

# All-Black, Pro-Black. Crafting Black Transformative Environments (Even in all White Spaces)

Elevating the Brilliance of Black Boys

Wednesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

# Land Acknowledgement



- ▶ Interrupt the legacy of injustice by acknowledging ways in which you perpetuate it and work to change it
- ▶ Begin with acts of healing and honest storytelling about how we have and currently still occupying land
- ▶ Commit to being a steward of that land - including the land, the waters, the plants, and the animals
- ▶ Create relationships with them. Not transactional one but ones that center trust, action, accountability, and love



# Ciera Young (she/her)

- Director of DEI
- The Bertschi School






A wondering...

Does my institution love me?

How will the  
**Black** children  
within your  
institutions  
respond if asked  
this question?

The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes create a dynamic, layered effect on the right side of the image, while the left side remains white.

What does  
institutional  
love look like?



# How do we implement institutional love?

Actively involve Black community experts.

Recognize the cultural significance of the Black community by following proper protocols and values.

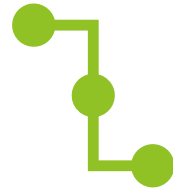
Meaningfully integrate Black cultural pedagogical approaches into the activities of the institution.

Providing the financial resources and social capital necessary to incite change.



# How do we implement these strategies on a granular level?

► Connection



► Care



► Content





# Connection

- Cultivating an environment where no one shrinks themselves to belong by creating inclusive policies.
- Policies must support students, families, employees, and neighbors.







# Care

- ▶ Supporting the social and emotional well-being of the entire school community.
- ▶ Care work must center students, families, students, families, employees, and neighbors.

# Content

- ▶ Do your homework!
- ▶ Creating transformative environments requires meaningful study and application.
- ▶ Organizations cannot build the plane as they are flying it...this is harmful to the Black people you serve.
- ▶ Use a robust amount of your financial resources to train your employees and board members.
- ▶ Vet future employees and board members for their knowledge and commitment to DEI

- ▶ How can you create institutional love on an individual level?
- ▶ How can you leverage your power as an individual to challenge your institution to become a transformative environment for Black children?

# Turn and Talk



- ▶ On a scale of 1(minimal effort) to 5(high performing), evaluate how your school's policies are creating connection, care, and content for Black people.
- ▶ How can you create institutional love on an individual level?
- ▶ How can you leverage your power as an individual to challenge your institution to become a transformative environment for Black children?

## Reflection Question



# Hiawatha Davis (he/him)

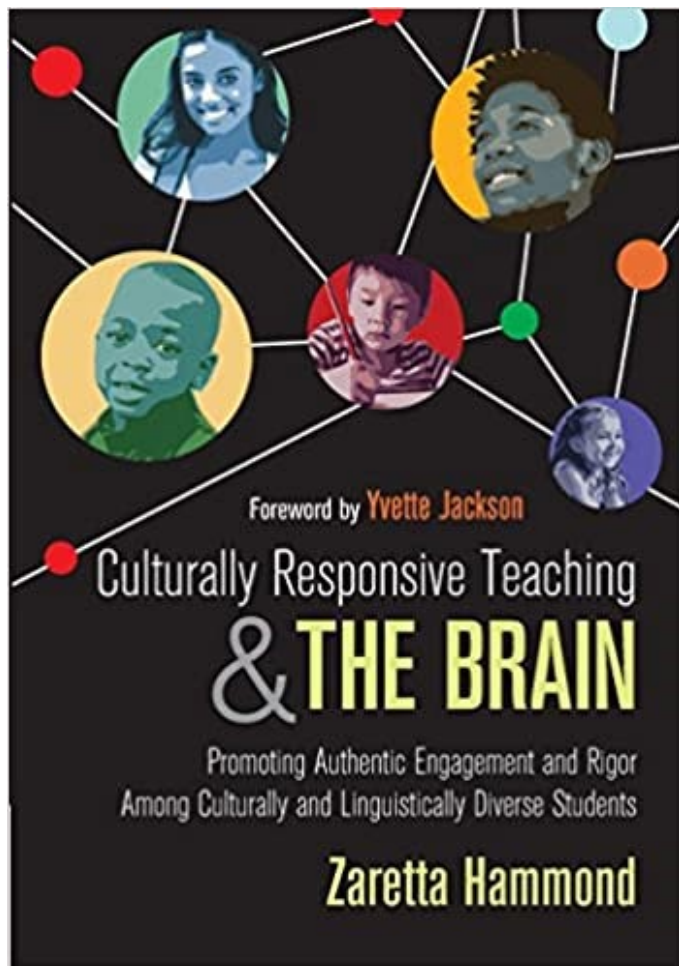
► Educator and Consultant

# Celebrating Black Boys in the Classroom









# The Foundation (Relationship Building)

- ▶ Meaningful relationships are the key to celebrating Black Boys within the classroom
- ▶ Black boys come from community based, collective cultures in which meaningful relationships are the foundation of all social, political, and cognitive ways of being
- ▶ Our brains are hardwired for connection (stemming from way back when)



Black boys cannot learn  
from teachers they do not trust

How do we earn the  
trust of our **Black** boys?



## Show

Show them you genuinely care about them

## Start

Start small and think big (the little things)

## Develop

Develop the family relationships (blend the home-school binary, which also helps bring their diverse cultures into the classroom)



Contrary to the dominant way of being in the classroom environment (which positions relationship building as a secondary issue related to classroom management as opposed to having a direct connection to learning)

# Re-center Black boys in the learning environment



- Re-evaluate how we as teachers exclude Black boys in perpetuating certain teaching/representational practices, then adjust

# Other ways to center Black boys in the environment

► Critically analyze the different ways in which your classroom environment mirrors dominant factory models of education (how things are positioned in classrooms like desks for example), then work to disrupt to these patterns in centering the Black boy.



# Center Black boys in your visual environment

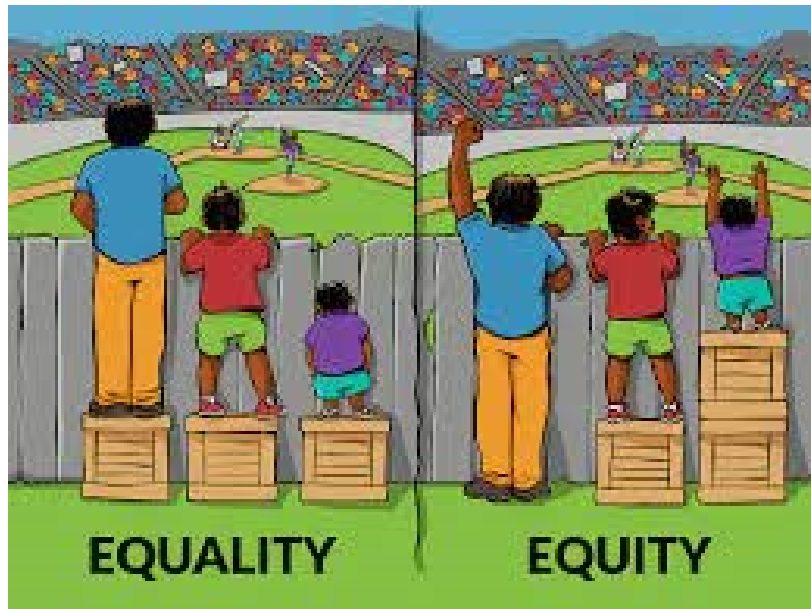
Books, signs, cozy areas, art displays, etc.





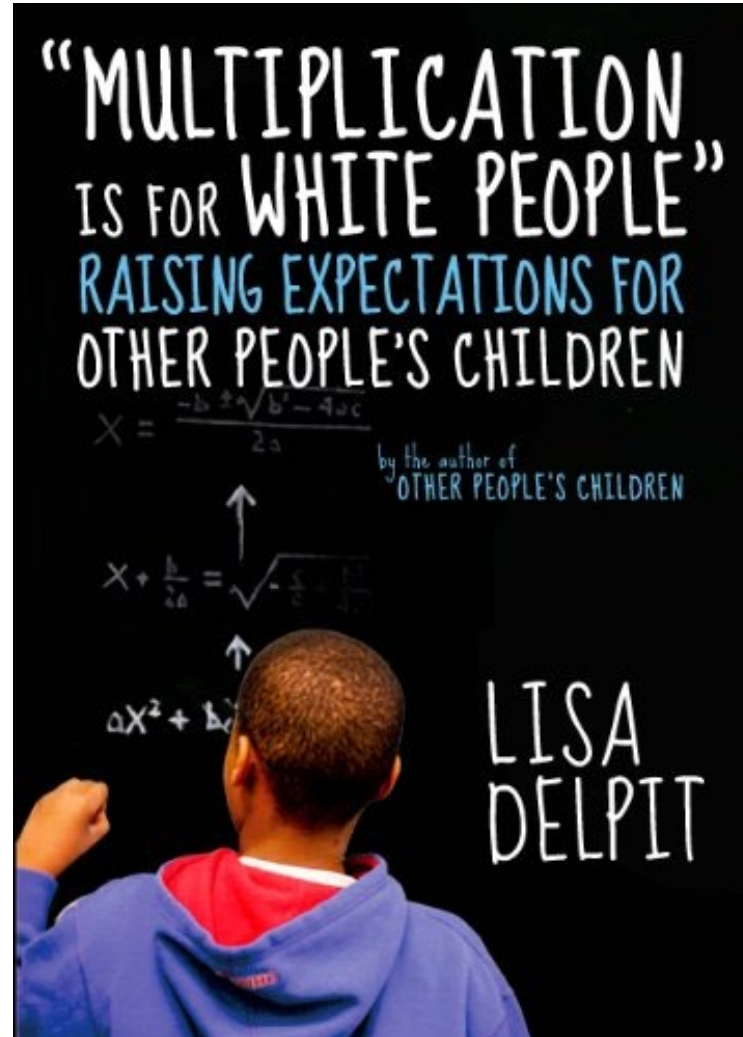
# Million Dollar Question

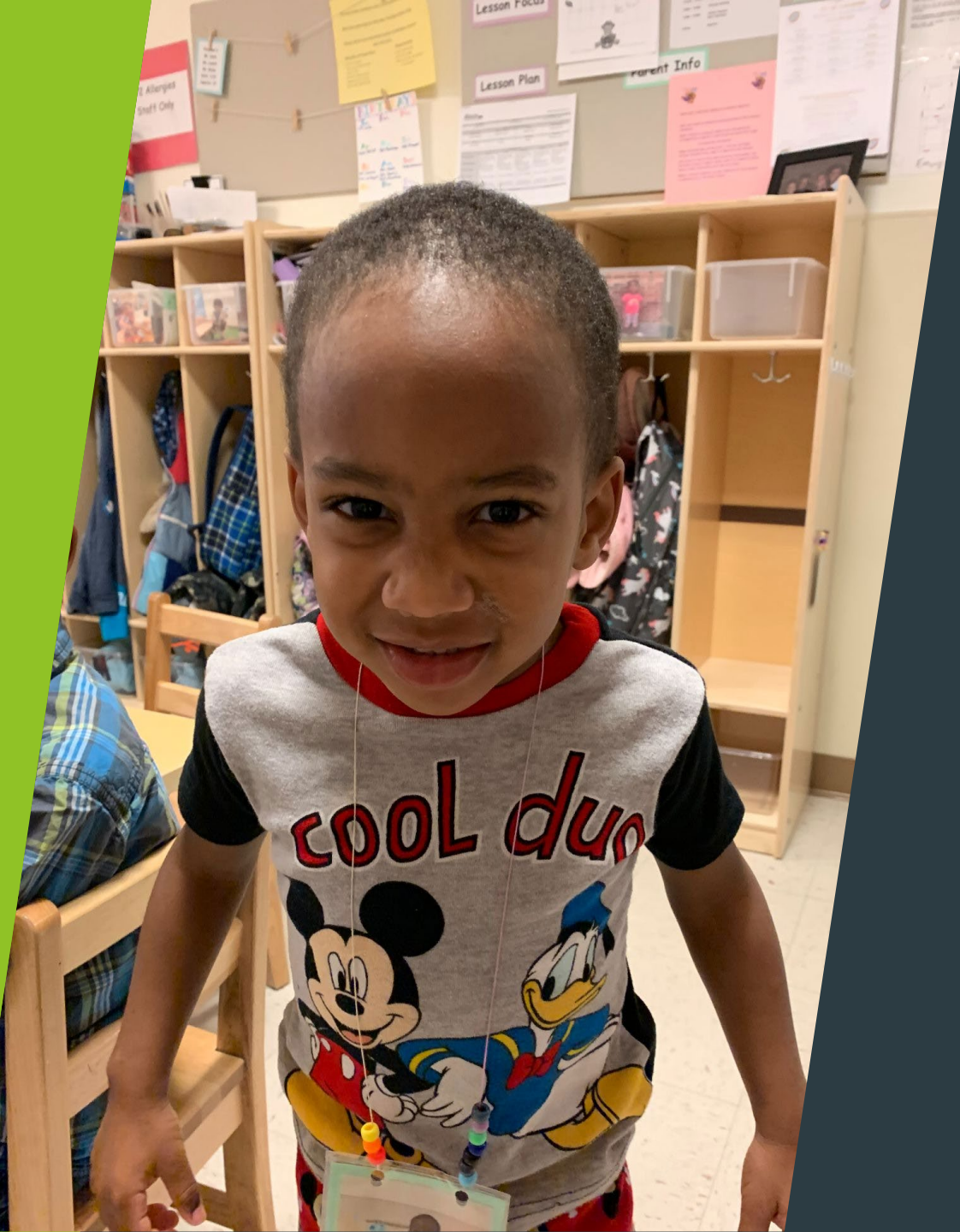
- ▶ As educators how do we engage in developmentally appropriate practices while still holding our Black Boys to high expectations?



# Become the “Warm Demander”

- **Warm Demanders:** “Expect a great deal of their students, convince them of their own brilliance, and help them to reach their full potential in a disciplined and structured environment”
  - Lisa Delpit, “*Multiplication Is For White People.*”





## What does the “Warm **Demander**” look like?

- Understand where your students are, but also be aware of where they are going.
- Positive, equitable, relationships support students in reaching their full potentials





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**Decolonized Mindset**

# I am...

I am a male who doesn't need to police how others perform their masculinity

I am a female who engage in behaviors this society see as exclusive only to masculinity

I am a White person who doesn't need to wound voices of color to feel secure in who I am

I am a voice of color who doesn't need to bruise someone else in an attempt to get closer to the proximity of whiteness

I am a Black person and I don't need to hate or dominate against those with darker or lighter skin complexation, against multiracial people

I am Latinx, some of my ancestors are descendants from Africa, and distancing myself from Blackness is distancing myself from truly accepting who I am

I work in the United States but don't need to reinforce a colonized mindset or only center the Black American experience in my work

I am cis-gender who doesn't need to add an additional layer of hate and discrimination to my Black trans, non-binary, or two-spirits. I can use my cis-privilege can create a safe(r) space



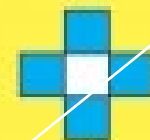
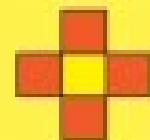
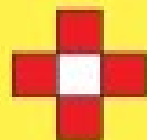
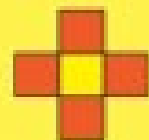
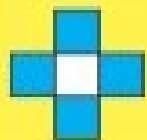
# Decolonized Partnerships



<b>Transactional</b>	<b>Relational</b>
focus is on the quality of a program	focus is on establishing and / or deepening friendship
can feel impersonal and non-intimate	accentuates a human to human, heart to heart connection
success gauged by attendance, quality of content or the "bottom line"	success gauged by personal engagement among people
task and project driven	motivated by needs of people; soul care
fueled by accomplishing goals	driven by sincerity of relationship
requires management	requires authenticity
lots of counting	lots of caring
tends to be superficial	tends to be genuine
Information oriented	transformation oriented



**DEMOCRACY IS INDIGENOUS**











# Breaking the cycle of wealth

Lack of Black staff and adults in your program? → Find Black elders and invite them into your program to share stories, to engage, once a week.

Lack of authentic, Native apparel? → Native Craft Fair at Daybreak Star in November and December. There are lots of gifts/ classroom materials you can purchase to support this community. They typically sell various crafts, games, basketballs, jewelry, fabrics, clothing, art, housewares, etc. Work with Nick Terrones to find opportunities to connect your two centers or to expose your children to more indigenous curriculum.

# Breaking the cycle of wealth

Decenter whiteness and western society? → Scaffold in opportunities and institutionalize more diverse traditions that are reflective of the community you serve such as eating with chopsticks, celebrating Lunar New Year, provide alternatives to Christmas and Thanksgiving such as Kwanzaa and Fall Harvest etc.

Ordering food for your program? → Diversity your supply chain. Agriculture can be a tough business and farmers of color need the same stability that white farmers need. We can give them that stability by making long-term contracts directly with the farmers.



- ▶ Black children are part of your community. How are you providing them the space and agency to craft an environment that allows them to thrive?
- ▶ How can we center Black mental health in our work and engage in Anti-Racist healing as a community?
- ▶ Where are we inviting opportunities to collaborate with people important to our Black children's lives - particularly collaborating with those who are not their primary caregivers?
- ▶ How can you create a non-threatening environment in which caregivers and community members feel safe in communicating and interacting with those at your school or organization?
- ▶ How are you socializing the community to operate, live, and work in a white world?
- ▶ How are you nurturing resistance and joy in Black children?
- ▶ How are we decolonizing ours and our community minds around the idea of what suspension, discipline, or child-rearing "should" look like?

## Reflection Question