Jessica Ellison: It gives me such pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker this morning, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings.

[applause]

Jessica: [laughs] Yes. I love it when we have celebrities in the education world, because they speak teacher language, so when we have individuals like Dr. Ladson-Billings, who knows how to talk to teachers its such a thrill to have them here with us.

Dr. Ladson-Billings is a Professor Emerita and former Kellner Family Distinguished Professor in Urban Education in the Department of Curriculum Instruction, and was Faculty Affiliate in the Departments of Educational Policy Studies, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, and Afro American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a member of the National Academy of Education.

Ladson-Billings' research examines the pedagogical practices of teachers who are successful with African American students, and is known for her work in the fields of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical race theory.

Ladson-Billings is the author of several critically acclaimed books, including "The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children," and her more recent book, "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question." Her work inspired our MNHS Teacher Education team in 2016 to build a program entirely around the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy and since then have served over a thousand teachers in this work.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Dr. Ladson-Billings.

[applause)

Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings: Thank you, Jessica. Good morning.

Audience: Good morning.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Oh gosh, I have been to Minnesota about three times in the last few months. I have great empathy for your presenter who can't come because of COVID because that was me a couple weeks ago. This thing is real. It's not a hoax. [laughs] I am delighted to be here, not only just to talk to teachers, but to talk to people who are interested in social studies. Do you know how rare that is in the world?

[applause]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I am a bonafide social studies teacher. I have been teaching social studies for many years. I got a master's degree in social studies education at the University of

Washington. I was a social studies supervisor for the School District of Philadelphia. I teach social studies methods for people who are interested in teaching in the middle grades.

I'm going to get started because I want to make sure we have time for you to ask questions and share your own experiences. I've called this presentation "Show Me the Evidence: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Primary Sources."

Let me just start with a picture. I don't know if you know who that photographer is. Usually, we know photographic evidence, sometimes by who took the photograph as opposed to the subject. The photographer is Gordon Parks who was a renowned photographer and cinematographer. I like to use this picture juxtaposed to that picture. People know that picture, let's start the alang.

It's a classic Depression-era photograph. When I use this with young folks, I say, "How are they alike, and how are they different?" Very important skill, even in reading, comparing and contrasting, right? That they're women, there's a look of despair. Some of the things that are different is that there are children in one, one woman is solitary.

There is this common human look on both women's faces of what's next, what can I expect? One of the things we want to do as we go into this whole notion of using primary sources, using evidence is to be able to look carefully to make conjectures, all the things we say we want kids to know how to do, we can do it with primary sources.

Let me back up a little bit. Jessica did a great job of telling you who I am. I am Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, that is just a fancy way of saying I am retired.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: You will learn I am not good at it at all. I'm the immediate past president of the National Academy of Education, which is comprised of 200 eminent scholars throughout the country and around the world. I am a fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Now, I got to stop and tell you about this because I became a fellow four years ago, but I never went to the induction because my husband was ill and he couldn't travel. He was so bummed because, they send you a list of everybody that was inducted the same year you were. I had Tom Hanks, Sonia Sotomayor, and Barack Obama.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: My husband's like, "I'm going, I'm going, I'm going." I'm like, "You never go anywhere. I'm going to this." I said, "I don't even think he's going to come." "I'm going to go just in case he's there." Then he got sick. The following year, I was sick. The next year COVID one.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Next year, COVID two. I called them because they sent out the invitation for the incoming class, and I actually have a few friends who are inducted. I said, "I'm coming because I'm signing that book." You know who else signed the book? Benjamin Franklin.

"I'm from Philadelphia. You mean I get to sign a book that Benjamin Franklin signed? Oh, I'm signing the book." I am a fellow there. I'm also a fellow of the American Educational Research Association. I'm a fellow of the Hagler Institute of Texas A&M. I am a fellow of the British Academy, that happened last year. I don't know what that means.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I have made up in my mind what it means. It means when I get to London, I get to have tea with the queen.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I've decided that's what it means because I know she got at least two empty spaces at her table.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I know two people she's not inviting, and I have it on pretty good authority Andrew ain't going to be there neither.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I can come and have tea, that's my belief. That's what I'm walking around thinking. I am also finishing up a distinguished visiting scholar at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers. More importantly, I am a teacher with 54 years of experience. I have been doing this for a very long time.

[applause]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I think it is the most important thing you should know about me, but not just who I am, but where I am from, matters. I've already alluded to the fact that I am a Philadelphian.

Before that man slapped that other man, I could recite the first line of that show because it was true in West Philadelphia born and raised on the playground where I spent most of my days. That's true of me. I am in West Philadelphia.

Of course, Philadelphia is so pivotal in the history of this nation to be able to teach in Philadelphia, to be able to take youngsters to Independence Hall and the Betsy Ross House and Elfreth's Alley, to be able to see all of the inventions of Franklin the library system, the postal system, so central to who I am as a person.

From there, I went to a historically Black college or university known as Morgan State University located in Baltimore, Maryland. That is a picture of Homes Hall, which is a central building. If you've been on the campus of Wisconsin, you know that Bascom Hall is a central building. Anybody know who that statue is in front?

It's probably not as easy to see. That's Frederick Douglas. In Philadelphia, we used to have iconic store called John Wanamaker's, now it's Macy's because everything is Macy's. Marshall Field's is Macy's. We have that iconic store, has a huge metal eagle. You would always tell people meet me at the Eagle.

If you want hundreds of thousands of people in Philadelphia and you want to meet somebody downtown and say, "Meet me at the Eagle," they knew exactly where that was, the eagle in the center of the store. On the Morgan campus, it would always be, "Meet me at Fred."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: "Where are you going to be? Just meet me at Fred." Frederick Douglas who was a native son of Maryland, very important. If you have not read David Blythe's biography of Frederick Douglas, you are missing a treat because this is a marvelous book. His writing is exquisite.

That also shaped me in some fundamental ways to be able to study with some eminent historians. Benjamin Quarles was my advisor, and he is perhaps the most eminent person on the role of Blacks in the American Revolution. From there, later I went to University of Washington.

This picture, you can't see the whole thing well because it's cut off for some reason, but this picture is really known as the mountain in the fountain. If you could see the top of the picture, you'd be able to see mountain right there. Now, people who know Seattle know it's a joke because you don't get to see this mountain, but eight days in a year.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billing: It's so cloudy and overcast and rainy. That mountain is over 100 miles away from the campus, but you can see it on those eight sunny days. You can look out there and go, "Oh my gosh." That's a question that's often asked at the University of Washington, people will say, or in Seattle, "Is the mountain out today?"

Because you get to see it. There, I got to study with some really incredible social studies professionals, James Banks, [indecipherable 10:50] , John Girolamo. I think every last one of them had been President of the National Council to Social Studies.

Then finally, I ended up in California and that is looking west on Palm Drive at the Memorial Church of Stanford University. Stanford is an incredible place in terms of resources and the ability to think and to grow.

One of the people that I met after I actually graduated, had earned my PhD, but Sam Weinberg followed me at Stanford became...was a student of Lee Showman. Of course, those of you who do primary source work should know that name, Sam Weinberg, because Sam had been studying the use of Primary Sources in the classroom for many years.

That's who I am and where I'm from. Let me back up a little bit and talk about what I would call a tale of four pandemics. Now you're going, "Oh my God, four, we got our hands full with one. What do you mean four?"

That's the one you know. The novel coronavirus, the SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19, that has put us in these strange settings, mask wearing, social distancing, remote learning, has had a devastating impact on us as a people.

I was telling someone that while we're having breakfast, that a social studies teacher is a perfect opportunity for us to talk about the 1918 flu. We've been here before, but because we don't study our history, we act like everything is new.

We've been here before, we saw the major study of three cities that did it in different ways. Philadelphia did it terribly. They pretended like it wasn't real and they lost thousands upon thousands of people. San Francisco did it halfway masks, but the masks were made of gauze so they didn't do that much.

St. Louis shut down everything, and they saved lives. That's the one everybody knows, but it's not the only one. Those of you in Minnesota know this one. Why do I call it a pandemic? It just happened in Minnesota. Maybe it's endemic, Gloria, but it's not pandemic.

It is pandemic, because what I heard from colleagues around the world, would you guys think you're the only one who have this problem? Calls from the UK talking about the Stephen Lawrence case. Emails and texts and calls from friends saying, "You don't know what we do to francophone Africans here, particularly if they are Muslim.

Calls from Canada, all you all want to rush up here. Trust me, when they dug up all of the bodies, they will told you how we feel about people who are different. Australia, you see what we do to indigenous people in Australia? It is pandemic that's for some reason, human beings use very superficial differences to persecute one another. That is a pandemic.

The economic one. We are all struggling with these gas prices and the cost of food and rents and housing, all going haywire. It's pandemic because when you do something on one side of the nation in the economy, it impacts the other side of the world. People in the US don't buy things people on the other side of the world can't make them. It is pandemic.

The one that we know intellectually but we keep pretending like it isn't real, is of course the coming environmental catastrophes. We are seeing it all over. I use these fires in California because my grandchildren all live in California. They tell me how bad the quality of the air is.

They are athletes and they're like, "Grandma, we can't even work out outside is so bad, the quality of the air." We've just seen what happened in Kentucky. That's not normal for these kinds of floods to be happening. The weather is changing and it's changing around the world. Europe is experiencing some of the hottest summers it's ever experienced.

We have some cities that we know with before centuries in will be underwater. Venice will be gone if we don't do anything. Miami will be gone if we don't do anything. What's interesting about this particular pandemic is that our young people are most concerned about it.

A survey of about 25,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 indicated this is the thing they're most worried about, and link to it is their concern that people like you and I won't do a thing about it.

This is what we are up against. We are in the midst of these pandemics. I know it sounds like a lot of doom and gloom, but I want to suggest to you that there is a ray of hope and I grabbed that ray of hope from this Indian novelist by the name of Arundhati Roy.

If you have not read this piece that she wrote called "The Pandemic is a Portal," let me just advice you, it's not behind a firewall, put your name in and put Pandemic is a Portal and you'd be able to read it. It is a powerful, powerful statement. Puts this whole thing in perspective for us.

Let me share a piece from it where she says, "Historically, that's my favorite word. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us." Or that's the operative word, that's the word of hope for my perspective.

"Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world and ready to fight for it." Now I think that's the place where teachers live. The place where we begin to imagine another world and fight for it.

We live there because we have another generation in front of us. We are hopeful because we have that generation. We're not just looking at people in our generation. What is this new world going to look like? Well, I would also say, in addition to pandemics, we are facing an endemic concerning what we can teach.

This graphic map of the United States is showing you all the places in pinkish or beiges, I don't know how it's showing up for you, where there's legislation against teaching anything about race, legislation about teaching anything called "Culturally relevant pedagogy," legislation against social-emotional learning.

Everything now is CRT. Everything that we think people don't like is CRT. I want to suggest to you that while it is politically motivated, its impact on our field, on our profession, is profound. It is one of the things that is keeping people from going into the field. It's one of the things that is chasing people out of the field.

Then the silly part about this is that people who propose this legislation, they don't even know what they're talking about at all. People keep saying, "Well, I've seen you do a couple debates with...or interviews and things with you, you seem to have tapered off." I said, "Because I can't have a debate with somebody who doesn't know what the topic is."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: It's like trying to debate with a two-year-old about a bedtime. They don't have a concept. Here we are in this particular moment. The funny thing about Wisconsin cracks me up. If you know the state, Wisconsin only has two law schools in the entire state, Marquette and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Critical Race Theory was begun in the late 1970s, early 1980s. Where? At the University of [laughs] Wisconsin-Madison law school.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Probably more than half my legislature has a law degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They already been exposed to it. Can I just drag, snatch your law degree? Should I put you out of the legend? That's how stupid you are.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Just how stupid you are. My name has been dragged across this country. I got dragged at the Texas State Legislature one week and the following week, the Governor's Honor Guard is escorting me through a program. I'm like "Do you all know who I am?"

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: "No, you don't." We know that the political games are going and in some eras we could ignore them, but they have a direct impact on what we're trying to do. People ask me about critical race theory and K12.

I stopped saying, "It's not tough." What I say is, "Critical race theory is teaching the truth about our history." Now, if you don't want me to do that, say so. Let's not hide behind it's this dangerous thing. You're here to talk about culturally relevant pedagogy.

You probably know it from this book. I actually just put out the third edition. The book that will never die. Every time I think I'm done with it, the publisher calls, "It's really selling, can you update it? Can you do this?"

You probably know that if you are educational research nerd, you might know it from the American Educational Research Journal article that I published back in '95. That's the new book. I always find these joyous little boys. I love this. That kid looks so happy and that's the way we want all of our young people to look.

You may know it that way, but I'm going to give you a quick and dirty explanation of culturally relevant pedagogy. I'm using what I hope is an equilateral triangle. If it's not, don't blame me, blame Microsoft, Bill Gates, any of those people that I asked for equilateral triangle, that's what they gave me.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I want an equilateral triangle because I want to underscore that all sides of this are equal. You cannot have two sides and have a triangle, cannot have one side, you need all three sides, and they need to be equal.

The first side is one that most of us know, and that is academic achievement, but I've modified it to talk about student learning, because we have so distilled academic achievement down to test scores.

Anybody who has spent any time in a classroom knows that young people, children learn a lot more than we could ever test. Some of the things that they learn are just not testable, but are essential to their learning.

Are the middle school people here? All right, I love you people because that's the hardest job. I thought I was going to be an 11th grade social studies teacher, because 11th grade is the best job. Oh my God, those people get it. They are so with it.

My certification was US history and in Philadelphia at the time it was at 11th grade. Everybody

knew that was the best job so there were no vacancies, so they put me in eighth grade. The worst job.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I don't care, I will fight you over this, the worst job. Anybody who also teaches science knows something called metamorphosis.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Eighth graders are at the larvae stage.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They are unattractive, I don't care. I have four of my own, they were all unattractive at that point, and supersensitive over every little thing. "What's wrong with you?" He's looking at me and?

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: You have someone who's standing before you who is...First of all you have amazon women and midget men. That's the dynamic that you're dealing with. She would stand before you with her two pigtails, a face full of pimples and a 38 double D bra and you go, "Oh my God."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Now, the truth of the matter is this is all going to come together nicely in 11th grade.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: It's not going to happen while you deal with them. My hats go off to all my eighth grade folks, because you got something on your hands. If an eighth grader learns how to organize a notebook, that's a major learning, but it's never going to be on the test.

It's going to be something they will use from here on out. When I say student learning, it is things like kids knowing how to get organized, kids knowing how to get class on time. Kids learning how to work cooperatively in a group. Never get tested but they are a part of the student learning.

It's the difference between what youngsters looked like in September when they came in and what they looked like in late May, early June when they leave. That to me is student learning.

Our previous education secretary didn't understand the concept of a growth score, but that's what we're interested in, kids growth.

I'm going to talk more about each of these. The second concept, cultural competence, is what I would call the most misunderstood one, because people think, "Oh, well, I just need a list of dos and don'ts." No, you have to understand that culture first of all is so flexible.

I can say this certainly in Minnesota because you have similar population demographics that we have in Wisconsin, so you know that you probably have a fairly sizable Hmong population. When these families first came, we have very stereotypical notions about who they were.

I've worked with Hmong graduate students who have studied three generations among immigrants. First generation born and raised in Laos, still learning to speak English. Second generation, born in Laos but pretty much raised in transition, coming to Thailand and the Philippines and into the US Mainland.

Third generation is born here, and that third generation struggles to communicate with that first generation. We've said stupid things like, "Oh, these Mongols are going to get married at 14." Not here. In Laos that might have made sense if there were no opportunities.

We know for example, the fact that we have young Hmong students coming to colleges and going on to do great things, that their culture has adapted, like everyone's culture. We totally misunderstand the notion of cultural competence.

It's not dos and don'ts, it is allowing young people to bring that culture with them. You should know that on the campus of University of Wisconsin Madison, one of the most popular courses is Hmong 101, the language, because that third generation doesn't speak the language, but they want to, they want to communicate with grandma.

They want to be able to communicate with elders. It's the ability to bring your culture with you while also learning to be fluent and flexible in yet another culture. For most kids of color, that other culture is what we think of as the mainstream.

For White students, they are not exempt. They're not going to live in these encapsulated bubbles. We'll talk more about that later. They need to know a culture beyond their own.

Then the last concept is the most ignored. That's the one where the CRT stuff is under attack, the sociopolitical or critical consciousness, the ability to use what you are learning in school, whether it is literacy, whether it's mathematics, whether it is history, whether it is other notions of science, to solve a problem that you care about. We want our young people to be problem solvers.

Those are the three tenets. If you don't remember anything else, please remember those three

things, student learning, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.

Let's dig a little bit deeper. As social studies people, we grapple with this all the time, depth versus coverage. There is no way to start with, "The age of exploration."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: ...and end up at COVID. Not possible, not possible. You have to make some choices. I tended, from a very long time, to teach a more depth and conceptual approach to history.

Why? Because one of the hardest things to learn is time and chronology. It's not easy. You're standing there teaching about something that happened at the turn of the century, and students are saying, "Were you there?"

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They don't get it. It's not their fault, because time and chronology really is linked to where you are in the chronology and where you are in time.

Do you remember as a little kid you took Christmas two years to come? When is it going to be Christmas? When is Christmas coming? Oh, man, it's not Christmas yet? At my age, Christmas come every six months.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I still got Christmas stuff on the table. My husband's like, "When are you going to put that away?" I'm going to be, "Christmas before you know it, don't worry about it."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: It changes as you change. I realized that trying to get kids names and dates wasn't helpful. I needed to tell them about experiences. I need to help them make some comparisons between their lives and the lives of people in a particular moment.

Yes, I give them timelines, but we try to plum those timelines so that versus coverage is it on, is never going to be different. We're going to always struggle with that. We shouldn't believe that high failure rate means that it's rigorous. Maybe high failure rate means we just are not teaching that well.

The idea that our job is to catch kids, to fail them, is totally anathema to what teaching ought to be about. We should want high accomplishments, high effectiveness. We do want to find ways to make sure that kids master what it is that we are teaching. We got to move away from this

notion that what we do is put kids through a sieve.

You put them all in, and you push, push, push, and only the ones that come out on the other side are worthy. What's left in the sieve, we toss away, or maybe you should do this. Maybe you shouldn't consider post-secondary education. Maybe you should see if you can get a job at Walmart, not knocking Walmart.

I'm saying that we often have this notion that only certain kids should be able to do certain...I don't believe that. Culturally relevant pedagogy's not built on that.

Instead, culturally relevant pedagogy is built on the concept, metaphorically, of the net. Can you imagine first responders heading off to a fire saying, "Let's go see if we can save some people." Mm-mm. They always go with the notion that "We're going to try to save everybody. We're going to catch them all."

I am crazy enough to believe that there are some professions in which there should be zero tolerance, zero tolerance for failure. I'm going to catch a plane this evening.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I better not have a gate agent that said, "Some of our pilots is pretty good..."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: "...but we got about 20 percent, they just not that good." I'm going to rent me a car if that's what they say. There should be zero tolerance, and there is in the FAA, for failure. That's essentially what they say. Nobody can crash planes, zero.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I actually think there should be zero tolerance in the police force. Don't tell me about some bad apples. If you a bad apple, you don't belong in a police force. Your badness is rubbing against somebody's potential goodness, and you're spoiling the whole barrel. You've got to go.

Yes, I'm crazy enough to believe that there should be zero tolerance for bad teaching. There should. You are doing life and death work in the same way that a pilot is, a police officer who has been allowed to carry a firearm. You have these young people's lives, their futures in your hand. Zero tolerance.

Student learning is all about ensuring that our kids are learning, and it's funny that the place where the battle is, is over what they should learn.

The cultural competence, of course, as I mentioned to you was the ability to be firmly grounded in one's own culture of origin and fluent in at least one other culture. I want to give you an example that may seem a little strange because I don't want to talk about kids of color.

Let's talk about an experience I had on a farm, a dairy farm in Wisconsin. We have a program called the Wisconsin Idea Seminar. If you don't know, Wisconsin Idea is the boundaries of the state or the boundaries of the university.

Now, we say the boundaries of the world are the boundaries of university. We take folks who are new to the campus around the state for five-day field trip. Doesn't that sound like fun? Five days with academics on a bus driving around the state, but it turned out my favorite stop was the dairy farm.

Of course, my colleagues teased me when I told them I was going to do this thing, because they're like, "You Ms. City Girl, you going on a farm?" "Yup. I'm going to the farm."

What I loved about the farm. Number one, the farm had been in this family since the Civil War. You already just hit my sweet spot. Civil War? OK. Yes, let's talk about that because that's really my area of specialization.

They had been awarded that farm by the federal government for their participation in the Union Army. There were three generations of farmers on this farm when we went to visit, all of whom had graduated with a degree in dairy science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

More importantly, there were about 11 interns on the farm with them the day we were there from Portugal, from Japan, from the Netherlands, from Brazil. I was like, "Oh my God." Here are these little Wisconsin farm boys, and we have in our heads who they might be, not at all, very fluent in the ability to talk cross-culturally.

They had, in my mind, received the culturally relevant pedagogy experience because they didn't graduate from Wisconsin's Ag school and head off to New York to work a farm over there. They went back to their farm, to their community, and they'd all been to these different countries.

That's what I mean. We should not expect just because a student is White that they're not going to have interaction and experiences beyond their communities. They need to be culturally competent so they can do a good job.

The third piece is the sociopolitical or the critical consciousness. One of my favorite complex human beings, Thomas Jefferson. I know there's this about Jefferson and there's that about Jefferson. He's a human being. On the one hand, he can talk about liberty and freedom with the best of it, on the other hand, this man is sleeping with a slave.

He's complex. He's a human being. I love this point that he makes here when he says, "Above

all things, I hope the education of the common people will be attended to, convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty."

Jefferson is the one who thought public education was essential. Because remember planters didn't think they needed to spend money on education. Their kids went to private school, their kids had tutors. They sent their kids to Europe to be educated. The rest of you all don't need to learn nothing.

Jefferson said, "No, we're not going to be able to maintain a republic unless most people really do understand the tenants of democracy." Social-political consciousness is about helping our kids solve the problems of democracy.

Here's the point that I think people get hung up with. It's not the teacher's problem. It's not you bringing your agenda. I've been in schools and I tell you I've eight classrooms, everybody's studying the rain forest. I asked the question, "Where's the rain forest?" We don't know.

This is something she want to do. She interested in this. This is not us imposing an agenda on kids, it's us trying to determine what are the things kids most concerned about. It may seem simple to us, but the kids have to have the experience of trying to solve the problem using the tools we give them. It may be something as simple as my school has a hat rule, and it is not applied fairly.

I've seen that problem solved by kids, where they actually do surveys and they collect the data and they put the report together. They show on the graph that if you are Black or Latinx, you're going to get stopped with a hat on. If you are White, you probably won't get stopped.

Fortunately, in this setting, a wise principal took the data to the staff and said, "We have to do better. Either we have to more equitably apply this rule, or we got to get rid of this rule." That's what critical consciousness is all about.

I'm giving you that as a basis, but now let's talk about primary documents. Who is that cute little girl?

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I'll admit, yes, it's me.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: If you looked at a picture like this, and I'd say that you want to start close to home, that is what we in anthropology call making the familiar strange.

Look at something that you think you know, and then begin to make sense of it, so maybe just asking students to bring in an cold old photo. Of course, we have to put old in quotes because our kids are going to bring us something from three years ago. "That is old. I was in kindergarten."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: There's a lot of little things in this picture that strike me. Number one, look at my shoes. I don't even know if we do those shoes for kids anymore. It was a belief at that time that you had to "strengthen their ankles." They restricted us in a particular way.

That particular skirt is handmade. I'm trying to think of what else. Oh, the ribbon in my hair. We don't do that with kids anymore. We could talk about all kinds of things, like how gendered photos tended to be back then. We want to make sure you know this is a little girl.

There are certain things that are giveaways in terms of how old I am. Somebody want to make a guess?

Audience member: [inaudible 40:32] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Right on the money, three. What told you three?

Audience member: [inaudible 40:38] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: You had something to compare it with. Anybody else have a reason why they thought maybe three?

Audience: [inaudible 40:46] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Teeth, yep, got enough. It looks like a full set of teeth. My hands, look at my hands, kind of pudgy. There are all kinds of little indicators that when you want to start with primary documents, we don't want to bring up something from the 1700s and try to have students make sense.

Start with something quite familiar for them or use a familiar item to develop skills in using these primary sources, and so we'll have students learn to identify, authenticate, and to contextualize. You know what that thing is?

Audience: [inaudible 41:25]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Cast iron skillet. Anybody ever hear it called a spider? That's another name for it, and you would ask students, "Why is it called a spider?" If you've actually got one, it has some little feet on it, little nubs to let it sit up a little bit, so there, again, looking for the most

familiar things.

For some kids, that would mean looking in Grandma's cabinets and cupboards for something old, a familiar item to begin to learn to do the skills that you want them to do as good social studies students.

Here's an old picture. This woman is Cora Lyles Woodward. She was born in the late 1800s. What do you notice about the picture itself? Anything? It is a black and white picture. It's grainy.

Let me go back a minute. When you said black and white, it triggered something. This is not exactly black and white. They might know what that technique is called?

Audience: [inaudible 42:46] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Sepia. It's got a brownish tint to it. That comes in in a certain era, in the late '40s, early '50s. Get back to Cora. This is clearly black and white, and it's grainy. I chose this picture because...and this is horrible. This is a typical academic thing, show you a bunch of data that you can't read.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Let me help you. Here's Cora right here. She is a wife. This is on the 1920 census I believe. She's a wife. You can't really see it, but they said Cora is a mulatto. Do you know what a mulatto is? Mixed race. Barack Obama was, "Mulatto." Halle Berry, mulatto. Mariah Carey, mulatto.

It's interesting to me because Cora isn't that fair, and her hair is pretty coarse, but they list her as a mulatto. Sorry. At this time she has a daughter named Elizabeth. She has a daughter named Jessie, and she has a daughter named Laura. That's the 1920 census. Let's move forward. This is even worse, but this is the 1930 census.

Here they are down here. She's still married to Robert. She still has his daughter Elizabeth. Either Jessie had a sex change because in the 1920 census, she was a daughter now she's a son, so she would be one of the earliest documented [laughs] sex change people. Then there's Laura. There's Robert, George, Dorothy and there's Ruth.

Five girls, two boys. These people are interesting to me because Coralas Woodward and Robert Preston Woodward are my grandparents. How did she become mulatto and then become, "Negro?" I didn't show you that in that second one. I think part of it has to do with the fact that she's listed as literate.

I know that Jessie didn't have a sex change because that's my mother.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Think about it. Sometimes when kids get these documents in their hands, you have to help them approach documents with a sense of skepticism. The enumerator unlike today when you fill out your own, which incidentally, there's a lot of errors and the ones we fill out. My father regularly lied in the census.

He's always telling me he had two and three bathrooms. I'm like, "Where is the other two bathrooms?"

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: "Why am I standing outside waiting for..." He said, "I don't want the people in my business." There's always this sense in which you cannot always trust the document, but that's the fun of it. Then on one hand, it looks very authentic, it looks the thing you want to...There's questions of possibilities.

Even in that first one where it says Elizabeth, that's my aunt Eliza. Her name is not Elizabeth. She was never Elizabeth. If you go back in our genealogy, she's named after my great-grandmother whose name is Eliza Sims. It's funny if you trace my family, there's certain names that come up over and over. Eliza, Cora, Robert, George, over and over and over again.

We still have those names in my family. We have a lot of Roberts and Robins. I don't know why they love those, and a lot of George's. My husband's family is Charles. My husband's name is Charles. He introduced me to three of his cousins.

All of them name is Charles Billing. I'm like, "Are you serious? That's Charlie Frank. That's Char." I'm like, "Get some new names you guys."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: It's a tradition and I was sharing with someone. One of the things that first day of class I do with students is have them read that little short piece in Sandra Cisneros, "House on Mango Street." Just have them read that two-page chapter, "How I got my name." Have them read it and then they share with a partner how they got their name.

Some kids know big elaborate histories, some kids don't know. That's OK, because now you got something to go do, go find out from folks you live with. Do you know how I got my name?

Interesting to me I've had instances of young women named after fathers. I'm Stephanie, my dad Steven. I've had a Davida, my dad David. I've never had a young man named after mother, interesting. Sometimes a mother's maiden name becomes a name like Fitzgerald now my name.

That's an interesting thing to take a look at. I will say to you, don't be afraid to link the old and the new. March on Washington 1963, very iconic. Of course, would bring Martin Luther King's most cited speech, I have a dream out of that.

There were people marching in the streets just a couple of years ago. We asked ourselves, what's the same? What's different? I will tell you people used to go dressed up to the march that's for sure.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: People wore ties and jackets. Now we show up in our come as you are garb, but that's OK. That street protests have a very long history in democratic spaces. Don't be afraid to link the old and the new. Don't worry that "Oh, this is way back in time and the kids won't get it."

You want them to be able to see similarities and differences. You use primary sources to compare and contrast. We saw linking the old and the new but what about if you link the new and the new?

Both groups have the right to protest. Ask kids what they noticed that are similar, what is different? The whole point is that we want kids to be able to make sense of the documents and what they represent, so that they can enter into the broader historical narrative.

Don't forget the everyday items. Sometimes you think you can only use stuff that has quote what we think of as historical significance. The idea that you might use a Korean American cookbook or look at this one, the, "Usborne Cookbook for Boys."

Why would somebody write a cookbook for boys? That's another conversation to have. Even when we know that many of the top flight chefs tend to be men. It's very male dominated. This notion that we thought, "Oh no, cooking is what women do."

There was a sexual stereotyping at the time that did not give opportunities for kids to explore all kinds of different things. "Sylvia Soul Food." I chose this one, because I've been to Sylvia's and I can attest they really got this stuff and it's good.

To use say a local person who has a cookbook or a historical cookbook. I found this one interesting, "Southern Cookbook." It says, "322 old Dixie recipes." Boy, this is a minefield. All kinds of stuff to talk about.

We know probably a Black person did not write this cookbook. Look at the iconography. What is it saying about who was cooking and particularly being a southern cook? Don't forget to use those everyday items, those opportunities that you can get ahold of.

Don't think, "Oh, I only can use the stuff that comes in the curriculum or the stuff that they send me from the Minnesota History Society." You can use all kinds of things as primary sources. Then help your students create their own artifact sets. I have "artifact set" in a quote. This is actually an assignment I give students to do.

For example, how about an artifact set that explains farm life? I don't expect you to bring a plow in, but you can take a picture of the plow or the tractor, where these are things that are a part of farm life where I grew up.

How about one that explains hip-hop? One of my favorite artifact sets that doesn't explain hip-hop was a student who did artifact set on the Grateful Dead. Oh, my God, that was such a good kit. She had the tie-dyed T-shirt on there. She had a bunch of tickets. I saw the Dead here. I saw him here. I saw him. She had programs. She had photographs.

The idea that kids can begin to curate their own documents. One that might explain life in a local church or one that explains your school. Most kids go to a school named after somebody and they don't know who the person is. That to me, is the first thing you do.

How did this school get its name? Is it named for the area? It's the West Park Elementary School. Is it named for a person? It is the Thomas Jefferson High School. Is it named for a local person? So-and-so who used to be was first school board president.

Begin to help kids curate their own artifacts. Then include some common experiences. This is one of my favorite things to do. Number one, because it's cheap, but start out with a bunch of pennies. If you've got one on you now, pull one out because you'd be in better shape to do it than looking on the screen.

I had the kids look at pennies and I set this scenario for them. Let's imagine that we are from another galaxy. We're time travelers. We end up on this planet and there's nobody here. What we find all of these copper disk, bunches of them.

What is it that we would say about who was here based on looking at this artifact? Tell me, let's look on the first side. What is it you want to say about these people? They had beards, see? Right there. It's very clear. Anything else? They're men, that's of no wonder they're gone. It's all men.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: What else?

Audience member: They believe in God.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They believe in God. They believe in some deity. Anything else?

Audience member: They have a language system.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They have a language system.

Audience member: They have liberty.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Liberty, maybe that's this guy.

Audience member: [inaudible 54:30] God.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Maybe he's the God. Think about that. Not only do they have a language system, but what else do they have?

Audience: [inaudible 54:38] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They've got some kind of numerical mathematical system. We don't know what that little thing is, but it's there. Look how they dress, and kind of uptight, don't you think?

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Oh, let's flip it on the other side. What else do we learn about these people?

Audience member: They made things.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They made things. Here's obviously some building.

Audience member: [inaudible 55:06] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Or they're bilingual?

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Look, this language is not like that language.

Audience member: They're self-important.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They're self-important. What tells you that?

Audience member: The fact that they're using Latin to communicate.

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They're using an even more ancient language.

Audience member: Rather than just saying what they want to say, they're...

[crosstalk]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They'll say it again. They're going to pump themselves up. Anything else?

Audience member: [inaudible 55:35] .

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Yeah. Guess what? Maybe Liberty.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: See Liberty sitting back in here? Can I tell you the kids just flip out when they see that little thing in there? They're like, "I never saw that."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Yes, just having them learning to look closely at a familiar object is a place that I think you should be considering when you're starting with primary documents because we have things that we use all the time and we don't pay any attention to them because they're so common to us.

That's a very easy exercises. Now, if you have a little bit more wealth, you can use this one, but I don't know if you're getting all these dollars back.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: They give you your pennies back, so you might want to stick with replication here. The paper notes in this society are so intricate. Now, number one why are they intricate? Concern about counterfeiting forgery. They're very, very intricate, but they have so much meaning.

Everybody flips out when they find that I...Oh my gosh. Again, you see the multiple languages, you see the signatures, you see the serial numbers. You ask questions about why do we use serial numbers? It's around counterfeiting. It's also around theft. A lot of times, having grown up, "No, I don't want to do that."

Having grown up in Philadelphia, I'm right near at Mint. Of course, every time I took students to the Mint, everybody's idea is, "I'm going to steal some stuff in there." No, you ain't going to steal nothing.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I'm going to tell you. You're not going to steal not one penny out of the Mint. They got this thing down to a science. The fact that they do create these serial numbers is really for banks and banking when there's theft and robbery, that there's a Secretary of the Treasury and there is a treasurer, two different people.

Then this very intricate, the plates. The students their minds are blown when they see the plates. If we look carefully at the eagle, you'll notice that there's actually 13 arrows in one of the talons. Why are there 13 arrows? 13 original colonies.

We tie our history to our every day in our currency system. Because I've had the fortune to travel the world, I give my students examples of notes from other countries, try to choose countries that don't put on them what they are. Very colorful notes. I love using the Swedish krona, but you don't know who any of those people are.

The British stuff you know because Queen Elizabeth has been on there for a zillion years. That's my girl, she's like what? 90 something. I give them different notes and sometimes they'll have a British monarch on currency that's not the UK, because they are part of the Commonwealth.

Money is a wonderful place to use as a primary source to have kids make sense of. Then is the size of the notes are different, some places a bigger note, more money smaller note.

We have a uniform size for our notes. They're all this dull green, but they're very, very intricate. You can tell where it was minted. Everything on there means something. That's a wonderful explanation and they are notes.

They used to be legal tender. They're not any more, they're Federal Reserve note. What's the difference between that? There's all kinds of very close to home things you might use in a culturally relevant way to have [indecipherable 59:57] . The debate we could be talking about is when is the Harriet Tubman $20 bill ever coming out?

Also use the primary sources for what I would call intergenerational of family learning. Want to bring your families in. You could choose any of these particular incidents. The November '63 assassination of John F. Kennedy, April 1968 death of Martin Luther King, the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana, 9/11, or the Hurricane Katrina.

Those are all iconic photos of things that occurred and you start with your students asking the question of their family members, "Where were you when?" I was standing outside of the prestige pharmacy when this occurred. I was a high schooler when this occurred.

I remember someone running outside of the pharmacy, it's a pharmacy/soda shop. I'm one of them happy days' kids. Everybody, you're going in and have a soda jerk make you a drink.

I remember somebody running outside saying, "The president's been shot." I also remember that I thought, "Well, he's the president so they got the best doctors, he'll be just fine." My shock when I got home and saw how downcast my parents were that he did not make it. I remember everything shutting down.

I remember the first action that happened when Jack Ruby then shoots Lee Harvey Oswald. All of these things and all of the conspiracy theories that have span out of that, the grassy knoll and a single shot and all those things.

I was a college student when this occurred. I had actually seen Martin Luther King in person give the speech at my local church. I remember the despair. I remember the riots that occurred.

This is Jesse Jackson. The students see Jesse Jackson and they go, "What? That's Jesse Jackson?" Yes, that's Jesse Jackson, Ralph, David, Abernathy, Hosea Williams. I remember him being in there. I remember the prophetic speech of being to the mountain top and I may not get there with you and him not worrying.

He says, "I don't fear any man." Clearly we all got up in the middle of the night.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: Though we need to see the dress. I'm one that taken with that dress, but I thought she was really interesting and her entire life story and her changing of what it meant to be a "princess".

This I remember because my daughter was on her way to high school. She's going to school at morning and everybody saw it the first time and thought, "Oh, what a tragic accident." Within minutes it was, "Oh no, it's an attack," and the conversations that we heard in school about what it all meant.

Then of course, Katrina was a seminal moment in my presidency at the American Educational Research Association because, actually, I experienced Katrina.

I was in the UK. I can see the images on the TV and I'm thinking "Oh, what country is this?" No idea that this is my own nation that had no...Did not have the wherewithal to save poor people in the midst of a disaster. It's a wonderful thing. Think of some iconic. Where were you when. Clearly, in Minnesota, there may be the whole episode around George Floyd. Let me wrap up at this point.

Just say that, the use of primary source material not only invigorates what you do, but it also helps students to engage and link up to it. If you're going to do a culturally relevant approach, your primary source ought to give you some knowledge, that is that student learning part. It ought to allow them to link their culture as well as grow in their knowledge of other cultures.

It ought to help them as they begin to pose, what I would call questions and problems of democracy. I'm going to stop there, make sure that we have some time for you to ask any questions that you might have.

The visceral reaction was to the term "Negro." OK. I think anytime you are going to be using something in which the language is "arcane," you bring that up front, you're going to encounter the following. I'm not someone who thinks you should not teach "Huckleberry Finn."

Yes, you should but before you put that book in someone's hand, you're going to say Mark Twain uses the language of the time, it is offensive.

Because we see it is not giving you permission or license to use it here, is offensive and hurtful, but we will encounter it. You have to make sure you prepare them for what they will come across. They'll actually look for it once you tell them, but it's different than "Oh, it's just here, we're pretending it isn't."

You might give them a little bit of a history of how the naming has evolved over time, the power to give oneself a name is an important power that Black people didn't always have. Indigenous people did not always have. We change over time. I would try to prepare them beforehand, not giving to them call.

I would always start with maybe three or four questions that we should always want to ask about the census. It's OK not to have an answer. Maybe one of the questions is, how do we know that this is true? It's OK to say, we don't know, we think so, or how might it be possible that there's inaccurate information. Let them speculate, let them play with it.

We forced our kids to have this convergent thinking that everybody got to come up with the same answer at the end. You don't. It's the work of historians. This is what we think based on what we know, but there may be missing information that we don't know. I don't know how many of you ever played that, "Where's Waldo?" I have a daughter who's younger than my son, so I got sucked into Waldo.

Just looking at all these intricacies, what story is being told on the page? Again, that's why I think you start with the familiar before you head out to the strange. People want to treat it like a recipe. It really isn't about that.

It's about learning how to cook. It's learning the level of flexibility that I don't have that particular element, so I'm going to use this, because this will do a similar thing for me. It's a philosophy. It's not a strategy.

If you actually read "Dreamkeepers," you will know that those teachers were very different about how they practiced these certain activities. They were similar around belief systems. They were

similar about their ability that the kids had the ability to learn and that it was their responsibility to teach them.

They were similar about believing that it's important to create some level of community. They were similar about you have to be skeptical about the information that comes before you.

One of my favorite experiences was in a classroom where this very poor school district, very old textbooks, and there was a line in the sixth-grade textbook that said, "The peoples of Nigeria are traditional and primitive."

Rather than say, "Oh, that's not true." The teacher said, "Oh, what do you think that means?" They had this conversation. She then had a whole series of slides, and she asked them to guess, "Of these urban spaces, where is this? Where is this? Where is this?" About 15 of them.

They were, "Oh, that's Tokyo. Oh, that's in Berlin." When she got through, she said, "Every one of those slides was taken in Lagos, Nigeria." How do we square what was in that textbook with these photographs that were taken in the actual place?

Then that creates a level of skepticism that you want, not cynicism, but then in an old textbook writing about something remote, sometimes the authors mischaracterize certain things. You want to be clear.

I often like to go see if I can find old histories about a place where we are, because kids will go, "We don't do that." We never did that before. I was asked to do a textbook piloting. I was teaching in the community, it was Black and Puerto Rican.

Everything they had about the Puerto Rican community was wrong. The kids were like, "What is a taco?"

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: I would explain, we don't need that. I said, "I know." That's what they want to put out into the world. Being able to have them develop the criticality is part of our job. Try to move away from someone says, "Oh, I had my checklist." Say, "You know what, I talked to the woman who invented the work."

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: She said that she never made no checklist.

[laughter]

Dr. Ladson-Billings: You don't have to be that snarky. What you're going to do is, say to people,

"No, this is about a philosophy. This is not about a checklist. You're never going to get it with a check."

Just like, "Is there a checklist for driving?" Probably. "But is that going to help you drive?" No. You have to do the driving, and it's the same thing with the teaching. Thank you so much.

[applause]