

Talking about Race and Racial Justice with Children and Young Adults

Homecoming Panel

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): So we have more folks filing in but I'm going to go ahead and get us started.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): Greetings, I'm Cindy Gerstl-Pepin Dean of the College of Education here at UMass and it's my pleasure to welcome you to our education showcase talking about race and racial justice with children and young adults.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): And to introduce our moderator and panelists. Our moderator Jamila Lyiscott aka Dr. J is a community engaged scholar nationally renowned speaker and author of *Black Appetite. White Food: Issues of race voice and justice within and beyond the classroom*. She currently serves assistant professor of the social justice education program at the College of Education.

She is the co-founder and co-director of the Center of Racial Justice and Youth Engaged Research and co-editor of the highly acclaimed *Journal of Equity and Excellence in Education*.

Dr. J is most well known for being featured on ted.com where her TED Talk, "Three Ways to Speak English," has been viewed over 4.5 million times.

She has been invited to over 100 institutions throughout the nation where she works closely with youth educators and communities to disrupt racial inequalities and enact vision driven justice.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): Now I want to turn our attention to our panelists. Our first member, Associate Professor of language literacy and culture in the College of Education. Dr. Maria José Botelho who conducts research and critical multicultural analysis of children's and young adult literature.

Her research challenges researchers, teacher educators, and teachers to reconsider how multicultural children's literature and other texts are studied in elementary and secondary schools.

Dr. Botelho is particularly interested in how school literacy practices can be reimagined to affirm children's cultural and linguistic knowledge.

Her current research explores how critical literacies, multi literacies, and Waldorf language arts pedagogy is convergent diverge and search literature and in Waldorf-inspired and democratically organized public schools.

Lastly, she is studying how critical collaborative inquiry and ethnographic research practices hold great promise for the professional learning of experienced and pre-service teachers.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): Dr Kofi Charu Nat Turner is a community-engaged scholar, dynamic mindfulness facilitator, and ceaseless seeker of knowledge, who embodies the qualities of a global ambassador of love.

Dr. Turner is an associate professor of teacher education and curriculum studies in the College of Education and is headed the doctoral concentration of language literacy and culture, which includes programs in bilingual education, ESL, multicultural education, and reading and writing

Dr. Turner is prolific at conceptualizing ways of engaging youth, K -12 teachers, and university community partnerships and in advocating and organizing for racial justice and reparations in education and for the past four years he has done direct engagement with primarily African American and Latinx students in juvenile justice settings in New Jersey.

A teacher's teacher, Dr. Turner is a learner practitioner of the Raja Yoga tradition across multiple global contexts and has received degrees in Educational Administration at Harvard University and Africana studies, Political Science at Brown University, as well as a Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): Dr. Marcella Runell Hall is an alum of UMass Amherst, and is Vice President for Student Life, Dean of Students, and lecturer of religion at Mount Holyoke College.

Trained and introduced in the interdisciplinary field of social justice education as both a practitioner and scholar, Dr. Hall has authored numerous books, articles, and curricula on topics of popular culture, friendship, race, spirituality, and critical pedagogy.

Most recently, co-authoring a book, *Common Bonds: Women reflect on race and friendship*, with Curtis Smith, and a chapter on parenting mixed-race children in, *Biracial Families Crossing Boundaries, Blending Cultures, and Challenging Racial Ideologies*.

Dr. Hall is an advisory board member for Embrace Race and serves on the board for the Holyoke Children's Museum. Hall is a white mom dedicated to anti-racist pro-liberation parenting raising two young daughters who identify as black and mixed in Western Mass with her partner.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): And now one of our special featured guests, Aaliyah Zoe Hall, is a 10 year old entertainer and community builder, who created her own social media web series doing quarantine.

It's terrific. You should check it out called Dreamland with Aaliyah, where she has read over 200 stories and raised over \$10,000 for various nonprofits.

Aaliyah believes representation matters and that kids should always have a voice, especially as it relates to conversations about race and racism.

She has been featured on multiple media outlets including mass appeal, 1010 wins, NPR, NBC Universal, the Drew Barrymore show. She loves TikTok, Apple products, *The Babysitters Club*, graphic novels, hanging out with her sister and best friends, and making memories with her family.

Cindy Gerstl-Pepin (she/her): You can check out the panelists bios and a link to the racial justice resources we've cultivated together at our website www.umass.edu/education/homecoming-2020

Also, this webinar is going to be recorded and we will post the recording in the coming days on our website. Thank you for attending this session, it shows your commitment to supporting a more just world. I'll now turn it over to Dr. Lyiscott to get us rolling.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you. Thank you, first of all welcome everyone to this just really amazing and important event in this social moment. We are just, I want to say first that as, especially as a black woman faculty member, I am just filled with gratitude that the leadership of the college has taken this step. And I know that beyond just this moment of of hosting an event, there are structural approaches to making sure that the call for racial equity and justice is being addressed and prioritized at the college. And so I just want to express that gratitude. I want to express gratitude for being in the company of such brilliance and I know you're all going to learn from in a moment.

And, to all of you each and every one of you for showing up. We know that showing up as part of the work and the expectation is that you take, that you don't you don't show up and then check off, you know, there's no checkbox, like I showed up. I did the I did the racial justice panel, right?

We go out into the into the systems, into the spaces where we have influence and we make and demand change. Right. And so, I'm just grateful for you being present. So, before we jump in and and and witness and learn from all of this brilliance, I'm gonna share some guiding assumptions, because we're all coming to this conversation from different places and spaces, physically, emotionally, different racial identities, different social identities, that shaped the way that we approach the question of racial justice and racial equity, especially in this country.

And so there are some guiding assumptions that you all need to be queued in on for this conversation. The first is that racism is a system, not just an event. Right, so we're not talking, we're not limiting our conversation to racial acts, right, we're talking about the systemic framing of race, the structural condition of racism that impacts people across different areas of life. Right. So, this is not just about someone said something that was racist someone you know with had a you know a white hood on. It's not just those acts, we want you to understand that along with that this kind of racism that we're talking about both explicitly at the micro aggressive level is embedded in the very fabric of American society.

So we're not talking about something that just exists in some areas, and some parts of the country, maybe here or maybe there, that the very fabric and foundation of our society is grounded in racism and that means something for the way that it will be spoken about today.

Um, the other thing is that racism cannot really accurately be understood out of an intersectional lens. The idea of intersectionality was brought to us and conceptualize by our sister Kimberlé Crenshaw, which acknowledges that at all times, there are interlocking systems of power at work right. So there's never just racism. Right. there's racism and sexism and classism, and other -isms and other systems of power that are working together and they have unique impact on each and every one of us based on our social locations along the lines of privilege and oppression.

OK, the next thing is that this is not going to be a damaged center conversation we're having a conversation about racial injustice. We're not having a conversation that exploits the pain and the wounds of Black, indigenous, and people of color. We're having a conversation that calls out those very systems that I named before, right. So, so rather than speaking of the gruesomeness of the impact of racism. It's where we're focused on also the systems that are causing the problem and that's a really important shift in orientation.

And then lastly, and probably most importantly, in many ways, this conversation will not center on whiteness.

A lot of times when we have conversations about racial justice we tend to center the questions, the needs, the concerns, the comfort of the white folks in the conversation. And so, but we want to acknowledge that black indigenous and people of color have entirely different conversations about race and racial justice with their children than white parents and caregivers do.

Right white parents, caregivers, educators, and they do so from a completely different socio-emotional standpoint. So this conversation is not going to center on the concerns, the needs, and the comfort of whiteness. That's really important. Alright, next thing: we have a community chat box.

We want to make sure that this chat box is a space for building community and engaging substantively and this experience. For me, like, I'm from the Black church and from Hip Hop culture, so, I like the shared energy. Right, that's just that's culture right there, that's love.

But, we want to make sure that the chat box mirrors the values of love, justice, joy, affirmation, and inquiry that we're committed to in the college broadly and also in this conversation. So, feel free to interact on in that space.

But if the chat box is distracting for you because we understand that that can be very overwhelming while you're trying to hear different people speak.

Please feel free to minimize it. You have that option in the upper right-hand corner there should be a drop down arrow that allows you to do that.

And there's also finally there's a separate chat box for Q&A. So, we don't want your questions to get lost in that chat box. We know you might be highly engaged excited and just type something up.

But if you want us if you want us to make sure to regard your question, please put it in the Q&A a box and we will do our best to honor as many as time permits, but we will not get to all of them. OK.

But ask away because this, this conversation does not start it and here. OK, that's enough of me. I want to hear from our amazing panelists and I'm going to begin with a question for everyone.

Um, I will ask a few questions of each of you, and then we'll open up the conversation so that folks who are here, can, can you know, throw in some questions of their own.

And just like right off the topic. The topic of this panel. I'd like for each of you to touch on what are effective ways to introduce the topic of race and racial justice to young children in both family settings and school settings.

And, just to reiterate what I shared before I asked this acknowledging that young children who are black indigenous at or of color experience the introduction of race and racial injustice very differently from white children and families. Right. And then there are other orientations or social identities that might impact that. So, let's make sure that that's a part of it.

But again, the question is what are effective ways to introduce race and racial justice to young children in both family settings and school settings and we can have on anyone begin

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): We can we can start.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Okay. Sure, go ahead. Okay.

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Um, one thing is that Black history shouldn't and doesn't start with slavery and one other thing I wanted to say is that a lot of my white friends, their family doesn't...like I'm not able to talk about race and racism with them because their family doesn't teach them about it. And I can't like talk about like some like a micro aggression that might have happened at the grocery store because they are not educated and they don't know about that. So that's one thing I wanted to share.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Well said, Aaliyah ,well said. And I think for us and our family, obviously, you know, we have high value on reading, it has been an important part of our family and we try really hard to choose books. So that's a place where we started a lot of conversations both you know books that felt representative, but then books that didn't so you know where we could really use some of that critical literacy skills. So that's my training in terms of social justice, education, and critical literacy and all of that is that that work around, you know, being able to see yourself reflected, but then also being able to point out when something is problematic or not representative. And so I think for us it's about understanding history, it's about choosing good good materials to start the conversation, and it's also about expectations in relationship. Those would be some of the places we would start.

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): And then the graph.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Yeah. You want to talk about that.

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): So there was a graph about all picture books and basically two thirds of all picture books have the main character is either an animal or a white person.

And really, like in our family, probably, like, almost all of the books that we read the main character is a person of color. And so that's just, and the thing that's also crazy is that more than half of all children are kids of color.

So, that is crazy that the books are like that, and that you really need representation in books like that.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much for that response like very, very powerful and illuminating offerings to us. Let's have another panelist please jump in and add some layers to what just shared, please.

Maria José Botelho: Thank you, Aaliyah and Marcella and I want to begin by saying that we all need to be brave and this place because we need to show our children and youth how to participate in a multi-racial, multilingual, multicultural democracy.

And to do that work. We as the adults in their lives need to show how that's done. And I think it's important for us to also understand that, you know, in terms of differences, you know, babies can distinguish skin color and hair texture early on. And by two and a half children notice differences, but around four or five that's when certain values are being attributed to those differences and so children learn biases. And children of color, they begin, and if not earlier than four, they feel that deep discrimination that comes with those values around race. And so I think it's so important for us as adults to create a space for children's respectful curiosity and to have very open conversations with them.

And if we don't know how to have those conversations to practice them, you know, to try them out with with other adults and to try them out when you're in the room by yourself, but also to have the conversations and to make mistakes and then to share with our student with our children and our youth that we've made a mistake and that we need to learn more. And then in that learning we're showing that this is ongoing work. And this takes a responsibility and commitment over time.

We don't just, you know, it doesn't just happen you know overnight and and dealing with these very deep issues that are very much part of all of our fabric in this country and really around the world. And so, and so this work, you know, needs to be ongoing. And we need to be aware of our own biases. And we know too well that actions speak louder than words. And so if our children and if our youth see us, you know, critically engaged with how we see the world and how we are in the world and how we interact in, are with different groups of people, then you know that is teaching them that this is ongoing work, ongoing struggle. Um, and I can also, I would love to piggyback on Aaliyah and Marcella's, you know, pitch for books. And so in terms of this kind of work, certainly books can play an important part.

They can be mirrors. They can be windows. Mirrors reflecting our children's experiences and family's experiences. They can be windows and expanding those experiences. And, they can be doors and where we can sort of slide through with our imagination and to these worlds that that books can create, I do want to come back to those metaphors later on in our discussion, but they do play a part, and certainly books, stories that can children can explore and how to be allies to each other.

Stories about resistance and social action children come to learn about mobilizing and working together to create social change all of these kinds of storylines need to be part of our reading diet and and those books are available.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much. You know, I'm hearing so far that you know white adults, you've got to talk to young people about race, right. Because students of color, young people of color don't have the option. Right.

I'm hearing that representation matters, that modeling vulnerability matters, right, that, that taking the risk even practicing and being self-aware and understanding what it means

to nurture and nourish the curiosity of young people, because those biases are coming in very early. So, we have to have these conversations

Nat Turner. I know you got some gems to drop. Can you share with us some more about effective ways to introduce race and racial justice to young children and young adults in our family and school settings?

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): Right on. Right on. So thank you for everyone who organized the panel and of course the moderator Jamila. Thank you for hosting us and the first thing I'll just say just by way of acknowledging that the land we on if we're talking about racial justice is just that we, this is indigenous land we all are sitting on if we're in this United States of America. And I just want to just put that out there. Just as a way of, you know, respecting and acknowledging that fact.

And then go in to answer your question. I'm going to talk later about mindfulness. But to me, this is one of the tools to get to kids early in the process of humanizing all of us. So, once we humanize ourselves we're much less likely to dehumanize another human being. Um, so for me, that's one of the fundamental things that I work on the teaching. I'm going to talk, hopefully, we have another shot at this more about that in a second.

But the one lesson, I would like to share is from my mother who's a white woman. So, my father is African American and my mother is European American but my mother raised me mostly and what she taught me from the beginning was to have a critical race ideology and this is a concept that actually some of my friends at Harvard came up with, Dorinda Carter, Daren Graves.

But, what she told me, she explained how you know white supremacy is running in all of our veins and is infiltrating many of our minds. But, she wanted to encourage me to know that I was going to have to do you know work twice as hard and that the system would be looking at me more as a token or a tool to further their, to continue their system of white supremacist capitalist hetero cis patriarchy. But, she said, you go in and utilize and learn what you can from it and then yeah, just just undo the system. So, by teaching kids up front what the system is that they're up against and confronting I think is, is, is a very powerful thing and what again what those researchers at Harvard found were that high achieving Black students, parents had giving them this critical race ideology that showed the obstacles that they might face in the future and showed them ways to navigate it and get over it and around it.

So, and then I'll just dovetail on Marcella, Aaliyah, and Maria. It's just a point about history, world history. My parents from day one had books about all the countries in the world, all the peoples in the world, and just it just humanized everyone in the world so that we're all on the same level as human beings. Versus, again, that the media that we get here are the books that we get here are just about, you know, pretty much white people. So, thank you.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much and shout out to you for citing and your mama first before you got to them, Harvard scholars. He was like, I'm gonna cite my mom, who taught me this. That's what's up.

The knowledge comes from everywhere, and that's that's critical. Thank you for that wisdom. Before I jump into the individual questions, I'm curious about how do we have these conversations I. These are effective ways. But how do we have these conversations, um, that, in a way that's not from a damaged-centered place, right. I work with a lot of young people Black, indigenous, and students of color who are just like Yo, I'm sitting in class and the conversation is like, so you were slaves, and this is the beginning of the conversation right and I know Aaliyah touched on that earlier, but having these conversations usually is fraught with the tension of what is happening especially in the social moment which is essentially like racial trauma. Right.

So, how do we have these important conversations about the racial trauma about the issues of racism without using that damage-centered starting point and everyone doesn't have to answer, but I just wanted to, you know, throw that out for folks who who might have some thoughts.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): And we can, we could weigh in for a second. I mean, I think there's a lot of interpersonal work that needs to happen around humility and vulnerability. And I think that

when it comes to the power differential that's baked into adults and children. There's already an opportunity there to think about the ways that we show up when kids ask questions. Um, because there's so much natural curiosity that children have about difference about history about fairness about equity. I mean, I think that, you know, just as a kindergartener about somebody taking something that doesn't belong to them or, you know, putting themselves on somebody else's mat that you know, they were there first, right, they're going to get that right away. That's a pretty transferable way that then you can talk about colonialization and other aspects of history when you're ready to scaffold it that way. Right. But I think that the important part is validating children's interest but validating in a way that feels really authentic and and comes from a place of you've been doing your own work.

There is no way to show up in these conversations if you haven't been engaged in the unlearning of your own work, particularly for white people, particularly for white educators, white parents, white adults engaging with all kids around these conversations.

I taught Aaliyah recently, the term "gaslighting" and we've been using that time to talk about sometimes what feels like gaslighting, right, this this this feeling of like your experience is not real or not valid, you know, and I'm just gonna, like, "because I said so" you, right, and and that's not effective. So I guess just the humility part, the vulnerability, the commitment that this is going to be lifelong work and then finding ways to to make it

really centered on on equity and lived experience so that it feels like it's a holistic conversation.

Wanna add anything to that?

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): I'm sure there have definitely been times that I might have. I don't know if this has definitely happened, but I'm sure that there's been times that I've been with one of my friends and she'll and or he or she will say something like, "why did, why did that person, like, why did this happen to that person, not that person?" And then, and then their parents will be like "Shhh. No, no, no, we're not talking about that right now." That's not the I'm not really. I mean, it's not like the kids are just like interested in that. But really, the parents just aren't ready to talk about that and haven't really developed a way to talk about that on their own. So it's not the kids fault. It's the parents.

Jamila Lyiscott: You gotta preach. Yes, hello sis, thank you so much, dropping wisdom. Do we have maybe one other panelists who who feels like they have something to offer around that question?

Maria José Botelho: I think it's, again, I think what's so important and I worked with really young children and young adults, and those in between, is really to be open to their questions and and to get and to really to understand what they know, don't know, and what they might already think about race. And so assessing all of that through the questions, the conversations, the deep you know relationships that you know we have with one another and that we can't always answer all the questions that they have, but you need to show a commitment to learning with your student, with your child, with your youth to figure out what those answers might be.

Jamila Lyiscott: It that's that's that's really amazing advice. You know, I know, I work with, with the young people who say, who basically feel like their voice is not even a part of the conversation. They're like, anytime I'm taught anything about racial racial justice I'm talking about someone who looks like me that overcame something painful, right, like everything is all about overcoming. I'm not learning about a variety of people and they're they're ready. They have thoughts and they have questions and they have needs. And if invited, they can offer that as a starting point for the conversation. So, we don't just start anywhere we want, you know, so thank you so much.

And it actually transitions really well into my question, which is, for Aaliyah. Aaliyah, I want to know. Like, do you know of any examples, can you share examples of when you felt like adults got it right when speaking to young people about race and someone some examples of when you felt like adults fell short of that?

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): I actually have two things prepared so um recently my teacher this year, she has been so good about talking about race and racism in our classroom and she's been talking about it in such a comfortable way, which really like makes me feel like

amazing and we have been doing voting projects on like for a public service announcement. And in our voting project, she assigned us to like certain topics. So, me and my friend we got picked to do women of color voting.

And that was what our slideshow was about, but she was so good with giving us so many good resources and she's a white teacher so she was good. She was so good, like she had so many resources. She was emailing us every day about it. And that was a really good experience for me. And, a not so great experience was when I was in my class and we were talking about our heritage and where our family was from. So, um, what we were all like raising our hands and my teacher called on me and I said that I was from the Caribbean and from Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis on my dad's side and on my mom's side I was from Ireland, and we had actually gone to Ireland last summer, and I was really excited about that. And he wasn't really as excited about it, of course, but it was OK. And then after my friend Ellie, she raised her hand, and she's white and she said that she was from Ireland, too, and then my teacher said, "Well, I could tell that you might be from Ireland, because of your pale skin and your blue eyes," and now right after he had just called on me. And that was a time that I just felt really sad and it just made me feel like like bursting into tears. So, yeah.

Jamila Lyiscott: Wow, thank you so much for that level of vulnerability and even sharing that here and I'm just so moved to know that you have a home environment that make sure that you're equipped with what you need so that those things don't have to faze you, right. Like, I love that they don't have to faze you in a long term way. But there are other young children, right, who, if we don't get this right. If we don't get this right. If we don't do this work and show up right, the damage, right, it's unimaginable.

And so, Marcella seeing as you are very much at the helm of this this beautiful home that is you know gifting us with the wonder of Aaliyah, I have a question for you about how people enter into this conversation. So many people enter into these conversations, do so with complex emotions. We know that it's not it's not like...so, for white parents, caregivers, educators, there may be shame or guilt attached to conversations about race and for Black, indigenous, and people of color speaking with children about race they might naturally come with frustration, apathy, other valid emotions, right? What can you offer parents, educators, caregivers, as they consider how their own experiences and awareness plays into conversations with children about race and racial justice.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Well, I think, for one thing, you know, in even in the way you frame the question the acknowledgement that it is heavy and complex and different depending on your social identities and life experience is a really important place to start. I think that there have been a lot of white parents of white children for a long time that have thought the conversations about race have nothing to do with them.

Right, that it's like someone else's conversation, you know, and even when things were happening just this summer. You know, people were saying things like, Oh, I'm so sorry

that, you know, your family is going through that. I'm like, no, no. We're all we're all going through this. We're all in this conversation, you know and and that's really important. They might look different. The conversations might look different, of course, but we're all in the conversation.

The meta conversation or if we're not, you need to be. So I think in terms of how you approach it that it is complex and that it is actually nuanced and that you are going to go through a range of emotions and you're going to feel embarrassed and you're going to make mistakes, then you're going to want to give up and you want to go back to your bubble of not having to think or talk about it.

And, but, there's there's such a loss to all of our humanity. Particularly when white adults make that choice because it diminishes their humanity, our humanity, everyone's humanity. Right. We all need to be able to show up and fully participate. So what does that look like?

Looks like lots of different things for all of us. Right. It could be therapy, could be meditation, yoga could be classes, could be art. There's a lot of ways you can work through your emotions that are applicable here. But, the point is that you need to do that so that you can keep showing up and not work out your stuff on children that you're, you know, engaged with or other people that are in your life that are in a more vulnerable position.

Jamila Lyiscott: Whoooo, that's real talk, you can't give people what we don't have within ourselves, right. Thank you. Thank you so much for sharing that. I want to turn the conversation over to you, Nat Turner, around this, the role of mindfulness. So mindfulness is just like booming. Right. It's just like really peak in popular culture and mainstream culture and the idea of it. And in terms of its role in in self-care, in personal development is huge. But you've undertaken it in a big way. The role of mindfulness and education and in this work that we're speaking about here today. So can you share with us what role does or can mindfulness play in conversations about race and racial justice with young children and young adults?

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): Yes, thank you, Dr. J. And yeah, I want to just build on what Marcella was just saying about the different identities that we come with right and how we enter this differently. So, for me, this is a part of my lived reality and for many of my students this is part of their lived reality. So there's no real explanation I necessarily need to do regarding sort of racial injustice in their lives.

And the feeling of not being safe. Okay, so that is something that young people who have this browner skin in this U.S. United States have to sort of deal with the threat - the threat that comes against them from white body supremacy. And that can be found that that white body supremacy can be found in all of our bodies because we're all exposed to this coming at us so much. So, this is where mindfulness comes in. It can be used as a tool to help our bodies to feel safe to help us feel safe in our own bodies and to build resiliency like Aaliyah

was just saying her mom is building up that resiliency, so that when things come at her, it doesn't like tear her apart. But she has some some strength to to to challenge it.

Okay. And so then I wanted to share this book here with you all [shows book, "My Grandmother's Hands."] This book has blown my mind it's on the link - on the social justice resources link for this event but Resmaa Menakem, he does - he combines two things that I've been thinking about my sort of my whole life right so white supremacist capitalist hetero sis patriarchy, on one hand, is sort of how we intellectualize and understanding the interlocking systems of oppression of the intersectionality, if you will, that Dr. J alluded to, coming from Kimberé Crenshaw.

But, in addition to that, the fact of the matter is, we cannot intellectualize our way out of white body supremacy, because it lives in our veins. We are the people, our ancestors went through all of the sort of the violence that happened on this land. And so in order to heal this, Resmaa in this book, he has a lot of different exercises, very similar to the exercises that I share around dynamic mindfulness of how to heal our bodies and metastasize some of the trauma that's in all of our bodies so that then we have more capacity for empathy and and and to support others and share this.

Finally, I just want to actually share a bit of this practice with everyone here who's on the call. And I brought along a little chime here. And I'll just tell you the three parts of this practice that I lead in Jersey City, and in the College of Education and across the University, and the nation.

It has three parts: centering, which I'm going to do with this time, breathing, and movement. And the centering helps us focus on the present moment, so that, you know, depression, maybe in the past and anxiety in the future, but pieces in the present. And also breathing helps regulate our emotions. And then finally, the movement, as I said earlier, it metastasizes trauma that stored in the body and gets it out of our body. And so that we're not holding on to it and then re-traumatizing other people are blowing trauma through other people's bodies, we're dealing with it in our own body and that is sort of the first step to not to ending the cycle of intergenerational trauma that we're in.

Okay, so here we go. I want to just invite everyone to get comfortable. Maybe sit up tall in your chair at the crown of your head up toward the ceiling. Notice any sensations in your body from your day so far. I invite you with your hands to relax your hands up or down on your lap. Just let them relax from all the emails and texts, you may have been doing all day.

And with your eyes. I'm going to invite you to lower your gaze by looking down, and if you feel comfortable you can close your eyes, ensure the safety of your own home.

What I'm going to do is I'm going to ring. This time, and I'm going to invite you to listen to it as long as you can. And when you can no longer here, I invite you to raise your hand.

[Hits chime.]

Beautiful. So, that time was just for all of us in this room and for all of our happiness and peace, but let's send another time to all of our family members, friends, our inner circle affected by these multiple crises that we're facing at the same time from coronavirus health, our health from the economic fallout, and from systemic racism, let's just do one more time for everyone in our circle all of our loved ones.

Beautiful. And the climate. That's right. The climate and the democratic crisis and the third time we're going to ring is for Briana Taylor's family in Louisville, Kentucky, who's seeking justice; George Floyd's family, and all the people in the world affected by these pandemics and crises that we're all facing. Let's just in love and light out to the world. One more time.

[Hits chime.]

Okay. Beautiful. So that is our centering our focus on this present moment. Now I just want to lead a quick breathing exercise. So, I'm going to just invite everyone to take three deep breaths together. Take a big inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. One more inhale and exhale through your mouth.

Beautiful. And what I'm going to show you right now is deep belly breathing. What it, what happens with this is that if we can get air into our stomach, it sends a signal to our ancient lizard brain that's responsible for, fight, fight and freeze, that we're safe and so I want to just invite you to try deep belly button. So, I invite you to bring your right hand to your belly, if that feels comfortable

Maybe you bring your left hand to your heart that feels okay for you. And the idea here is to inhale through the nose seat, you can make the belly expand like a balloon. So inhale, bellies expanding. Exhale, belly contracts. Two more. Inhale. And exhale.

Last one. Inhale. Exhale. Yeah.

Excellent. And for the final one. I just want to show you something for public school students for all students and hosts have to sit in classrooms. A lot. They say, a lot of teachers say, you know, for Black and brown kids. You can't get up. You don't get out of your seat or you go into the you know the principal's office. But one of the things is, you know, we need to move our bodies and it's really important. And so this one, students can do in their chair without ever leaving their desk or whatever. But, um, it can release a lot of our attention. So, this is a twist seated twist. So, I invite you to take a big inhale in the middle.

Grab the back of your chair exhale and twist.

Again, inhale in the middle. Grab the back of your chair and exhale, twist the other way. Two more inhale. Twist. Last one in here. And. And can I just have people just pop into the chat, how you're feeling right now after that.

Thank you.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much. Nat Turner, for inviting us to think about the the mind body connection right. As you said, this is, this is not work that can just be intellectualized that's not going to do it. We know that this kind of collective trauma lives in our body. And this social moment that we're living in this divisive social moment is playing out on all of us. So we need to really consider what it's doing to our children. Right. And in the bodies of our children in the everyday. So, thank you so much for modeling that because I know a lot of people hear the word mindfulness thrown around a lot, and really have not seen or witnessed or experienced models for actually engaging in that practice. So thank you.

And Maria José, I will pitch the next question your way, um, you know, the 45th occupant of the White House just recently banned critical race theory from federal spaces on the Vice President of this country just looked in the camera on national TV with both eyes and said that there is no structural racism problem in our justice system and we, those of us who have showed up. We showed up, because we know better, right. Right here into this conversation and and so for you, I'm curious about when we do witness structural and interpersonal racism that does very much exist in our institutions in our world, in our everyday lives. What is the responsibility of the parent, caregiver, educator when they become aware of this when we witnessed this and can you offer some explicit examples of how these forms of racism might show up in school context. Oh, you're still on mute.

Maria José Botelho: Thank you, Dr. J. Sorry about that. Um, yeah. So I reflected on this question quite a bit and and I am going to be addressing both structural racism and interpersonal racism, just what that looks like in schools, because I think it's important for us to name what that looks like.

So again, as adults, we have a social responsibility to struggle for social racial justice in our schools and communities and as parents and educators we need to stand in solidarity with our black indigenous and students of color and their families and communities, the way I think of it is all children are our children.

And when I say children. I mean, all the way through high school, I would never call a high schooler a child but I think for this setting, I want to evoke that role that that that we have, by saying a child is that as adults we have a responsibility to them.

I appreciate what Ibram Kendi says about racism and that it happens between and among people and that it's dynamic. And so they're racist thinking and practices and policies are choices that we have made as people as as societies over time. And so it is our responsibility to integrate back to interrogate structural racism and one of the ways that manifests itself in schools is through the curriculum.

These are some questions that are coming out from the second book project that I'm working on and where teachers can critically read their English language arts practices, but to ask themselves these questions. How did these choices and practices position our students and their families and communities?

What do they communicate about them? What counts is learning in my classroom? What and who's knowledge is seen as valuable?

What, in whose views do we represent to we present and represent whose views are not represented? What are students learning about participating in the classroom community, etc.? What can we do and not do?

How might our students have lived experiences, interests, and or inquiries inform our curriculum making? How else might our lesson be taught curriculum units be redesigned?

And, what resources might support us in this work? And so it's so important for us, you know, to really think about the curriculum, because there, there are so many misrepresentations, under representations, invisibility in the curriculum that we need to address in terms of interpersonal racism. Hold on, I'm sorry I had generated a quite a lengthy list of in terms of structural racism and just those examples in schools.

If you want to just to share that list. It's quite long, but it's so important for us to name all of these ways that structurally racism lives in our institutions. And so, for example, children as young as preschool, Black children are more likely to be suspended from preschool settings.

That if we look in terms of languages and literacy, which ones are valued and not valued and schools.

I gave you a curriculum example, but also the books and other curriculum materials we use and which you know who's, who's present who's not

The ways that we discipline and terms of our zero tolerance policies and practices that mandate predetermine consequences so very punitive ways that we discipline our students and so that in some, some scholars call it is really a pushing out practice of students, which also contributes to the school-prison pipeline.

The ways that we assess students and place students so standardized tests. They're culturally biased, we've known that for years and years and years but we continue to use these these ways of assessment and very high stakes assessments.

The ways that we place students in gifted and talented, in special ed programs, who's in these programs and who's not in these programs? The ways that we counsel students in

terms of, you know, life choices after high school, the ways that we, the ways that students access college you know who's prepared and who's not? The ways that we hire, you know, faculty for schools we notice a pattern that in poor communities of typically higher unlicensed or less experienced teachers. Funding structures in this country are absurd. They're based on our tax on property tax and other countries where you see more equality across schools, there is a flat of funding across you know districts.

So the list. I mean, it's not an exhaustive list, but those are some of the ways that racism is structurally in place and the institution of schools in terms of at the inter personal level, you had asked, you know, what might that look like. And certainly we see, you know, that in terms of, you know, the micro interactions between students, between teachers and students. We see in terms of how languages used different kinds of social practices, pedagogical practices, bias jokes, the ways that social media is used, non-verbal taunts. So all of these ways are are examples of interpersonal racism.

And certainly in terms of what should we be doing as adults and the spaces is that we need to, you know, interrupt the these these instances. And we need to denounce these acts, we need to support targeted students, we need to learn more about the interactions that took place, we need to promote healing. And we need to plan for more learning together and this needs to be part of the curriculum. The curriculum needs to be part of what we are living and not something else that we add to each school day.

Jamila Lyiscott: Okay drops mic. I love it. Just dropped the mic. Thank you, that you know what what you're what you're sharing here is such a crucial. Reframing right because many of us come into this conversation. Like, how can we get students of color to stop failing, but you're inviting us to see that it's the institutions that are failing students of color. Right.

So how do we get the institutions to stop failing our children, how do we start failing our children by being complicit with institutions that are that are bent on failing our children and and not look at it the other way around. Thank you so much for those those very explicit examples Aaliyah, did you have something you wanted to contribute? Did I see your hand up?

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Um, so one time. My dad and I were walking down on on the side walk. We were in Martha's Vineyard and I was wearing one of my favorite shirts. It said, "I am Black history" on it and I, um, and then an older white man stopped me and said, oh, oh, yes, I really believe in that. And it was like, wait, I looked at my shirt, like, oh, and he was just like, "Oh, I really believe in that. Yes, yes, yes. Love that" and, like, thank you. I guess you know because I really like I can like, I can validate myself on that kind of thing. And that and I and I just that just, I just remember getting home for bring the food home and I was telling you and Ava. You guys are like yeah yeah I

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): She wanted to share that anecdote about like what it's like. Sometimes when people try and it's like validation, not necessary like, I'm good.

Jamila Lyiscott: I love it. “Yes, I can validate myself. Thank you.” Right. Um, I just really appreciate the anecdote and I invite everyone to take what they will from it. But just know, Aaliyah self-validated. Thank you. I appreciate that and just because we know that this conversation. So, so listen. Where I’m from, you know, right, like two blocks away from my you know my hometown in Brooklyn. There is a Black Lives Matter street sign painted down like three blocks of street.

We've seen that happen all over the place. We've seen the the announcements. We've seen the press releases, we've seen all of that. But we know that just languaging your - tidea that you are an ally, or a co-conspirator is not the same as substantive change.

And we know that this panel. This conversation is not the end all be all. And so we want to also ask of you panelists what kind of resources and books and media and language like what can what can folks in this conversation draw on to do the sustainable work beyond this the moment of this conversation?

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): Yeah, if I can just jump in there is, again, I'm talking about mindfulness and Dr. J., you had a nice critique of the movement in general, right off the top as just sort of behaving more calmly and accepting this system from longer and longer and longer, and that is the antithesis of what sort of I'm teaching and just to give you a quick example of in New Jersey in the school I work in those students have been sort of pushed out of all the other high schools and in some cases there's a sort of lockup facility where I leave this practice and I have some of the more advanced students teaching the other students.

But, I asked them this question that we're grappling with tonight. How do we link mindfulness with Black liberation? And their own liberation. How do we link the two and these students had the brilliant ideas and said, “Hey, why don't we go out in front of this police department here in Jersey City, where they're they've been shooting us and and let's leave the practice right in front of the police department to show them a different view of who we are and to humanize it? and I said, Wow, that was heavy. I was like, okay, and in in my leading of the practice weekly on Thursdays at one o'clock we do the practice. And then we have the conversation of, how do we utilize this practice to challenge systemic anti-Black racism and so we cultivate a lot of sort of ideas and sort of actions that we might take collectively to to do this work.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much. So, it sounds like one of the the resources is like really from the the mind and the power and the genius of the young people that you're working with. Right, just like learning from them as a valid and legitimate resource of how to do this and you going to read from some academic scholars who never set foot in their community, learn from those young people. Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

Other panelists about resources, media, texts like what are ways that we can that we can draw from beyond this conversation?

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): I can go next Aaliyah is taking a stretch break right now she's been in in remote school all day. She's taking a little stretch break right right here in the room.

I think there was a question in the chat about how to engage and I think there was two different questions about white parents and white kids and then and then white people more broadly in in this conversation. So, I want to answer your question, two ways.

First, starting with Barbara Love and her work around liberation. So, one of the things about social justice ed when I was there at UMass as a student, and that I've taken with me and my throughout my entire life, is spending time on imagining the world as as you would like it to be. What does that look like for yourself, right, in your home, in your community in, you know, and sort of taking it, you know, beyond that, because if you don't have an idea in your mind of what's possible it's very difficult to sustain this level of work and commitment right because because where are we headed then? Right then we're in that anti sort of dynamic rather than the pro-liberation model and of course anti-racism is important but coupled with the pro like the, "Where are we going, and what do we want this to look like?" So, for me, first and foremost, it's that belief that idea that that we need to have liberation as as as the process and the goal, right, like that's what we're trying to get to, so that our humanity is in fact you know all the things that we wanted to be in terms of respect and love and kindness and all that.

The other piece, though, is, is who is going to connect with different audiences and and under like what conditions. And I think that looks very different. So there are people like Chris Crass or Paul Kivel. Those are white men who do anti-racism work. They're very involved in standing up for racial justice if you don't know standing up search standing up for racial justice or their work, you should look at it. Paul Kivel's written about the cost of racism to white people. Chris Crass does workshops all over the country. So, if it's an if it's really looking for the match of like the messenger that you're going to connect with. I think there's lots of people out there like Robin D'Angelo who are doing the work.

I personally also think, though, it's really important to to, you know, seek out and find the authors of color that have been writing about this for so long. The, the TED talks, the, you know, the Instagram accounts, the YouTube channels. There is so much resource out there right now to engage like I love Sonia Renee Taylor, for example, I think she does incredible work.

She's been doing so much and there's, there's a lot of people that you could point to that are really out there that I would say, you know, there'll be on our book list. I think they're there. They show up there. That you can you can seek out Ibram Kendi's works have been

mentioned, there's a children's book that Ibram Kendi wrote about, *Anti-racist Baby*, that's really a great one as another one

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): *Stamped*

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): *Stamped* is a good one. Right, these are ones that we we read here at home, and they're very concrete action-oriented, easily digestible books. So, so I would just say again, pointing back to all the resources that are out there and then find some people that will come together and talk about them. Right, so like do the, the organizing, the community building, and bringing people together and then start the conversation from there. So the liberation part and then the action part and

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): *This Book is Anti-racist*. That's my, that's like my favorite I'm reading it right now. And it has a lot of things about like the dominant culture and about how there's been racism in the classroom. And it's really, really amazing. And yeah, that's one of my favorite books I'm reading right now. And then I'm reading the one about Trevor Noah.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Yeah, it was his auto-biography. So, really good.

Jamila Lyiscott: *Born a Crime*?

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Right. Yes. Yeah.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you all so much. Maria José, do you have anything to add in terms of resources for folks on the on the Zoom?

Maria José Botelho: Yes, I highly recommend that folks visit what we've assembled together as a collective. I think that those are really wonderful places to begin, I'd like to promote the project that I direct with several colleagues at the Five Colleges. It's called the Five Colleges Doors to the World Project.

In many ways what I've done in this project is I've made my reading practices public. Because I argue in my work that all books are socially constructed and so that anything that's been made socially made - that means a lot of decisions were made and maybe making any text.

Then as a reader. It is our responsibility to take them apart. so books. We certainly want books that center Black and indigenous and and characters of color. We want books that are created by by authors of color. We want, but it's also important to keep in mind that you know books are also mirrors of our society.

All books they they they offer us a snapshot of when they were produced. And so they are mirrors of our society. And if we look at them closely we get some instances in these texts that show us give us glimpses of how we are organized and in this society, they are also windows and that they offer us a panoramic view and how power is exercised.

Kendi talks about power that it is dynamic and that, you know, one moment, you could be racist and the next moment, you could be anti-racist. And so the ways that we, the choices that we make and the ways we use language, the ways that the choices that we make in terms of what we do in the world these can either promote our anti-racist commitments or they can sabotage and we see that in books, if we really pay attention to the social processes among the characters.

And then books are doors and doors in the sense that, yes, we are able to glide into these these different stories, but also when we learn certain things through our critical engagement with books, then we also have, we can take that door into the world and it will never be the same because now we understand, will understand a little bit more how race works in this country and perhaps than that, that new insight will then help us in our everyday lives. And so I highly recommend that when we think about any kind of text that we think about that. It's all you know, think about what we use or read, but also how we read it and we have responsibility to do both.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much for inviting us to reflect on that. Um, I'm going to, I'm going to transition now into audience questions. We've been sharing a lot of what you know has been brewing over here as we thought collectively about this event but but very urgently, you know folks that come prepared with some thoughts or have resonated what with what you've shared and I'm going to ask. I'm just going to suggest that for each question - because we got quite a list - I'm going to suggest that just one person answers the question, but, you know, if you want to answer just some mute yourself it's, you know, just suggestion.

Um, so I'll begin and some of them are our comments that might just need a response or be helpful to respond to. So the first one is not a question. It's a comment, and it says that many white teachers feel uncomfortable to teach race and at this at this this attendee's school when George, George Floyd was killed. They had a discussion and many were uncomfortable. Right. So anybody want to respond to that?

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): Can you repeat it.

Jamila Lyiscott: Yes, so many white teachers is just talking about the discomfort of white teachers to teach about race and this attendee gave the example that when George Floyd was killed. They had this discussion and many were uncomfortable with that discussion. I imagine that it was an inter-racial space. And it was just very awkward. So how do we, you know, I guess the implicit question is around how do we have these conversations around race when when white teachers are uncomfortable?

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Any I guess I'll take us a try it that I mean I think that – practice, right? Like there's...So what's the uncomfortable about like is it that there's not been any space to practice that like you haven't had the experience. So then, it feels like you're going into uncharted territory. It's very uncomfortable position for people in authority. Teachers, adults, parents, right, to go somewhere where you feel like you're, you may not be the expert. Right. And in fact, it's good to know that in advance that you're not because you're going to be talking about people's lived experiences. Right. So I think there's something about making sure that you you have practice.

In like sort of working through that, you know, as we talked about before, the tools that you have that you need to work through your own discomfort but to actually like tap into that and realize like, it's okay to be uncomfortable. Like that's it's it's what you do with it. Right, so I don't think the goal is that we're never uncomfortable when we're talking about horrible things or we're talking about, you know, structural racism or people's lives being taken. Of course that's uncomfortable. That's part of your humanity to recognize that. As an educator, though it's then to figure out what are you going to do with that. Now that you know that about yourself, that's not a pass out of the conversation.

So I think yes, uncomfortable requires practice, requires training, requires more information ,and lots of comfort - comfort with making mistakes and being uncomfortable. That would be my

Jamila Lyiscott: Yeah, Maria José, do you want to jump in on that as well?

Maria José Botelho: Yeah, thank you Marcella, and and and and certainly we know too well that that uncomfortableness comes also from an experience. And so, yeah, we need to do work, we need to you know, we need to read, we need to ask each other. We need to talk with each other. We need to educate ourselves and we need to make mistakes, but also we need to also remember that in schools we have such a culture of niceness and when we adhere to being nice with each other and not bringing in these topics that are uncomfortable, then we are actually reaffirming the racist structure, systemic racism that is has a hold on on in these institutions that we work and so niceness plays a big part in this, too.

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): If I can chime in, too, is just around practice. I want to build on what Marcella was saying about practice.

This practice that I was leading and sharing is a practice that we need to begin doing collectively and communally. It turns out that the trauma that's in that teacher's body. Who doesn't want to talk about it.

It's not only in that teachers body. It's in all of our bodies, whether we our ancestors were the ones committing the trauma. We're observing it or receiving it. And I just want to say

the practice teaches us to observe when uncomfortability in our body. So getting used to, when our bodies are getting uncomfortable. And I'll just put a plug in

I put in the chat here I've helped curate at UMass, UMass Meditates, so every single day of the week, Monday through Friday at different times during the day, there's an opportunity for us to do this, these practices, collectively, and that is a one way we can heal.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you all so much. Um, and, and, you know, just a lot just to like tie that all in a little bow. I want to reiterate something that I shared earlier. White comfort is not the priority. It's just not, you know, and in this country for a long time. The priority of white comfort has actually led to a lot of the the systemic issues that were worried about today. So understand that alongside white comfort is the pain and trauma and death that Black, indigenous, and people of color are carrying with them every day. And so decentering white comfort is a very important part of this work and so thank you for everything that was shared.

I'm going to jump to this question because it comes from a person of color and I want to, I want to center it, it says coming from. And actually I'm going to try to, I'm going to try to finesse this and like bring together a couple of questions that are all asking about the influence of TV and media. So coming from a Black family. We work really hard to introduce positive Black images, very early on to my niece was four years. Yet already we see how she is influenced by TV where whiteness is dominant. She recently said that she wanted Elsa's hair. My family try to correct it by showing her Black children's books with little girl with here like hers.

And then, you know, so just thinking about that, you know, the fact that they're still coming you know getting that dominant white culture coming in. Um, we have what we have someone else along similar lines a little different. That saying that you know you were mentioning books, but children spend a lot of more time watching TV or they're on their computers. So how do we prioritize representation there - more diverse representation there - and and do you feel like the books versus the TV is or computers are having more influence how do you navigate that or what are your thoughts on that?

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): I thought Marcella was going to go, but I'm going to just jump in here.

I want to promote the idea of reparations. OK. So we've talked about social justice we talk about racial justice, but I think this racial reckoning moment now is to talk about reparations. Right. So starting as I mentioned about the indigenous folks land all the treaties that have been denied and shredded need to be enacted, and then all the labor of the African needs to be paid back okay and analogy I would like to put push forward for thinking about how we do this work and to answer the question directly about media and that sort of thing is to think about this is like a divorce. Right. So in a divorce basically each

party will get half in this country up into this point with white supremacy white body supremacy.

What if they've gotten the whole kit and caboodle so what I'm proposing is like in hiring a lot of corporations are doing this in the wake of George Floyd is saying, okay, we want half of our employees be BIPOC people of color.

Yeah, I would say in our university, we need to have faculty half and it goes down to the media and representation in Hollywood. We need half of those movies and books, you know, I mean, at minimum, you know, and so we have to get our people in these positions. That's what I think needs to happen.

Jamila Lyiscott: Thank you so much. And, and, um, I guess, I guess, drawing on what what was asked here, following on that. Like, how do we how do we get to that kind of representation that half right. And and any other thoughts about. I'm like, Marcella. I don't want to push you to answer. If you don't want to answer, but I imagine that folks are curious about your perspectives of the on the influence of TV versus books, um, if you don't mind.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): We have so much to say that's the problem. We were like, oh, which things should we talk about. Yeah. I mean, it's a lot so that the princess culture in and of itself really could be its own separate panel. Just the Disney princesses and the infiltration, you know, we talked about when Princess Tiana came out and Aaliyah was little. It was like our gateway into the Princess world like because Tiana, and all her friends like we just then we ended up down a rabbit hole and and I think that you know, there isn't an easy answer here because this is one of those times where you push back on kids too much and it can become you know an act of like defiance a rebellion. Right. Like, like you're pushing it on pulling right like then we're sort of in that. So I think that's a caution. Sometimes that can happen you know if if Elsa gets to demonize then like, you know, it's sort of like Elsa becomes the thing right Elsa's hair and everything else. Uh, we've many, many lots of Frozen references that we could draw on but but I think to use that specific example. One of the things that we did try to do was complicated even Elsa, a little bit. Right. So, like who is Elsa?

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Okay, yeah. So we were in the car on the way home from watching Frozen Two and we were talking about how Elsa is not just that white Princess right because of her mom to because I don't know if anybody's watched Frozen two because of her mom is her her mom's family is from a Native American group that she kept a that she kept kept a secret. Up until this new movie.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Basically, that means that Elsa and Elsa's sister and are both like of indigenous ancestry. Yet, which was not ever before, talked about. So there's this whole other narrative. If you're willing to engage right again. Right, so, so we talked about that why that wasn't at all a part of the first movie because it wasn't actually a thing yet they

hadn't written that second movie. But we talked about Idina Menzel as the lead singer and her social identities in terms of religion and and her family, her children. We talked about Frozen on Broadway. They actually asked characters of color in Frozen on Broadway. Yes. And they had more, you know, freedom to do that on Broadway then in the films, you know, for different reasons. So I guess what I'm saying is I'm always looking for the way can we, where can we connect them on what you're interested in and what you're excited about. And then how can we expand that?

Right. How can we expand even our understanding around that, you know, so Elsa's hair is a part of the story, but it's not the only part of the story, right, like how to expand that. That being said, we do a lot in our house to make sure that there's representation of the people who live here. The children who live here in the dolls and the media and we're always always talking about when we see, you know, something that we're watching like me huh, what do you think about this, you know, like, oh no, there's not that many characters of color. I don't really feel connected or seen or this is maybe we don't want to watch this today, right...

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Maybe we don't want to watch it today. Maybe we want to watch Black-ish instead.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Right. Right. Exactly. So there's ways that we do I, to me, is that that principle of trying to find a connection. And then, and then build out from there.

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Can we give any other examples?

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Annie, Annie the 2014 Annie?

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): And yes but that the hair episode of Mixed-ish. Well, I mean, I watched it like a year ago. I don't remember that much, but I just remember that in it. Um, one of the main characters aren't took them to go to the hair salon instead of having their hair done at home, and when they want to the hair salon it took a very long time, but they got their hair straightened and then there was a hair episode of Black-ish where she where Diane has gone her hair straight and for a very long time for her whole life and then one day she decided to go with a natural hair style and she decided to go with box braids and she and that was another hair episode of one of those two but that's what I remember watching those like it was about picture day and yeah.

Jamila Lyiscott: Yas..

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Conversations to be had.

Jamila Lyiscott: Yas. Thank you, Aaliyah you're my new favorite person. She's like, absolutely, because I you know I completely forgot that in Frozen Two, I'm like they stole

that indigenous land like they stole it. You know, and that's just that's beautiful, thinking about the nuances and even if you are not watching it today and you watch it tomorrow, having those critical conversations about what's missing or what what needs to be complicated. So thank you all so much for those examples.

I'm going to jump in. We got about five more minutes. So I'm going to throw out a few more questions.

What would panelists recommend beyond representative literature for teaching white children and white schools about race and racism, who have not had many interactions with people of color and have the foundation of racism/racial silence at home from your parents? Anyone feel free to answer.

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): I mean, the only thing that comes to mind for me is that this movement to bring about racial equity in this country is going to have to be led by white people in on some level.

Like white folks are going to have to step up and teach other white people is not going to be some black Messiah who goes to these neighborhoods and changed everybody and teaches everybody so white people who live in those areas that are so disconnected from folks of color, they are going to have to step up and take leadership and do that type of education row.

Jamila Lyiscott: Mm hmm. Absolutely. Thank you so much. And, you know, oh

Maria José Botelho: Dr. J, you go...

Jamila Lyiscott: Well, no, no, it was actually going to segway into the next question. So go ahead.

Maria José Botelho: Yeah, and I think that I'm just, again, you know, allowing students to ask questions about where they live.

Why is it a homogeneous school? Why is it a homogeneous and you know neighborhood and, you know, and to really, you know, to just wonder about all of these things. And it's not just because it just happens and and I think that by poking at these questions as inquiries. It can then help people understand the students understand you know how racism works and that they're living racism and their own, you know, neighborhood.

Jamila Lyiscott: Absolutely. Thank you so much for those insights and um, I know that that those are really important starting points like that actually segues into what I'll make the last question, I'll try to lump some things together.

Another you know finesse a little bit. One more time. But, you know, so there are a lot of the a lot of questions, several questions that are asking about initiating this kind of dialogue or conversations with folks right like so, for example, there are people who came on this call.

Earlier I shared that folks who showed up tonight show up because we know that there's very much a systemic racism. Racism problem in our world. For the most part, and then, you know, but the people in everyone's lives and our lives don't necessarily know that right, but we know that we have people in our families. We have friends. We have colleagues who needs to be in these conversations. And so how do we initiate that like how do we initiate those kinds of conversations? Um, for the people in our world so that they can know that that this is not neutral and that there needs to be room for advocating and engaging in the kind of change we all need collectively.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): I think that one of the things...First of all, I just want to say if it's the last question. Thank you so much for your facilitation and you're like, I mean, just like brilliant. I mean, not surprising at all. You know, it's just brilliant so complex. So many things, but still like flowing and feeling really digestible, so thank you.

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): I was going to say that - digestible bits, digestible bits like tater tots.

Jamila Lyiscott: Ha ha, thank you.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): Love it. So, so I think I guess the thing that I would say about like engaging in the conversation. I don't mean to sound impatient, but I feel like you need to kind of just go do it like just start somewhere. You know this summer. One of the things I did is I put out a call on a dance it so like dance parents and caregivers are on like a Facebook group and I just said, hey, does anybody want to get together, you know, and talk about how to talk to kids about race.

And it turned into like a five week thing where we met up once a week and you know I brought all my SJE resources that I had to the table but I was just really committed like let's just do it and let's put ourselves out there and let's share what you're struggling with and and see it how you know we can help each other and and sort of get past whatever it is and I'm a busy person. I don't have a lot of extra time. It wasn't like I was sitting around thinking, what could I do. You know, I just took a leap and and so I guess I would say that on a lot of this, it's about the relationships you already have you already have a sphere of influence of people that are around you who who will engage with you if you invite them in. And so I think just being willing to to do that and and activate those those circles. Do you want to say anything else?

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Um, I would just like to say that even though online school is pretty great better than last year. This was way more fun than being on my meeting for an hour and a half.

Marcella R. Hall (she/her): I love it.

Jamila Lyiscott: We are winning, yes!

Maria José Botelho: I just wanted to build on that, yes, definitely spheres of influence those relationships. And much like the examples that you are sharing, Aaliyah and Marcella, but just also just like your everyday lives together as a family as friends and the kinds of things that come up, you know, whether you're watching you know a show and then a you know a commercial comes on that is so problematic and then to name that or whether you are, you know, reading and you're reading the newspaper. And again, addressing something that comes up in the newspaper. So the everyday life that we live is to just bring up those issues of race racism instances of racism that that are important for us to talk about and then certainly you know make our commitments public all the time.

Jamila Lyiscott: Absolutely and that's real. And I'll remind us also that this, this was asked, broadly, but across racial lines. There are different states when we do this right, what was being invited here, right. When you're a white person that's initiating a this kind of conversation with folks versus in a personal color in a professional setting, especially, right, there are different stakes that come along with with having that kind of that kind of courage or vulnerability or whatever is needed at that time

Nat Turner, do you want to drop some wisdom on us about how do we initiate these kind of conversations beyond the scope of the people who had the good sense to join this Zoom?

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): Absolutely, absolutely. My point is very similar to what I said a second ago, but for my white colleagues out there from my white brothers and sisters: call in your brethren, your kin folks don't. You don't need to call them out as racist and call it all that sort of thing. But just call them in and work with them teach them, share with them, love them, and that's how we get this done. You know, I mean, call in your family.

Jamila Lyiscott: Whooo, just dropping gems ending with the gem, and the note of love, which is often forgotten piece of this very important conversation.

Thank you so, so, so much. Thank you for your brilliance. Thank you for everything that you've brought. Thank you to those of you who showed up and who are about to go and change the space - your spheres of influence, so that we have a better world and future. There's a better world to inherit.

I'm just very grateful to to you know also that this is going to be recorded, so another passive aggressive moves it moves that you can share this link with somebody to initiate a conversation like "check that out."

And we're just grateful grateful to have you here. Please check out following up for resources and these videos online, thank you all and have a beautiful, beautiful evening.

Aaliyah Z. Hall (she/her): Bye, Thank you.

K.C. Nat Turner (he/him): Thank you. Aloha!