

1 TeachMeets, Groovy work and Building the best school in the world. [Recorded 2022, April 20]

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5 **SPEAKERS:** Hassan Dabbagh interviews Mags Amond and Ewan McIntosh

6 **Ewan** 00:07. "I wouldn't do a PhD I couldn't write in the ivory tower language of a PhD. However, when
7 Mags has done that, I would love to get my teeth stuck into translating it into plain English that I can
8 understand.

9 **Mags** 00:23 You're hired.

10 **Ewan** 00:25 That's fun. That would be groovy work."

11

12 **Hassan** 00:28 You heard Ewan McIntosh there talking to us on this CESI Staffroom, Ewan McIntosh is the
13 founder of the consulting firm, NoTosh, and if you want to find out a bit more about him, there's more in the
14 description below. He's a man you want to listen to. And when he talks, you can't help but listen to him, and
15 that will become a bit clearer later on in the in the episode. You also heard from Mags Amond, Mags Amond
16 is a friend of mine. A friend of CESI, friend of everybody. She was one of these people that if she was
17 standing beside the Pope, people would be saying, who's your man standing beside Mags. Anyway, Mags
18 according to herself is a retired teacher. Again, according to herself, she a slightly tired but happy researcher
19 she's almost finished her PhD and has several knitting projects on the go. She loves life, loves family, loves
20 CESI and loves her colleagues. She loves what she does and she loves TeachMeets. This CESI Staffroom
21 started off talking about TeachMeets. And we're a bit late we were meant to upload a day ago. But we're a
22 bit late because I listened to it and listened to it and listened to it. And in the edit I felt that I'd buried the lede.
23 What lede am I talking about? Well, at the very end of the tail end of the episode, we talked about building
24 the best school in the world with Ewan McIntosh and that to me is an intriguing idea. I spoke to him about it,
25 and frankly, if it wasn't for the fact that we were an hour in or an hour plus into it, I would have drilled down a
26 bit more into that concept of building the best school in the world. Anyway, if you want to know more about
27 that that's to come in the CESI Staffroom. As always, if you have anything to contribute to the CESI
28 Staffroom, we'd love to hear from you. You can contact me directly on Twitter @hassandabbagh. Or you can
29 contact CESI directly on the website www.cesi.ie that's CESI the Computers In Education Society of Ireland
30 dot IE - we would love to hear from you. And something that I haven't been doing. I'm going to ask you, if you
31 if you liked the podcast, please subscribe. Please share if you don't like the podcast, if you liked the podcast,
32 tell a friend if you don't like the podcast, tell nobody. We, we're trying to build up our base at the minute so
33 we would appreciate your support. So please, I think the kids say, like, share and subscribe. So we started
34 off asking Ewan about the origins of TeachMeet.

35

36 **Ewan** 03:04 TeachMeet is a meeting of teachers with NO PowerPoint with NO keynotes, with no sponsored
37 talks. It's the antithesis of every big education event you go to. And it was designed to give a voice to
38 teachers whose voices would normally not be heard. And to throw up surprises both the surprise of that just
39 genius moment from a beautiful new person that you've never seen before. And of course, the occasional
40 dull as ditch water geek talk, the idea was if it's one of those, it's only going to last seven minutes, which is
41 time enough to get to the loo, go and grab a pint or do whatever you need to do, come back and there was a
42 pretty good chance the next talk would be a winner. And we had these. It was born out of a frustration; I was
43 at I remember the Scottish Learning Festival or it might have been called SETT back then, in ancient times in
44 2005 in the September time, and John Johnson, a teacher from Glasgow and David Noble, who is an
45 amazing teacher in the National Health Service, in fact works in a school for kids who don't fit in the
46 mainstream schooling for lots of different reasons. We were having a chat about just how, you know, yes, the
47 keynotes that were there that year at the festival were fantastic. But they were talking about stuff in the future
48 tense that we'd been doing in the previous week with our classes. And we just thought why are we sat here
49 listening to people kind of singing to our choir, and we knew that lots of people in the audience it'd be the first
50 time they'd heard about it, but we wanted something for us. And then we said, that idea was pitched in as a
51 way we should do something and then at the Edinburgh Live festival later in that school year in 2006, it was

52 the same again; and no offense to two people who I count amongst his friends, Will Richardson and Alan
53 November, were giving keynotes at this Edinburgh City Council technology event. Again, telling stories of
54 stuff that were great, but we were already doing them. In fact, we were doing them even better in Scottish
55 schools. And yet our voices weren't heard. And I know that anyone in Ireland would share the same tall
56 poppy syndrome that we have here in Scotland, which is if you're doing good stuff, don't talk about it too
57 loudly. So we said let's go to the pub. We there was a pub relatively close by that had WiFi called the Jolly
58 Judge. And that evening, we managed to corral about 14 people. I got into the boot of my colleague's car,
59 we transported everyone we could in his Volvo estate with me crouched illegally in the back, dropped us all
60 off at the Jolly Judge went down there. And that's where it was ScotEdublogsMeetUp, we called it, that's
61 where TeachMeet was born. And we realized that that the first conversation it wasn't just about technology, it
62 wasn't certainly about blogging, it was about creativity, creative thinking, beautiful things that people were
63 doing in their classes with their kids. And so we needed a different name. And that's where TeachMeet
64 emerged later that year. Back at that Scottish Learning Festival in September 2006 in a hotel bedroom that
65 we commandeered, and we packed 60 people into that bedroom for a learning session that lasted about four
66 hours with free wine. David Weinberger, internet hero, was there sitting on the floor because there were no
67 seats left; even my mother came along. The whole family was there and it felt like a new family. It felt like a
68 whole bunch of people whose voices were worth hearing. But they had nowhere to stand and share their
69 voice.

70
71 **Hassan 07:03** Mags. TeachMeets in Ireland. Talk to me about them, and your involvement.

72
73 **Mags 07:12** Well, something like what Ewan said, it was a reaction to something that happened. I was
74 involved in a group called CESI, this is where we are in the CESI Staffroom. But very suddenly, very, very
75 suddenly we lost a day of CPD that we had been given permission to take teachers out of school for by the
76 Department of Education. And I had seen Ewan and the teachers at the Scottish Learning Festival and
77 seeing that, it really turned my brain around. And hearing David Noble talk about what he was doing. And we
78 just took a chance and there's a lot of trust in TeachMeet, I think Ewan will agree with this. There's a huge
79 amount of trust in each other, in your peers. And of course every so often something might go belly up but
80 we took a chance, and Conor Galvin at the time was Chair of CESI, I talked to Connor about and we said,
81 look, let's go for this thing. (This thing! I always call it a thing, because before you come up with TeachMeet
82 you were calling it 'this thing'.) And we rented a hotel room, 60 people turned up sometimes you'd hear 600
83 were there when everyone says "I was there". And for me, I knew it was definitely a thing when I copied what
84 I'd seen Ewan doing - and this is what TeachMeet does, it evolves from each other. I sent people away to
85 four different corners of the hotel. Imagine sending people out in Ireland in a hotel and saying 'talk about
86 education', I had four people who wanted to lead the conversations. And I wandered through that hotel at
87 about nine o'clock at night, I found the four corners and I listened into the four conversations, I could hardly
88 get them back to the room. And for me, that's when TeachMeet started in Ireland. And that's when I knew I
89 knew it was gonna be a thing. And something in my soul just knew there was joy in learning together. And I
90 kind of knew it was going to be the thing, I didn't know that I would end up studying it. But there was just
91 something in that moment that I'd felt at the Scottish Learning Festival six months beforehand, d'you know
92 we can trust each other to teach each other.

93
94 **Ewan 09:29** There's something really important in the context of that time though, as well, which is that
95 professional learning was never run in that way. And so actually a lot of the ways that people go about
96 running a really successful TeachMeet today you might look back and see what that's just good professional
97 learning. Got to remember in 2006 you paid big bucks to have (generally American) keynoters come and tell
98 you how to do your job. You would have workshops where people with job titles of a certain pedigree will tell
99 you the best practice, that's how it was organized. And in fact, even the CESI Conference in 2007, I
100 keynoted that, and I was stood in a room full of people that I considered some of them were my kind of
101 thought heroes, teacher practitioners, but the people sitting next to them didn't know that they were doing it.
102 And it was also pre social media. So there was no other way for people really to share their practice. A lot of
103 people said, I'm not really a writer, so I can't blog - you got to remember that YouTube was a couple of lip
104 sync videos at the time, it wasn't really a massive big thing that people might consider putting a talking head
105 up. And you couldn't just open up Zoom and record yourself and put that up on YouTube or use your phone
106 because smartphones didn't do that, you know, there was quite a lot of technological barriers to doing what

107 was much easier in a pub, or in a hotel, in a non-education environment, getting people out of their comfort
108 zone. And I guess the question in my mind is always this: is this format still relevant today, when actually, if
109 you've got a really well-run conference, there's loads of opportunity to network and connect and have
110 informal dialogue and hear lots of voices. And then I see a badly run TeachMeet, where you have three
111 keynoters and the sponsored talks. And yet, there's still a need for it, there's still a need to remind people
112 that this kind of grassroots movement shouldn't ever be assumed to be safe in the hands of commercial or
113 even a government run event. Because there are always politics at play, or commercials at play ...
114

115 **Mags 11:37** Something you just said there (Sorry, Hass) that it's the person beside you at the TeachMeet.
116 That's the key. And that's come out of what I've heard from all, from everyone I've been listening to for four
117 years now. And it goes back to it was back to Winer's Law, the cheeky Law of Conventional Conferences,
118 you know, the sum of what's in the room is much greater than the sum of what's on the stage. We need to
119 start listening to each other, horizontalising things.
120

121 **Ewan 12:07** Yeah. Yeah. On you go, Hassan...

122
123 **Hassan 12:10** isn't it funny, ironic, whatever you want to call it, that you're getting people, you're pulling
124 teachers out of a non education environment, put putting them together to learn and to talk about education?
125 And to talk about what's working for them. I always thought that a bit bizarre.
126

127 **Ewan 12:31** But if you think, you ask any kid, what's your favorite experience at school - and it's the reason I
128 was a French and German teacher - it's the school trips, the foreign exchange, it's the Duke of Edinburgh
129 Award. It's all stuff that didn't take place in a classroom, it might be a project, that you remember that it was
130 great. But generally, the project involves something away from the classroom. The idea that quality learning
131 is the exclusive kind of responsibility of the four walls of a classroom or a school is nonsense, and always
132 has been. Great learning happens when you're primed for it. And I would argue most school environment,
133 schooling environments are not primed for all types of learning. They're really good for some, they're actually
134 pretty atrocious for professional learning. That's why when people say to me, you know, would you like to,
135 we're going to run an event, we need you to do it in our school, I won't do it unless I can see the school for
136 myself plenty of time ahead. And a few times, we'll just say that this is a crappy environment. We're trying to
137 help people teach in a different way, think about learning in a different way. And the whole environment is set
138 up for the industrial complex that we're suggesting doesn't really work very well. And at the same time,
139 there's a lot of quite traditional learning and teaching stuff that still needs talk, people need to know what
140 feedback routines look like, they need to understand how to ask great questions in a class. And they need to
141 be able to do that in their class as a different kind of learning. That's kind of coaching, peer to peer learning
142 where you should be learning that stuff, I think, as you go with your kids in your class with a buddy on hand,
143 what we're talking about is kind of the breaking the mould learning, which is you need to be away from
144 business as usual in order to look back on it with a critical eye.
145

146 **Hassan 14:20** Mags, you want to jump in there.
147

148 **Mags 14:22** Well, I wanted to hop in there. Yeah. And I was saying one of the lovely lovely things about
149 TeachMeet is, what people really appreciate it's that little window into that classroom of where there is
150 pocket of excellence or some something lovely has worked for somebody. They don't get to show us to
151 anybody. No one gets to see it, but they can take it to a TeachMeet, do a nanopresentation, "Look, this
152 happened on Wednesday afternoon ... X, Y and Z the reaction was" and you can see people - this is
153 when I find people pull their phones out and go click or jot something down, somethin' for Monday I'm gonna
154 try that next week. So it's kind of like a micro level of professional development.
155

156 **Ewan 15:05** And other thing is seeing into other people's schools because their learning environment is
157 different. I've always remember just loving listening to John d'Abbro, we did a TeachMeet in Redbridge in a
158 school, talking of which, they do happen in schools, it was a Victorian edifice of a school with lots of little
159 rooms and winding corridors, is the kind of thing that people use Irish Pub owners spent a fortune trying to
160 recreate out of MDF, the school had the original Victorian kind of thing going on. And it was filled a rabbit
161 warren of little rooms. And I remember hearing John d'Abbro stood up talking about the learning center that

162 he ran for really challenging kids and is completely different from anything we had seen or heard about
163 before, then what was interesting, he didn't show one photograph of the learning environment. But he
164 painted such a strong picture of what this place looked like and felt like that we all wanted to go and work in it
165 afterwards, we all wanted to work for him. And you get moments like that where you get that insight. But
166 going to Mags's previous point, the person next to you can also do the same. I always remember when we
167 took we took TeachMeet to England, at that Redbridge event, that was the first time it's gone south of the
168 border, or over any border. And then we went to the BETT festival and we were given a space to run one
169 there and we were given - these were the days - 5000 pounds by RM to put behind the bar. RM was a
170 technology company for those who've never heard of it, which might be younger generations may never
171 have heard of it. And we had a great time but sat at my table next to me was Julia Heppell. And she had
172 been looking at learning environments and along with her father experimenting with learning environments
173 with some of her students. And I was actually more interested in the two-minute discussions between the
174 talks, so that I could learn a little bit more about her work. But it was also professional connection, and a
175 personal connection that stays to this day. And now we don't talk about learning at all. We talk about kids
176 and holidays and going to the beaches and things like that we don't really talk about work. For me, that's just
177 as important that that kind of friendship group that I've grown, which includes John (Heffernan) and includes
178 Mags as well, you know, in a way that matters more to me than the tips and tricks I might have picked up.
179 And that's why when I see a host of a TeachMeet rushing through presentations, trying to get as much as
180 many people on the stage as possible, always think they're missing a trick, you kind of want to leave people
181 chance to have a jar. And if you've ever gone to a folk session at The Cobblestone you know what that's like,
182 they will play a tune, and then they all stop. And the tourists are always hungry for more tunes, and they sit
183 there in silence, waiting for the next tune as if it's a concert that's like the traditional conference almost where
184 there's the locals and then adopted locals like me, will speak to the random stranger next to them about what
185 they've just heard or about what's coming up or about what they're drinking or something. There's a human
186 connection that's made. Why go to a folk session, you don't go to a folk session just to listen to the music,
187 you shut up when the music is on. And as soon as it's done, you have a bit of banter with the person next to
188 you. And I think that that's maybe why it works really well in countries like ours, where we have a folk
189 tradition, because that folk tradition translates really well into learning.

190
191 **Hassan 18:39** I love that analogy. I love taking it from the folksy point of view and the sharing because there
192 was a time if you said to a teacher, why don't you share your work with another teacher? They'd be like, Oh
193 my gosh, NO WAY. (All three react). But if you told that same teacher will you tell us a story about something
194 that happened in your classroom that worked? They're happy then definitely they'll tell you that story. We
195 love we love a good story. We love to tell a story...

196
197 **Ewan 19:09** ... with people you know, it's always Wee Jamie or Kellyanne but you know, it's always the
198 student that adds the color that makes you actually listen to the story and then nick an idea and that's the
199 key you want, we wanted people to steal an idea. It's George Bernard Shaw, isn't it? If I give you an apple
200 and you give me an apple we each have an apple but if I give you an idea and you give me an idea we each
201 have two ideas. And I think that that's the principal; you sit there passive trying to learn from the people on
202 the stage kind of doing yourself out of all these idea apples around you that you could be stealing.

203
204 **Mags 19:47** Yeah, and in Irish the word for that idea exchange - Sarah Jane [Carey], one of the one of the
205 Irish CESI teachers, she calls it a 'spreagadh'. So you just want to get enough of an idea of what the thing is,
206 so you can go and find the rest yourself. It's a jump forward, igniting, it's a lovely, it's a lovely thought a lovely
207 analogy. And look Hassan, when you said about non teachers and teachers being there, the coolest thing
208 that you can imagine that people love about a TeachMeet is the mixture. This is really weird. Most of the
209 other professional development, by dint of its nature, that you go to it's all the French teachers of the district
210 or it's all science teachers in school, or it's whatever, everybody looking at one topic for you go into a
211 TeachMeet, you have pre service teachers, and teachers of teachers, primary, secondary, third, vendors,
212 like you're not a teacher, Hassan, you go to TeachMeet and you run TeachMeets so you've got everybody
213 who's got the shared values around education, listening to what they do at the other level, and I've had really
214 good conversations about this, should the TeachMeet be just secondary, just primary, just whatever? Or
215 should it be all of us in the pool together, and all of us in the pool together is it's just, it's on fire.

216

217 **Ewan 21:13** It makes you realize you have more in common, but I think the other thing is, I realized this after
218 a while, and I think maybe after four or five years of these events beginning to happen more and more. And
219 it's funny, you mentioned Conor Galvin, because at the time, he was doing a lot of the European funded
220 work. And I was, I was one of the first teachers in Europe. I only discovered this later, but I think I was
221 teacher 83 in e-Twinning. And I was, I was a really enthusiastic teacher with far too much time on my hands.
222 But I was I signed up and I was taking part in these events. And he was, he was really keen, he loved it, I
223 think, because it was a chance to discover new talent, it was a chance to see new ideas and fresh ideas.
224 Something really interesting, though, is that in traditional conference settings, you would hear this keynote,
225 telling stories that were vaguely familiar, you'd seen it somewhere, you'd seen the thing, the example in a
226 blog somewhere, but I always find that their sourcing was really weak. Why, because they're the keynote,
227 they they're the ones that are made to be showbiz hands making people feel warmed up. And then at a
228 TeachMeet, what you become very aware of is that in the room are the people who did the innovations the
229 first time around that you're no building on and you're sharing something back. So generally people doff their
230 hat to so and so or so and so who they, you know, I nicked this bit of the idea from that person, then I've
231 added this part onto it. Even in the first one or two TeachMeets, there were some commercial providers who
232 had had their app, their tool, broken by practitioners and made better. And they would share that. And that's
233 what I mean, by kind of having a trail, you wouldn't dare cast off someone else's work as your own in a
234 TeachMeet environment because someone would speak up, you'd be interrupted, or people would just start
235 laughing at you, you know; whereas in a traditional conference (and I hate to see it online), the idea that you
236 can just rip someone off and get away with it is rampant. And unfortunately, in a lot of the teacher innovation
237 that I see online is people share the practice, they're not giving a nod as to where things came from, which
238 means you can't do what Mags suggested, which is go off and Google it for yourself and find out for yourself
239 because you have no idea where the DNA of the idea came from. And I think that's something that the
240 physical event still keeps people in check, because there's a really good chance that the person you're
241 referring to sat in the room.

242
243 **Mags 23:55** Can I do an anecdote Hass, which is on that on that level? That beautiful, beautiful level of
244 humility? I got an email once for someone saying Mags as a TeachMeet coming up, can I do
245 Nanopresentation, please, I want to talk about Audacity. I said, Yeah, sure, Irish teachers love Audacity.
246 Yeah, let's go for that. And we went to the TeachMeet. And this very, very humble man came up and said, I
247 want your help to translate audacity into Irish. I'm James Crook. Hello. (Ewan - no way; Hassan - chuckles).
248 So here we are, you know, it was just, I think it's the only time I actually almost swooned at a Teachmeet; but
249 this is what Ewan I think is referring - this extreme, extreme humility, that we sometimes find; it is lovely.

250
251 **Ewan 24:43** And if you don't find it online in the same way people do seem to operate on the understanding
252 that if I declare this piece of work my own then it must be; and I think it's, I think that's something I would love
253 to maybe take on next is think about what can a TeachMeet do know that it couldn't do however many years
254 ago it is now ... the potential for ... so if you go back to 2006/2007, there weren't that many people sharing
255 online, I think there was a point, I don't know when probably were in 2012/2013, where I used to be able to
256 read all the people that I admired on an RSS reader in a morning over an hour, and then there was a real
257 tipping point where a lot of people were sharing their practice online. And now you've got these blogs with
258 huge followings, nine million teachers following a particular teaching blog with teaching tips. And you've got
259 the amazing Teacher Toolkit with Ross [McGill-Morrison] and his team developing ideas, you've got
260 incredible low-cost publications from people like Crown Publishing and other folk like that where practitioners
261 and people who are not practitioners now but have a real craft writing and explaining teaching ideas are able
262 to share. So there's a point where I sort of think, well, if I had a valid for two and a half hours of time, or three
263 hours of time, would I go to a TeachMeet to hear about those things or would I just buy the book on Amazon,
264 read it, and dip into it in my own time. And I think that's a risk for any kind of professional learning is that
265 you've always got the status quo of just not learning, you've then got this new thing of actually really cheap,
266 highly personalized approaches to getting what you think you already need. So TeachMeets have really two
267 things up their sleeve, one is serendipity, throwing stuff in front of you that you would never have thought to
268 ask about, look at or bump into. And I think that's a massive role. Because they're linear, there is no choice.
269 You they are done by surprise, it's a raffle draw as to who speaks next. So there is no preprogram that
270 makes you decide whether you're going to go or not. That serendipity's really got to stay. And I think it's quite
271 a unique positioning, if you like for a TeachMeet. But I think the other thing is, if TeachMeets were able to

272 help people trace the roots of ideas, you would have something fascinating, and I don't have a clue how
273 you'd go about doing it other than each person contributing, taking maybe a little bit more care to try and
274 trace the ideas, or having time at a TeachMeet for the participants to help identify where the DNA of an idea
275 has come from. Because when you know where the DNA of an idea has come from, it makes you able to
276 change the idea and make it even better.

277

278 **Hassan 27:39** It's about joining dots. I'm always saying this and it's not my line at all, like Steve Jobs says
279 we can look forward ... you can't join the dots looking forward, you can join the dots looking back where you
280 came from kind of thing.

281

282 **Ewan 27:56** But I think he also said you got to have enough dots to join up in the first place. (Hassan -
283 Yes). And I think that's where the power of the room, being there in a hothouse for 90 minutes or two hours,
284 gives you more dots than you would know what to do with but you got to give people time to help join all
285 those up. And I would love to see that visualized with an illustration. Or maybe it's post it notes or whatever.
286 But imagine the DNA of a TeachMeet actually being something that you can see after the event, maybe it's
287 on a Miro board. And you can see when a person talks about that, and these are the ideas that are in it,
288 which came from these people. And I think that they would be fascinated to try once and see but offers any
289 value. But I know ideas are worthless for me unless I know where they came from. Because it's a little bit like
290 playing music. If you if you don't know what you're borrowing from, then you can't really innovate. You're only
291 ever copying and pasting. You can't really come up with your own sound. And the same is going to be true
292 for ideas and teaching and learning. And we're talking about creative teaching and learning. We're not talking
293 about best practice or reception form. We're talking about having fun with ideas or in teaching and learning.

294

295 **Hassan 29:04** I know my brother in law, there was a TeachMeet we organized in Mayo and I remember
296 asking - I was blown away my first TeachMeet I saw it at CESI, I just went to watch, was amazing, they're not
297 talking about exam like you said they're not talking about stuff like the best practice the titles, the subtitles,
298 they're talking about "I did this and this worked. I engaged with the students this way and it worked for me".
299 So at one of the TeachMeets I thought gee I have to you have to pass this on - So went down to Mayo, told
300 them in Mayo we're gonna organize TeachMeet for Friday night and people were laughing at me "on Friday
301 night are you insane?" and something Ewan, you said your mother was there. I had a table in the Education
302 Center booked for just my family. D'you know (Ewan - I love it) my sisters, my mother? As I said just in case
303 nobody turns up but my brother in law's who is a teacher came up. He said, I have an idea is this what you're
304 talking about? And he had the words - Mags you can help me here - what they have the words on the
305 boards, you see from classrooms now the topics? (Mags: maybe the Learning Intentions?). That's it. So he
306 put all his learning intentions on little key rings. And that was his thing. And he said he'd pick keyrings out of
307 the bowl each day. And he said that we're going to do this, this and this. And he felt that that wasn't that
308 nobody be interested in that. But I've heard since that there are teachers doing in a different way. And they're
309 telling me about it, just like you said Ewan, they're going, I have this great idea, except it's not a keyring. And
310 I said I know where that came from. And it was from a little TeachMeet Mayo. Mags, you want to jump in
311 there.

312

313 **Mags 30:58** That's really, really important. Two things that your brother in law said - "I don't think this is what
314 people would like", I think (see what you think Ewan?) one of the things you touched on earlier Hassan is
315 that having a TeachMeet as your as your sort of surround, people who might be a little bit reticent about
316 stepping forward, the tall poppy the whatever it might be, will eventually (if we push them enough), I could
317 name and shame 100 People from CESI who said No, no, no, no, no, not me, not me, not me, I couldn't I
318 couldn't, I couldn't. And when they did, eventually afterwards, there's almost like a feeling of "Phew". And it
319 happens in Gasta and BrewEd and all the other sort of descendants of TeachMeet as well. "Gosh, I'm really
320 glad I did that". And it's one of the reasons I'm really interested in watching the student teachers, a lot of
321 places now are introducing their student teachers to the TeachMeet format, it was Bianca, our friend, our late
322 friend Bianca Ní Ghrógáin, who started in the Froebel college here; and also Ciara Brennan (Reilly) in
323 Marino, a lot of a lot of teacher teachers are doing it now showing the youngsters, you know, this is what we
324 can do, and gathering an audience for them and doing a TeachMeet event. And they're growing up with it.
325 They're not afraid of it. Like you say, like I said earlier Ewan, now it seems like not a new thing, even though
326 I'm immersed in it. I'm studying it. There are there are still tiny, unique things about it that are important. But

327 it isn't new. It was there before TeachMeet as you have often said yourself, it was there before 2006. You do
328 yourself down - the name that you chose the name that you all collectively chose is really important. (Ewan :
329 It is.) The name and the branding of it is all it has. It has nothing. It doesn't even have dot.com It has nothing
330 except the name. And from that name hangs a kind of a mythos and an ethos that I'm trying to, at the
331 moment I'm trying to document.

332
333 **Hassan 33:05** that's the thing I want to talk about - sorry Ewan for cutting you off there - because just in our
334 own just for the sake of this podcast, otherwise, we'd be here for the next 14 hours talking about this. Just
335 the growth of TeachMeet, the origins of TeachMeet as John has kindly done up, our super producer John as
336 done up a list for me to follow. So we've discussed the origins of TeachMeet, growth of TeachMeet, futures
337 of TeachMeet - well the futures of TeachMeet I want to talk a bit more about that; impact of TeachMeet, I
338 mentioned kind of briefly. Mags, you didn't just introduce (I'm going to say Mags introduced TeachMeet to
339 Ireland. So that's it. That's, That's it. I'm saying, it's true. But Mags you're studying TeachMeet, your whole
340 PhD is about TeachMeet. How do you go from seeing, witnessing, attending a TeachMeet. And then going
341 right, I'm going to do my entire PhD on TeachMeet.

342
343 **Mags 34:08** I'll tell you how you do it, because you go out on a very, very wet, wet, wet Thursday night, your
344 drive to Maynooth your watch a TeachMeet which just has all the joy. This is the word I keep going back to
345 all the time, all the joy of learning in the room and on the way home in the drivin' and rain, you're trying to
346 stay out of the potholes, and you wonder, like, what causes this Thing Was Just A Name? Like what, What
347 What, what, What is it that brings us together? So I can call that the name of my study - my study is "an
348 exploration into the nature, the niche, the essence of TeachMeet the phenomenon. And I don't know, I'm
349 nearly at the end and I'm looking forward to telling people everything but actually the origins and the growth
350 comes down to something like it's like "I want one of those". The thing about TeachMeet is that begets more
351 TeachMeets. And Ewan is the only person who read can't talk about this, because he started the first one
352 with John and David, and the rest of us sort of ... No, no, I do you a disservice! (Ewan: I'm gonna come back
353 on that!). But you midwived it and fostered it beautifully, but when somebody of a certain nature goes to a
354 TeachMeet, they walk out that door saying, I'm gonna do one of those, I want one of those from my friends, I
355 call these people the Bringers. I want to bring it to others.

356
357 **Ewan 35:34** So there's something in the DNA that's really important, probably not known or maybe it's not
358 important, but I actually got into it, the idea didn't emerge from nowhere, either. That's the truth of it. So in
359 2005, I went to Paris in December, as a speaker on a panel that I think called Le Web. No, it was called Les
360 Blog. It was before they discovered the rest of the web. So there's a French conference run by Louis
361 Clemeur, French entrepreneur living in San Francisco now. And I was on the last panel of the day on a
362 Monday, and the audience has stuck around to hear about education and blogs. And if I'm honest the other
363 three panelists were talking about theoretical ideas of blogging, and with my kids in school, we had blogged
364 for three years before that. So I had all these great stories to tell. And then realized from the IRC chat that
365 was scrolling behind me that people were more distracted by my accent, a whole bunch of Americans
366 basically in the room were distracted by my accent and not really listening to the stories we were told. One of
367 them came up to me afterwards and said, I love what you're doing with students and blogs, would you like to
368 come to a BarCamp that we're organizing? And I said, Oh, what's that? Thinking it was something I should
369 have known about. BarCamp had started in August that year. This was one of the founders of that, Chris
370 Messina, who is also the originator of the hashtag, which has become a crucial part of TeachMeets being
371 able to communicate. So Chris invited me to the BarCamp in Paris that he had organized, that he had put
372 out there that it was on. And so we all went to the top of the Concord Lafayette bar in Paris on the 33rd floor
373 and had a BarCamp. And it was really interesting to see. It was very informal. And that's what made, that
374 was a seed planted in 2005. And that in the following year, in early 2006, I, along with two others started
375 BarCamp Scotland, and it was for the tech industry in Scotland. And it was the first time it had been done.
376 And it was a venture capitalist, a tech investor and me organizing this event. And at the time, Twitter was
377 playing off Jaiku. And Jaiku was a Finnish Twitter at the time, we all thought Jaiku was going to win. That's
378 how people communicated. And we were using keywords like TeachMeet that had to hang together; if it was
379 too long, people would forget it. And if it was two words, you wouldn't be able to find it. And when you look
380 for Teach Meet, there's nothing there. And so that's why the name is important. But it also sums up quite a
381 lot of what it's actually about happens to. And that's so I went to a BarCamp, and I was inspired to start a

382 BarCamp in Scotland, which then also inspired me to say, you know, what, half the people that Barcamp,
383 were actually in education, higher education, mostly, but they were all in education, let's do something for
384 teachers. And that was a conversation we ended up having at Scottish Learning Festival. And when you
385 think about the number of conversations that happen in schools, the challenge, I think, is, people have
386 probably organized things like this without even knowing they've organized it. And lots of discussions happen
387 in schools about how we could do things differently, do things better, and then no one acts on it, no one goes
388 off and actually puts it into action. And I think that's something any learning organization could do better is
389 hold people to account in a fun and formal way. If you have a conversation this week, you will have a
390 conversation this week. And it's going to lead to a great idea. Have you got your book where you write down
391 your ideas? And at the end of the week, can you translate one of those ideas into a thing that you're actually
392 going to try? And if every school, if every university did that can you just imagine the number of grassroots
393 ideas that would be buzzing around our schools and buzzing around our organizations. We wouldn't need
394 conferences anymore because people would be doing the work, and networking is part of the job.

395
396 **Hassan 39:45** Ewan, you raise your raise so many points there; how do we capture that ? Where do we go
397 from here? What's the future of TeachMeets?

398
399 **Ewan 39:56** There was that attempt to capture in video format, Leon Cych did a heroic effort trying to
400 capture videos of everyone speaking and it was a great effort, but it doesn't ... you're either going to attend to
401 TeachMeet or not, you're not going to sit there trawling through hours of video footage, that are blogs
402 everywhere about stuff people have been inspired by in TeachMeets. But again, you have to really want to
403 go and bump into that kind of stuff. And the idea that it's somehow a course or a talk that you can learn from
404 after the fact I think we've already said, it's not the talk that's important. It's the discussion that happens in
405 the corridor and the table in between times. So I think the capturing is less important, actually, than everyone
406 committing pledging to do something on the back of it. It might be to start doing other TeachMeet. Or it
407 might, which is the kind of traditional rallying call. But it may also just be a I'm going to take one thing I've
408 learned from this, and I'm going to apply it in my classroom. And if we knew that that was going on, that's a
409 huge amount of change, positive change happening in schools, with very little cost behind it. Very unplanned
410 and very organic. But if it's good change, and it makes an impact a student's experience, generally those
411 ideas tend to spread pretty well.

412
413 **Mags 41:13** It's something that came out of the BarCamp philosophy and something that that Steven Howell
414 said to me one day, it's, it's kind of like the opposite to Fight Club, the one thing you do after TeachMeet is
415 talk about TeachMeet, (Ewan, Hassan: chuckles!) whether it be that idea, that one idea that you bring back
416 to your staff room from it, or that you will have a another TeachMeet but that it must, it must flow on
417 organically, rather than sort of, let's build more of these, it must, it must kind of flow its own way. And one of
418 the things I found people saying is they really yeah, they want it to flow on, but to evolve as it has evolved,
419 it's only 16 - it's only like a little baby teenager yet. So let it let it grow and don't try to fence or corral it or
420 bottle it.

421
422 **Hassan 42:11**

423 I get asked all the time is when are you organizing the next TeachMeet? And I have to say, it's not up to me
424 to organize the next TeachMeet. (Mags, Ewan: Yep.) It's like there's an Education Center, and it's there. And
425 it's there to be used. Let's go, let's meet, let's talk about stuff that you're doing in your classroom. And let's
426 share those ideas and we share them amongst ourselves. What do you think? And this one is for both of you
427 keeping in mind that we can't capture, What is that you can't capture - a lightning bolt, but you can't capture
428 TeachMeet? But what does the evolution of TeachMeet look like in your own opinions?

429
430 **Ewan 42:52** Part of me, that's gonna sound a little bit cruel part of me doesn't care. Because it's not mine to
431 care about. and also, I have two kids, I have a ridiculously busy job as well. And I understand from a user
432 perspective, how hard it is to justify leaving your family for an evening to go and learn in that way. So I think
433 that the healthiest thing that can happen is people from TeachMeets talk to each other off the record, if you
434 like, and away from the actual event itself. And you see that happening. There's something emerging, which
435 I find really unhealthy, though, which is this kind of a US and THEM cliques on Twitter, on social media,
436 haranguing each other over whether something is good or bad for learning and teaching, and turning it into a

437 bit of a slanging match around whose ideas are best. And all of this discussion is about research, It's about
438 philosophical approaches, quite often, it's not actually about what happens in a classroom. TeachMeet was
439 always about what happened in the classroom. So I think if we could create that very pragmatic, this is what
440 we do in my this is what I do my classroom, this is what we do in our school. If we can change the language
441 around the way we talk about progressing change in a school for the better, to be in less philosophical, less
442 ideological, and make it more about ideas that have been worked on and have either worked or not worked,
443 but people have learned from them, then I think that would be a really positive next step, even if there were
444 never another pub filled with teachers. If the dialogue around education could really shift quite markedly
445 towards practice that has worked and practice that has not worked and people are prepared to share and
446 learn from it then I would be very happy.

447
448 **Hassan 44:58** Mags, you want to jump in there.

449
450 **Mags 45:00** well, look, I'm a biologist, and evolution takes place and it jumps and starts, it's organic, and
451 you can't force it. And circumstances sometimes, you know, change the run of things. But it's already started
452 to evolve within the 16 years of TeachMeet, Daryl Simon Egan and Ed Finch have started Brewed, and
453 taking maybe a more Edcamp twist on the TeachMeet; Pedagogoo has started back up in Scotland again, (how
454 can we keep on starting things?), and Tom Farrelly here in Ireland has taken the Pecha Kucha push thru
455 TeachMeet of GASTA. And it's wonderfully popular with people who are at a big conference. And they want
456 to they want to a blast of air in between. So look, it's finding its own level. We haven't mentioned the
457 pandemic, pandemic has brought it right back to its roots. I don't know if you remember Ewan, but in the very
458 first year, you were inviting people to join in via Skype, if they couldn't get to the thing.

459
460 **Ewan 46:04** That's right - my old colleague, Ian from Isle of Islay was one of the first!

461
462 **Mags 46:08** yeah, really what I'm finding it (and I'm kind of looking at it from a drone's eye view I'm trying to
463 get up there and look at everybody and what they're thinking but to be honest, there are a few essential
464 signature elements that have to be there. And you're very humble. The role of the MC is really important, it
465 goes back to the (folk / trad music) session. And sometimes I'm thinking it's almost like TeachMeet is like hip
466 hop to classical music, that the MC is very important. The Open Space Technology from which BarCamp
467 and TeachMeet and EdCamp all came that that ability to get up and walk away - Law Of Two Feet, whatever
468 - if you're not happy. So once that very central core, the one thing I would say is, people love the idea of
469 TeachMeet. It's its own worst enemy, the name is wonderful, the greatest benefit is the greatest risk. "Let's
470 have a TeachMeet" like Mrs. Merton's "let's have a heated debate". So people said, let's have a TeachMeet,
471 but go into it without knowing what it is. So I would say find its DNA, find its origins, and "read my book!!!",
472 when I get to sorted - I'll have one A4 page for it,. And even that I don't want to do it. It's not prescriptive. It's
473 more about, it's about atmosphere, and ethos and trust.

474
475 **Ewan 47:35** It goes back to that thing of knowing where ideas come from. And I think a lot of people pick up
476 on ideas without knowing where the idea comes from. Which is why that are some - I'll just say it - they're
477 copycats, the same thing with a different name, why they've done that, because they didn't really understand
478 what the original thing was in the first place. And that's not just about this, there's so many ideas in
479 education, but people don't know where it comes from, which is why people keep having to bang on about
480 the same old thing. And people make similar mistakes. Which is great if you work in our business, because
481 you get to solve them all out for them! In jazz music, they see you've got to pay your dues, which means you
482 got to do your homework and work out where stuff comes from so that you can then improvise on top of it; if
483 you've ever heard someone who's not done their homework trying to improvise - painful. And the same goes
484 for this.

485
486 **Mags 48:26** Yeah, there's a lovely feel of apprenticeship through it, I'm finding people who just went
487 because they were really curious, I want to know what's this thing about. And then it kind of went "I did
488 something last Thursday; I'm going to share that the next one". And then the third stage, well look, this is
489 really, really good. I'm going to bring it to my colleagues or bring it to my town. So there is a lovely feel of just
490 organic apprenticeship. Teachers passing things onto each other, telling stories around the campfire.

491

492 **Hassan 48:53** I'm a big fan of big fan of TeachMeets that goes without saying, but it annoys me to be
493 honest to be sitting in a staff room. That's a very big staff from and to have. And I use this example all the
494 time you if you have a technology teacher on one side of you, and the technology teachers talking to me and
495 going if only we had some sort of robotics thing to do with thing, I'd be able to engage with my students
496 more. And then you go to the other side of you and you have your technology teacher so you have a
497 technology teacher or you have a woodwork teacher or metalwork teacher and he's saying I have a whole
498 bunch of these robots. If only I knew how to code them. And I'm sitting in the middle gone have you actually
499 met each other? Like seriously? Have you have you met each other and it's something that that was said
500 and I can't remember which staffroom. The actual staffroom in a school is such an amazing place. There's
501 very few working environments. Normally working environment, it's all coders or it's all accountants or it's all
502 whatever. In the school staff room, there's musicians, and there's linguists and there's engineers, the point I
503 was making is you have the staff room was such an amazing place. And an awful lot of the time, there's no
504 communication happening within it, although teachers could write a friendly and courageous paper on
505 communication within a school! Ewan, what projects are you working on at the minute that you want to tell us
506 about? Because I know I have a cheat sheet here in front of me, I want you to tell me about that project
507 you're working on?
508

509 **Ewan 50:41** Well, I think that it ties in quite nicely, actually, because we're talking about adult learning. And
510 the reason your staff room can't be that place is because it's the wrong context, it's the wrong time with the
511 wrong people, the wrong politics, the wrong energy, and the wrong drink in your hand. And it's all the wrong
512 stuff. And so the context for adult learning is something that's often neglected and not just in education, but
513 in life. So with them, an incredible woman, Andrea Mitrea, in Romania, she approached us (NoTosh), just
514 before the first lockdown of the pandemic began to hit and was actually about to pull the plug on the project.
515 And we said, Look, all of our other customers have left us, (we lost 85% of our customers in the space of 10
516 days). And I said, you know, I've got time, which is rare, let's just do it, we'll pay some sweat equity. And if
517 we get this idea off the ground, there'll be more than proud of it. And in the end - I should first of all point out,
518 we got everyone over 85% of those clients back, bar one. And they eventually realize that things don't just
519 stop the in fact, it's the opposite. We need to keep developing ideas and developing people. But in the
520 meantime, we had created a new school out of nowhere. And it's remarkable because the business model
521 for the school is innovative. It's actually a construction project where we've built our village during the
522 pandemic, in the hills of Transylvania next to the city of Cluj. And all of those sold, and they needed a school.
523 So two of the houses were knocked together to make the first school. The construction of phase two, which
524 turns us village into a town is underway, and all those homes are being sold, which means we're able to
525 open middle and high school in a couple of years. And we've just hired our first head of school, all the way
526 from Buenos Aires, it is an Englishman coming with his family to the hills of Transylvania to run that school.
527 What's magic about school is it's not for children. Most schools have this one group of learners and Colina
528 Learning Center has two - children and adults. It is actually a dual curriculum school because we felt that the
529 vision for the school is that we will build a learning culture through every home. And I think actually a lot of
530 schools would have that as a purpose as a goal. But you can't do that unless you're in every home. And so
531 the purpose of the school is to support everyone, adults and kids to learn how to thrive in life. And the
532 curriculum is designed in a way that the children have their program, which is tied to standards, New York
533 State standards in fact, and will lead to qualifications in a traditional sense. But alongside that is a curriculum
534 that parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, locals in the community can engage with to talk about the
535 same themes in a different way, and look at how they grow their brain, their heart, their physical health, their
536 spiritual health as well and kind of the community is incredible. It's a school that has its own organic farm on
537 site. It has an incredibly robust, rigorous early years curriculum in place already. And the learning is
538 designed for children and adults equally. And I think that's phenomenal. And the impact it's had when we
539 hadn't even advertised any jobs. And we find ourselves with job application streaming. And because people
540 said I just want to work for that school. That's the kind of thing I want to be part of. And so in August, two
541 years, two and a bit years after helping to create the vision and the purpose and the curriculum and even
542 down to some of the physical aspects of the school - I've never actually been on site and I've never met any
543 of the team in person before - so in August this year, I'll get a chance to go and hang out in the school that I
544 helped to build for the first time, which is extraordinary and crazy. I'm looking forward to it.
545

546 **Hassan 54:56** That sounds amazing. I have absolutely no words than other than that sounds amazing.

547

548 **Ewan 55:02** It's crazy. And they they've good faith, we talk about good faith, the good faith they showed us.
549 This is a kind of VC venture capital type people from Silicon Valley who've, you know, they've made their
550 money, they want to invest in something worthwhile and they fell in love with Romania, as a lot of people do
551 when they visit it. And he says, right, well, we'll build a village, and we'll build the world's best school, which
552 is basically what we're trying to do. But I met with the board and said, yeah, they said, you know, we're not
553 sure what's going to happen with construction, whether the project is going to be a success, because no one
554 knows what's happening in the world. But at this point, this was in March 2020. And when I say, Look, I'll do
555 it for free. I'll do it and return for good feeling. They said Are you sure? Yeah, I mean, and they trusted us to
556 do good work. And what we've done is just blown expectations out of the water. So there's a whole new
557 Romanian family over there for me to enjoy. At some point, when I get over.

558

559 **Hassan 56:01** "We'll build the best school in the world". Folks, that's the show title right there.

560

561 **Ewan 56:09** You don't have to actually manage to do it. But trying is the important part.

562

563 **Hassan 56:13** Yeah, lookit, I don't know - Martin Luther King, he didn't say I have an idea is that I have a
564 dream. Now. So yeah.

565

566 **Ewan 56:23** And it's also its interesting, schools have to think about their families. When you're starting from
567 scratch, you choose the family that you want to come to the school. So we want to be the best school in the
568 world for a dynamic, enlightened families who want to thrive in this kind of connected world. So most of the
569 people move into this community are home workers, they are digital people. They understand, they have a
570 sense of design, they don't think that their kid is going to necessarily go to Harvard to be successful in life.
571 And so there we are also making the school what it is; quite a refreshing brunch.

572

573 **Hassan 56:56** Can I ask a silly question? What does it look like? What does the nine to five look like? What
574 as your walk in the door? Draw us a picture.

575

576 **Ewan 57:11** It's - having never been, it's quite hard to draw a picture.

577

578 **Hassan 57:14** And this is this is exactly why I asked. I want to hear your picture. And then my next question
579 is, I wonder will that picture match up to?

580

581 **Ewan 57:23** Well, it's inspired a great deal by Scottish, Gordonstoun Expeditionary Learning, influenced by
582 all the work that Ron Berger and colleagues over in the States have done in Expeditions influenced heavily
583 by what then the team XP school in the north of England have done with it, infused with the research and
584 design cycle that we've been working on for the last 12 years. So when you walk in, you'll see kids, whatever
585 age they are, there'll be in one of five stages of learning, they'll either be discovering, which is all that
586 immersing into something new. And that discovery is using all four senses. So they're out in the mud, they're
587 in the garden, they're doing all that kind of stuff, you know, they're not just in a in a class or in a space. And
588 we have a dream phase, which is allowing kids to dream like so this is what you've just been exposed to?
589 What would you like to do with it? And so we're negotiating curriculum with children, what do we do next?
590 Researching. So now that you've settled on a research goal, go do your homework. So be interested in stuff
591 that you wouldn't normally be interested in, expand what you know, build your understanding of stuff that you
592 think you know, but you're not sure build your knowledge, knowledge is super important in this as well,
593 because they can't really progress that ideas unless they know, but they have a deep desire to learn new
594 stuff, because they've got this dream that they've come up with, then really important, do it. So manifest,
595 move into action, you can probably hear a little bit of TeachMeet pedagogy coming in there as well. So you
596 know, shaping and get feedback and keep going persevere. And then the final part is transform. So really
597 important is that we measure the impact of what young people or the adult learners actually achieve. So
598 there is showcasing there is celebrating all the stuff you'd see in any school. But there's also looking at
599 expanding beyond the school into the community. And actually, we're exploring Colina newer communities in
600 lots of other places around the world, in Latin America at the moment. So there'll be that opportunity as well
601 to share ideas and see if they work in a completely different context. And when you walk in, these are very

602 little people at the moment. They're four or five, six years old at the moment. We have double the number of
603 kids that we can cope with. And so the need to expand is there. But if you want to see what it looks like you
604 go to Colinalearning.com, Colina is Romanian for Hill, so Colinalearning.com. and you'll see plenty of some
605 of the most beautifully short practitioner video that you will ever see in the world. One thing we do really well
606 at NoTosh and with the team at Colina is a branding and storytelling so you will see beautiful stories told in
607 HD 4k. So enjoy going to have a look at that.
608

609 **Hassan 1:00:23** And I'll have a link in wherever it wherever I share this. Mags, we look forward to your PhD.
610 We look forward to reading it. Mags. When can we get our hands on it? When can we have you go through
611 the TeachMeet?
612

613 **Mags 1:00:43** Let's say my student card runs out at the end of 2022. So like there's your deadline sorted for
614 you. I'm nearly there. I find that I find the writing as me difficult. It's easy when I'm writing the voice of Ewan
615 and or the voice of all my fantastic incredible contributors. But just I'm not a natural writer as you can ..n I'm
616 a talker, but I'm slogging through, I'm here in my ivory tower plugging through all the time, and can't wait to
617 get to the real world, Hassan ,can't wait to get back to my Turtlestitch and all the other bits and bobs that I
618 get to play with and CESI, my CESI folk and MakerMests and all of that, the real world as I call it.
619

620 **Hassan 1:01:28** I didn't I didn't give you your full introduction at the start simply because I want to have you
621 on again just to talk about Mags Amond the teacher, where you are, your journey today's excluding
622 TeachMeet, such as bringing the CESI side of it. So you will be back. Ewan, I want you back just somehow
623 harness some of that energy, that positive energy I mean, seriously, if you could bottle that. Your energy is,
624 is addictive, is that right?
625

626 **Ewan 1:02:08** I think my colleague, Brad Carter in Tokyo is a Canadian in Tokyo. And even that might give
627 you a clue as to his attitude in life. He been part of our team for the last 18 months on some really
628 challenging projects in the Middle East and other places internationally. But working at distance of strange
629 time zones, which has never been easy. And occasionally I get worried. I get worried about other people's
630 energy working on those kinds of time zones. And with those kinds of deadlines. And there's two things he
631 shared recently, we shared them in our provocation newsletter. This one was just last week even that when
632 you're being asked to do work, you generally say either Yep, nope, or groovy. Yep, means I'll do it. It won't
633 take me two minutes, probably quicker for me to do it, then you need to do it. Nope means no, shut up, move
634 on. I'm not going to do it. And groovy means not only will I do it, but I'll probably invest far more time than
635 you're paying me for to do it. Because I'll enjoy doing it. And I think that's an a very healthy approach to take
636 to invitations, do things or requests. Then the other thing that he taught me over the past 18 months is the
637 choices we all take in life where the work we do. His thing is to do and it sounds a bit hippy, maybe. But his
638 choice is to do cool work with cool people in cool places. Now, if you're a teacher in your school, you might
639 kind of go along, I'm stuck with two of those things. I have no control over those things. But even just cool
640 work, make your work cool. And I think that you can complain about standards, you can complain about
641 testing, you can complain about so many things in the teaching, but there's actually a lot to love in it. And
642 you got to maybe this is a good point, a spring cleaning almost, audit everything you're doing. Ask yourself
643 what you're going to stop, ask yourself what you're going to keep doing. And then the fun part is, actually the
644 fun part of what you're going to get rid of, what you're going to stop but the other fun part is what you're
645 going to start. And I think if you do go to a TeachMeet you should go having already done that audit and
646 worked out what you're stopping so that you've got room on your slate to get something new in there.
647 (Hassan: I LOVE that). And that should be cool. They should be cool. Don't take on noble work that you feel
648 you've got to do. I wouldn't do a PhD, I couldn't write in the ivory tower language of a PhD. However, when
649 Mags has done that, I would love to get my teeth stuck into translating it into plain English that I can
650 understand. (Mags: You're hired!). That's fun. That would be groovy work. And I think it's worth getting into
651 that that mindset of realizing you don't always have to do everything you're asked to do. Everyone's got a
652 degree of agency.
653

654 **Hassan 1:05:10** Ewan McIntosh, Mags Amond. Thank you very much for joining me in the CESI Staffroom.
655 I'm blown away.