

# Episode 81 - Andrea Schiralli

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Moira McCullough, Andrea Schiralli

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Moira McCullough 00:00

Welcome to the College Scoops podcast. I'm your host, Moira McCullough and today, Andrea Schiralli is joining us to share storytelling tips and techniques to use when crafting a personal statement.



Andrea Schiralli 00:10

Some people are just naturally good writers and yeah, some people aren't. But there's a lot of little tips that you can learn, like how to play around with the pacing, or how to use certain devices for effect, and what effects for example, like anaphora, like repetition at the beginning, like of a word, or clause or sentence.



Moira McCullough 00:38

This is the College Scoops podcast and I'm your host, Moira McCullough, we focus on everything college related from the admissions process to where to eat, stay and explore on and round campuses. Our guests include founders, educators, authors and experts in the college space. Join us as these experts share their knowledge, experiences and lessons learned to help you have stress free and formative and tasty college journeys. Whether it's your first or last child going to college, or you're just interested in going to a college town for a game or meal we've got you covered. If you haven't already, please subscribe to the

College Scoops podcast to get the inside scoop, send everything college related, and leave us a review. Thanks to all of our sponsors partners in the entire College Scoops Ambassador team for helping us bring valuable content to our community. If you would like to support College Scoops as a sponsor, please head over to [patreon@patreon.com/collegescoops](mailto:patreon@patreon.com/collegescoops) and sign up as a sustaining listener, insider or Deluxe sponsor. We have exclusive benefits for our members free ebooks and even a College Scoops care package. Since 2014, Andrea has worked as a college admissions coach strategically helping students craft memorable essays, while taking into account their overall application package strengths and weaknesses and personality. Before entering the field of admissions consulting, she taught test prep, creative writing, and literary analysis courses at private and charter schools. She's also written SAT and GRE books. Creating an SAT vocabulary app, edited everything from best selling nonfiction books to esoteric dissertations, and published many hopelessly girly poems. In addition to her proudest accomplishment, certification in chocolate and candy making from the French Culinary Institute. She holds a BA in French literature from Cornell, and a master's in education from Harvard. Welcome to the College Scoops podcast Andrea, thank you so much for joining us today.

A

Andrea Schiralli 02:40

Hey, thanks for having me.

M

Moira McCullough 02:42

And you're getting ready for holiday. So I'm so glad you're took some time out of packing to join us and share your expertise with us. I loved your story. You have worked and lived overseas, which I have as well. And I always love connecting and sharing stories and finding all the hidden gems in different cities, coffee bakeries, we don't even know what more is in store for us that we'll learn about on this conversation. I'm sure yeah, that's fun. Can you share a little bit about your background in terms of how you got into writing? I mean, Was this something that you always love to do at a young age?

A

Andrea Schiralli 03:17

Well, I always like to read a lot. It's always been my favorite hobby. And then in college after trying to study nutrition and finding out the times is way too hard at the college level. I considered majoring in Spanish literature and got exposed to like different world literature's I ultimately settled on French literature, just because I think the language is so pretty. But yeah, I've always been really into reading. And in college, I noticed that I would

always be editing essays for my friends. So after college, in grad school, I took on a job as a college consultant, working specifically on the essays. But yeah, I felt like I was always good at writing because I read a lot. But yeah, basically, I write short stories, poems are all about love. Nothing else, literally, nothing else inspires me. And I've written like Test Prep books for the SAT essay when there was a writing/reading component to it and also for the GRE analytical essay and issue essay.

M

Moira McCullough 04:12

Okay, did you write poems when you were even high school? I mean, it's something that you don't hear about a lot. You know, people just love Yes, poems and loved poetry.

A

Andrea Schiralli 04:21

So I more in college. Yes, after my first like, first real time falling in love.

M

Moira McCullough 04:27

To move from writing poems and, and literature and everything, suddenly go into SAT and vocabulary words. How did that come about and what brought you as well over to living in Germany and in China?

A

Andrea Schiralli 04:44

as well as for the shift in writing. I'll address that first. So some essays I think are a bit boring to write. I see why kids don't like reading argumentative essays for school. They're very formulaic. You have to do a lot of research (shutter) Um, but for the GRE, analytical essay, an issue essay. It's basically just like analyzing someone. Analyzing an issue and thinking about it critically, which I think is just really important to do. And I think that comes easily for me, because in real life, I always tried to think critically about everything. If not, you're just a sheep like to advertisement into other people's beliefs. And I did teach critical writing on critical thinking workshops in the past, mainly in China and also for the SAT writing. I didn't really know what it was all about until a company in China asked me if I could work on the essays for an essay t book. And it's basically analyzing someone else's argument, like not if their argument is strong or weak, but how they create the argument, like, you know, like using appeal to emotion, rhetorical devices, logic, whatever. And I think that's so important. And we never really learned that at least not in most high schools. So for me, it was new, but I really enjoyed doing it and dissecting someone else's argument. And I think I enjoyed it because somewhat because of the novelty, it was really long, it was

like 120 sample essays, I guess, when I was like, around halfway done, and it lost a bit of the fun factor. But it was still interesting. And it really like makes you see the world through sharper eyes.

M

Moira McCullough 06:22

When you talk about dissecting someone else's essay, and how do you then try to improve it or edit it without, without totally rewriting it?

A

Andrea Schiralli 06:35

Well, for the personal statement, it's more like a piece of creative nonfiction. So there's a lot of storytelling tips and techniques that we can apply to their own writing to make it better. And it's just things like for any craft that you just need to learn. A lot of people think like, Oh, you have to be like, some people are just naturally good writers. And yeah, some people are, but there's a lot of little tips that you can learn, like how to play around with the pacing, or how to use certain devices for effect, and what effect would for example, like anaphora, like repetition at the beginning, like of a word, or clause or sentence, whatever, like, it's used a lot in speeches. And now every time that I read an essay, or speech or book, I do notice these devices a lot, which is kind of annoying. Only if it's over done. If it's a writer who writes in poetic prose, I noticed it, but I appreciate it. That's the downside to dissecting everything. But yeah, when I give my students tips, I just give them a lot of creative writing tips in addition to how they can improve the content of their essays, and give tips on as comments. And then they improve the essay. And then I'll just tweak the language a bit. But I think if you explain things and give examples, and say why you're doing something, or recommending something, and the student understands it better, like I never give vague advice, like oh, use figurative language over here, I'll give something specific, like maybe a simile or metaphor could will work well, such as blah, blah, because x, y and z,

M

Moira McCullough 08:02

Did you have a specific teacher that inspired you?

A

Andrea Schiralli 08:06

Not really, it just happened. I just like reading a lot. And then I got a job in education consulting company where I was working on the essays. And since it's only busy with the essays were around, like, you know, four to six months, a year, depending on how involved

you are. So the rest of the year, they would ask me to teach and one summer they asked me to teach nine Creative Writing sec sections I spent like such a long time making a PowerPoint and learning everything. Like I didn't know all these, like little rules and tricks. I just did what comes naturally to me from being a lifelong reader. And only, well, pretty much only reading classics and like high quality literature that stood the test of time for a reason, super cliché, but true. So I think like some of that, you know, God entered my brain for like, most of this. Yeah, basically, when I was working on preparing the materials for this class, I read so much for each lesson on a million different websites, and I basically condensed everything I learned. And I taught it that way. I made like one master PowerPoint with like, over 100 slides, but it was it was an intense class. Yes, I basically learned it on my own.

M

Moira McCullough 09:15

And I think that's the beauty of reading. You can just learn anything you want. It's exhausting. Now, I can imagine and the amount of research that goes into it started that as a consulting business while you worked overseas. Is it very different than your experience here in the US?

A

Andrea Schiralli 09:32

I worked with a lot of Chinese students. I worked with some German students and also a lot of Russian students, and some Turkish too, but I find the biggest difference. The Chinese students generally lack like more critical thinking skills, they're just not really reinforced in their public school system. It's more like rote memorization. So I found that have giving them some critical thinking workshops was very helpful. And also I think they're just some little things that they do more. It's all stereotypical, but it's all true. Like, as a whole, the Russian students tend to be more more logical, less funny, like more serious. Their essays are very formulaic like three body paragraph structure. And you know, when other students might feel more bold and change the structure, depending on what what works, given the content of their essay, maybe a diary format or Manifesto, or just something a little bit more unconventional. But yeah, I feel like it's enjoyable to work with different types of students, it really depends not only where they are from but how they think.

M

Moira McCullough 10:35

Is that something that you tried to gather when you're working with students in terms of their background and finding out what type of reader they are? Or is that something that

you kind of see in the sample writing that you get from students?

A

Andrea Schiralli 10:51

Yes, if I'm teaching them, I give them like a little questionnaire just to gauge their experience and background. But if I'm just working on the essays with them, I feel like I can tell based on their writing, when I give like feedback accordingly, just like not doing them to think in a different way, if something is lacking.

M

Moira McCullough 11:07

I'm always of the mindset like, it doesn't come easy to me. So it just in terms of that brainstorming and having that blank page, what were some of the tips or guidance that you would give to students?

A

Andrea Schiralli 11:20

Well, for brainstorming, if they're really, really stuck, I have like a questionnaire with certain questions that I asked about, like, you know, academics, life experiences, or any life changing woman's family, just a series of questions. It's like around 20 questions, and just to try to get some ideas from them. And then they, I asked them to narrow it down into like, three stories that they might want to tell, and then go from there and see what will work best as an essay. So I always will have them outline first. And I'll help them with the outline just to see if something can be fleshed out into an essay or even make for an interesting story. Because you know, sometimes you think something makes a good story. But it's only interesting to you because it happened to you. Or something could be a good story, but not for an admissions essay.

M

Moira McCullough 12:06

That's the fine line. It's like I have this great story and you read it and you're like, absolutely. It's a wonderful essay. It's just not the right one for the the objective of the college essay.

A

Andrea Schiralli 12:17

Yes and I always ask them like what are some traits that are not really present in other areas of your application that you want admissions officers to know about you because like, this is your time to show those traits. So if there's any traits, like we can work those

into a theme and backtrack from there.

**M** Moira McCullough 12:32

You have written several books on vocabulary, as at type books that would help students what drove you to write those books?

**A** Andrea Schiralli 12:42

Are they the ones that were on the essay, like analytical essay was a company approached me to do them in China. And I was like, Why not? Because it was my offseason, and just something to do. And the the vocab guys actually, when I was studying for the exam, I noticed that so many vocab words have similar meanings. And so I started to group them according to meaning and synonym. And then I made on one guide on that. And then I also made like, kind of an alphabetize dictionary, almost. It's not as long as the dictionary but it has like the top like 2500 sH T and top 3000 Gru words. So I grouped them according what I what I thought would be most helpful if I were learning it, like I had a sample sentence but not a super boring one, I tried to make them more modern and fun. Because it's already like boring to have to memorize vocab words like I want, I want this to be as painless as possible for people. So I gave like, the structure is basically like a word, a sample the definition in different forms, like adjective or noun form, for whatever it can be. And then a sample sentence and also all the SAT word or GRE words that are also synonyms of that word. So then you can memorize them more easily.

**M** Moira McCullough 13:56

That to me, it's like such a task.

**A** Andrea Schiralli 13:59

I know, it was a task, but I was a kid it was OCD. I'm like, I must put these words together. Like why I couldn't find anything else out there. When I was studying. I just had like list of words that I didn't know. And then I kept refining it and like making the list smaller and smaller as I memorize them all. And I'm like, What the heck. So many of these words have really similar meanings and they should be grouped together. There's so many different resources out there yet,

M

Moira McCullough 14:24

It's hard to find something that's in a consolidated platform that is easy and accessible to us as well. And in terms of the other book, which was a collection of you said sample essays that you as an example. So can you share a little bit about that as well.

A

Andrea Schiralli 14:41

So they were for the GRE and SAT exams, they were actually like two separate books, and then someone else wrote explanations of why the essays were strong and explain them in Chinese and then I also put them on my website in English, but basically, so the GRE argumentative essay is you get a question like to what extent does something something, and then you write your response on it. It could be anything like To what extent does being located near a body of water affects like a city's growth or something or something boy, some of them are like really boring. But a lot of them are actually really interesting. Like about heroes and like how they affect a society or reflecting society's values. I think they were all kind of interesting. And they make you think a lot. So I would just think about each question for like, a couple minutes, and then just start writing and see what happened. And I feel like if you're just thinking, as you're right, the process is fun.

M

Moira McCullough 15:43

I think it's easier to start writing and not overthinking it, as well.

A

Andrea Schiralli 15:48

Yeah, definitely. Don't overthink it. Just see what happens. And then if the organization needs a bit of tweaking, that's easy to do later.

M

Moira McCullough 15:55

The teaching aspect, something that you've always enjoyed. I mean, I know you got into it, because you had the opportunity. Is that something that you enjoy and continue to try to pursue?

A

Andrea Schiralli 16:07

Yes, I like teaching. I always thought I wanted to be a teacher. My first grade teacher was like, Really? I don't know, we were really close. Yeah, basically, after college, I taught some

summer courses. And then I moved to China and I taught in a village for a year, and I really enjoy it. But not every day. I think it's kind of you're always on. And it's like a bit like draining and tiring. And I don't like how there's a set schedule. Like I'd rather just edit it with headphones on when I want. But I do really like it. So I do it once in a while now, like when I have time, maybe like a few hours a week, like zero to three hours a week. And for me that's very satisfying and rewarding.

M

Moira McCullough 16:48

I love the fact that when you move to China and you went to teach in a village, was that something that was a setup program? Or is that something that you just traveled? And then you needed to get a job? Did you go over there with a particular program for any students who might be interested in travel and teaching?

A

Andrea Schiralli 17:04

No, it was like my first real breakup, like I need to change my life. So I considered like just teaching somewhere. I considered Japan, China or turkey that I did more research into them. And then I just chose like a village at the Chinese mountains because I was like, I just want to be somewhere pretty in nature and away from crowds.

M

Moira McCullough 17:25

What age of students were you teaching?

A

Andrea Schiralli 17:28

Like 19-20 and I was 22. So it was really fun. Like every day we'd play volleyball, so it was actually a vocational college. So they were going to all be either teachers or nurses. And I thought I taught the ones who were going to be teachers, they were going to be English teachers. Their English was really good already.

M

Moira McCullough 17:45

So you did teach in English? You were not teaching in Chinese?

A

Andrea Schiralli 17:47

Yes, their English is really good and I'm still in touch with it. Like a little group of them. They were my posse. It was definitely the best year, it's one of my best years of my life, I highly recommend that to anyone who just wants to change.

M

Moira McCullough 17:59

It's just trying to have the courage to go over and travel and working there. Is there any advice you would give to any students who, who would love to do what you do?

A

Andrea Schiralli 18:08

Yeah, well, one I've always embraced change. And I think if you don't, you should try to or else life is going to be really hard. We're always changing even in like, the simplest of ways on an individual level, like we're always aging, and you're not going to really enjoy life if you're not flexible to change, not as much as if you were. So I found a job before and they gave me like a work visa. And then I went there for I got really lucky because this was back in 2012. And you just needed a bachelor's degree. But now, for most opportunities in most countries, you also need like, I think it's a TESOL certificate like teaching English as a second language. The best one I recommend is like Cambridge institution, I'm not sure if it's affiliated with Cambridge University. I don't think it is it might be, but that they have like the most comprehensive ones that are the most widely accepted. I feel like it seems boring. A friend asked me to help her with it once I helped her for five minutes. I'm like, No thanks. But it is very useful. And it has a pedagogical instruction. I think if you're going to do it, just do it once do it right and get the highest certification. With the most hours, I think they have like 80 hours or 120. It probably doesn't take that long to complete. Unless you read and think slow. I really don't think it takes that long. Because I've seen my friend working on it. Who did a similar thing to me. But yes if anyone's interested in just keeping that option open even to teach like during summers abroad, I would definitely just get that over with.

M

Moira McCullough 19:31

So you get that certification. And then is are there particular institutions or programs that you would having gone through it?

A

Andrea Schiralli 19:39

Yeah, there are actually for Japan like the most well respected. One is called jet like GT. And they pay decently. If you want to get like the most money I would teach at a school

and like Shanghai or Beijing, and there's a big range there. Their public schools generally are not that great if you teach it like an American school. In international school, they typically pay better. And don't reimburse your flight if you complete your contract. If you're just looking like for something like I was like to get go to a village or somewhere more remote, you don't pay as well. And other countries usually don't pay as well either, but like they pay for your housing and your flight. And the lifestyle was pretty chill. Like, for example, I moved all of my classes to Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, so then I would just like travel around and like hike and stuff the rest of the week, I'm going to get your hours and they don't care.

**M** Moira McCullough 20:30

For that experience, you were contacted for another opportunity, which morphed into the educational consulting.

 20:37

It was a few years later. I was in China for a year, then I went to grad school, and then I was looking for a way to pay down my student loans quickly. Because you know, they're crazy in the US. So then I yeah, I saw a job posting for an education consulting job in China, I really didn't even know that industry existed until then. But I was like, why not? I moved to China to do it. And I did it. I did a few months of the office gig and I realized it wasn't for me. So then I made a deal with the company that I could work remotely and spend two months a year in China.

**M** Moira McCullough 21:12

So for any students who love to write, there's so many different opportunities you said teaching or writing in it for a particular industry? Do you have any advice for students who, who are in school right now who just absolutely love writing?

**A** Andrea Schiralli 21:30

Oh my god, yes, yes, there's this book I discovered. So I was a French major. But I saw this book at the library, love libraries, they have so many crazy things I don't even know about, like, unrelated to books. But, for example, like kids with projects for your kids to do at home, better kids, depending on your zip code. But there was a book I found there. It's called so I'm, I'm an English major. So now what I didn't read it, but I started to read it. And it had all these jobs that I didn't even know existed that you could get with a degree in

English, or like literature, journalism, whatever. And it was so useful. And it was like, we should have this for every industry. Because usually, like we don't know, all these jobs that exist within a certain major. So that book, um, I think could help. And I think you can always like, you know, work as a writing coach, or as a teacher editing for a company, that education consultant, usually they hire people, like full time to do different things. And to work with the students more closely on the whole application process. They usually don't hire just editors. Some companies do, like hire essay specialists, as they call it. But usually, it's like a full time I would recommend like a full time gig for one company, because then you know, you get benefits. It's not just a freelance kind of thing.

**M** Moira McCullough 22:48

Did you ever freelance for other publications?

**A** Andrea Schiralli 22:53

I did a couple of nonfiction law books. And I've, I currently work in a B2B fashion mostly. I do work directly with students who find me through Google and stuff. But mostly we work with other consulting companies. And my business partner, Marissa and I work on the essays only. So they basically just outsource their students, essay to us. And it works in their advantage. They can take on more students, and they don't need to, like pay someone full time to do work that is not really full time and give them random tasks to do the rest of the year,

**M** Moira McCullough 23:25

It allows you to do what you love best, which is writing and not all the other aspects of the educational consultants job.

**A** Andrea Schiralli 23:33

Yeah, yeah. I like the flexible nature of it, and also the seasonal nature of it.

**M** Moira McCullough 23:40

Is there anything that you would love to do as a writer going forward as bucket lists that you haven't done that you're thinking?

A

Andrea Schiralli 23:47

Okay, yeah, my dream has always been to write a young adult novel. They're my guilty pleasure. And it's hard to find some that are well written. I love Sarah Dessen. I've read all her books. JOHN green is a really good writer. But besides Fault in Our Stars, I feel like it's a little repetitive. Like the types of characters and kind of cynical he sounds like a 40 year old guy who doesn't sound like a teenager. But Sarah doesn't I love and Layla Helen, she wrote like in tuck, Lewin and tuck it read, their writing is really good. So the dream is to write a young adult novel that I'm proud of, and hopefully that sells, I just, I just feel like it seems so intimidating to write. I know I've written other things, but I don't know it's hard to have confidence. In general as as like a writer, you're always doubting yourself and trying to make things more perfect.

M

Moira McCullough 24:33

But hearing that from somebody like yourself, loves writing is so successful at it. It kind of gives the people like myself who don't love writing and relief to think that it's not so easy for everyone.

A

Andrea Schiralli 24:47

Yeah, just putting the time in like it's like a couple of related courses on like novel writing, and we actually had to get a lot done like character sketches. Like it was really good, but I feel like if I had a general outline, it would be way less intimidating. I need to do that I need to actually take the advice I give my students and like they're always following their dreams. But yet, there is always that, that self doubt and like, where do I go from here? Like what you said with a blank page?

M

Moira McCullough 25:12

So we'll try we'll try in terms of writing a book, how long does it take, it's a process it's attorneys to your students, as well, when you're sitting down with an essay, it's not something that can just be done in an afternoon, there's a process that goes into it. And it's hard for everyone,

A

Andrea Schiralli 25:28

Maybe not, if you don't, I feel like if you don't have that crazy self doubt, it could be like very, like painless, like Fahrenheit 459 was like written in nine days, I think you're always going to have some, like some things to change, like, I think as long as you get a first draft

on for for the students to just get a first draft done. And then it's easy to see, like, where to tweak or move things around, or, you know, add some dialogue, like cleaning it up is like the, like, easy part. But just getting the content down on the first, like, at once is fine. I always tell my students get the content down and get your story down and tell me everything you want this essay to say. And then we'll deal with like organizing, and everything else if you're too overwhelmed. Okay, so

M

Moira McCullough 26:14

That's the advice for students who are getting ready in the summer months to get the content, worry on the formatting, organizing,

A

Andrea Schiralli 26:22

ideally, I would say ideally, first think about the themes you want to convey. And like what aspects of your personality you want admissions officers to know, or if there's a certain story or talents, like just read over the common app prompts, and see if there's anything that you really want to tell. And then I would summarize like a few ideas in a few sentences. And then ideally, just try to outline them to see if they would make a good story. And if not, that stresses you out, just like tried to write a first draft of each one and see if it can be a good story. Some people really hate outlining. I know like a lot of my students hate outlining, I don't really do it either. I didn't do it for any of the essays in the books I wrote.

M

Moira McCullough 27:04

That's right, but I find that when you do write the outline, and I don't like writing that either. But when you do write it, it does help. But it's, it's so hard.

A

Andrea Schiralli 27:15

I think it depends on the person too. And like how you think like I can use I was brainstorming with a student yesterday. And we basically were just she was telling me her story and we got like the essay down and then like you for me, it's really easy to see what should be moved around and where once it's down and how to add transitions that like make connect all the dots. But a lot of people have a hard time with transitions and connecting their ideas like within and between paragraphs. So I feel like it just depends on like, the way you think and see things moving around. But outline definitely if you feel like even a little bit intimidated or feel like you're not good at writing, or I don't know, just a

little self doubt, just just do a really simple outline with bullet points because it'll make your life easier just to know the order of your ideas. Because if not, it can be like a mess.

M

Moira McCullough 28:04

Totally. And then you get so frustrated that you end up giving up and there goes to self confidence. And they Yeah, exactly. What's on your reading list for this summer reading list.

A

Andrea Schiralli 28:18

I usually just read like a few books at once and then change based on my mood. You know, I'm currently reading a nonfiction called the beat hotel. It's like about the Beat Generation writers. I love them. Yeah, Kerouac Ginsburg's diaries are really good. I'm also reading a couple of Christian books about like theology by Derek Prince. I like because he studied theology in ancient Greek and Hebrew. So he really just gives comprehensive, like, intelligent explanations of things in the Bible. Yeah. And I also just finished a pop culture book, which I normally don't read. But two people recommended it to me. So it's really good. It's called green lights by Matthew McConaughey. way he tells it, you know, like the way he speaks about his life, and I think writing might be like they've been reading it and it's a bit a lot of stream of consciousness and run ons, and I could see why it might be better read out loud. But yeah, I also prefer physical book and the classics of always reading I'm reading Howards End right now by Ian Forrester. He wrote a room with a view. Highly recommended if you're into romance, if you were recommending to your students is are there any books that you loved reading when you grew up? I really like the Princess Bride. If you're into like adventure, it's a little bit fantasy, but more adventure. I made a list for my students was actually based on their mood. I like crime and punishment. I feel like it's kind of if you're like one of those angsty teens but you're not into like Catcher in the Rye. I wasn't so into Catcher in the Rye. I think I read it when I was too old. And I just saw him as his like bitter kid. I'm actually enjoying going back and reading some of the books that I know I read, but I forgot or I didn't like the alchemists good for teens. It reminds me a little prints like looking for something that's there all along. I think that's also good for little prince Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan. The alchemist is really good into what do you wish you knew before you attended college? Math and science are like way harder than they are in high school one actually failed like calculus in college, and I almost failed his dad, it was really way too hard for me. But in high school, everything was easy. I think it depends on where you're going. Like the level of the classes can be different. I would say there's also stuff you never know what literally, most of my friends changed majored, like one from engineering to psychology, and then one from animal science to computer science. And like, she was really, really bad, like failing out of animal science. But then she,

she's like really good at computer science and like, Did her PhD and you Chicago. And now she's like, wrote a book about it. But I'm like, people might get discouraged when they're not good at something. But just try other things. And you'll eventually find what you like, I feel like high school is way too young to know what you want to do, or even what you want to major in. Unless you're one of those kids is like hardcore, like I want to be a doctor, I want to be a lawyer. If you're not one of those, I think just explore or engineer, just take a bunch of different classes. I always took Spanish in school, I never knew I liked French. And then I took one French class and I'm like, Oh my god, prettiest language ever.

**M** Moira McCullough 31:16

You could structure it based upon what you think you like and not leave any opportunity to take some classes just because why not? Yeah, as we said,

**A** Andrea Schiralli 31:25

Yes, you have to take the more like different types of classes you take, like, the higher the chances of discovering what you truly enjoy.

**M** Moira McCullough 31:32

Do you have a favorite dessert or food place on or around a college campus that you would love to share?

**A** Andrea Schiralli 31:38

Hmm, oh, if you're in Boston, there's this place in Cambridge. It's on a Mass Ave. near the bridge. It's called Veggie Galaxy. They have really good chocolate chip pancakes. And also, there's FOMO in Boston that has like, I think it's Ravi and cashew based ice creams that are really like creamy and satisfying.

**M** Moira McCullough 31:59

Well, there's so many great places in Boston, it's hard to go wrong. But then because there are so many great places you do want that inside scoop as to where to go because you could end up going somewhere else and being disappointed with your chocolate chip pancake and wondering why didn't I go to veggie galaxy?



Andrea Schiralli 32:14

Yeah, they have Oh, we also they have like holy chocolate chip pancakes. And he was like the taza chocolate.



Moira McCullough 32:21

Andrea Thank you for joining us today and sharing your expertise. Really appreciate it.



Andrea Schiralli 32:25

Oh, yeah, you thanks for talking to you. It was fun.



Moira McCullough 32:30

Thank you, Andrea, for sharing your story on so many fronts. Whether you are students starting your personal statement and looking for writing tips, or wondering how to get a job teaching English or test prep overseas, Andrew provided practical advice and strategies based on her own experience living and working overseas. And as a professional writer, take a look at the common app prompts to get ideas for your personal statement, and then try to write an outline. It will help you get your ideas organized. If you have an opportunity to travel or study overseas, go for it. You can find all of our show notes and links to the helpful resources mentioned throughout our conversation on our website at [College Scoops.com/podcast](https://Collegescoops.com/podcast). You can learn more about Andrea and Ivy & Quill on their website. Thanks also to Andrea for her help recruiting students for our student q&a videos, check out Boston University as we co-sponsored that video with Ivy & Quill. Please take a couple of minutes to rate review and subscribe to College Scoops. Thank you for listening to our College Scoops podcast. Our entire College Scoops team strives to make the college journey a little bit easier, less stressful, fun and tasty by sharing all the inside scoops we have curated along the way. We would love to hear from you about topics to cover and your ideas and everything college related. Reach out to us at [collegescoops.com](https://collegescoops.com) or follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.