the mats it has a like a recessive path, so kids can touch and track the path. And he has different pockets with different shapes, so children can put and find the shape, different shape of the tiles to put on the podcast. So that's lots of fun things they can do with these features.

S Shawn Marsolais 11:20

And then it also has letters and numbers. Is that right?

M Mandy Lau 11:23

Oh yes, right. So the tile has the letter. So there's the the letter, but also in the letter in print, but also the title, the braille as well. So kids they are blind, they can learn about the braille, and it's a really fun way to starting to understand and just recognize the braille. And but for kids and sighted kids, they can learn the letter, so they can all play together.

R Rob Mineault 11:55

Yeah, that's the thing that that I was really fascinated about, and that that I feel like really makes Reach andMatch unique is that the this idea of inclusive play. A lot of times when we we talk about inclusion stuff, we're we often talk about adapting different activities specifically for you know kiddos with disabilities, but we don't hear very often the idea of building new activities from the ground up that just work for everybody. You know, this idea of of universal design, and it's such a powerful concept, but it but it can be very tricky in in building something like that. Did you find that when you were initially developing the system that was was a real challenge for you to to find activities that were universal designed?

M Mandy Lau 12:55

I totally agreed, and I find is very like for example when I firstly learn about braille, I only find it in the books, or there is a brailler, which is the typing machine for kids to use the braille. But what about before that? So, because for other children, there's so many opportunity. They can they can look at the magazines or book like colorful posters or television or other things so visual. But what about little children? How is that something they can start by learning pre braille skills? That is really important for young children to develop the sense of braille and also to appreciate. So I was thinking, oh, there's no toys with braille. It's hardly find any toys with braille, and obviously, I understand now. It's really difficult to make. It's expensive, and that's why all is make it so difficult to have those toys available in the market. So that's my ideas. I want to make it accessible, but it's not just for blind children, but for everyone, because what I was thinking is lots of tools, equipment, toys. They are like special toys or special needs equipment. So you just label the child with their disabilities, but but toys should not be like that. It should welcome everyone. Everyone should have a way in. Everyone is welcome. So that's what I found universal design is really important, and that's the concept that how I start designing Reach and Match. What about a child is non-verbal? What about a child is deaf and have difficulty hearing, and what about a child has cerebral palsy with limited mobility? So I'm thinking how they apply and what they can learn from it. So I think that is really important about multisensory design because for children, they learn. They have different learning profiles. They have a way in. They they also make it more accessible for them to to a to enjoy and also participate with others.

S Shawn Marsolais 15:13

So I'm curious, where have you sold this? I guess where can people find it? Like like, do you have examples of where this is working, where kids with disabilities are interacting with kids with typical kids, and how this Reach and Match is helping sort of develop those social skills and those opportunities?

M Mandy Lau 15:35

So it's an interesting question because I never would imagine where Reach and Match can be used in many different countries now, because originally my dream was so simple. Because when I building the prototype of Reach and Match for my Masters, I was thinking, oh, if my prototype can be used used in the Vision Australia library for children with like with a disability, they can play together. That would be awesome. But now use across eight countries, and there are so many countries they're using, and which is really really meaningful experience. So there are countries, for example, in the U.S., Reach and Match is approved under the federal quota fund. So that means children with vision impairment, additional needs, they can access the fund through APH to buy these toolkits, and also basically any country can buy the product online. We can ship internationally, and we also have some really meaningful and impactful projects that working in the Pacific, which is funded by the Australian government defects, and they are wonderful projects support the school readiness and inclusion program in, for example, in Papua New Guinea, and also in Tuvalu for those programs supporting children with disabilities, and we provide training for the teachers, so they will be able to access these tools. And on the other hand, we also collaborate with some libraries to develop some sensory story time to support children with autism to learn, and I also partner with some schools in Hong Kong. They they use our program in their mainstream settings as well. So it's not special schools; it's not school for the blind, and it's really wonderful to see how they embrace to use in the mainstream schools because any mainstream school have a certain percentage of children with additional needs in the schools, and and reach and match the system is not just about the the sensory two kids, and I also develop a program. So the program is aligning with the early learning year span work, but it also really align with the expanded core curriculum supporting children with vision impairments as well. So it has around seven learning outcomes, including like cognitive, sensory, motor skills, social communication skills. So teachers can really are able to find little exercise activities to support their children to learn all these skills through play, so so this is really lovely to see how they can use that in their settings.

S Shawn Marsolais 18:33

What is the age that it's designed for?

M Mandy Lau 18:36

The age now are used mainly using around preschool age, from children like two years old up to six years old, but in some special education setting, we do have children like older children like early primary school children. They find it beneficial as well.

R Rob Mineault 18:56

Yeah, I think it's it's really interesting, and I think that's something that that a lot of people don't really consider, especially you know, on the early intervention level, is just how important things like social development, you know, playing with with the other kiddos, and even just play in general, like how much learning and how much development actually happens when when they're playing. It's such a great foundation to build all of these other things that you were just talking about. You have this great platform to build all of these on. Can you talk a little bit about some of the the responses that that different organizations that have implemented and what kind of feedback that you've gotten from from your community?

M Mandy Lau 19:44

I remember like couple years we organized some webinar. I think APH - American Printing House for the Blind - they have several webinars. It was a very wonderful webinar they organized. I did a little presentation, but they also invite a team, like an educational team, and also um team with the therapists as well. They talked about how they collaborate and using the same rich and match toolkits across different disciplines, which is amazing. As a designer, I feel so, I feel so grateful, and also just so happy to hear the therapists they use in their schools. For example, they shared a physical therapist and also OT, they share about how to support children with their body skills, coordination, core skills strengthening, and they show also like some little videos showing how little children they are playing. It's lovely, and also early childhood educators how to support in the early intervention settings, for example, sensory exploration for little children, just learning about their bodies, learning about the spatial awareness, fine motor skills, etc. And we also have an organization, for example, in New Zealand, is called LENS. There's one time they share with me how they support some parents to use at their home setting for children with visual impairment and other additional needs to develop the language of the directions of orientation, mobility, skills, and also like play games. Like it's just really lovely to watch the video how parent and their children playing together and interacting and having fun. So that is wonderful, and because I also personally train lots of schools, I travel to the countries, and I will see there's so many like I mean beautiful experience I got. For example, in PNG, there was one time I traveled there. There was a education education recovery program that we partner with UNICEF, PNG and Child Fund, and we train the teachers that use our program in this the the special education settings. And there was a teacher himself was blind, and we have all the training with all the participants. We have to make sure all the activities is accessible and very fair. And it was such a great learning experience for all of us, and this teacher, he he was really excited to to learn all these games so he could teach his students with vision impairment and low vision. I just feel lucky that I got the chance to to see that.

R Rob Mineault 24:22

It must have been like quite the journey, quite the development journey. Can you talk a little bit about what that must have been like in terms of, like, just the the amount of things that you you must have learned about inclusive education from from just talking with teachers, being in the schools as you were developing the products. What was that like, and was it a pretty steep learning curve in terms of you know what you were taking in?

M Mandy Lau 24:51

Yes, definitely a huge learning curve because I never even imagined to have my life. Also, business because I I didn't know any business. I was just a designer. I make prototypes and and it was so interesting journey for me to just learn so much because when I finish my Masters, I shared my work through conferences. So that's how I able to meet experts from different countries, and they they say, "Oh, I really want to have your tools to support my children." I say, "Oh, but I'm not really actually selling any product because that time I'll just share about my my findings from my research and recovery - but there was this tiny voice inside me just keep pushing me, trying to find out whether this is something I design in research will work will really make a difference for children's life, and can this really supports the teachers. If I just leave it as a paper, like my research, it doesn't seem really change any lives or making any impact. So that's how I really started to make prototypes, and then I tested with the schools, and then listened to the teachers. I learn about how to really make this useful. It's not just about design, about the aspect of how children's learning, how to support their school readiness. It's more about how our teachers teach in school, what are the funding available, and what their routine looks like, and whether they have time to use the tool, and how this tool is actually helping the teachers teaching. So it will lower their burden for from designing different activities or making adaptation. And I think that's opening my my eyes to learn about just from the broader perspective to a service, and then to the education system, and also to the policies well as well, because when I work with different countries, different countries they are very different in terms of the policy, and also their inclusive education system. How much they value about inclusion, and what's their practice? And I feel like I learned so much just talking to the people, understand their barriers, understand talking to the parents, what are their needs and what are the support they are having now, and what are the gaps, and it was huge. So, I I just find it is so fascinating for me to understand. For me, designing a a product and then later on it become a program, including the learning the lessons and then a little bit more like including teachers' training because I see the needs because I see that teacher need that support. Teachers needs the confidence. They need the skills. The tools are able to empower the teachers so they can make the change in the classroom to facilitate the inclusive participation for children of all different needs. So if the teachers understand the importance of inclusion, and also have the skills, and also these ideas to support them, and that will be really, really powerful for making that change in the classroom. So for me, I can see the the change for my work from the product perspective, and then changing to surface, and also understand how it can strengthening the inclusive learning system in the early years setting. That is, that's really interesting for me.

S Shawn Marsolais 28:54

That's really cool. Can you just sort of explain how how the how this could be used in a classroom? Like, is it is it a one to one kind of two kids on the mat or four kids on the mat or can the whole class play together? Like, I'm trying to get a concept of what that looks like.

M Mandy Lau 29:19

Yes. So the Reach and Match has a program, and the program is underpined by seven learning outcomes. And under that, it has different exercise and also group activities. So that means it can support individual learning to learn this little exercise. For example, for little children, just learning touching the tactile textures on the mat, just matching, exploring, develop their fine motor skills too. You can play with a group of children. Then you can play a games, for example, called Simon Says, which is they learn about their body part, put your right. Hands on the dots of the mats, and then they go to find the dots of the mats, and then they have to learn about which one is my right hand or left hand. So this, for example, these little games is about learning their body parts, and also learning about just listening to instructions. But we have around like 40 activities, but this is just a guide because the teachers are so creative. Once they learn about these basics of the activities and the features, they can come up with so many their own ideas, and they know their children. For example, they want to support some little kids. Say some teachers share that some children using remote chairs for a long time, you can put between the mats. So we have also another version. It's called wheelchair match lights. It's a small version for clinic or for one-on-one and family use, and also a tabletop version. So children in wheelchairs, they can also play with other kids as well. So, and it's really important they can train their upper body muscles, and also with stretching their arms. So this is a little exercise, is quite flexible. Teachers can use it, and but we also design a routine line of activities we can incorporate or embed into the routine. For example, we have sensory play sessions. Just have a different, different sensory play or movement break time after lunch. Maybe kids become a bit sleepy, and we have some activity to design for that purpose. In Hong Kong, it's also quite interesting. Some teachers share that because there's a limitation of the space. Not like in Australia, we've got like a big playground for kids. They can run around. So in Asia, they're like maybe not enough space. And it's interesting to hear that they also design activities to support kids with their gross motor skills, for example, we arrange the mats in not in a square shape, like not two by two, but it's like a straight, like a line. It's look like a river, and then the mat look like a river, and then we play a game - it's called the River Crossing game. So the kids just standing in on the mats as a river, and then the teacher give instruction about the left and right, and then games like this is lots of storytelling incorporated. So children they love it, and we also have the numeracy games ask kids to do counting. So in teach kids about early math concept, and also pattern recognizing give kids different shapes, and then they have to repeat and tell you the next one. So there are different learnings, so you can put into their classes in different sessions.

S Shawn Marsolais 33:17

Wow, that's great.

R Rob Mineault 33:19

The system is very versatile. You can you can put the the mats in in a bunch of different configurations. It's very modular, I guess, in in that sense. Was that kind of always the design right from the beginning? And is that important in order to, I guess, make it as versatile as possible for for an education setting?

M Mandy Lau 33:42

Yeah, yes, exactly. I I love your question because it remind me how I design it. For my Masters, I develop so many so many different prototypes that total different designs, and then I test with the teachers. So I find it's really interesting. I got lots of teachers find this really useful because it's flexible. Especially, I want it to be as be accessible by as many children as possible. So something I found is, oh, that looks really cool, or it would be very awesome to develop this. But the teachers sometimes give me a different feedback that I may not wanted to hear. So, oh, that's cool, but it may be challenging for some children to do this. And then that's how I really learn about universal design. I learn about children with different needs, different preferences, and this one can be really calm. I mean, easy entry point for little children just exploring textures. You don't need to do any activity. They can just do the exploration. Up to some kids, they they want to play games. They want to do a relay run with the games. Put mats one mat on the other end and tiles on one side. And the kids have to find the tiles and put the tiles to the mats. For example, there's a game that we design called Relay Run. We spread the mats in the room, and then we asking the kids to find the different pattern or colors of the mats, and when the kids giving out different instructions. So designing this way is very flexible, and also that is quite a lots of different learning for children to learn. And sometimes teachers also say that oh, we can just use one one or two mats with a a little young baby or infant, it would be good. So so it just made it quite flexible a module design for the children, and and I also design in that sense because I really want this to be a group activity as well. If the teachers or the the group the classroom they want to make it so so that's why I especially design in the way that it can allow a group of children can play together, and you can also put more sets of the mats and filling the whole room. So we did that in the camp before, which is really fun for 30 children to play together.

R Rob Mineault 36:18

Is this something that could be used in sort of the home setting as well?

M Mandy Lau 36:24

Yes, yes. So as I mentioned, the original Reach and Match Kids Inclusive Education Kids was designed in the school setting, and few years ago, actually, maybe I I started to develop the small version. It's called the Reach Match Light, and because due to COVID 19, teachers start emailing me, oh, I would love to have a small version, because the social distancing and also small classroom, like for the applications, and I think all of that would be really useful. That makes sense, and especially lots of teachers can carry the small version to different schools, and the therapy they can OT they can use in the home setting, and that was the reason I make a light version, so which is really portable, and it also can make as a tabletop for children in wheelchair they can play as well. It's lights and but all the elements, all the features is the same as the large kids, so it make it more accessible for the families.

S Shawn Marsolais 37:33

That's cool. I'm curious to to check that out. I need to get my hands on it. I can't see to look at the website. I mean, I was curious about how this can support the expanded core curriculum, but as you've spoken about it, I kind of can see that. I can see how it benefits orientation and mobility and sensory, just you know, distinguishing like the sensitivity in your fingers and fine motor skills. . Yeah, I can see all the applications, social skill development. So it's very clever. I'm very impressed with what you've created.

M Mandy Lau 38:16

Thank you. Thank you so much. I appreciate your comment.

R Rob Mineault 38:21

Yeah, and you know, I think that it really, even as as I'm listening to you talk, what really strikes me is just that it this it's such a great example of the power of universal design. Because as you're talking, you're talking about all the benefits and who benefits from it. It's every it's everyone from the kids to the teachers, it really just makes learning a better experience for the sighted kiddos, for the blind kiddos, for the teachers. You know, it's just a right across the board. It's just, it's just a great design, and I think it's the, I think it is the gold standard for what we should be trying to, what systems we should be trying to put forward, especially in education.

M Mandy Lau 39:08

Yeah, I totally agree with you. And I thought about one games where the kids, children with and without vision impairment, they can play together. So that's one game is called like a listening game. As I mentioned, the tile, which would shake and each shape can give different sounds. And when we play these games to a group of children, and children who are blind with vision impairment, they they always the first one to recognize the shapes, to know about the sounds, and I feel like this is such a beautiful experience for kids without vision impairment. Like they would just learn so much about. Wow, is is like just think about how your hearing skills like. This day we we rely on our vision a lot. I mean, for the kids, they start using iPad and things like that, and then we just started to realize that, oh wow, how come their hearing skill is so good? They will practice a lot and do a lot of like training with that, and I think this is a beautiful experience to just give all children to appreciate that every kid they have that strength and differences and respect each other. And also the kids they ask about braille like children the other children ask about the braille because they never see braille in any toys or books. They asking about oh this stuff looks really cool. What does that mean, and who is using that? And all these questions are really important. It's just opening the questions, the answers are like inclusion, and this is a children's way to learn inclusion. And the kids they can learn together. And this is so fun and beautiful experience that I can see through these games they can play together.

S Shawn Marsolais 41:14

Yeah, I love that. I love the idea of sighted kids coming across braille and learning about it just organically and the sort of opportunity for the blind child to excel, even in like being able to feel the different textures or identify the letters in braille. They have a chance to to be good at something right alongside the sighted kids. That's cool.

R Rob Mineault 41:43

Well, so where can people find out more about Reach and Match if they're interested in in the system? Where can they find you online?

M Mandy Lau 41:52

Yes, we have a website. It's just very simple. It's just reachandmatch.com. So that's our website. Feel free to send us an email, or we've got any questions. And yes, we'd love to hear.

R Rob Mineault 42:12

Thank you so much for for coming on. And and I guess it's evening here. I I don't even know what time it is there. But your morning. I think it's morning there, right?

M Mandy Lau 42:22

Thank you. Yeah, yeah.

R Rob Mineault 42:24

Thanks for spending your morning with us. We we really appreciate it. Best of luck with the product, and yeah, thank you for for creating a really amazing system. I think that this is going to really help a lot of a lot of school systems all around the world. So great job!

M Mandy Lau 42:43

Thank you so much. It's so lovely to meet you and have a chat. And I really appreciate this opportunity for me to just share my stories again and also reflect on my journey. And it's such a lovely experience. Thanks.

R Rob Mineault 42:57

Thanks, Mandy.

M Mandy Lau 42:58

All right. See you. Bye.

S Shawn Marsolais 43:00

Bye, Mandy.

R Rob Mineault 43:02

Well, there you go. Very cool. Very cool.

S Shawn Marsolais 43:06

Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 43:06

I love this. I love this. I want three first. Yeah, three for blind beginnings.

S Shawn Marsolais 43:15

I mean, one would be cool, but yeah, three would be even better.

R Rob Mineault 43:20

No, it's such a it's such a it's such a great idea and so innovative. It's one of those things where you just you go, why didn't anyone think of something like this before? Like modular textured mats with a bunch of little you know little tiles, right? That that have braille and shapes and like it just it's it's brilliant. It's brilliant.

S Shawn Marsolais 43:43

Sounds a little scrabble-esque.

R Rob Mineault 43:47

It does. I was thinking about that actually. I was going to ask her, do you fit the pieces in with Velcro? Yeah. I just love it. It warms my heart. Universal design. I just love it.

S Shawn Marsolais 43:58

Yeah, it's great.

R Rob Mineault 43:59

Well, so how do you feel? How do feel to be an AT Banter-ite for the evening?

S Shawn Marsolais 44:04

Fine. Do you need to do any sort of like outro?

R Rob Mineault 44:07

Yeah, this is the outro. We're doing it.

S Shawn Marsolais 44:12

Oh, sorry. It felt great. It was. I felt natural. I feel like, yeah, it was good.

R Rob Mineault 44:23

Yeah, it was fun. Well, we'll we'll do this again real soon.

S Shawn Marsolais 44:27

Okay, sounds good. Thanks for having me.

R Rob Mineault 44:29

Maybe sooner than you think. Awesome. But all right. Well, let's then let's get out of here because I know you got to run away. Oh wait - You don't know where people can find us. We've not rehearsed this.

S Shawn Marsolais 44:43

I can ask you.

R Rob Mineault 44:45
Okay, you ask me. Ask ask where where can people find us.

S Shawn Marsolais 44:48
Rob. Yeah. So Rob, where can people find us?

R Rob Mineault 44:53
They can find us at www.atbanter.com.

S Shawn Marsolais 45:06
Okay,

R Rob Mineault 45:07
and then and then tell them they can.

S Shawn Marsolais 45:09
And if they're curious about maybe finding me, they can find me at limitless@blindbeginnings.ca.

R Rob Mineault 45:17
That's right. And if they want to email at cowbell@atbanter.com

S Shawn Marsolais 45:38
Right.

R Rob Mineault 45:39

Okay, well, I think that will about do it for us. Big thanks, of course, to Mandy for joining us. Big thanks to my guest host Shawn, and thanks for everybody for listening. We'll see you again next time.

S Steve Barclay 45:59

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