

The Vignettes

This vodcast was inspired by the important, yet under-recognized work, many youth are actively engaged in to create better school systems. This vodcast is structured into a series of five vignettes that share glimpses into critical moments and experiences that shaped and lead one high school student, Mila González, to racial justice work. They are structured in vignettes so that they can be used as connected stories, or independently.

Design Choices

The vignettes are structured to highlight Mila's story, though she is interviewed by her mother, Taucia González, a special education professor. The videos were edited minimally (only to prevent distractions and remove bloopers followed by laughter) to preserve Mila's voice and natural story as much as possible. Mila wanted these videos to feel real, to give the feeling you are sitting down with her rather than perfectly polished "serious" videos. Each vignette begins and ends with a photograph of Mila and Taucia (a mother-daughter photo), along with a song of Mila's choosing to add an additional layer to her experiences—and for your enjoyment.

Background to the Vignettes

Through racial justice education work, Mila began undoing the unintended impact and accumulation of damage she experienced as a Student of Color in the Midwest. She now recognizes that her experiences are not isolated instances, but rather reflections of educational systems that still have long roads ahead to becoming places where Students of Color can thrive. Rather than allowing her experiences to continue impacting her mental health, Mila now uses those experiences to drive her work.

Acknowledgments

According to Mila, power comes in numbers. She has been able to grow through this work by doing it alongside others that are just as passionate. Sometimes that is through other youth such as her friend, Grace Middleton, who continues the racial justice struggle in Madison. The two of them worked alongside each other to hold their teachers, schools, and district accountable for creating space for Students of Color. She has also learned from scholars that visited Madison such as Bettina Love, Cherrie Moraga, and Angela Davis, and books she is reading written by Bettina Love, Beverly Tatum & Tim Wise, and Robin DiAngelo.