

TRANSCRIPTION

Seena Skelton: This is our combined joint event with the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and the School of Education in collaboration with The Midwest and Plains Equity Center and The Great Lakes Equity Center to present *Meeting the Needs of All Students During COVID-19* Virtual World Café.

We are so excited to be able to welcome participants from all over our region and beyond. We are welcoming participants from as far away as California, as far east as Maryland, from our states within our region, such as Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, Michigan, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Indiana. And I'm welcoming people from outside of our region. So, we're very excited everyone that you all here and to join us this afternoon.

I want to take some time to introduce our facilitation team for today and just have a chance for each member, just to say a quick hello. So, we're welcoming Dr. Tandra Jackson, Dr. Kathleen King Thorius. Again, myself, Seena Skeleton, Dr. Jasmine Graham, Dr. Lasana Kazembe, and Dr. Jeremy Price.

We are also welcoming Dr. Tiffany Kyser, Ms. Diana Lazzell, Dr. Crystal Morton, Dr. Trish Gorman, Dr. Rosiline Floyd, Ms. Nickie Coomer, Mr. Kyle Huskins, Ms. Robin Jackson, Ms. Katy Rusnak, and Ms. Noelle Broughton. So, if, we can have just a quick hello from the team, that'd be great. I'm going to stop sharing my screen for members just to give a quick hello.

Kathleen King Thorius: Hi everybody, we're so pleased to have you with us today. I'm Kathleen King Thorius, Executive Director of The Great Lakes Equity Center, as well as faculty in the School of Education here at IUPUI. Welcome.

Seena Skelton: Okay. Thank you for waves and hellos. We have a chance to hear a little bit more from our team in just a few seconds. So, our event this afternoon, and we're going to go at a very quick pace. We have a lot jam-packed in. So, we're going to start with a welcoming word from Dr. Jackson and Dr. King Thorius. I'm providing the overview of our section right

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

now. We're going to have a combination of some breakouts, small group discussions, as well as a panel presentation.

Then we will be able to give closings and provide some information about additional resources that you can access from the Great Lakes Equity Center, the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, and the IU School of Education. A note about access, we know that we are in different spaces. These days we're working remotely, and we also understand that many of us have been on Zoom lines or other distance learning technology. So, we want you to make yourself comfortable, move about as needed, take breaks as needed. We will be providing a copy of this presentation at the end. And so, our images are combined with alt text, so if you are using a screen reader, you would be able to use your screen reader to describe the images that are on this slide. And we are offering live captioning today.

In order to access captioning, if you move your cursor to the bottom of your screen, a tool bar should pop up towards the left of that tool bar, you will see a button that's labeled closed caption, above that labeling there's a little carrot. You want to click on that carrot, and they would give you options for closed captioning, and that way you can see subtitles if you so choose. This is an interactive work session, so we really want you all to engage both using video and audio.

However, to reduce noise distraction, we ask if you're not talking for you to mute your mic. And then we will be using various tools for this afternoon, including breakout rooms. It will give you a bit of a tutorial on how we will use our breakout rooms when the time comes.

We are recording this session. We make all our learning experiences accessible as learning experiences and learning tools to people can access after the event.

So, we aim to make this experience accessible as well. The recording will be edited and then uploaded to our YouTube channel as well as our website, along with transcriptions.

So, as you are sharing just keep in mind that this session is recorded.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Diana Lazzell: Seena, are you showing your screen?

Seena Skelton: Yes. Isn't that showing?

Diana Lazzell: We can't see it.

Seena Skelton: All right. Thank you. Let me try again. Okay. Can you see it now?

Diana Lazzell: Yes.

Seena Skelton: Okay. Great. Thank you. So again, just to repeat that we are recording this session. So just keep that in mind as you are sharing. We would like you to join us via social media. I'm sharing the wrong video. We asked you to extend the conversation expanded via social media at #MAPEquity. Also like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. As we're engaging in these great courageous conversations, we ask you to keep in mind these four commitments to stay engaged.

That means present to the conversation, to speak your truth and hold space for others to speak theirs. Know that any conversation around issues of equity and anti-racism are issues and topics that are going to require us to experience discomfort. And so, we lean into that discomfort as we have these important conversations, and we know that this work is work that is ongoing.

And so we expect and we accept non-closure. However, we do expect to make progress. So, we keep these four commitments in mind as we engage this afternoon in important conversations. Our purpose today is really threefold. First is to connect, to build community, to build coalition, and to build networks around supporting all students, but particularly our students that have been and continue to be marginalized in our schools and our school communities.

We also want the space and create the space for sharing. And so, we're asking you to bring with you in your conversations and point information, resources, knowledges that you would like to share with colleagues. And to learn, not only from the facilitators in our

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF EQUITY
CENTER

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

breakout sessions and our scholars on our panel, but also to learn from each other. So, I'll pass the mic, so to speak, over to Dr. Jackson to provide us some opening remarks.

Tambra Jackson: All right. Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to the World Cafe event. The Great Lakes Equity Center and The Midwest and Plains Equity Center is housed within our School of Education and we are very proud to be the home for this Center. And we're very excited to sponsor the event today. And look forward to doing more with our colleagues in collaboration. Given the times that we're living in now, I think we appreciate the value of collaboration. So, I'm very excited about this, very excited that Seena and Kathleen invited us in as a co-sponsor. So, welcome to the event.

Seena Skelton: Thank you, Dr. Jackson.

Kathleen King Thorius: As I mentioned earlier, I'm Kathleen King Thorius. I'm the Executive Director of The Great Lakes Equity Center. Also, I'm faculty in the School of Education. So, we're really pleased to have some amazing colleagues from the IUPUI School of Education here to facilitate some conversations with all of us today. So we'll be moving into breakout rooms in just a couple of minutes, but really I'd like to frame today about communicating how families, communities, and institutions currently are, and are able to partner together to address the equity implications of this current context we're in: social distancing, pandemic illness, and deaths and loss to our communities and families; but we also have to acknowledge the historical and the current context of discrimination and racism for particular communities, families, and youth. So, we look forward to seeking out and spending time talking about the innovations, the assets of our communities and families. We're also thinking through the ways in which they have been marginalized in our schools and our communities.

So, I know that you'll find that the discussion to be rich. We encourage you to interact in all the ways that technology allows for you. And just welcome and thank you for being virtual and share space with us today.

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Seena Skelton:

Thank you, Kathleen. So, at this time, we're going to prepare to transition into our four breakout groups. So just to talk through quickly what those breakout groups are. So, we've created four breakout groups around essential areas of work related to ensuring that all of our students can receive, have access to supportive, inclusive learning communities. And these four topics are topics that have really risen to the top of areas of focus as school districts, as school communities are planning, not just sort of wrapping up the current school year, but really planning to be re-open school in the Fall (2020). We want to focus on the extent to which we're creating school communities that are attending to the mental health and social emotional wellness of our students and our adults that are in our school community.

Our first breakout group will be around supporting mental health and social emotional wellness. Dr. Jasmine Graham will be the lead scholar and co-facilitating that breakout room. Our second breakout room is around really centering the importance of community care, leveraging the assets of our community, and how do we bring that to bear as we think about planning for re-opening our school communities. Dr. Lasana Kazembe will be the scholar facilitating that breakout session.

Our third is around leadership--the importance of leadership; not only leadership in terms of whether we're talking about administrative, also leadership at multiple levels of the system, including our teacher leaders, our building leaders, and our student leaders. As well as connecting with leaders within our institutions of higher education. So, we will have our third breakout session around leadership and Dr. Tambra Jackson will be our scholar leading that breakout room.

And then lastly, but I think one of the areas that have been most on educators' minds as they've planned for thinking through how to expand learning spaces in this time of COVID-19 from face-to-face, in-person spaces to our virtual spaces and distance learning spaces. So how do we really authentically support diverse students in distance learning? And Dr. Jeremy Price will be our scholar and is facilitating that breakout session.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF MIDWEST & PLAINS
EQUITY
ASSISTANCE CENTER

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Break out Sessions (Not Recorded)

Kathleen King Thorius: I'm so excited to re-introduce my wonderful colleagues who are going to be part of our panel today and who were facilitating conversations in the breakout room. So, you all met Dean Jackson, Dr. Tambra Jackson, and also we have with us, Dr. Lasana Kazembe, Dr. Jasmine Graham, and Dr. Jeremy Price. If I could ask Dr. Graham, if you would introduce yourself again and just share a bit about your work and then I'll pass it to Dr. Kazembe and finally Dr. Price.

Jasmine Graham: Yes, sure. Good afternoon, everyone. It's so good to be here with all of you. My research can be delineated broadly into two categories. First, I study Black mental health, trauma, and I tend to situate that work in schools and communities and families and other systemic bodies. Secondly, I study Black Women's mental health, and that work is largely centered on the notion of strong Black Womanhood as a health disparity, and as a determinant of one's health.

Before academia, I was an outpatient therapist, school counselor. I mean, the list goes on and on, addictions counselor, I won't list all of it but my clinical experience is broad and deep, and it informs my research, my approach to mental health, and how I train graduate students.

Kathleen King Thorius: Thanks so much, Dr. Graham. Dr. Kazembe passing it to you, please.

Lasana Kazembe: Thank you. My name is Lasana Kazembe. I'm from Chicago, and I've been here almost three and a half years now. My background in research interests center on urban education, arts-based pedagogy, and global Black arts movement. So, I'm also interested in social and racial justice and education. So, the work that I do as a scholar-researcher, educational consulting, and teaching artists occurs in schools, communities, juvenile detention centers, and prisons. So, I bring a great deal of expertise and interest in those areas. Those are the spaces that I get down in.

Kathleen King Thorius: Thanks Dr. Kazembe, appreciate it. Dr. Price?

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Jeremy Price:

My name is Dr. Jeremy Price and my full title is Assistant Professor of Technology Innovation and Pedagogy in Urban Education. And the much of my research focuses on using technology to prepare teachers for social justice and for equity and inclusion. As well as I've been doing a lot of work in having conversations about race and religion, and gender identity and sexual identity in suburban schools, as well as looking at white nationalism and online hate groups. So that's what I do. I've been doing actually a lot of COVID-19 work because I'm the only technology person in the School of Education at the moment.

Kathleen King Thorius: Thank you, Dr. Price. All right. I'm going to jump in with a question. All of you, one of the reasons we have invited all of you to join us today is because you are engaged as partners in your communities in many, many rich authentic ways. So, I'd like to ask you to share with us ways that grassroots community and institutional assets, we really want to focus on assets here, can converge to address the current context of this.

It's really an intersecting pandemic of racism and COVID-19, that is really coming together. So, focus on assets and how can our communities and our institutional assets converge. Would anyone like to start us off there?

Jeremy Price:

I can start off if nobody else is. So, I've been doing a lot of conversations with schools and districts recently around these issues. Some of the things that I like to say is that, really the first thing that should be thought about and considered is keeping your students and your teachers and your community safe and healthy, and then everything else sort of flows from that.

I've been hearing a lot of different schools having different plans for reopening in the Fall, because that's what we're basically looking at, at this point. The other thing is that, and this came up during the breakout room that I had just now, is thinking about the emotional and the trauma that students and communities have gone through in the past couple of months. But really, from my own expertise here, the thing for teachers and educators to think about with respect specifically to things like remote and distance learning is about what devices families, and students have.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Jeremy Price:

And designing experiences that can be delivered through those devices. Not everybody has a laptop or a Chromebook, or has access to broadband internet. So, one of the things that can be done is to provide those services. I know that a lot of schools and districts have sent out buses as Wi-Fi access points. But, the other thing to consider is, can you provide learning experiences over a cell phone, for example, on a smartphone that would fit on that screen.

So, the other thing that really comes up is supporting the families and understanding how these online systems work, and how to navigate those, how to help their students navigate those, and to navigate the work that they're expected to do.

Kathleen King Thorius:

Thank you, Dr. Price. I'm going to make sure we've got some space for everyone's thoughts and thank you so much. Those were really important, particularly because a lot of times, those of us who have access most or all the time don't necessarily stop to think about those. And those patterns fall on and across racial and income lines. Dr. Kazembe, I saw you came off of silent mic a little earlier. So, you ready with the-

Lasana Kazembe:

I was practicing my mime skills. One of the things that I feel very strongly about is this area of translational research. It is very important to me that the work that I do as a representative and a faculty member, an employee, if you will, of this institution, that this work not stay locked up in this institution, but then it actually gets out into the world and becomes of use and then I become of use to the people.

So, one of the ways that I think we can begin to leverage our assets is for institutions and folks like myself. Then institutions begin to reimagine our role and begin to reimagine the kind of things that we can do with research. Two quick instances, I'm partnering with some colleagues across a different unit. We just applied for a got a COVID-19 research response grant. So we're going to be partnering with about five or six local Black arts and cultural communities--organizations here in Indianapolis--to actually began to reimagine how they respond in an era where they're being besieged on all sides by challenges, but also looking at some of the assets, practices, and processes within these institutions that we can help them leverage.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF MIDWEST & PLAINS
EQUITY
ASSISTANCE CENTER

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

The other one is a larger grant that we're writing right now for the William T. Grant Foundation. It's an institutional challenge grant. And again, the premise is to think about in what ways this research institution can put itself in service to a local grassroots community organizations. So, that's just one of the ways is to sort of unshackle ourselves from the ivory tower and to get out in the street, and it began to be of use to the people.

Kathleen King Thorius: Yeah. And the power of collective arts movements, particularly Black arts movements, those innovations and resources that have been there for so long, and that have been silenced in mainstream communities and neglected altogether, right?

Lasana Kazembe: That's right.

Kathleen King Thorius: Then you also talk about positioning ourselves as servants to our communities, with our communities, the communities often where we sit, and where communities were disrupted to build the very brick and mortar that we're sitting within as well. So, thanks Dr. Kazembe.

Lasana Kazembe: Thank you.

Kathleen King Thorius: Dr. Graham. I'm going to kick it over to you. Thank you.

Jasmine Graham: Yes. I think one of the critical factors that we need to consider are what are the assets. Sometimes we get into these narratives that all students are struggling and indeed, just like I said it in my small group, many students are struggling, many families are struggling, but not all Black students and families are struggling. Particularly those for whom school is a traumatic environment.

So, I think as we think through the feedback and exploration and assessment of assets and how we can build students up, how we can build families up, we need to be aware of our audience. Are we speaking to folks for whom school was in and is a traumatic environment and how then are they dealing with social isolation, homeschooling, and COVID? They may or may not be struggling.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Jasmine Graham: I can think of several families and several students that are actually doing better now that they're being home in the context of a safe home, as opposed to at a school with teachers who do not see their promise and their attributes. At the same time, I can think of other students and families that are having a hard time as a result of homeschooling and being socially isolated.

So, I think we, as a community of helpers, think through the feedback and the support that we're going to give. We need to make sure that we are giving feedback and support that meets people truly where they are, not where our narratives portray them to be.

Kathleen King Thorius: Yes. Thank you so much, Dr. Graham. I'm actually going to segue into another question because of the important points you're raising. Many of our families and students--they're thriving at home and in their home communities, away from the marginalization and the violence of schooling. And those narratives are often silenced, neglected all together, or shouted over by people in dominant racial and income positions very often.

So that's a really important reminder and thank you. I'm going to ask us, and I'm going to put it right back to you, Dr. Graham, if that's okay. Which is, what are the ways that we need to critique our formal institutions about how they are developing and publicizing and rolling out all these efforts around COVID-19, around meeting the quote-unquote needs of our students and families? What is worthy of critique of our institutions, if you'd raise a few points?

Jasmine Graham: Oh, sure. That crux of whiteness, right? And how whiteness manifests in all of our structures and all of our systems in our society, particularly education. And this idea of what's normal, what's healthy, what's not normal, what's unhealthy, what's well, and what's not well. I think all of that is subject to critique. Anyway, but certainly in these times as we intersect COVID with the racial unrest happening-- and rightfully so-- happening in our nation and globally.

I think whole gamut should be up for critique, right? How do we examine wellness, how do we examine what's right, what's wrong, what's healthy, and not healthy. I think we

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

have to go back to the foundations of our understandings about wellness and mental health and deficit in order to come up to emerge with something new, something better, something more equitable.

Jasmine Graham:

I don't think as working from the notions and the systems that we have now will create any different outcomes. I think we really need to go back to the brass tacks and think about what is healthy, what's unhealthy, and where are we as individuals who make decisions, as scholars, as leaders, as change agents, as teachers, as educators, as parents, where do we derive those notions from? Just because we hold a notion, doesn't mean it's accurate and, often at times, it's very faulty.

Kathleen King Thorius:

Thank you so much, Dr. Graham. I'm going to ask Dean Jackson. I'm not seeing you on my screen. I'm assuming your still here, there you are. I'm going to ask, I know you lead many institutions in your role as Dean or elsewhere. What critiques do you have of our formal institutions in ways that you're supporting families and communities right now?

Tambra Jackson:

Similar to Dr. Graham's comments, I think it's an opportunity for us to really look at the ways in which our policies, practices, and procedures uphold whiteness, and anti-Black racism in particular. One of the things that I think gets in the way is not so much that we don't have the capacity, is whether or not we have the will to do things, to make change. And I think that we use capacity as an excuse.

So, one of the things that I've noticed with COVID-19, things that we said or things that would normally take 10 pieces of paper in order for the action to transpire within a matter of 10 days, almost every kid in this country will have left schools, school has closed. We had virtual schooling sessions, things that teachers had been asking for in terms of being able to connect with kids where school for lots of different reasons you think about health issues, kids can't come into the building. Teachers have been wanting to have more access to kids who were in home spaces, but we were able to do these things within a matter... less than two weeks. Where before, there was 10 pieces of paper and lots of excuses, and that sort of thing. So, I think it's an opportunity for us to critique the bureaucracy that exists within our institutions and the things that are providing

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

barriers for exercising the will of those of us who are social justice seekers and doers. So that's one thing that I've been thinking about lately.

Kathleen King Thorius: Thanks, Dr. Jackson. I also want to give you the opportunity to respond if there are particular innovations and assets and communities that you want to emphasize at this time.

Tambra Jackson: I've been thinking a lot about the word innovation. In another role that I hold, I am working with partner pairs, classroom teachers and teacher educators at the university level who are working together to develop so-called innovative practices, to meet the needs of kids who tend to be marginalized in school. And one of the things that we talked about recently is innovation isn't always necessarily something new, but innovation can also be something that we know to be right and fighting for that rightness, right?

We know that there are things that are good for children, right? It's not new, we've known these things for a long time. But what could be the innovative part is exercising that agency to take up that fight or to take up that fight in a different way. With the issues around technology, one of the things that I've been urging people to do is to reach back to what I'm calling Indigenous practices, not necessarily thinking about Indigenous people, but the Indigenous, the very rudimentary cultural practices of particular groups.

A lot of Communities of Color have a rich oral tradition. And I think that this lack of being able to be face-to-face and having to rely on technology, I think that we can meet some of this need of access through tapping into the oral traditions of Communities of Color. We don't all have to be on a Zoom room and that sort of thing. I know my son's preschool teacher, one of the things that she did for parents is she said, "I'm here to talk. I'm here to talk to your baby because the preschool Zoom room is crazy."

So Khadir had an opportunity to talk to his teacher and get that attention that he seeks and wants, that in a normal everyday classroom he would get some of it, but not in the way that she was able to give it to him because of the transition. So, yeah.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF EQUITY
CENTER

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Kathleen King Thorius: Thank you. Thanks so much, Dean Jackson. All right, I'm going to open it to the group with the short time we have left and I will pass it to our Dr. Kazembe and Dr. Price first. Let's hear a few questions from the group and Nickie or whomever. I think, Nickie, you're monitoring chat, but others are as well. If you can maybe give me a couple of questions or a question you would like to emphasize.

Nickie Coomer: Sure. Oh, sorry, Robin.

Robin Jackson: It was you, go ahead.

Kathleen King Thorius: Well, pardon me, Robin. I'm sorry. My screen didn't have you on. There you are. Robin, over to you. Thank you.

Robin Jackson: Well, our illustrious, fearless leader posed a question--Seena. How do we de-center whiteness in our discord related to wellness? How do we create space for educators to engage in critical self-examination of our own notions of wellness, mental health, etc?

Kathleen King Thorius: Right. Well, I know that that's specific to Dr. Graham's expertise. I also want to give the opportunity for Dr. Kazembe and Dr. Price to chime in around wellness. And there's lots of ways that wellness materializes and manifests and is defined. So, Dr. Kazembe will you take first shot at that?

Lasana Kazembe: Yeah, sure. Ralph Ellison was talking about the blues, he was writing about the blues and he said that, as a form, the blues as an autobiographical chronicle of a personal catastrophe expressed lyrically, right? And I know that there was a point made earlier about just this cultural way that especially Black folk have had of turning awfulness into awesomeness. And it is a way of communing with the spirit, it is a way of communing with one's history, not just during February, beyond Wakanda, beyond February, right? I'm sorry, a corporate type of art heroes and stuff that's given to us, but every day. I know, personally, I am engaging with the arts on a daily and consistent basis, and now virtually--live performance, reading poetry, having poetry read to me, writing, journaling--all of

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

these things are therapeutic. And I use them and write about them and teach about them as healing modalities.

So, there's so much to be said for being able to get things out and to write things and to read things. One of my big critiques about society today is that there is a spirit of pretentiousness and age that we live in as a spirit of self-absorption. I think when one is able to free oneself, you can free yourself and travel in books. You can free yourself and travel in the biographies and the stories of other human beings.

Lasana Kazembe: And then you read about the types of adversities that they've gone through. You begin to sort of see a window, you begin to sort of see a mirror, if you will. And you can actually begin to sort of relate to stuff that's being shared with you via the written word, the spoken word. It can be in the form as itself as a sort of release. So, I'm always pushing the arts on people, music, spoken word, poetry, theater, reading, literature.

I think in an era to a point Toni Morrison made a long ago, it's especially important to do those things in the midst of controversy and contention. When things are at their worst, it is important to travel within and travel in that way to bring other people along with you on the journey. Those are just some of the thoughts that come to mind.

Kathleen King Thorius: Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Kazembe. I'm going to see if we can get another question from one of our participants. Robin, if you can pull something up from a participant or if any participants would like to jump in after we give Robin about five seconds to scroll.

Robin Jackson: I don't see many more questions on that side of the conversation.

Jasmine Graham: What about what Dr. Renita Evans said. It's not a question, it's more of a statement, but I think we can interrogate it a bit, if you guys don't mind. "I feel like institutions have gatekeepers who continue to drive out innovation to maintain the norms," that's our comment.

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Kathleen King Thorius: Our institutions are full of gatekeepers. Dean Jackson talked to him about that earlier with the bureaucracy, or some instances that can show up. Absolutely. Dr. Price, if you can talk a little bit about gatekeeping functions in your area of expertise.

Jeremy Price: Yeah. I mean, one of the things and I think it actually has to do with the notion of health and wellness, also, is actually the excessive standardization that schools often are dealing with, because it defines what a successful student and what a successful learner looks like in one particular way and through particular lenses. That's something that has actually, I believe, been really laid bare in COVID-19 because what you do is... you see the successful teachers in the successful schools that really thought about and interrogated those standards and really asked themselves, well, what's important to teach and what's important to learn.

Whereas, I've seen a lot of parent complaints where basically the teachers would pass on the standards to the parents and expect the parents to teach the standards. I think that one of the things that we should do, not just now but moving forward, is really think about what is worth teaching and learning. And what do the standards or standards displace. And most of the time, what the standards display are things like the arts, are things like culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies and content. So, I'm hopeful that this will actually cause a lot of conversation nationwide.

Kathleen King Thorius: Yeah. Thanks for pushing that point, too. I know you have a lot of expertise around universal design for learning and that focus on expert learners is a big part of it. And we need to really shake up how we define competence and expertise with our youth and families. Dr. Graham, I'm sure you took Dr. Evans' point because it resonated for you. So, I want to give you the opportunity to respond and then ask them. Dean Jackson, if she has any closing comments for the panel, and then we'll wrap this up here real soon.

Jasmine Graham: Oh, let me go back to the point. Okay. Yes, I agree. I agree that the institutions are full of gatekeepers that maintain harmful status quo. I don't know if there's one remedy to that, but I certainly think that us looking inward and having open honest conversations about

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

these matters is important. I think that the work that we do in our school of education should be a standard practice for other schools of education.

Some of the hard-interrogating work that we do as individual faculty members, as collective faculty members, in order to develop systems and structures that we hope are more equitable and it takes a lot of work. It's work that has to get done.

Kathleen King Thorius: That's set by the leader. That tone, and that space has to be created as well as we commit to that as individuals. Oftentimes, the leader creates more formalized routine spaces. Dr. Jackson, anything to add there? Dean Jackson?

Tambra Jackson: In my notes, I think it was Kate in my breakout group who talked about her observation of how leaders are responding to this moment. She talked about how really this is an opportunity to build something different. And if you don't have a leader who can see that opportunity, then you're going to be in an organization that maintains the status quo. One of the things that I've been thinking about in terms of leadership is in the kinds of leadership or the kinds of leader that I would like to be.

And that is the concept of servant leadership. To Dr. Graham's point, if leaders position themselves as servant leaders, then they are in tune to being of service and not using the leadership position for self, not using it as a stepping stone to get to the next spot, that sort of thing, but really listening to the folks that you're leading, and leading beside them, not in front, not on top, that sort of thing.

But being a leader who walks with the group and not above the group, so to speak. So, I think anybody, though, can be a servant leader regardless of whether you hold an official leadership title.

Kathleen King Thorius: Thank you. Thanks for that reminder, too. All right. Thank you so much, Dr. Graham, Dean Jackson, Dr. Kazembe, Dr. Price, our pleasure to have you with us today. I know we had a few glitches getting people in the right spot but thank you. We have a few thank yous and a few final slides just to wrap this up.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF MIDWEST & PLAINS
EQUITY
ASSISTANCE CENTER

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

Seena Skelton:

Thank you, Kathleen. And thank you again to our panelists. Thank you, to the participants for great questions, both questions in the chat and in the breakout rooms as well. So, to close this out, I'm going to get us back to our presentation. The special thanks to Sophie Richardson and Javier Barrera for their support and doing all the things in terms of getting the materials together, getting information out.

So, a special thanks to Sophie and Javier. I want to alert participants to some MAP resources so that you can find on our website (greatlakesequity.org). Please, if you haven't visited our Equity in Education During COVID-19 Flipgrid (webpage), please do so. This is the opportunity for you to leave a brief video sharing your own ideas or resources that are happening within your own school communities. And also, to hear from resources shared by others.

Visit our COVID-19 Pandemic Resources and Support (web)page. Included on this page, the wealth of resources, including hyperlinks and various different websites, downloadable digital print resources, various links and into other resources, as well as the research they're located on our own website. So please visit our COVID-19 Pandemic Resources and Support page. In the future coming soon is our Anti-racism Support page, as well.

Seena Skelton:

So, check out our website soon and check out those resource pages. We have a number of different professional learning experiences that are focused on engaging in a collaborative discussion around these issues and others related to making sure that we're creating inclusive and responsive learning communities for our students in this age of COVID-19, and to help promote anti-racist policy, practices, and structures, and discourse.

So, one is our Virtual Coffee House Series. We have our last Coffeehouse experience coming up soon. We also have our Families Learning from Families, our Virtual Roundtable. These Roundtable experiences are specifically for our families, and it's a way to bring family members together to again learn with and from each other. I also want to share some resources from the School of Education, just information about their teaching programs, their master programs, and doctoral degrees.

Copyright © 2020 by Great Lakes Equity Center

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021). However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

A PROJECT OF 

Virtual World Café: Meeting the Needs of all Students During COVID-19

So, visit the IUPUI School of Education website for more information. With that we want to hear from you. We learn from our participants to make things better. We are a continuous learning and continuous improvement organization and learning organization. So, in the chat box there should be a link to the post-session questionnaire. Please take time to fill out that questionnaire. We take your feedback very seriously, and we use that to improve future opportunities.

And with that I want to thank you again all for joining us on this World Café. Thank you so much for engaging wonderful ideas and conversations, and we look forward to you coming back.