💡 **Educator Spotlight: Peter Foster & Jorge Zavala**

🎙️ **What This Conversation Is About**

This segment brings together **Peter Foster** (The Industry School, Australia) and **Jorge Zavala** (Silicon Valley entrepreneur) to explore how schools and startups can prepare young people to **solve real problems**, embrace failure, and build meaningful, balanced lives—not just chase grades, diplomas, or unicorn valuations.

Key Threads:

- Moving from a purely academic school model to **industry-immersed, highly personalized education**.

- Students combining **real work** (industry placements, start-ups, equine academy) with academics, and discovering purpose through **doing**.

- **Disruptive learning & entrepreneurship**: start from a problem you really care about, use AI as a mentor/tool, and build something real.

- **Failure, resilience, and critical thinking** as **core** learning outcomes.

- **Well-being & purpose**: work–life balance for entrepreneurs and students, and redefining success as **creating value for others**.

ᴀᴜ **2. Peter Foster & The Industry School (Queensland)**

The Model: "Will and Skill"

Peter describes his evolution from leading a traditional academic school to leading **The Industry School**, where the priority is developing human beings with **"will and skill"**:

- **Will** = attitude, resilience, determination, gratitude.

- **Skill** = technical, academic, and employability skills built on top of that.

Structure (Years 10–12):

- Students alternate between **blocks of school** and **blocks of industry** (equine, construction, marine, energy, etc.).

- Every student has a **personalised pathway**—success is defined at **their** level.

The Learning Culture

- **Integration: Industry consultants** work alongside teachers, liaising with employers and feeding real-world context back into the school.

- **Well-being:** A **well-being system** with vertical groups (Years 10–11–12 together) features a dedicated mentor who tracks each student's academics, industry progress, family context, and wellbeing.

- **Digital Detox: Phones are banned during the day**; students must communicate face-to-face and solve problems without escaping into screens.

- **Failure is Learning: Failure is expected and accepted** (e.g., a student running her own florist business for Year 12 certreneurship)—failure is treated as learning, with explicit reflection.

- **Service:** Strong emphasis on **service and social justice** (volunteering locally and abroad) to experience contributing to something bigger than themselves.

Student Voices (Equine Academy)

- Students, like Charlie and Evie, highlight the switch from struggling in traditional school to getting high grades when they could combine academics with real work (like a vet nurse traineeship).

- They value the **autonomy to "create my own path"** and learning things they will **actually use**.

- **Peter's Closing Message:** Education should **overturn the 17th-century classroom factory model** and move to individualised, purpose-driven pathways, explicitly teaching **resilience** and **gratitude**.

MX 🤖 **3. Jorge Zavala (Silicon Valley Entrepreneur)**

Disruptive Learning & AI

- **Teaching vs. Learning:** Jorge distinguishes **teaching** (teacher-centered) from **learning** (student-centered): "Do you **teach** them or do they **learn**?"

- **The Experiment:** A challenge with first-semester university students in Cancun required them to **choose a real problem you care about** and use **AI and weekly mentoring** to build an app (e.g., a prototype game to manage attention deficit).

- **AI's Role:** AI is used as a **coach/mentor**, not as a replacement for thinking.

- **Failure: Failure is normal**; the key is to **reflect** (post-mortem): what worked, what didn't, what to try next.

What the Market Values

- Schools still treat a bad grade as a dead end, while in innovation ecosystems, **failure is an expected part of progress**.

- **Critical Skills:** He sees the most critical skills as **Leadership**, **Communication**, **Creativity**, **Critical thinking** (validating information in the age of AI), and **Humility** (admitting "I don't know").

Redefining Success & Value

- **"In-premiums":** He criticizes confusing success with **winning competitions and demo days** (chasing prizes and diplomas).

- **True Success:** Serious entrepreneurs define success up front in measurable terms and focus on **creating value**—solving real problems that clearly improve people's lives (e.g., automating electricity and water systems).

- **Work–Life Balance:** Rejects the myth of destroying one's personal life. Argues for **focused presence**: be fully present with family, and work with full focus. Time off is a **precondition for good thinking and creativity**.

🤝 4. Cross-Cutting Themes

Across Peter and Jorge's different contexts, there is strong agreement on:

- **Learning > teaching:** The key is teaching people **how to learn** and adapt.

- **Failure as feedback:** Reflection and post-mortems are essential; schools should normalise this.

- **Purpose and value creation:** Students and entrepreneurs should aim to **solve problems that matter**, aligning work with social impact.

- **Critical thinking in an AI world:** AI makes knowledge abundant; what matters is how we **select, evaluate, and use** that knowledge.

- **Contribution to the greater good:** The goal is to **leave the world better than you found it**.

🔗 **Entities & Links**

- **YouTube segment (24h for Change in Education):**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sqg39Gx-Dr8

- **The Industry School (formerly Australian Industry Trade College) Homepage:**
  https://theindustryschool.com.au/