

Building Legacies of Equity in Education - Transcript

Bretton Rodriguez

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Hello everyone, welcome to *Thought on Tap*. My name is Bretton Rodriguez and I am a teaching assistant professor in core humanities, as well as one of the founders and co-organizers of *Thought of Tap*. If you're new to *Thought on Tap*, welcome. We are a public engagement series that brings together diverse faculty, staff, students and community members from pardon conversations around timely topics on the second Thursday of every month during the fall and spring semesters.

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We are brought to you by the core humanities program, Laughing Planet, and the College of Liberal Arts, at the University of Nevada, Reno. Our theme for this academic year is legacies. This fall we discussed confronting legacies, first of health disparities in October. Then of voter suppression in November. And finally, of Policing and Violence in December. In the spring we are building legacies of equity in education, that's what we're doing today.

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On health and healing activism and social justice, and also economic empowerment. So the plan for tonight's, so we'll be with you until 630, along with the zoom right as soon as you're watching you can also see us live on youtube, if you go to thought and top.com slash YouTube. And the way this will work is first I'll introduce our fantastic panelists who are incredible.

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And then I'll go ahead and introduce the theme for today, and then we'll go ahead and get into our questions. I have some questions prepared. But after the first two or three I would love for you all to go ahead and jump in with your own questions as well.

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Alright, so let's go ahead and let's start with introductions. So our first panelist is Dr. Cynthia Maribel Alcantar. She is an assistant professor of higher education leadership of the University of Nevada, Reno. Her research focuses on the social mobility and integration of racial, ethnic minorities and immigrant populations in the United States, with a particular focus on the influence of schools, and the educational pathways and civic partnerships of racial,

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ethnic minorities and immigrants students before UNR, she was a postdoctoral scholar at Pitt Pitzer College, and a researcher for the Institute for immigration globalization education at the University of California, Los Angeles. She also has extensive experience working in K through 12 and higher education settings, including three year grant programs at Norco Community College and Claremont Graduate University, the title five Hispanic serving institutions grant program and Mount

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St. Mary's College, not a visa High School and John Adams Elementary in Southern California. She also consults with school districts, community colleges and four year colleges concerning the campus climate and culture to support underrepresented student populations. She earned her PhD in social science and comparative education at UCLA, Cynthia would you say hello, please.

Cynthia Alcantar

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Thank you Hello and thank you for having me. Looking forward to the conversation.

Bretton Rodriguez

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You're, you're very welcome Our next panelist is Donald Easton Brooks. Dr. Easton Brooks is the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Nevada, Donald Easton Brooks is also internationally recognized as a critical quantitative culturally responsive scholar, his scholarship covers more than 100 manuscripts, blogs, podcasts, op-eds, presentations, keynotes, and keynotes. Easton Brooks is best known for introducing the concept of ethnic matching to the field of education. Dr. Easton Brooks has received a number of awards and recognition for his research and work, including the 2019 Philip C. Chin Book Award from the National Association of multicultural education

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for his book, ethnic matching academic success and students of color. His research has been cited on educational initiatives and policy efforts in the United States and in places such as Africa, Australia, India, Germany and New Zealand. He was the section, editor of some of the start of the soon to be released Handbook of research on teachers of color, and is on the editorial board of the urban education journal, the impact of his work has led to the national and international interviews

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on television, radio talk shows newspaper and parenting magazines, and now *Thought on Tap*, I'm sure his highest, although at the top of the list. His work has been awesome. Thank you. His work has also been key and creating high school pathway programs designed to promote equity in education by moving to diversify the educator workforces, and in developing culturally responsive teachers is part of the American Educational Research

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Association series, senior scholars and advancing research and professional development relating to black education. I'm Donald would you say hello, please.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Hello everyone. Great to be here.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Welcome. All right. And our final panelist, but definitely not least, definitely not last. Anyways, you know what I mean. So, Tiffany Young M.Ed is currently the Director of equity and diversity for Washoe County School District. Her work is with is within systems to support and clarify the role of equity, diversity and cultural competency interwoven into all schools departments

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and systems. Leading work around programs that policies and practices that must be addressed through an equitable and culturally responsive lens, as well as creating and facilitating professional learning around equity and cultural competency. Ms. Young owns Tiffany Young consulting, LLC, working with organizations to provide training and strategic planning. This event is also an adjunct professor and Human Development and Family student and Family Studies Department at the University of

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Nevada, Reno, a public speaker training workshop facilitator and community collaboration collaborator at heart, in 2019 and Tiffany travel to Zambia to co facilitate a training of trainers, modules or models for girls under the age of 25 and educators from peri-urban areas including gardens. Kamala Taro meat and dairy and chama as part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship reciprocal program, the training of trainers guided volunteers have she entrepreneur to integrate

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into training lessons that addressed the social needs of young mothers, mostly adolescents who are part of the sheet entrepreneur program. Secondly, for educators to incorporate lessons on cross cultural communication diversity inclusion and equity through the sheet entrepreneur program. So, Tiffany, welcome.

Tiffany Young

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Thank you so much for having me. I'm very excited for our wonderful discussion today, and to be on this panel with these esteemed colleagues.

Bretton Rodriguez

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So, thank you so much and thank you all of you for being here. I'm really excited for this conversation. So just to provide a little bit of background really quickly, and then to get out of your way. Really just speaking about education. Education has a fundamental role in society, in many ways that shapes who we are. The way that we think and how we interact with society, historically education has also been a vehicle, economic and social mobility.

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Despite its importance, there are and have been for a long time and serious issues with the educational system in the United States. Many of these issues revolve around the need for equity in education, or in other words, ensuring that every student has an opportunity to succeed. Unfortunately all students in the United states do not have the same educational opportunities. For instance many students face discrimination based on the gender ethnic origin or socio economic status lack access to education, or lack of access to the

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high quality of education as offered to more privileged groups and communities within the United States. For instance, in many states districts with the highest rates of poverty, receive far less funding than more affluent districts to provide one concrete example. As of 2018 high poverty districts in Illinois receive about 22% less funding, the more affluent districts. For the more, on average, the US in.

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On average, US school districts, serving the largest populations of black Latin x and Native students receive roughly 1800 dollars less per students in state and local funding than those serving the fewest students of color, although that might not seem like a huge number for a school of 5000 students that would translate to a deficit of roughly \$9 million. The distribution of funding has serious consequences and more than half of all students who dropout of high school are students of color.

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And most of these are students. And most of these students are mostly students who are also from low income communities and additionally historically marginalized students have far less likely to attend a four year institution than their peers. At the same time, therefore more likely to be suspended, expelled or dropped out of such institutions.

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This lack of access to quality education as well as a frequent lack of support within the educational system, including the lack of diverse educated workforce has led to an increase economic or increase economic inequality is as well severely limiting the opportunities for people of color and individuals from low income communities to succeed and thrive in the United States today. This type of division and society has long lasting ramifications and negative consequences, not just for individuals, but also for communities and cities in the country as a whole, who.

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Alright, so now. Now the fun but now I get to ask you all questions and I get to, to get out of the way. So the first question is really incredibly broad. Do you want to start broad and hopefully we get more specific as we go. So question one. What does equity in education look like and how is this different from the current situation? So, Cynthia I thought we'd start with you and then we'll move on to Tiffany and then Donald after that. So, Cynthia, go ahead.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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Well, you know, so one and it's recognizing difference right so looking at equity in terms of. Oftentimes, like before getting to like having a bigger discourse around equity there was a lot of conversation around equality, right like that does everyone have an equal access to education equal access to different opportunities. And since then, a lot of different folks educators scholars and in a lot of different folks have been pushing back on that idea because equality doesn't necessarily get at the differences in terms of equity and access and opportunity for different groups

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so one is looking at differences of different groups differences and outcomes differences and experiences, different groups as you mentioned you mentioned a lot of different types of equity issues for different groups, whether it's by race, ethnicity, country of origin immigrant background or experiences. Gender Equity sexuality issues, different ways to look at it at women, men, all kinds of ways. So I went in because of that, so it's recognizing differences recognizing differences and outcomes and experiences for different groups.

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I'll stop right there because I think we also have some great folks here that could speak even more so, on some of these issues so I'll stop there.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Okay, thank you so Tiffany, do want to go ahead?

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What I would add to what Cynthia stated is, is, I think we need to step back for a minute and redefine what we think the definition of equity is. So from a K 12 perspective. Any district you go to it's going to look different. And so, equity can be solely a race conversation then equity can be a funding conversation and the equity can be a resource conversation, but I use the analogy of the prescription eyeglasses all the

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time. So if Donald and I go to the doctor next week, and the doctor says you know what both of you need to be able to see and to Cynthia's point, then he will equally give us a prescription, but the equitable approach would mean that he would find out individually what prescription we need to see. And so when we think about equity in that standpoint, what do we individually need to provide for students, whether it be teachers, faculty in higher ed.

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And when we think about a system why structure equity is a system conversation where there have been continuous institutionalized barriers and practices that have not been disrupted for us to truly have the outcomes we need as schools. So when I think about equity. I can't just think about it from a classroom conversation, it needs to be a system wide approach.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Sounds great. Thank you, Daniel Do you want to jump in here as well?

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Sure, and I will add to that and I think they both got great analogies and I think Cynthia's right. We've come at this at the beginning from looking at equity versus equality. And what we really need to do is take that lens of what equity means equal in some places as needed. When we talk about equal pay for an equal job. Yes, but when we start talking about that equity, and as you mentioned, Bretton Rodriguez about that whole notion of opportunity.

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And it's about equity so that we can provide opportunity. And so when we think about this notion of equity. From a system level from a classroom level from how we've existed and they can implement policies. We have not thought about groups of people, equity, and I think Tiffany says it's so correctly. Equity has to be looked at in a lens that you look at a community, and look at what the needs of the community and provide fair opportunity for the opportunities for those communities to take advantage of whatever services being provided.

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So we think about education. I think oftentimes we've really tried to think about what's equal. Rather than thinking about what's equitable and what communities need to be, we need to be successful. Now while we have groups in our in our classrooms, or in our schools that are diverse, oftentimes we think that equity suggests that what we do for the Latino population is what we should do for the black population is what we should do for the native

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population, not understand we even within those groups. They are different impacts and different things that impact those groups that make equity different. We talk about language and

LatinX population. We need to understand that, even within that we have to think about the origin of Spanish. As we think about the Spanglish from from maybe la that's different from the Spanglish from from maybe Oakland, when we think about Puerto Ricans and and New York, and all the different things in which we're engaged in.

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We can't say that we apply the same thing to those groups and expect equitable outcomes. And we've used that same notion as we think about blogs and squeeze everything about the Cuban box, think about Dominicans which can also be Latina X you think about those of African descent. And we really any I mean, our new world Africans that are now coming to the US, and we really have to really step back and think really critically about what equity means and what is this about what it's about.

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Now, I've presented some complex things about equity, but it doesn't mean equity as complex is very simple and you take that step back and think about engaging with people from where they're coming from.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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And I had one other thing to think I like what Tiffany brought up to have like it's a it's looking at it system wide right so what are the systemic issues that are happening, how does it impact different people. And, and sometimes I think when we, when we are where we fall short sometimes in terms of having these conversations is we might say but you know we have Tiffany, and you know Washoe School District, you know, we check the mark like we've already

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addressed, you know equity issues because she's looking at diversity and looking at all those kinds of things. And so yes we have that one but are we, I mean on one level are we supporting her, like, you know, are we giving her all the resources to do her, her job, or do you know how she wants to do it. And you know, but then she's in over, you know, leading efforts across the district, and so then the districts have to change as a system in order to have an impact then on students so the system meaning

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policy resources funding Yeah, but then it's, you know, the teachers, it's the administrators it's, you know, how are the students experiencing the schools and their outcomes, and they're part of communities right especially when we're talking about public schools especially but all schools but especially public schools because they're, they're charged with that mission to serve those communities and so, so that's that.

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So that to add that other layer you know that you know it's not as easy as like yes you know we have that one person or we checked off the mark either that little check box. It's a bigger, bigger question.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Let me add to that so that Tiffany doesn't get herself in trouble. So the question I think the answer to that question is no. And I think it's no because we again as simply as so rightfully said, we say because we have a person in that position. We're ready to go. But we don't think about those resources that it takes to get that done, and it doesn't necessarily mean. Oh, she needs books, I mean it's a matter what you're saying. Here are the challenges we face and we really need resources up we want to do this and do this effectively.

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And as we think about that and I again and I think Cynthia's right and Tiffany talks about this, we have to break it down. There are systematic things within this up, we have to look at. And we have to really look and see, are we really matching where these equitable needs are. And we're listening to where these equitable needs are. And I think if we don't do that we missed the boat, and then what we say is that we've tried to deal with equity.

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But Tiffany did x y and z. And then we bring someone else in, and they keep saying the same thing that Tiffany said, and then we keep running into the same cycle because we're not paying attention to the narrative. Sometimes with equity and I think that's something I mean since you brought this up before, sometimes with equity, we still get people that are not clear on what this means and want to say equal or we have people that want to say we provided an opportunity by providing this position. That should be enough.

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And we've been struggling with this for generations. The, the bilingual that, how many times a week but Jessica bilingual that, and we keep saying, Well, it's all right now. No, it's not all right now. We have to really step back and think about our desires or our intentionality. Does it do those things, do they match what it is we're trying to do from a resource life. And that's what's critical and important when we talk about STEM and want to embrace and engage stem, we put all the resources available instantly get it done.

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We need to have that same effort when we're talking about this very human issue of equity.

Bretton Rodriguez

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So I think that's a great transition, I think both of you gave so much there's so much, there's so many different ways we can go right now I think it's fantastic. But I want to pick up in particular on what, maybe some of these challenges are here in Washoe County, and where they are kind of at the high school level where they are the school system here. So Tiffany, maybe you can speak a little bit about some of the specific challenges. Are they you're facing, and maybe some of the ways that you're approaching these challenges as well.

Tiffany Young

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I will say in Washoe we have both unique to watch some challenges and then we have similar similarities to other district challenges. And the challenge with equity is that its equity, right. so you have to commit, and it means that we're going to intentionally layman we're going to fight when people don't agree. We're going to make provisions when necessary. We're going to step back and check our biases we're going to acknowledge that we have institutionalized racism and institutionalized practices. We're going to be willing to get real uncomfortable and own some things were going to acknowledge disproportionate practices in hiring, student achievement.

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We're going to have to systematically committee and we have to understand that people have certain levels of power and privilege where they can choose to no longer commit, they can step out when it gets to be too difficult, and then leave that weight, and then you have this wake of things that have happened. So some of the challenges that I know we haven't watched show is that it is not a small district, and people think

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that equity should happen because we say we want equity. You have to understand that systematically from top down, and side to side that work needs to happen and it needs to be continuous. So we can't have people going. I was equitable today. It doesn't work that way, equity is a mindset and also as a commitment and ownership to review your policies and decide whether or not you have any unintentional barriers to your hiring practices to review your grading policies to see if you are disproportionately monitoring what's happening with students to understand how your funding sources, and you're not leaving money on the table where money could be used in other places.

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Also acknowledging whether or not you are in fact building capacity for the people to engage in the equity work, we cannot slap equity onto a district or a university like a bandaid and not provide the healing that needs to happen for people to be successful.

Bretton Rodriguez

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So there's a question here in the chat and also I would encourage anyone if you have questions please throw them in the Q&A throw in the chat will, we'd love to hear from you all. But there's a question here about charter schools I was wondering, either Tiffany you or anyone else who wants to jump in if you want to speak a little bit about the way that charter schools relate to this as well do they exacerbating the quality or to make it more difficult, what what's the relationship that you see and maybe what's, how do you see things going in the future as well?

Tiffany Young

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You know I would, I would not, it would not be fair to say charter schools, right, as a whole, I think it depends on the charter school and depends on the structure, and it depends on and it depends on what the competition looks like we know that their districts and in ours we have a little bit of that conversation around choice. And so when you have a person that has been in a system for so long and all of a sudden they choose to go somewhere else.

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We cannot just point our finger at the place they went to, we need to examine why they left, and that sometimes are things we don't look at, and so we can't blame charter schools as a whole, we can maybe look at what's happening within the structure of how they're set up to be able to answer that question. And when then we also have to ask ourselves, is there something they're offering that we're not. We know that school systems are in control over all funding that comes to them; that's a statewide decision. And so if we don't really think about the legislative process the per capita funding that happens, the school districts not at fault for that because

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they're not in control of that they're doing with what they've been given, but if they don't have an equitable approach to disseminate those things, then it's going to land in what happens in our buildings, and if charter schools have less autonomy, to be able to do that, then maybe that will allow them some room to be able to make some of these decisions but I don't think it's fair to say and or, or if or the other one is better as a whole, but I think those are things that you want to really look at and consider.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Let me go to this a little bit and I think Tiffany is so right. We do have some charter schools that are really impactful and really effective and sometimes they get wrapped into those that are not really focus on the needs that we're talking about. But here's something from a systematic lens that's important to think about what you think about equity or we think about our schools and public schools across the nation. When we look at our public schools and who's leaving are pushed out. We have to think about templates and why but here's this here's something that we have to understand, of those who leave schools for private schools.

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It's 75%, white, of those who leave schools for charter schools, it's 65% of color. And so we think about school choices of where students are going, suggesting there's something within the system that's not working that are pushing these students out, but the choices the students are able to make all these families are able to make are quite different. The point is, and there's a point that was brought up earlier is that we have to think about our funding. And if we're funding our schools at the level that they're able to do what they're supposed to do.

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We wouldn't be pushing out our students, and we wouldn't really be pushing out of students of color who families are looking for the best opportunity for their children. But when we do that we push out. Students at the charter schools, or the private public schools, I mean private schools. We still have this population within public schools that we're not addressing at the level we need to address it. My bias is that we need more funding for schools, and we need more funding for schools and put resources in the right places. So we're not pushing students out.

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And what's challenging is that we have corporations that are getting involved in this at a level that they don't understand the equitable things that they're, they're affecting. I think about Seattle Public Schools, up until about four years ago so they didn't have charter schools or alternative schools, but the Bill Gates Foundation goes in and they funded this push for a vote for charter schools. But you're talking about a city with a very high achievement rate among their, the big population.

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But now charter schools are coming in and that's going to change the dynamic of what we understand about those populations and equity as it relates to that. And so that's that's that's a critical thing you bring up. I think Tiffany's right. We can't measure them all the same, but we're funding schools, this wouldn't even be a conversation.

Bretton Rodriguez

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So that's a question that just came through which I think is a good follow up question here as well. And that has to do with funding based on test scores for public schools. So the question or ask, Is this something that we should improve upon just something we should scrap. So, how do you feel about this process if you know what kind of pagan funding based on and test scores. Cynthia Do you want to maybe start off here and then we could go from there?

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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I mean I could speak on it more so on the higher ed level. So, I mean, because there's that while in the K 12 system that might be, you know, regarding test scores in the higher ed system

it's about performance of the colleges and being compared against one another so the Community College is compared against the four year college in terms of funding at the you know the inserts, in terms of state funding. And so I can speak to the higher level or maybe we could turn it over to the more the experts of the K 12 system and then, and then I could tie it into the higher ed.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Yeah, what do we will start so Tiffany maybe we'll start with you and then something will come back to you afterwards if that that works

Tiffany Young

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Well I don't know if we have enough time to actually have a funding testing conversation to be honest, and I can tell you that before I started working in public education, I thought that these things were simple fixes. You know you ask the question why can't this just happen, but there is such a long line that needs to be, and woven around testing, and you can have the conversation around the bias in testing the purpose of testing who's getting paid for the testing, why are we testing and what did the testing actually show us right and so those layers of conversation, lead us to how we land in higher ed right so

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That's the path that we go to this a P-26 conversation. Early Childhood to career. And so we have a K 12 conversation we have a higher ed conversation. We should be having a p 26 conversation continuously and testing, we need to really step back and ask what is it actually doing? And who is creating it? And what is the purpose? And for that funding, if I wouldn't say take testing completely off the board but I would say maybe redirect the funding and restructure what we're doing with testing, and why we're testing students, just to find out, get a better

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handle what it's actually doing for us because we have such brilliance in our students and such levels of gifts and talent and knowledge that we have created an atmosphere based on testing that is now caused our young people to believe that they are not intelligent, because they are not doing well on tests. And so the test does not determine your intelligence and the test does not determine your ability, but that's the system that we built, and that's the challenges that we face, so no one's going

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to say yeah we're going to just scrap all of that. So I say we need to redirect that funding and restructure the purpose and the use and figure out what our true outcomes are and consider who it is that are creating the test, and what they're creating the test for.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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And I think so, to lead into this, you know, the whole you know K through 20 and beyond conversation to so if those things are happening in the K 12 like one it's like, so students who are maybe not benefiting from the particular system that we've created, potentially, they're not coming into the our colleges were losing out on particular knowledge is and experiences that enrich our learning an opportunity in the higher education system. I think on another level to that we're often we often focus, which is, it is a good thing right we're focusing on the students and outcome but also even the educators in higher education we're training the educators were having these conversations we're

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building we're developing and and helping develop like our future leaders who are making decisions about these funding structures who are making decisions in terms of our testing. And so even in higher ed, like, not only are we playing a role like a very direct role in terms of the training and so forth will be providing an opportunity for students. But we're having a greater impact in terms of thought process to so like as a faculty member I could say like in my classes we're having like we're having these conversations, because to me it's important that my future, you know, my, my graduate, I'm

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teach graduate level classes but my graduate students who are pursuing leadership positions in higher ed and in K 12. They need to know how this impacts different students in different ways and what role they could play once they're coming into the systems, because yeah like Tiffany says and then sometimes you know this is a very typical thing and even in my grad papers like I always tell I pushed them to say like, you know, what are the implications of whatever topic they were talking about and. And often it's a question around they'll say something like well you know we need more funding. Well, well what does that mean right what does that mean And where will that money go and how will we think about money and how its distributed like we've

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talked about a little earlier to, you know what, what does all that mean, and then like even this question about whether do we even have testing so in higher education, aside from the state testing that happens in the K 12 level we also have the admissions test right that are also very inequitable in terms of outcomes for students of color. And in terms of having access even into higher education so even in that sense we're also playing a role, and some states have decided to use like for example the ACT as a form of their state measurement.

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In terms of outcomes of their students their student learning outcomes. But then you know how, what role are we playing in higher education so I think the this, the comment from Tiffany saying that we need to be thinking about k 20 and beyond, is very critical because it's not is not isolated

and we tend to work and very in silos even within institutions we tend to work in silos and we need to we need to stop doing that.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Could I say that two wonderful wonderful minds have explained this greatly. There are a couple of things to think about what testing, and I think Tiffany said it correctly, why, why are we doing this. 20% of our curriculum and testing. 20% of our curriculum and testing is our curriculum and testing is based on 20% of the population, suburban white to family heterosexual household. Well, our schools are more than 50% of color.

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They were saying to the population. We want you to be like this knowledge, language, culture, impacts me, culture, and life impacts perceptions and how we perceive things when we start talking about testing and talk about competencies, we start to miss the boat. About over a decade ago. Ooh, ooh, I did a study, and the kind of age hit you. I did a study over a decade ago, and I wanted to look at the difference in the achievement gap between comprehension, versus proficiency. Comprehension suggest you read a read a text, and you can comprehend

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the whole thing and you give answers to them, proficiency suggests that you look at pieces of what you're trying to measure the students understand sounds of letters. Do they understand words and context to the other seven pieces? What I looked at these two things I saw that Yeah, that was an achievement gap, based on test scores. But there was not an achievement gap, based on proficiency scores, based on the type of things you need to know about reading.

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So we give the students these, these Comprehensive Tests, and they don't do well with it. They can't read, that's not true. And then when we start to put these biases on what testing means as it relates to race, that becomes part of the psyche. Cynthia talks about when we look at this whole notion of even college entry. And then we start to even look at Colvin and college entry, who's getting access to tutoring for SAT and ACT.

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If you don't have the money you're not doing it. And so when we look at this college entrance, these test scores matter. But we're missing the boat and looking at those skills that talent that soon as a brings it to the table. And I look at a place like California for instance, they're starting to move away from just a CT and ICT and starting to look at other types of factors that can help look at students' abilities to be accessible and bring it upon a bit more equitable and an open enough diversity to happen.

Bretton Rodriguez

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So I think all these responses are really really fascinating. I wanted to change the conversation slightly so we're, this is actually building a little bit off something you said something or Cynthia. So looking a little bit at the educators kind of moving from the students and the student responses so looking at the educators and their role in all of this. And so one of the questions here asked, how would you recommend that we better prepare and educate teachers and administrators, both in K through 12 and also in higher education to utilize pedagogy that is grounded in equity, so kind of looking at moving from the students to to the educators a little bit. So, yeah, so anyone who wants to kind of jump in and kind of think about ways that we could really prepare teachers to answer these questions, or can engage with these issues.

Tiffany Young

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I think I'm on the other side of that so we get the teachers after they prepare them. And so then I do the other level of coaching so we actually leave the professional learning around cultural competency and I think some of the things we have to understand is that when we think about Washington for instance, it's considered a majority minority school districts so we're about 57% students of color and Washoe County School District. And then with our teachers being a majority white, and there seems to be, oftentimes, in some cases this misnomer that a majority of our white teachers cannot teach our students of color.

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And what I would say to that is that that is not true if they don't have the skills necessary they haven't had the proper education and training, and vice versa if the majority of our teachers who are teachers of color, and being able to teach our students of color is not a bonus that you get automatically because you're a shade of brown, but if you don't have the tools if you have not been prepared in your program, and then you come into a system where then you have someone like me that has to train and

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we have to unravel some things that have just been ingrained in you for so long. Then we have those challenges that we have to face. And so when I see what's happening with you in our College of Ed and I see what's happening with, you know, College of anti human development, and now with the College of Liberal Arts, some intentionality of providing context to the content, then we can do a better job of who walks into our schools to teach our students, because we have to understand that just because your license doesn't mean you know how to teach. And if we don't give you the tools necessary to continue to have the capacity growth.

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We're going to do a disservice to our students, black, brown, white, gay, straight, lesbian queer questioning intersectionality poor native, you keep going. It doesn't give you this bonus to walk into a space. If we haven't provided the capacity, you need to be successful.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Amen, Amen. I would have to say that as well she saw right, one of our challenges and what we do and this is something I push even in our school or college and and on the state level. We can't require one course and multicultural education and say they got it. Now, it has to be integrated, it has to be woven and as Tiffany said it has to be and there's an intentionality that has to be there. And until we correct that we're going to continue to get the same things. I did study.

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That's part of the book that I wrote on teachers and their use of cultural sponsored practice and multicultural at over 90% only 95% of white teachers said they took that course in their training over 95% of teachers have columns that they took that course of their training. When I asked, Did you use this and I taught it I interviewed about 40 to 50 teachers, and as if you use this in your training over 90% of black teachers said yes.

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I think a higher percent of London next to the teacher said yes. About 65% of white teachers said yes. But when asked, "Why don't you use it?" The main reason is because of schools and the children that were valued. They feel like they didn't have training, even though they took the class and I agree with the training part, or there were some factors that really were associated with just not having an understanding.

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And I think that when it comes to you taking one class you're not going to get it. And, and it's a relationship. You can't go on one day and say, we're going to get married and we know everything about each other. You have to engage, you have to be intentional about having intentionality about that. And until we correct that and change it and make it more integrated. And until we work with our schools and work with our departments like the one that Tiffany is a part of, we're going to continue to miss the boat, and higher ed we can talk about it

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a lot but if we're not engaging with that transition, it's not going to work. And then we get the students to college, and then Cynthia has to have this conversation again about how do we get you to understand this because they've had an experience that tells him that equity doesn't matter.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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And I think I mean something that Tiffany brings up to is this continual learning right so when we train them. But then, are there opportunities at their school sites to be able to engage in these

conversations and engaging the conversations in the, in the changing context of our society, right, because it's not just, you know, one class one training where you talk about oh there's differences and then there's inequities. Well, you know things evolve things change there's historical societal things that are happening that we should be talking about so that they could think about, well, how does that apply and how can I implement it within my classrooms in a way that that

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is productive right because sometimes, you know, we may teach in terms of what are some equity issues but then what do you do with it like what you would in sometimes it comes off in a bad way. Like sometimes I said I train mostly you know graduate students and so it could mean that maybe if I don't continue having these conversations that could mean that they take that and then they'll be the faculty in the classrooms, one day saying like so. Cynthia you're Latina, what do you know, what do you think we just talked about that, you know, so that we have to have these continued conversations and across the board, not just one class.

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I totally agree with that and not just for your white teachers and educators, for your non white too because I mean I've experienced those things with educators who are not white and who have very problematic views in terms of our education system and the way they treat other students of color. And so, everybody has to have these conversations. Same with like we're having, you know, even with faculty so at one level is like, what are the curriculum requirements for their certifications for them to teach. Right.

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So that's one thing okay well the school, you know, can be teaching particular classes and what is how it can be answered to diversity and equity issues being discussed in those classrooms. But then you know what about the other classes, you know, are the other faculty teaching in that way to, are they having these equity issue conversations and not just an education in the social sciences because a lot of times in higher education that falls into those disciplines and not in others, or they're not either forced or talked about or maybe they get that one training across the institution that, you know, people just keep on clicking.

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And not really thinking about applies. And so, yeah, so I think it's continued learning it's across the board and then in thinking about having those conversations about how you do it and I would add to this not just teachers that are going into our K-12 systems and future faculty but then it's also our counselors, and even training like we were often talking about educators and we know there you have a key role but even like our frontline workers the folks, the folks that are in the front desk and

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how did they treat our teacher our, our, our families, you know, coming from a background where my parents were Spanish speaking only like. I mean so many times I had to either

translate as a six year old for my parents or, you know, having to deal with negative interactions because they thought of my mom as less. And so what does that mean for me and how you see me in your school. Um, so yeah, so I think as training across the board, it's beyond educators everybody who's interacting with their students in our communities.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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And I'm a side note, sorry real quick. On a side note, we have to make sure that we understand that speaking Spanish in the United States is not illegal. We have no national language and our country is nothing illegal about speaking another language in the country. And sometimes you make it seem like we should only speak English. Now, we don't have that.

Bretton Rodriguez

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So I think these are all really really great points I want to kind of think a little bit about the makeup of the workforce, a little bit of this kind of educated workforce in particular, and think a little bit about why it's so important why so necessary that we have not just that we think about equity in the workforce as well? And so the question I want to ask is kind of. First of all, why is it so important that we have equity in the educated workforce and then secondarily, how do we promote a more diverse educated workforce as well I mean this is often something that we don't see promoted so how do we how do we get there basically Tiffany do want to start us off?

Tiffany Young

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Yeah, I'd love to and this is a conversation that I have on an ongoing basis and one of the things we have to remember is that diversity in a workforce is not just brown people so let's like just clear that up, because we have done such a poor job of language and and to the point that Donald and Cynthia made, and we think about what you speak another language. Language is a gift is not a barrier, it barriers the inability to communicate. Okay, I'm off that soapbox, but what we have to say is that when we think about a diverse workforce, what are we talking about are we talking

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are we talking about men, are we talking about women, are we talking about people of different racial and ethnic identities, are we talking about people with different gifts and talents, and so we need to first of all clarify that! see strategic plans and department plans and they say we want to increase our diverse workforce. What does that mean? and if you do it. What happens then do you in fact have an environment that will welcome the diversity? Will you hear the voice of the diverse people? Will you take the feedback and put it into practice? Have people been hired, retained and promoted?It is not just a simple conversation that people have all the time.

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And so when we talk about why it is important. It's important because we have like minded people sitting around the table making like minded decisions, giving us like minded results. And so if we want to truly change things, then we need to change who is sitting around the table and not for the sake of checking a box, but with power with decision making and so that we can really ensure the outcomes that we need.

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So diversity, for the sake of putting on the strategic plan does nothing for me, my children or my grandson, but if you're going to institutionalize and enter practice, then that means you're going to truly understand what a diverse workforce is.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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Sister Tiffany had taken on the gloves tonight. Just punching and swinging that's good, good, good. And I think she's right. I think we do have to. We have to help our community understand that we can use that word diversity loosely. When we talk about people of color. We can't even use that loosely because we still have to think about that language piece that's very critically important to a lot of our immigrant brothers and sisters . that's critical. We have to think about our LGBT community, we have to really embrace the notion of what diversity means.

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But when it comes to this notion of equity and ethnic diversity this equity act ethically twisted diversity. It's very critical important this is what my research comes into play. I looked at, if black kids had a black teacher. How would that impact their academic outcome? And I found that if a black student had at least one black teacher between kindergarten and fifth grade. They do significantly better over time, and math and in science, than those black students who had not one teacher of color.

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Now let me, let me give a side note of this. This is not to imply that every black teacher can do this work. But it implies that there's something there that connects these students and there have been follow up studies that have shown the same thing. But the Asian population in math, that has shown the same things. But there is a connection there that's very important and critical.

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I also found those states, and those districts that have a more diverse workforce, their achievement gap between that big population and white population is smaller than those that have a larger gap between teachers of color, and students of color. And that's something that statistically is different. And we talked about places like Washoe County, but we have 89% of the teachers white, and over 50% of the teachers of color. I mean students of color. That's a huge

gap that's hugely different from any other school and then another thing. One of the follow up studies about all this stuff that I did.

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I looked at teachers intentionality how intentional Are you in creating a culture responsive workforce and able to do it in a way that engages students for success and success was not measured by grade point average, and it wasn't measured by how well you did on a test lead to teach us talk about how success what some teachers said attendance increase. Attendance increased students of their participation in class increased their participation in those of those white teachers who I found had a high level of intentionality that they were very intentional on this.

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I wanted to find out why. Then what I found is that those white teachers who worked in the school with at least 30% of the workforce of color, were much better able to work in a culture responsive lens than those who did not. And only they can conclude from this is that as definitely talked about who's at the table for you having conversations but if I worked in a space where it was and I use analogy a lot of I worked in the space where I'm working with males, and I'm having a problem with my wife and I go and talk to males about my problems with my wife. I'm going to get that male lens and I'm going to get home and get to sleep on the sofa.

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I need some females to help me understand what's wrong with this male brain and get it right. And we need that diversity as we interact and engage, so that we're better able to interact and engage with our young people, and with each other, as we're doing this difficult work of teaching.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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And I say it impacts, I mean it's not just the student but it impacts right in our educator workforce and diversity there and you know all those things but then even beyond that. So then you know what is, what does it look like in terms of workforce beyond the K 12 beyond higher ed. and we're seeing that impact in terms of even or, you know, covered in the pandemic right and the lack of diversity in the health and the health fields. And so, like, and I'll give you an example. In my community where my parents live, it's a majority Mexican immigrant population.

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The COVID vaccine rollout and even just information about coven, it's been very limiting in terms of information reaching out to the immigrant communities. Either it's inaccurate or there is just none at all. And it's interesting that just recently a newspaper came out that they're the folks who are in charge of the rollout of all these things are just now realizing that they did not do enough outreach to the Latino and Spanish speaking community. Just like literally it was just published like this week.

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And, and so, you know, luckily my parents have me and I was able to drive them but even so who are the people that are making decisions about our community in terms of healthcare. I took them to get a vaccine. The folks out of 12 healthcare workers, only two of them spoke Spanish, And so there I was translating for the other seniors in the line. So, you know, it impacts us even later on it impacts all of us, it's not just the folks that are impacted more directly the Spanish speaking community the folks of color that are impacted you know all those people it's everyone gets affected by the lack

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of diversity like the lack of diversity the diversity in thought to I mean, you know, Don brought up you know even like who's making decisions and who's whose voices are we like centering in terms of how we make our decisions that happens in research, too. So earlier, you know, back in the day or not even that not that long ago, a lot of our information in terms of science and healthcare relied on white men like think decisions on women and women healthcare were based on science that came out from white men.

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And that's instant we need diversity in all aspects and decision making and thoughts and all in all aspects of our society and we all benefit from it.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Thank you all that's that's really that's really interesting that's really great. So I want to kind of take this, I want to kind of build off what you were saying about the look and the impact of coven in different communities. And so I was wondering if we could talk a little bit about the impact of covered, and also how it relates to equity with regard to education and how it relates, I mean there's a question here about school we openings as well, and some communities being disproportionately affected by the reopening of being at a greater risk of going back to school. I know this is a huge question.

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So I'm just going to go ahead and throw it out there and you could you could take it in any way that you would like to talk just a little bit about this intersection between the current health crisis and the inequality that we have and just looking at the these issues of equity in education as well particular as we begin to reopen so Tiffany maybe you want to start us off and we'll, we'll go from there.

Tiffany Young

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Yes, I'm fortunate to work with several amazing equity leaders across the country and their districts and I can imagine there's any district that is doing well. Right now I can't imagine that there's a large bucket of students that are just amazingly growing, everyone has experienced some level of challenge. But what this COVID situation has done is for people that either refused, or turned a blind eye to or were oblivious to the inequities and education system, see them more clearly now.

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And it's unfortunate that it is something like that that it took people to go Wow, I didn't realize that all these inequities were there, but even when you look at what's happening here locally you know we're bordered by two amazing tribal entities Reno-Sparks Indian colony Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and having conversations about putting hotspots in places Well, we've got 165 homes out at Hungry Valley that are Reno-Sparks Indian colony and a hotspot there's not the same as a hotspot in south of Reno

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and so people have had to be pushed to really start to examine some things and they're still struggling to figure it out. And this COVID situation has shown that the haves and have nots are wider and greater. Also, the assumption that people have made about the have nots. In capability, has been checked, because we have resilient communities that can thrive. With the right tools and resources. And if we don't assume in capability or lower level of intellect because of socioeconomic status. Then we further widen the achievement gap.

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So, this covert in equity situation has just blown people's concepts of poverty and intelligence and learning at home, and what resources look like, and has been able to, I think, really put a magnifying glass on some poor practices and I'm not just saying or Washoe County situation, but across education.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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I mean I think you also have seen it in terms of. I mean I want this so there's that it's the what's happening in the homes to you know like Do they have access to a parent who could help you know they A lot of it it's relying on the parent to like, or you know, do they have somebody who could help them with their homework and all that kind of stuff so that it adds to it. And let's be clear that like a lot of these inequities were, were there there was a level of it it just even got bigger and it's coming on and to light because more people are being

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by it. And so there's more focal more focused on these issues right. But it was always there was always a level of inequity there in higher education. We're also seeing the impacts of covert in terms of similar in terms of access to, you know, any type. We're also seeing the impacts of covert in terms of similar in terms of access to, you know, any type of technology, and I mean

literally any types of like do they. There's an assumption that everybody owns a computer for example, and that's not true. And not everybody owns a laptop, not everybody has Wi Fi, not everybody has a phone so some people may say well you know they can use their phone.

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Well, if the hotspot on the phone is being divided by five other people in the room, then it's not reliable and we're trying to use zoom which takes up a lot of that you know of Wi Fi, so it's equitable in that sense. you also have folks who. A lot of students of color, especially I hear the stories of being the primary breadwinner for the family. And now having to mostly focus on like wherever I could get a job I'm going to do it and that may mean me delayed

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my higher education, which then as research shows the longer that they believe that any type of break adds another layer of them less being less likely to finish a higher education, which then now they're potentially not finishing a college education but potentially, you know, furthering their debt load, which then makes it even harder to get out of that poverty cycle for a lot of the students, and you also have, you know, a lot of the students a lot of conversations have been coming around in terms

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or like well are people applying to college, and for a lot of colleges, they may see that in an increase because some folks may now be out of a job and they may see a higher education, especially in the community college system as an opportunity to either get back or gain a certificate or whatever. But then, are we looking at retention, like are they staying for the next year, and even in grad, like, We're focused a lot on on the issues impacting our undergrad students but even in grad school school like I know we were given certain topics that

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to kind of reflect on this meeting and I got emotional thinking about it because most of my students of color have had to deal with so much death. I mean just the emotional toll of it, not just even financial and learning opportunities. And when we're thinking about health to like in terms of health care for folks, pursuing stem degrees wanting to be doctors and so forth. The students coming from poor backgrounds are less likely to have those connections to then lead them into these things so things like interest have become so important for them but they can't do it right now.

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So even that for is furthering the gap in terms of opportunity for our students. Yeah, I'll stop there because of the emotion of thinking about it.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Well thank you all so unfortunately we're running kind of short on time, are very short on time. But I do want to kind of end with one final question for you all. And this is probably the biggest one and I'm going to ask you to do it in the least amount of time. So maybe if we can end with just maybe one thing that we can all work on and to build a more equitable or more equity in education. So maybe one kind of concrete stuff and then maybe we could end this idea of building equity or kind of ways that we can all build equity. So, Don we can start with you and then we'll go around.

Dr. Easton-Brooks

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This one Tiffany and Cynthia. I think one of the things that we really have to think about is that we have to stop making this complex. It's about building relationships, and we have to think about how we build relationships with one another and how we look at one another from a humanistic land. We all come with differences, and we need to embrace that that's a true fact about everything that we do and how we engage.

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When people are saying that these are, these opportunities are not provided for me, or these opportunities are not there for me at the same level we have to trust the experience of others, and be willing to help figure out how to correct our systems that have created biases, hate prejudices and really be intentional about changing those things so that we all have an opportunity to be successful and reach our potential whatever that might be. We're beyond just having a conversation now. I think your question about action is one that we really need to take seriously and get moving on, on making our society better.

Dr. Cynthia Alcantar

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And one concrete thing that is out. Sorry. I'm one concrete thing that I would say is probably look, look at the data, look at the data, if there's doubts, look at the data, I'll tell a story in terms of an equity and inequality that is happening in our systems that will be my brief point.

Tiffany Young

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And I'll just end with checking your privilege. Look at how you're using your power and consider if it's causing any differences.

Bretton Rodriguez

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Thank you. That's really great. Thank you for your final comments. Thank you for all of your, your comments, I think, I think this was really fantastic. I would like to keep going for like another

half hour 45 minutes, an hour. I know you don't have things to do, so I won't, I won't do that to you all. So let me just wrap up then I do have a number of people to thank if I could do so quickly. I want to thank the *Thought on Tap* committee, Carlos Mariscal, Daniel Enrique Perez, Meredith Oda, Katherine Fusco, Steven Pasqualina, and Caitlyn Earning. I also want to

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Give special thanks to Callum Ingrum, for helping to moderate the question and answer. And also to Gabriel Ortiz Flores for helping me think about and frame some of these questions. I also want to thank Deborah Malomog, Lisa McDonald and the College of Liberal Arts, as well as Chirs Stancil and Richie Bednarski for their support of tonight's event.

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I also want to thank our partners Laughing Planet and also KWNK where you can listen to this one, and also all of our events every week. I also want to thank our fantastic panelists. You all were really amazing. Thank you, this was really great. But also I do want to thank everyone who signed in and everyone who watched today I think was a great event. There is a brief survey once you sign off you'll receive the survey, please take a minute to fill it out, let us know what you think, and if you have any suggestions as well.

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And that's really it, so on the thought, I messed up the final line. And on behalf of *Thought on Tap* thank you so much, I'm Bretton Rodriguez, thank you all, have a good night.