Marcey Winawer

AP Computer Science teacher at Mountain View High School

March 27, MVHS classroom 801

00;24;08;17 - 00;24;20;22
Speaker 1
So, just to begin, I was wondering why you started teaching here in Mountain View and why you decided to pursue education, because I remember you said you had worked in the computer science industry before.

00;24;20;25 - 00;24;46;13
Speaker 2
Yeah. So after I graduated from college, I got a job at a very large computer company, and I was a software engineer, and I did that for a while. But then, you know, after I got married and we had one child, we were living in New York, and my husband got a job out here. And so, we moved out here and then, you know, we didn't know anybody here.

00;24;46;15 - 00;25;08;03
Speaker 2
So I sort of backed off my career, and I was, what I did is I taught nights at the end of college in their computer information systems department, but I wasn't working in a company anymore. And then we had two more kids. And so then I got pretty busy. I just sort of did a little bit of teaching, but I was mostly with my kids, and it's kind of a silly story.

00;25;08;03 - 00;25;28;22
Speaker 2
I started teaching because I was volunteering a lot in the elementary school with children at the school, and I was helping in classrooms, and I was getting really upset about math tracking. And this is an elementary school, you know, and kids, there were so few. The kids were so little, but they were already putting them into groups according to how they did math.

00;25;28;22 - 00;25;51;19
Speaker 2
And I just thought, they're just too little, you know? And, so I guess they thought I was going to fix that. Oh, yeah. Right. You know, so I went back to school once. My youngest daughter was in sixth grade. I went to a credentialing program where I got a master's and a teaching credential. And the reason I came here, there was a teacher here.

00;25;51;19 - 00;26;15;29
Speaker 2
She's retired, but she actually helps in AVID. And she was the head of the math department, and I. There was no computer science here because I started teaching here in 2010, and she was the head of the department, and she could have taught anything she wanted to, as she was

teaching the lowest level math kids. And I was so impressed by that that she, like, was so dedicated and and so I was just like, yeah, I just want to work with her.

00;26;15;29 - 00;26;23;10
Speaker 2
And so that was one of the things that attracted me to this school.

00;26;23;13 - 00;26;40;06
Speaker 1
And then just diving in, how do you recognize code plagiarism, I guess, when you mentioned, like, kids copying off of other kids' code? And then how do you think that differs from kids using AI? Are there distinguishable traits?

00;26;40;09 - 00;27;01;03
Speaker 2
Like, oh, back in here. Yeah, yeah, that's a really good question. So if two kids are copying each other, if I catch it, I feel like I'm lucky, right? Because I could have, you know, this year I only have like 68 students. But last year I had 100. Oh. So if I caught it, I felt lucky.

00;27;01;07 - 00;27;24;04
Speaker 2
You know, or sometimes if you know, how we did all the graphic stuff. So one time I actually caught three people across all three of my classes who work together because one of the kids gave his code to somebody else. And so they all had the same interface. So I recognized it. So I caught that. So, catching the students helping each other was a little harder.

00;27;24;06 - 00;27;46;10
Speaker 2
But the AI is not that hard, to be honest with you, because you know, how we're very scripted in our class. Like, we're like, okay, we're going to write it this way. We have this class,s and that class, and what students seem to be doing is like, I think, because they're not good at prompting. A lot of times I give them back something that we haven't learned in class, and it's easy for me to catch,it so that's really it.

00;27;46;12 - 00;28;07;07
Speaker 2
And then, you know, I, I don't know if you remember my policy, if you can explain it to me, I'll let it go. But if you can't explain it, you can't use it. And I still feel that way. But I think students are doing better with that. Like, students are actually, I've seen more students put comments in saying I actually got some help with this, but this is how it works.

00;28;07;09 - 00;28;12;10
Speaker 2
And so to me, that's okay.

00;28;12;12 - 00;28;26;08
Speaker 1
And I, I remember that you had some quizzes like the multiple choice. Have you still kept those around, or do you move more to the coding?.

00;28;26;09 - 00;28;47;09
Speaker 2
Yeah. Not only have I done that, but we're writing the free ones on paper now. Oh wow. That's awesome. It's awesome. So there's no computer. So we actually started the year the way your class did where we had online coding. But now because we want to get ready for the AP exam too, we're doing it on paper, which the kids have been doing pretty well.

00;28;47;11 - 00;28;59;28
Speaker 2
But I still do, you know, like the warm up that looks like the quiz ahead of time so people can get ready. Oh yeah. But yeah. And then we also do a little bit of a multiple choice too.

00;29;00;03 - 00;29;22;03
Speaker 1
I actually interviewed my APUSH teacher about this project because she had moved everything to paper to try and filter out AI, and she mentioned that the district was really encouraging, like, teachers encourage more conversations and just like students talking to each other. And I was wondering if you had, like, that same experience.

00;29;22;03 - 00;29;43;22
Speaker 2
Yes. And I actually was at a conference and I actually shared this as a silver lining. You know, sometimes when something is bad, something good comes out of it. Right? And so to me, like the way we've had to adjust for it, the good news is we are doing more student talking. So one of the things I'm doing this year that it didn't do with your class is a peer evaluation.

00;29;43;22 - 00;30;03;19
Speaker 2
So at the end of the quarter three projects, the students were paired up, and one student had a paper and they had to go through the other students' projects and look for different things. Like is the code modularized? You know, did they use this like, did they use an array list and all these different things? And then they had to play the game and give feedback.

00;30;03;26 - 00;30;25;16
Speaker 2
So that was great. And so the students were working together to evaluate each other. And then the interviews. I still do remember I interviewed you for your projects. Like I would just ask you questions and stuff. The milestone check-ins are really good for me too, because I really look at

the code during the milestone check ins, because that's because I have in mind what I want to look for.

00;30;25;16 - 00;30;42;11
Speaker 2
And so if there's a problem, I can usually see it right away. But again, like we were so like we have everything so scripted the way we want you to write the code, I feel like it's not that hard to find problems. And then you kind of get to know what kind of coders kids are, you know?

00;30;42;11 - 00;31;00;02
Speaker 2
And so if you see something that looks a little off, it's easier to see. But, you know, I always tell the kids, you know, it's I like, I like I think it's really important to know how to use it. But I tell my students, use it to enhance what they're doing, not replace their learning skills. When you're in high school, you want to learn.

00;31;00;04 - 00;31;12;07
Speaker 2
And then, of course, when you're not, when you're done with school, you'll be expected to use these tools. But you want to have that expertise so that you know that what you're getting out of the tools is what you need, right.

00;31;12;09 - 00;31;30;19
Speaker 1
Actually, my next question is like, would you encourage students to use AI for tutoring, I guess, or just, for this class specifically, I guess, like feedback on their code and how they could fix it. Like, would you encourage that or would you rather prefer they ask you or a teacher just like a peer?

00;31;30;22 - 00;32;01;00
Speaker 2
Well, quite honestly, nobody asks me anything anymore. Oh, I am not kidding. Like no AP students come to me. They come to my tutorial to play video games. But this is like the first year where I don't get any questions. So I ask for their classes and like, yeah, we're using it. So what I told them is if you're going to use AI, put in the chat that you are a high school student and you're taking the AP exam because then the AI can use its model or whatever model it has understands the AP exam to give you the right feedback, right?

00;32;01;06 - 00;32;24;06
Speaker 2
So I used to get upset when students did things like, you know, putting anonymous classes or using lambda notation because we never taught that in the class. So to me, chat bots do that a lot. So to me, if you tell the chat bot what you're doing that your student, you know, I think it would give you something more to do what you need, right now.

00;32;24;06 - 00;32;41;08
Speaker 2
I think it's great for debugging. Like, you know, how Java sometimes gives some strange messages. So telling you know, giving that to a chat bot I think is really useful. So you don't waste a lot of time. But then again, I, on the other hand, think debugging is an important skill. So being able to, you know, go to a line number and see what's wrong is still important.

00;32;41;08 - 00;33;02;05
Speaker 2
I think. Right. So yeah, I'm not against it. I just feel like we have to use it to enhance what we're doing and not and not make it so that we're not learning and that that's tricky. It's very tricky because, you know, when you're here now as a high school student, you've grown up with cell phones, you've grown up with a lot of technology.

00;33;02;05 - 00;33;17;21
Speaker 2
Right. So it's hard to back off of that. Right? So, you know, and even our district, I mean, we're still trying to figure out how we should we're trying to have a district statement about AI. We don't have that yet. So, you know, it's still working on that.

00;33;17;23 - 00;33;37;10
Speaker 1
And I know that this part could probably be very difficult to track. But I was wondering if you noticed, like any discrepancies between like, AP exam scores versus like class grades just because of like I use and then how if they don't use it correctly then it could replace their learning and they're not prepared for the AP exam that.

00;33;37;10 - 00;33;57;25
Speaker 2
I think you should ask me after this year. Oh no I'm serious. I think this year it's worse because like I said, I, I even said this to my class, I had nobody come in to talk to me during tutorials. So that kind of concerns me because, you know, either they're using AI or asking parents maybe. And so I didn't think so last year.

00;33;57;27 - 00;34;08;23
Speaker 2
But I wonder about this year, actually, if you want to check back with me because I'll get the scores in July. Canadian. I said this to Mr. Nguyen so I said I'm a little concerned about it, so.

00;34;08;24 - 00;34;13;01
Speaker 1
Oh actually it'll be past my project, but I am actually interested. Yeah that would be great.

00;34;13;04 - 00;34;19;09
Speaker 2
I'll try to remind myself to tell you, but otherwise come ask me and I'll let you know, because I am a little concerned about this year.

00;34;19;14 - 00;34;46;27
Speaker 1
Thank you. And this is a little bit on the side, but, I guess, do you think with the rise of AI, it's more important now that students learn how to code and get more accustomed to technology? Or do you think that it's also important to know how to do things traditionally, like on paper taking notes?

00;34;47;00 - 00;35;08;10
Speaker 2
That is a good question. I mean, I do think it's important for everybody to take at least one coding course, because I think it would be hard to find a profession where that isn't going to come into play somehow, whether you have to read a model or use a model. And if you know a little bit about coding, it's going to be easier, right?

00;35;08;12 - 00;35;34;13
Speaker 2
The paper, I mean, the paper and pencil is important for the learning part, right? Because it's really easy to just use a model and not really think about things like, for example, I had an experience this summer, so I took a course on databases and we had to learn about things like SQL and MongoDB. And so there were like three databases we were learning right?

00;35;34;15 - 00;35;54;01
Speaker 2
Which was fine, I got that, I was able to do that, but what was hard for me was that we had to write a Python model to access the data. That was fine. But what was hard was there's this thing called bash that sits on top of Python. It's like a third party, and it's like this crazy HTML thing.

00;35;54;07 - 00;36;08;06
Speaker 2
Oh, and I was just like, what is this? So I was using a chat bot to help me, and honestly, and I had no idea what was going on. And that was like an eye opener for me. Like, if you asked me to tell you how bash works, I had no idea because I was just using the chat bot like so.

00;36;08;06 - 00;36;30;26
Speaker 2
I was writing the low level code, but I was using bash for the interface part, and then I realized I'm like, I have no idea how I could write this by myself. So. So that was an eye opener for me,

that I think we have to have a balance. Right? And again, I go back to once you have that fundamental understanding, using the AI is really powerful, right?

00;36;30;28 - 00;36;42;10
Speaker 2
And honestly, I don't think we need the pencil and paper. If we could keep ourselves away from the tech. I think we're all kind of thinking more about that because of AI.

00;36;42;13 - 00;37;00;17
Speaker 1
And as my final question, I was wondering, what do you think effective teaching will be like for MVHS just in the future? So like, you mentioned a unified district policy or just like, maybe each department takes its own learning policy.

00;37;00;20 - 00;37;22;09
Speaker 2
For AI, you mean? Yeah. Yeah, that's a really good question. I mean, I think, I think having a unified policy is really good because it's something that backs up what we're doing. But it could be the each department tweaks it a bit. Right. I feel like the CTE department was so project based. We might not have as much of an issue as in a history class or an English class.

00;37;22;09 - 00;37;42;28
Speaker 2
Right? So, as long as we are, this is what we've been trying to do is just be more creative in what we're assigning. Right. But, yeah, it's hard to say. I mean, to me personally, I would like a unified district policy. Yeah. This is an umbrella. So that, you know, when we meet our parents, we can say this is what we're adhering to.

00;37;42;28 - 00;37;58;09
Speaker 2
And, you know, it's not just us. It's kind of like cell phones to, like, every teacher does something different. And it's very hard for the students because I have to remember, like, look, I'm doing I'm taking cell phones here. Oh, and the numbers and some of the kids said, well, I'm number five in here, but then I'm number seven in another class.

00;37;58;09 - 00;38;14;17
Speaker 2
And so, you know, because we're kind of all over the place. Even cell phone policies are difficult, right? So I think for AI, if we could have at least something in place, district wide, and then maybe we have some flexibility to tweak it for our departments, that would be really good.

00;38;14;20 - 00;38;34;00
Speaker 1

And one of the things that really stood out to me about your class is actually how we use Gemini as a part of the quarter for project, and I was wondering if you like, kept that or were integrating like more kind of like required I use into your projects or have you decided to like stave off of it?

00;38;34;02 - 00;38;53;09
Speaker 2
No, I like using it. Yeah. We're still going to do that. Do you remember the one where we wrote I forgot what we were talking about in two classes, and then you had to have AI write another class? Yeah, we did that. And then I think we're going to actually do more AI with the quarter project, because they move the AP exam out a week.

00;38;53;11 - 00;39;02;17
Speaker 2
So we have one more week. So I think to make up for that, we're going to incorporate more AI into the quarter 4 project. And that way students can get it done.

00;39;02;19 - 00;39;13;08
Speaker 1
So and then like what do you hope that students can see when they use AI for their projects like what would you hope that they learn that they're learning?

00;39;13;10 - 00;39;31;24
Speaker 2
I think what's really important is how to do good prompting. And also just it's being able to trace the code, like being able to we're doing more of that this year to code tracing like and trying to understand code, because I think that's another way. If kids are using chat bots, if they're tracing code, that's a way for them.

00;39;31;24 - 00;39;56;28
Speaker 2
I know I can see them trying to understand the code in the tracing, right? But I think, you know, being a good prompter and then whatever you get back, making sure you're looking through it to make sure it's what you needed, I think is really important. And I think that because of how we modularize code, I think, you know, that experience of, okay, I wrote this part and I need to have the chat bot generate something that plugs into this.

00;39;57;00 - 00;40;01;22
Speaker 2
I think that's powerful. How do you get that to work? Yeah.

00;40;01;24 - 00;40;04;29
Speaker 1
All right. Those are all my questions. Thank you so much for doing the interview.

Write a short reflection of 6-7 sentences analyzing how your **annotations help build a larger story**, and **where are there gaps you still need to fill** in that story?

- Discuss how the highlighted sections **connect to your broader research topic** and place your interviewee's story within a **larger research-based context**.
- Explain how the interview supports your **angle on why your documentary subject matters today**.
- What's missing in this story? **What are the gaps** you need to fill?
- Conclude by considering **your audience**—who they are, why they should care, and how this interview helps shape the story you want to tell.

Overall, I was actually surprised to discover that Ms. Winawer's perspectives aligned a lot with Ms. CG, despite the fact that they have two extremely different approaches to their education. While I think a part of this can be attributed to the fact that history and computer science are simply subjects, I think it emphasizes how AI is transforming education across the board. One thing that particularly stood out to me was how Ms. Winawer remarked about no students coming to ask her questions, which I found very concerning, as it emphasized that students are likely getting external help for almost anything and everything, and are relying less and less on their teachers. These points support my angle because I think it shows a general need for a greater regulation of AI in education, and the growth of more conversations. I liked how Ms. Winawer called the growth of conversations and peer evaluations in her class as a "silver lining", as it aligned with both Ms. CG's perspective, but also shows a positive aspect that has come from these new developments. Some gaps I may need to fill is continuing to research more on how conversations and creating different, more "AI-proof" can help students learn, or maybe even enhance learning in schools. I think this interview will appeal to my audience because it shows how students are truly beginning to rely more on AI and general external help than their teachers, which is also something that I think I could touch on in my documentary. Overall, teachers are being placed in more uncomfortable and less secure positions with AI taking over and becoming so prevalent among students.