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Joy Williamson-Lott

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INTRODUCTION

Ralina Joseph

Associate Professor in the Communication Department

Thank you so much for joining us this evening. My name is Ralina Joseph and I am an Associate Professor in the Communication Department. And I also direct a center called the Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity. And I am so thrilled and honored to be introducing our speaker for tonight, Dr. Joy Williamson-Lott. So before we go any further if I could ask everyone to please turn off your cell phones, put them on silent, so they don't go off like mine did in class this morning. Dr. Williamson-Lott is the seventh speaker in the UW’s 11-part year-long series on privilege. She is a Distinguished Teaching Award winner, a dynamic lecturer, a committed mentor, a creative problem solver and a brilliant scholar. She's also an incredibly loyal friend, and she's really hilarious too. Her research examines the reciprocal relationship between social movements, particularly those of the middle 20th-century, and institutions of higher education. She is the author of multiple books, the most recent, *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower: Black Colleges and the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi*, examines issues of institutional autonomy, institutional response to internal and external pressures, and the relationship between historically black colleges and the civil rights and Black Power movements. She's also written about the Black Panther parties, educational programs, the history of social justice and education, and the portrayal of the black freedom struggle in high school history textbooks. She's currently working on a new book that is tentatively titled *Jim Crow Campus: Higher Education and the Struggle for a New Southern Social Order*. And this book examines regional convergence with regard to Southern higher education between the late 1950s and the early 1970s. Professor Williamson-Lott will talk with us about how valuing history can guide the future of education. So please join me in welcoming Professor Joy Williamson-Lott.

FEATURED SPEAKER (2:23)

Joy Williamson-Lott

Dean of the Graduate School

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for coming out on this rainy Wednesday night. I deeply appreciate it. Thank you, Lena, for that introduction. I also want to thank my friends and colleagues in the College of Education. I see many of you out there. This is a dirty business. If I had to do it with anyone, I'm glad we're in this together. My WIRED colleagues, women investigating race, ethnicity, or women investigating race, ethnicity and difference. I see you out there also. My family, my sister made it all the way from Olympia even though she's sick, which I deeply appreciate. My parents will be watching this on video as will other members of my family. I want to thank my wing women, Ralina Joseph, Wadiya Udell, Janine Jones, and Alexes Harris who couldn't be here, and my husband and partner, Joe Lott and our babies, they couldn't be here. they're four and six, so they, they're being put to bed very soon by someone else. You all make it possible and totally worthwhile. So thank you.

So, are you ready to go back in history? I'm hoping that you'll enjoy this more than you did your high school history class. At least, more than I enjoyed my high school history class. So, since the American school, the public school was founded in 1836, is when the public schools as we know it emerged. Since that time, the lore of the public school is that it's free, it's deliberately inclusive, everybody was free to attend, welcome to attend, that all students would be able to receive an equal educational opportunity. It was to be the great equalizer, the great balance wheel in American society. Students would have access to the same kind of curriculum, they would have access to similarly, similarly trained teachers, and the same school schedule, again, equal educational opportunity, and they were supposed to be able to succeed based on merit and morals alone. So it's a good story, right? So, even back in the 1830s, it wasn't as deliberately inclusive as the marketing material would have had you believe. It was for a small subset of whites that the public schools for, didn't alienate in this time period. For instance, Jews and Catholics were completely alienated

because of the use of the King James Bible as a textbook in the school and if you know anything about Jews and Catholics, you know, they don't use the King James Bible. So when you're using it as a textbook, and it's required reading, you can imagine why Jews and Catholics felt alienated and why Catholics, particularly on the east coast, created a parochial school system, a separate school system.

People of color were not in this mix. So like I said it was for a certain subset of whites. But even whites in the south didn't have access to a system of public schooling until after the Civil War. And blacks in the south didn't have access to a system of public schooling until deep into the 20th century, even beyond the middle 20th century.

So my point with telling you this is that public schools have never been unadulterated or pure spaces. They've always been places that have alienated large segments of the American populace. So, they do the same today. And I know this does not come as a surprise to many of you. Many of you study education like I do or think a lot about education in the way I do. And we know that this is not a new phenomenon, many are studying to, studying it in order to try and improve the quality of educational experiences and outcomes for our most vulnerable populations. So historians aren't usually considered in this mix of people who have something to say and contribute to educational reform, thinking forward about education, how to make progress towards some ultimate goal, but historians actually do have a lot to offer. One we actually, what happen is this drives me absolutely crazy. You have people who love to use history and memory. They appropriate it for their own purposes. It's a good old days kind of rhetoric. Oh back when my, when I was in school, when my people were in school they assimilated and never had any problem with it. What's wrong with your people? This is good old days way of understanding things. Well historians actually studied the past and can disabuse you of those notions that should you ask. We have facts. We know how to interpret the facts. And we can use that interpretation to, to fuel and better inform the kind of debate that occurs today around education. Another thing that historians have to offer is that we can tell you what worked and what didn't. A lot of people like to think that the reforms today are new. As another thing that drives me nuts just because it's new to you, doesn't mean it's new. And I'm not trying to draw a straight line from the past to the present. I'm not trying to say that the past is a prescription for the future. I don't believe that by any stretch. This is a very different context than any past was. However, there are lessons that we can learn from the past that can help inform the way we go about charting a path forward. So these are a couple of the things that historians have to offer. And this is what I want to do. In this talk tonight, talk to you about some facts, some interpretation of some facts. The way I'm going to frame the talk is really about progress and push back. And so we're going to, we're going to take you through this journey, this educational history journey, where people are making progress particularly around African Americans, but then there's a major societal pushback that stalls that progress, and even brings it backward. And then finish by talking about the lessons, I think we can learn from a better understanding of this history. So as I said, I'm going to focus mostly on African Americans. But I'm going to talk about other groups as well, because you can't tell the story of American, of America, in black and white.

All right, you ready? All right, let's do this. All right. So before the Civil War, it was illegal for anyone to teach an African American who was enslaved in the south to read or write. There were severe penalties that could be meted out against you if you attempted to teach an African American who was enslaved to read and write. They were free blacks who lived in the south as well as the north but the majority of the southern part of the black southern population was enslaved. And the reason it was illegal to teach black enslaved people to read and write is exactly what Frederick Douglass talks about in his narrative, one of my favorite people of all time, one of my favorite books of all time. If I could have named our kids like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, I would have, but I don't think that would have gone over too well at home. But this is an absolutely amazing book to read if you haven't read it. And so this is a part of the story where he talks about his white master, talking about the perils of literacy for black people. After this quote, he says, "Now I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom, that it was literacy." So this is not necessarily education in the way we want to understand. It's certainly not public education. But this is, this is education in a very basic sense, it's about literacy.

What was happening, so the reason it was so dangerous, was a lot of it had to do with the reading of the Bible, so this is what a lot of black people were trying to be able to read. And when you can't read the Bible, I always say the Bible's like statistics, you can make it tell you whatever you want it to tell you. And so whether you read the Old Testament or the New Testament it's a different God, right, and so the God that white slave

masters were teaching black people about was this, the vengeful wrathful God, the slaves obey your masters. But when black people could read, as you can imagine, they were attracted to the New Testament, which was all about humility, and loving thy neighbor and these kinds of things. And so being able to read the Bible, to be, was, was a way to be, if not physically free, mentally free. So that's, which was considered incredibly dangerous. So moving forward to a time period, I'm not sure how much you remember from your high school history classes. There was a time called Reconstruction in the south. This was where, this is after the Civil War. I'm going to be using the words Republican and Democrat now. But that is not what the way we understand Republican and Democrat now, is not what was happening during Reconstruction. Okay, so just, I'm going to use them, because they're important because they show you how quick shifts have huge impacts on African Americans and for schools, schooling for African Americans. So this is a picture of the chapel at Alcorn. That's a black college, a historically black college in the state of Mississippi. So, during Reconstruction, the South loses, the South was predominantly democratic. When I say the South during Reconstruction, I'm really talking about the white South was democratic. The winners of the war the quote unquote, North were Republican, so Abraham Lincoln was a Republican. So Republicans say to the democratic South, we don't trust you to run your own affairs, you lost the war. We don't trust you to run your own affairs. We want to figure out how to get you back into the union. And so the Republicans send Republican, they appoint Republican governors in different states and legislators. Blacks are also enfranchised, black men, I should say are enfranchised after the end of the Civil War with the 15th Amendment. 15, 14, yeah, 15th Amendment. The 13th abolished slavery, the 14th is equal protection of the laws and 15th was enfranchisement for black men. And so you have some black men, also in legislative positions. So you have biracial legislatures, so it's incredibly different than the South had looked previously. So when the, this is during Reconstruction, when these black legislators and their white allies were there in these different states, in Mississippi, they set up Alcorn University in 1871. The first institution like its kind, was publicly funded, was federally funded, but that's still public, was through public funds and in a remote corner of Mississippi. And it's not purely altruistic the way that setting up Alcorn, a lot of it had to do with stopping the bid to desegregate the University of Mississippi. So it's not purely altruistic, but Alcorn exists. 1871, it was, they received three-fifths of the funds that were available to this kind of institution in the state, which is a lot. So the majority of the funds, so it was well funded, had black and white trustees. They had generous support from the state legislature and all students received, it was a teacher training institution, all students received the kind of education that you would want of your future teachers with lots of classical subjects and pedagogy, and a smaller amount of it, what was called industrial training. This was training for work. There's this giant battle between, over the curricula at the time, because it's all about first-class citizenship, second-class citizenship for blacks. So this kind of institution at the beginning was educating blacks towards first-class citizenship and educating those teachers who are getting their degrees there accordingly.

So Reconstruction ends in 1878. Rarely can you say when a historical period ends. You can with Reconstruction. It ends in 1878. It's a compromise brokered on the backs of blacks. It's about the White House. You remember back with Al Gore and I mean that, you think this is bad, like what happened this time around? The other, this was this was a compromise literally brokered on the backs of blacks in the federal legislature. And it, what it, what happened is that all the Republicans and the federal government left the South, that was part of the compromise. So they got, they left the South and left blacks to fend for themselves, basically. And so, these racist whites swooped back in and take control. Democrats take back control of the state legislature, not just in Mississippi but in other places also. And these newly elected Democrats, they fire the black trustees and appoint only white trustees. They reduce the annual appropriations. They abolish state-funded scholarships. They downgrade the curriculum. And then they renamed the institution Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College.

A little while later, this, his name is Vardaman, the governor here, he was governor of Mississippi between 1904 and 1908. You can see how he feels about African Americans. This is, but one quote that I could have chosen about the governor's attitude towards African Americans in general, not just in Mississippi. So what he does is he obviously discourages black aspirations at any opportunity. And what he does is he reduces the salaries of the academic faculty and increases the salaries of the vocational faculty. So this is a major switch. This is moving towards educating blacks towards second-class citizenship or third- or fourth-class citizenship, from first-class citizenship. The shift in curriculum is important in my point here. And so by the early 20th century Alcorn University had been downgraded from a bachelor's degree-granting university to an agricultural college, to an institution that taught menial labor in the guise of teacher education. That's progress and pushback. Alcorn is started, Alcorn is gutted. Alcorn is not the

same today. Remember, I'm ending this story here in the early 20th century? I don't want you leaving here thinking, "Oh, that Alcorn." Don't do that. It's a different institution today. It's a reputable institution today, but back in this time period, this is exactly what happened. So more progress and push back. So schools exist. So like, so when those black legislators and their white allies were in the state legislatures, that's when public schooling in the south, the system, the school system in the South was born. That's why when I said that whites in the South didn't get access to public schooling until after the Civil War, it's because these Republican legislators, created public schools for blacks and whites. When those Republican legislators were kicked out, the public schools remained for whites, particularly the high schools. So there are, there still remained black elementary schools, but very few public black high schools. And when I say very few, I'm saying like one per state, and I'm not exaggerating, most of the high schools for blacks were private, at, particularly in the early 20th century. So the progress is schools now exist, it's not illegal now for blacks to be literate. And some of these schools were actually quite high quality, and had a ton of redeemable features in them, including the teachers who cared deeply about the students and they could be rigorous so there were some very high quality segregated schools. But the pushback was that obviously they were underfunded. And let me give you a, give you an example from 1950. This is again from Mississippi, in 1950 I got this from the Census, the state of Mississippi was spending 122 dollars and 33 cents, 93 cents per white child in 1950, and 32 dollars and 55 cents per black child, that was separate but equal as far as Mississippi was concerned. And so what was happening to blacks is double taxation. So blacks in Mississippi and other states were being taxed, because they're taxpaying citizens. And those taxes were being funneled into white schools and away from black schools. And so when I say double taxation, that means that black people were paying taxes for the public school system, but then they also had to pay in other ways. Sometimes it was through money. Sometimes it was through the gift of time or goods to help support the black schools, the public black schools and even the private black schools that existed. That's what I mean by double taxation as well as taxation without representation. Black people could not vote in the South, most of them could not vote in 1949. This is a picture from a school. That's a stove in the middle, you see how crowded it is there. And to dramatize the fact that remember I said the blacks in the South hadn't gotten access to a system of public schooling until the middle 20th century? So here's some more stats from Mississippi. So again, 1950, in 1950, 70%, so almost three-quarters, 70% of blacks in the state of Mississippi who are over the age of 25, so almost three-quarters, had less than a seventh grade education. That's 1950, it's like yesterday in history. Only 2.3% had graduated from high school. And it wasn't because they didn't want to go to high school. It was because there were no high schools or they were forced to work. There's a variety of systems that were in place that stopped them from being able to pursue their education. So Brown v Board of Education, another perfect example of progress and push back, the Brown v. Board decision was a hugely important decision in jurisprudence. It was, it was, it was a unanimous decision. We can talk about that during questions and answers if you want. It's a Cold War case. So there's a reason that it's a unanimous decision. We were fighting with Russia. Imagine that. So it overrules Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896 said separate could be equal. As long as things were equal, they could be separate. It was about train transportation, but it bleeds into everything including schools. The Brown decision overturned Plessy, which makes it hugely important that the Supreme Court overturned a previous ruling. That is serious progress. The pushback, so the famous, the famous quote from the '54 decision is separate is inherently unequal. I'm going to have a think about that inherently word a little later. But that separate is inherently unequal. The famous quote from the '55 decision where I see, it says Brown two up here, is with all deliberate speed or two different decisions. People don't usually realize that. That's why we need to talk to a historian. We've read them. And so with all deliberate speed, what happens when the Supreme Court says, Southern states, you must move forward with all deliberate speed to desegregate, Southern, it gives the power back to the Southern states to determine the pace and path of desegregation. You see a state like Mississippi that says we think 1970 is about right in terms of and this is when Jackson schools, the city of Jackson finally desegregated their schools, 1970, the Brown decision was '54, '55, other states do the same thing.

Mississippi, Mississippi, like Nina Simone said, "Mississippi goddamn," they took it to an extreme, but it wasn't like other places were a safe haven for blacks in the south either. I apologize to the children ears in the audience. I was quoting a book, I mean a song, it was considered a quote. And so, it stalls forward progress in any meaningful way because now Southern states are like, "Whatever, we'll take our time." Some states move quickly. Others move much more slowly.

Also, what happens, that's a picture of Linda Brown in Brown v Board of Education. That's her and her mom over there in front of the Supreme Court. Vouchers are born during this time

period. That's public money for private education. This picture down here, I've lost four years of education why five, that's because there's a county in Virginia that closed its schools for that many years rather than desegregate. And what happened is public money for private education, private white academies start popping up. That public money, including black tax dollars, are now going to support private white academies. Private black academies, there are no private black academies, right? There's just, they're out of school. But what happens is more double taxation. And so the black community scraping together money to pay the teachers to be able to teach their kids. So vouchers are born during this time period. Black teachers are fired and principals are fired. So when desegregation finally does happen in some of these locales, that's what happens. It's not that, that the white schools make room for the black teachers. They're just fired, as are the principals, janitorial staff, superintendents. It has a pretty devastating impact on a big segment of the black community, this move towards desegregation.

Lest we think that racism is the purview of the South, let me give you some non-Southern examples. This is from Chicago. The Willis Wagon, so they were named for Benjamin Willis. He was the superintendent of instruction in Chicago. Chicago was intensely residentially segregated, if you think Seattle's residentially segregated, Chicago, Chicago was intensely residentially segregated, which means its schools were racially segregated. So what happened is there's overcrowding in black schools. Rather than busing those kids to the white schools where there was room, they brought in these portable classrooms. And you see these kids sitting outside, they're protesting the fact that they, that they're supposed to be going to school in these portable classrooms, that it's about, this is in the early 60s, it's about desegregation and why can't we just go to another school on a bus if there's overcrowding. That picture over there is Mothers Against Busing in Boston, which turned violent and not this particular protest, but the things that white adults were saying to black kids in Boston, were the exact same things white adults were saying to black kids in Mississippi, exactly the same, horrific, to stop black kids from being bused into these white schools.

This picture on the bottom, I'm not sure it's not particularly clear and I'm not actually sure if it's from a school protest. But it's a prize-winning photo and I think it's an amazing picture of a white man using the American flag as a weapon against the black man. And I show it here because this is, this is, I want us to remember, it's not just about the South.

Lest we forget Seattle in the mix, these are just a couple of examples of racial housing covenants that existed in the city of Seattle with the different neighborhoods in Seattle. So I'm not from the city of Seattle. So when we moved here, people kept talking about these neighborhoods and I didn't understand what they were trying to tell me. I could tell they were trying to communicate something with me, but I couldn't understand, I just totally didn't get it. And so like the fact that like there are these kind of like self-contained neighborhoods, this is the way the racial house covenants looked. And so you can see, you can find plenty more, this, this website, the Seattle Civil Rights of Labor History Project website has a ton more. This is where I lifted this information. And I wanted to show this, one, because it's an example from Seattle and also because you can see, because it's Seattle, there are other groups targeted. Blacks are not the major, they're a concern, but there are others who are an incredible concern and so Mongolian is really Chinese and Japanese and then eventually Korean and then Filipino, and Ethiopian, that was black people, I don't know why they, these are old housing covenants. Let me just put it that way as old housing. They say different things, but the point is the same right? And then you can even see in Magnolia, they don't even want Jews there. I don't necessarily think Jews were welcome in other places either but they named them in Magnolia.

And so my point here is that this is how Seattle came to be how it is, residentially, it didn't just happen, like the central district didn't just pop up, the international district didn't pop up because people thought, "Oh, this is a really nice place." But that's the only place they could live, the only place people would be able to sell a house to them. I mean, even in this first one, whole airport part blood, it's apparently the one drop rule for house buying too. And so this has a huge impact on Seattle demographics in terms of neighborhood, as well as Seattle, in terms of education and schooling experiences and opportunities.

And I do want to talk a little bit about other groups, like I said, mostly through African Americans, but I do want to talk about the way other groups have experienced education. So this is, I think it says 1901 up there at the top. And so you can see that this is, this says Liberty School, Miss Columbia is the teacher.

That's Uncle Sam. This kid down here is Filipino. I'm not sure if you can read it back there. There's a kid who's obviously Native American, there's a kid from Cuba, which I thought was an interesting call out in 1901. And I can't read where the other two kids are. But this is about the American school. So equal educational opportunity, merit and morals. It was also about making Americans, it was about assimilation, assimilation as good and healthy and as a way to achieve equal opportunity, economic opportunity, political opportunity, any kind of opportunity, that the school is a great balance wheel. And so you're supposed to be able to send all these kids into Miss Columbia School and they get spit out as Americans. And I don't necessarily know if this was supposed to be understood as a violent act, this fact of Uncle Sam dragging this Filipino kid, I think the stick is kind of, yeah, kind of a hint. But this is exactly the way that a lot of groups have actually experienced education as incredibly violent.

And so one example are Native Americans. And so most people have heard of boarding schools, Indian boarding schools, right. What people don't usually know is that they were actually a last resort. What happened is you have these white missionary associations moving, this was obviously after Native Americans were removed from their land and put into reservations. So now they're on reservations. You have these white religious missionaries trying to Christianize and Americanize and teach English to these different nations on their, now on reservations, you also have the federal government playing a role in it too. And the first thing they tried to do was set up regular schools on the reservations. But what the end, the whole point was to, and this is a quote, "To kill the Indian to save the man." To kill the Indian to save the man. What they found with these regular schools was that these kids kept going home at night, and on the weekends. They couldn't kill the Indian because they were still Indian. They were going home and they were with their families, they were with their communities, they were practicing their life ways. So then they create on-reservation boarding schools, they say, "okay, we need to contain it a bit more." But kids were climbing over walls because walls don't work — I can't help it — and they go home, right, and so they're still participating in their communities. So this is where off-reservation boarding schools come into play. This is when you are deliberately trying to sever the relationship between a parent and a child. When you put them on a train and you send them the thousand miles away. And this is a picture from Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, 1885. And so all of these kids were quote unquote, being Americanized. They were being promised the privileges of whiteness, they said if you would just become Christian, you become English, you would behave better, you go through the whole curriculum at Carlisle, you learn what it is we're teaching you, you will be able to enjoy the privileges of whiteness. That was never, it never played out that way. Mexican Americans are another group that were extended the privileges of whiteness. So the US went to war with Mexico, 1846. The war ended in 1848. There was a treaty at the end of the war, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. And in that treaty, Mexico gives the U.S. like a million acres of land: Texas, parts of Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, all of California, parts of Wyoming, I see you Gonzalez, my graduate student doing some research on this, parts of Colorado, also, so they cede all this land to the U.S. and all those Mexicans who are now Mexican Americans were told via the treaty, that they would enjoy the privileges of citizenship in the U.S. and citizenship in 1848 meant whites, white men. Others be like, Asians weren't allowed to be citizens, African Americans weren't even a whole person in 1848, women were excluded totally. So they were, they were supposed to benefit from the privileges of whiteness slash citizenship. That's why I say citizenship and whiteness, I'm using them as synonyms. Just like Native Americans, it didn't work out that way. Never did. Never has. To give you an example, there's a California school code, an ever evolving California school code,1863. It lumped Negros, Mongolians and Indians together as the groups that could be excluded from public schools that should be excluded from public schools and they can create separate public schools for them. So I said Negros, Mongolians, and Indians. I didn't say Mexican Americans, right? Because remember, they're supposed to have the privileges of whiteness. What happens in California, it doesn't work, but a couple of legislators tried to get Mexican Americans reclassified as Indian. Talk about the fluidity of race, right? They try and get them reclassified as Indian. Doesn't work, but it shows you the antipathy toward Mexican Americans. And then in an incredibly unique twist in Texas, Texas had a three-part system of public education, one for whites, one for blacks and one for Mexican Americans, right? So, Texas after the Brown decision says, okay, Mexican Americans, you've been trying to be white for all this time, now we believe you, you know how we're going to desegregate schools? We're going to put Mexican Americans together with blacks. That's a Texas proposal, was you want to be white? Congratulations. Now you are, you go to school with the black kids. So it's an attempt again, but like the fluidity of race to use it as a way to constrain educational opportunity.

Chinese Americans, I could have done the same thing, we can talk about Japanese Americans too if you want to during the

questions and answers, but Chinese Americans, where do they fit in the black-white binary? Right? There's actually an interesting case out of Mississippi too that we can talk about later. But there's an old Chinese community in Mississippi by the way. So it's a, what do you do with a Chinese girl Mississippi in 1927? To find out, you have to ask me a question later. And so 1882 is the first time the U.S. passes a restrictive immigration act. I'm telling you, it's like deja vu all over again. Restrictive immigration act. This one is targeted at the Chinese, it's called the Chinese Exclusion Act. No more Chinese. That's 1882. 1885, this is a picture of the Tape family, their last name is Tape, T-A-P-E. That's Mamie in the middle, Mamie Tape is the oldest daughter. So they live in San Francisco. This is in 18, in 1885, they bring suit against the San Francisco school board. Because, so, San Francisco has a Chinatown. It had a huge Chinatown, and most Chinese lived in Chinatown. So there were schools in Chinatown. You don't have to worry about the Chinese trying to go to your white school, because most of them lived in Chinatown. Mamie Tape's family didn't. They lived outside of Chinatown. She was Americanized, in the sense that she spoke English and she was Christian. She was also born in the United States. So her family sued for her to be able to get access to her local public school. As luck would have it, the ever evolving California school code only excluded Negros and Indians by this time. And so the California Supreme Court says, Sorry, school board, you have to let Mamie Tape go to her local school, which was a white school. So that's progress, right? There's push back in less than 24 hours. The next day, the California Legislature rewrites the education laws to put Mongolians back in the education school code, so that they could be barred from attending school with whites. And so they then build a school for Mamie and her siblings and for any other Chinese people living outside of Chinatown, that's progress and push back there in 24 hours, no less.

So I just want to talk a little, little bit about blacks and even others controlling their own destiny. I don't want you to think that all of the groups I've been talking about have not been actors or actresses in their own drama. People have been active, fighting back this whole time. And some examples that's actually, it's blurry, but that's a picture of Frederick Douglass, I told you I love me some Frederick Douglass, that's a picture of him in his library, his study. One example of black people creating a way out of no way is Dunbar High School which was a high school in Washington, DC. It was opened in 1870 by freedmen and freedwomen. It was the first publicly supported high school, so a public high school. And a lot of that had to do with the fact that it was federally funded rather than state funded. So it opens as a high school in 1870. And before long, it becomes incredibly competitive and has an amazing reputation. There are people who have actually studied Dunbar. By the late 19th century, the school offered an education at least equal to if not better than the local white high school kind of education. You had the black students there in 1899, it students outperformed white students at two of the three white high schools in the area on standardized tests. I mean, not that we should pay attention too much to standardized tests. But the point is that they were doing very well. They had access to a rigorous, high quality curriculum. Their teachers were also more highly trained than the teachers at the white schools. A lot of that had to do with the nature of segregation. There was no other place for these black teachers to teach besides the black high school and if you want to teach at the best black high school you teach at Dunbar. So you have highly qualified teachers teaching there. And those teachers actually got paid the same as white teachers. Again, it was because of federal funding, because it was federal, it's Washington, DC. So this is an example of blacks making a way out of no way. There's also a variety of black colleges. These are some of the ones people usually know. But there are several others that exist that have a long history of educating black people towards first-class citizenship rather than menial labor tasks. And also this concept of institutional caring, this is from another from historian of education, Vanessa Siddle Walker, and she talks about, she doesn't romanticize segregated schools. Segregated schools, like whether it was funding, there's all kinds of things that hamstrung them, but one of the things that they did for kids, these black kids, was provide institutional caring. The teachers who are always all black believe that those kids could succeed. They went to church with these, with the kids' parents, the parents were involved in the schools. They believed that the kids had value, that they were fully human. And when these kids left, these black kids left and went to these desegregated contexts, all of that was eroded. And so, like her, I don't want to romanticize segregated schooling, but I do want to highlight some of the things that we can cling to that came out of it.

Just very quickly, some other examples. This is chief Sequoia. This is how he spelled his name in Cherokee rather than, so he became literate in English and rather than trying to teach all other Cherokee to be literate in English, he created, when I mean literate, I mean writing here, he created a Cherokee alphabet, based on sounds, was 85 characters. And what it did is it helped Cherokee become literate really fast. Because it wasn't about trying to teach them English, and he and his daughter actually create, I think it's the first nationwide

distributed bilingual newspaper, The Cherokee Phoenix. So it's making a way out of no way. And here's an example, when people usually think about the late 60s they usually think about like black power, or the Vietnam War. right? There's other stuff happening in the 60s too and this is an example. This is a picture from the blowouts. They're basically student walkouts in LA in 1968. It's, I think it's 15 high schools, you have Chicano students walking out of15 high schools and issuing demands like smaller class sizes, bilingual education, stop tracking us into vocational education, pretty reasonable, reasonable demands, if you ask me, so this is students taking control of their own destiny.

So in terms of lessons, moving forward, what can this history tell us? Are you able to read that text in the back? Can you read a card? I see people, okay, I see people I know so I can name names. Those of you, I see some people I've had in class, you've seen this slide before. This is about the fallibility, it's actually more than fallible, the problem, the deep problem with the concept of colorblindness. I show this as kind of a piece of levity because it, what it highlights is the ridiculousness of not talking about race. I think it's funny. Sometimes my students in class, I'm not sure if they think they can laugh out loud. I think it's funny. I think it's funny every time I see it, like what, what the hell is a black comma man? How is that not funny? But that color blindness is actually white privilege. It's actually white privilege.

And so how can we fix the problem, or problems that are based in racism if we don't talk about race? There's literally no way to do it. That, well, the Supreme Court thinks, the Supreme Court disagrees with me, by the way, but they didn't, they didn't ask a historian. I could have told them about the context of the Brown decision. I could have told them about the context of the 14th Amendment, and that neither one of them was supposed to be colorblind. But they didn't ask the historian. Maybe I should become a lawyer, who knows. So anyway, so this is about the perils of colorblindness, how ridiculous it is, how useless it is, as a way to chart a path forward. Also, I do believe that there are value, there's value in possibilities in separate spaces, and I use the word separate intentionally as different from segregated, so those of you who I have had in class, you know, this too, I make them do a definitions exercise, where they define a bunch of terms, desegregation, integration, because one of the things I want them to think about is are they synonyms or not, assimilation, acculturation, same thing there. And then I have them think about the context of, the concepts of segregation and separation. And one of the things that's made me think this way about it is that W.E.B. Du Bois, with a D, U, wrote this piece in 1935 called "Does the Negro need separate schools?" And he's talking about the North, it's 1935, remember, but his answer is yes, temporarily. He's not saying forever, but he's saying black kids are being brutalized in these desegregated spaces, physically, academically, psychologically, emotionally, these are unhealthy places. So yes, the Negro needs separate schools. And so when I think about segregated, I think about that for the purpose of hierarchy. When I think about separate, it's not for the purpose of hierarchy. So you can think about Wellesley, Brandeis. People don't usually don't have a problem when I talk about Jewish institutions or women's institutions. It is when race enters the picture, people are like, "Wait a minute, isn't that racist, to have a Black Student Union?" No. There's actual value in it. So that picture over there is from, it's called Rough Rock demonstration school. It's a, it's a Navajo school in Arizona, that mixes academics with teaching of the Navajo language and culture and life ways and these kinds of things. So just some examples of value and possibilities in separate spaces. This idea I got from Michelle Alexander and her book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, I love the, I just like the way she thinks, tinkering is for mechanics, not racial justice advocates. And her point there is that she's a legal scholar, and she's obviously talking about the criminal justice system. And she's, but she does talk a little bit about education and she says, "It wasn't the Brown decision that made shifts in the way black people experience schools. It was a mass movement that did it." The mass movement is what did it. And she talks about the drug problem, she talks about the fact that the drug problem is, is racialized in the sense that it's usually considered to be a black and brown problem. When you know, suburban white mothers abusing prescription pills or white frat boys using ecstasy, they're not considered part of the drug problem. And she says, "It is because drug crime is racially defined in the public consciousness that the electorate has not cared much about what happens to drug criminals, at least not the way they would have cared if the criminals were understood to be white. It is this failure to care, really care across color lines, that lies at the core of the system of control." So her point is that the law alone cannot change the criminal justice system. There needs, there's the court of public opinion that needs to be shifted also. And she goes on to say, "Without overturning the public consensus, the caste system will reemerge in a new form, just as convict leasing replaced slavery or will be reborn just as mass incarceration replaced Jim Crow." And I would argue it's the same with schools. This progress, push back, progress, push back, progress, push back. That, that

what happened after legal victory of Brown is a perfect example. Not just for her purposes, but for mine. Oh, let me just go back to this. Oh, those are my babies. Our babies. Oh, oh. So I was just, I was going to tell you what some of these pictures were here, if I can remember what they, what I put up there. Oh, it was about a mass movement. So as a historian, I think the chalkboard is a technological innovation so the fact that I'm using PowerPoint is actually amazing. You might not think about it that way, but I think about it that way. And so that's a picture of — I have to stay by the mic — that's a picture of the March on Washington, as well as a placard from the March on Washington. This is students in South Carolina, marching for freedom, it's really about desegregation. This newspaper clipping, students, black students at a school kicked off a boycott, because they aren't happy with the quality of education that they are receiving, and the whole community backs them. So these are examples of social movement like this, trying to change the public consensus and consciousness and that picture down there, you can't really see him but if you can see the man with the mic, that's Stokely Carmichael. This is on a march in Mississippi when he helps to kick off the Black Power movement, 1966, summer of 1966, June to be specific. So I would agree with Michelle Alexander, that shifting in the public consciousness, not just the law, is something that needs to happen.

And in that spirit, there's a lot of white work to be done. And so one of the things that SNCC did, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1966, it was a, it was an organization that had blacks and whites as members. And in 1966, there's a shift for not every black person but a lot of black people are like, you know, we've been banging our heads against this wall for a really long time. And nothing seems to be changing anytime soon. We need a new strategy. This is when black, the idea of black power and a different way of defining the ends and the means of black liberation comes to be and in 1966 SNCC, the black people in SNCC kick white people out and they say if you really want to eradicate racism go work in the white community, you keep coming to Mississippi to work in the black community, go work in the white community. That's where the problem is. That's where racism lives. Reminds me of this last election. You know, there's work to be done, plenty of it, get at it. Also, I think what's useful, I found this really useful. This is from Danielle Allen's Talking to Strangers, or I think, yeah, it's, I forgot the prefix, Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown. And I'm going to read it. I know I'm not supposed to read long quotes. But I found this really useful for me when I was trying to understand what the e pluribus unum meant, and I think about it is if we could shift the end to which we're supposed to be working, then maybe it opens up other possibilities and trajectories for us. And so she contrasts wholeness and oneness here. So "wholeness, that oneness is the master term and the history of the production of Democratic Peoples. It means uninjured, sound, healthy, and complete. Dictionaries do not treat one as its synonym. The reason for this is simple: speaker cannot use the word one to mean multiplicity. But the word whole entails just that. The effort to make the people one cultivates in the citizenry a desire for homogeneity, in contrast, an effort to make people whole might cultivate aspiration to the coherence and integrity of a consolidated but complex, intricate, and differentiated body." And so for me, I found it really helpful. Like I said, it helps me think about how if we could just shift the way we understand the goal, the role of school and society to be something different than it has traditionally been understood, that it opens up all kinds of new possibilities. So here's some more pictures of our babies. So Jabari is the older one and Jordan is the younger one. I used to say to people, I'm a historian, why do you think I care about the present or the future. Now I have kids, I didn't really mean in the past, but now I seriously don't mean it. Because I'm worried about these two little black boys who are going to become black men. And I have, I'm pretty secure in the fact that in their schooling experiences, they're going to be okay. Their parents are faculty members in education. And every teacher is going to know it. I don't know who's gonna be the good cop, but we'll see. But I'm worried about them when they have to leave the school environment. I'm worried about what, how they're going to be understood. I'm worried that people see them already as threats in the making. So when it comes to schools, I know that this, I used to teach a class called education for liberation, and I will again, I promise, and people used to tell me I should rename the class education for oppression because they're so oppressed at the end of it. I'm like well, that's history. But I do believe in the power of school. And one of the reasons I believe in it, I feel like I have to believe in it because it's the only compulsory institution in which we must all participate. So it's incredibly vital. Isn't a panacea. Is fixing the school the panacea to all of America's problems? Absolutely not. One of my colleagues puts it this way, he says a school is not the engine of society. It's the caboose. I don't know if it's the caboose, but it's definitely one of the train cars somewhere in the middle. But I do believe in the power of education. I do believe that it's worth fighting over. I do believe it's worth learning about. And I'm going to end with this quote from Du Bois. And this is one of the reasons that I do believe so deeply in the power of education, because I believe like Du Bois, that for education

among all kinds of men and women always has had and always will have an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent. I'm not uncomfortable with dissatisfaction and discontent. I actually think it could fuel a better future.

Thank you very much.

Q&A SESSION (53:17)

Staff: Alright, so now we have time for some questions and answers. There are mics on either side here. Dr. Williamson-Lott gave us lots of teasers so lots of things that you might want to know the answers to. Please find your ways to the microphones.

Joy Williamson-Lott: I thought you two were going to ask a question.

Staff: Right? First question.

(53:45) **Participant 1**: Thank you so much. I really enjoyed your talk. I'm someone who's interested in becoming an educator, as I move forward, and like you, I also really value education and I think that it can be something that can be, you know, the great equalizer, so to speak. But I also agree that it is currently not the great equalizer. So I was curious whether you have any tips for people like me who want to go into the educational profession for how we can help make it become a more, a better place to serve justice for all basically.

Joy Williamson-Lott : Yeah, I think it's a good question. I think a great place to start is self-knowledge and reflection. Because I think we bring, I know, we bring all kinds of prior knowledge, including biases, and other kinds of other like -isms with us. And so one of the things that I always hope for teacher candidates and practicing teachers is that they do some self-interrogation about where they stand. Like bell hooks says, you know, all teachers should have therapy, right, or something like that. So like, I think we should all, I think it's probably good for everybody. But when you're dealing with kids, kids that you're unfamiliar with, kids that you don't know, families you don't know, I think understanding why you're in it and the role you can play in it, and then partnering with the kids in communities where it is you want to work, those are incredibly powerful ways to pre-prepare yourself for having your own classroom. So to do self work, as well as getting to know in a deep and meaningful way, the people that you're actually trying to affect.

(55:20) **Participant 2**: I'd like to follow up on that question. How would you suggest they change the education, the training for upcoming teachers, to help them be better with different cultural groups? Yeah, how can we, how can the teachers advocate for change, in the education that they are getting, so that they can be better with different ethnic groups?

[**Unidentified person]:** That was my original question.

Joy Williamson-Lott: You know, I think you know, what's unfortunate, so, graduate school in the state of Washington, you’re supposed to have a graduate degree, right, to teach, and it's expensive. And there's this push to shorten more and more the length of a teacher training program. In my perfect world, I want a teacher as an intellectual. In my perfect world, that doesn't take five quarters, that takes much longer than five quarters, but that's usually what they have. And so, but I also know that people are broke, they want to eat and start getting paid to stop paying student loans, right. So I get it, there's a tension there. But in my perfect world, there would be more time in teacher education, because you, they, you still have to learn about the pedagogy, you still have to learn about classroom management, you still have to learn about assessment, all of those things, and subject matter specialty, all of that is vital, you cannot become a teacher without that. But you, I also think that you can't become a teacher without actually knowing your students, knowing yourself, and knowing your students. And it's hard to shoehorn that in, and I don't, like our own teacher education programs here are working hard, hard as hell to try and figure out a way to weave it all the way through. So it's not a standalone class, like your diversity class and you can check it off, to weave it all the way through and so there are places including here at the UW that are

working to try and figure it out within the limited scope that they have within a teacher training program. But I think another incredibly powerful thing that can help with teacher education is professional development after teachers graduate. Because there's no way you can learn what you need to know, in those years, in that year and a quarter, then you get your own classroom. You don't know where the light switches are. I barely watch the news, but that's the news I catch. So continued professional development around these things with people who actually know how to do it because I think sometimes it's the blind leading the blind and everybody's afraid to say race, but it's a phrase say black dress a black dress African American, what should I say? Should I say black, should I say African American, what should I say? What do you prefer to be called? People are afraid to be called racist. White people afraid to be called racist. So it usually stops them in their tracks from talking about race. So creating professional development around that kind of thing and involving the parents in the communities in the school, is a third way to help teachers with their work. So I think there's a variety of things that can be done. But we do live within a lot of constraints. And a lot of people are trying it, but a lot of people aren't.

(58:25) **Participant 3:** So my original question has to do with vouchers there, there is more talk now, current talk about a voucher system. So I'd like to get your opinion on that and how, also how we can become more informed on what that actually means and how we can help others become more —

Joy Williamson-Lott: On what what means?

Participant 3: On what, what the use of vouchers may have, and its effect on the public school system.

Joy Williamson-Lott: Well, personally, I think public money for private education is incredibly dangerous. I think if you go private, you should pay for private and my tax dollars shouldn't pay for your private. If I want to go private, I do that and I pay for that myself. So, I think it is a, what I'm most concerned about is the, I'm big advocate of separation between church and state. And that's my biggest concern, that this, I mean, it's already blurring the line between church and state is already blurry. But vouchers is going to kick it up a notch where it's going to be public subsidy for different religions and the way that they go about education. And I think public money should be used for public education. So, in terms of being educated about it, you could come take class. But also, I just think paying attention, going to school board meetings, reading around, trying to, you know, get to the bottom of things. One of the things that being a historian will teach you is to try and get to the bottom of stuff, right, to try and interrogate what people offer you as truth, to find the, what's the evidence for your claim? And so, to even, when people are advancing claims about this initiative will do that, dig it, dig up under it, and see what's there. There's a variety of ways to do it so that's what I would suggest in terms of getting knowledge, is think like a historian, search for the evidence under the claim.

(1:00:10) **Participant 4:** So, as you know, but not everybody, I'm in College of Education but not interested in going into teaching or schools. I am interested in anti-racist work and I'm, so I'm wondering how, what do you think the role of coalitions and collaborations between folks in the education system and field with folks outside of the education field, I see a lot of you in here, what are your suggestions aroundsome ways to go about that and what value that would have in terms of the coalition in, in building up schools and building up our society to be more anti-racist and social justice.

Joy Williamson-Lott: So, I think there's this research methodology. Was it designed-based research? I don't do this, but Joe does, Dr. Lott does, and it's all about true collaboration or collabatition is often what people say. And so when I think about collaborations between people in schools and people outside of schools, and any kind of collaboration, if we really want to make a difference, then we truly have to collaborate. I don't come and tell you, this is what I need you to do, you YWCA, this is what I want you to do. I have the ideas. I know who you trying to reach, trust me. So we as organizations and individuals need to collaborate, but we also need to talk to the communities that we're collaborating about, right? And so I think that is actually a hugely missed step when it comes to collaboration or racial justice work, people want to come in there, like a savior mentality, like I know what's best for you, if you would just listen to me, I will set you free. That's not the way it works. You might not be identifying the right problem. And so when I think about collaboration, it's in those two ways. One is organization to organization and a true collaboration and the other is bringing in the people that you're trying to work with, instead of on. I'll see you soon. Kylie was my master's student.

(1:02:31) **Participant 5**: Hi, I'm Victoria Thomas. I am currently a PhD right now in the Department of Communication. And I kind of just wanted to ask you a question a little bit about the pedagogy, especially when it comes to thinking about politics. Currently, right now we're like, in our, I guess in my program, we're talking about whether teachers are allowed to be political and what is our role in the classroom when we're teaching our students about subjects and is it okay to, I guess, pick a side? So I kind of wonder how do you kind of deal with that, I know you specifically deal with race, but for teachers who don't specifically deal with race and these issues come up, how do we kind of deal with the political nature of it, and also still fulfill our duties as teachers?

Joy Williamson-Lott: That's a good question. It’s one of the reasons I teach adults, I don’t have to meet your parents, we have nothing to talk about, you’re an adult. But I'm in a different context, right. So, and I even teach graduate students so it’s like extra grown people. That's what I refer to them. But I taught a class in the fall called education as a moral endeavor. And I had a lot of teachers in that class. So this was during the election, and they were terrified about how to talk about it. So I don't know if I want to give general advice to teachers about how to manage it in the classroom. My best advice would be to stick close to your colleagues. Make sure you're working together and know your families, not just the kids, because I emailed my son’s teacher that night, that fateful night, four o'clock in the morning. And I didn't ask her, I think what's dangerous is so it reminds me of colorblindness right? And so avoiding pretending like the election didn't happen, it's like pretending you're colorblind, it doesn't help. Kids are aware so I actually think it's irresponsible to not talk about it. You do have to be careful how you talk about it, it's a public school. You should be careful about it because you're a teacher, not a pundent.. But knowing your families, knowing your colleagues and your principal, will help teachers figure out how to manage it. This is one other reason I think professional development is so key. I think teachers often think they're working in isolation and sometimes they are. But if you just talk to your colleagues and figure out how are you dealing with it in your class, because you're going to have the same kids. So how do you, how do you manage it? So I don't want to give kind of global advice about how teachers do it. But I do think it's irresponsible not to. So when I emailed our son's teacher, I said, look, because I knew that they had talked about, he's in first grade, our oldest son, so I said, look, I know you talked about the election before tonight, because I knew that he came home with stuff that kind of set some red flags in my head so I just kind of kept it there, filed it away, he’s six so I don't necessarily trust every piece of information he comes home with. But I filed it away and then the election happened. And I emailed her and I said, I'm not asking you not to talk about it. I'm not, I'm not the teacher. I'm not trained as a teacher likes I said, I like teaching adults. But what I'm asking is that you're gentle with the kids. I said, I'm sure that there are some people who are going to be thrilled with the outcome of the election, there are others who are devastated and afraid for their safety. So, please be gentle, the emotions are raw. And I also said, I ask that you message home to parents how it was taken up in class, because I think that's responsible. I need to know what you're doing. So I need, because I might have to undo it. But I don't know. And so I think that's why I say interfacing with families, making sure that families are informed. They can help in these kinds of situations. Yeah.

(1:06:30) **Participant 6:** Hi, Professor Williamson-Lott, it's a pleasure to meet you. So, this is really a question about self-care during this time, you know, it's a tough time to be a person of color in this country. I mean, it's always been so but also on this campus. Particular to be a scholar of color, particularly one that studies race. And he talked about being a historian and it's one thing to have hindsight but also foresight of living through the time that we're living in and to know what happened in history, but to also to live it and experience it and know what's been done, and what potentially could be done now. And so, that is a tough, it's so easy to be demoralized at this time. And it's so easy to use hope whether it be a scholar of color or just a student of color. So my question is a question of self-care and one of guidance and aspiration, inspiration —

Joy Williamson-Lott: We meet in my office all the time.

Participant 6: I'll see you on Friday. [laughter] But this is for the audience, Joy, of any like, what is, Dr Williamson-Lott, like what keeps you going right during this time, given what you know, your expertise, your knowledge.

Joy Williamson-Lott: You know, my wing women and my partner and my family, it's really those, it's my relationships that keep me going because I can cry in front of these people

and they're not going to judge me. They're just going to hold me and they're not going to say, "Oh, it's going to be alright. Stop crying." They're going to be like, "Yeah, totally sucks right now. I totally get it. I'm going to cry with you right now. Okay, we're just going to cry together." Sometimes that's all you need. Right? I don't need an answer. As a historian, so I have people who will like people will say to me, "Oh, this is just a moment in time. These things ebb and flow." I know things ebb and flow, I study history! But I also know how deep and terrifying those ebbs can be, and how long they last and how impactful they are. And it terrifies me like this moment in time terrifies me about the long-term consequences. I was never just worried about the election. I was always worried about the next four years no matter who got elected because I understand, I study history, I can I can I know how, how deep these ebbs are, how you get stuck in these eddies, and so in terms of like how I get up in the morning, right and come to work, it's my, it's my relationships that do it and I and this, it's true even though you are a student, it is true. It's my students, right. So I have great students, part of it is, are self-selected. So I've had great people, but it's also my students, including the students who were in my class last quarter. I don't know if they know that I see some of them in here, but last quarter after the election, so I threatened to be in Canada. Right. So obviously, I wasn't showing up at class the next Monday. And I don't know if they noticed this, but I didn't stay in the room while they talked about it. I gave them the space to talk about it. I said, think about this class, education as a moral endeavor, along with the election, I know you want to talk about it, go for it. And I left because I couldn't handle it. Still so, I don't know, it happened right. But you guys didn't realize what was happening. Yeah. Because my confidence wanes. My hope is, you know, blip. What sustains me is my relationships. So keep coming to see me in my office, we'll work it out.

(1:10:20) **Participant 7**: I have a two-part question. The first part is, do you happen to know what the racial composition was of Washington State's first public school?

Joy Williamson-Lott: I don't, is this a quiz?

Participant 7: And secondly, what do you think the fact of the Barefoot Schoolboy Act by Governor Rogers had upon the education of racial minorities?

Joy Williamson-Lott: You have to give me some more context for both of those questions. One I know, I already know the answer to the first question. No, I do not know the racial demographics of —

Participant 7: Rogers was a governor about 1900. He was the Populist Party. And the effect of the Act was to provide school supplies for children who came to school barefoot.

Joy Williamson-Lott: See, you knew the answers to your own questions. I didn't know. But I do now.

Participant 7: Bush Prairie's part, Bush was a black, African American man. Needed land for a school. I assume his kids attended the school.

Joy Williamson-Lott: Probably. Thank you.

(1:11:18) **Participant 8:** Yes. Hi. Sorry. You posed the question in lecture and no one else asked it so I figured I would. What do you do with the Chinese girl in Mississippi in 1927?

Joy Williamson-Lott: He wasn't even a plant, but he picked it up. Thank you. So 1927, Mississippi, what do you do with the Chinese girl? Gong Lum v Rice, it's a Supreme Court decision. And so it's Mississippi and 1927. She's school age, makes its way to the Supreme Court. And basically, the Supreme Court says she might not be black, but she damn sure ain't white, so she's got to go to the colored school. And I was reading this just the other day, James Loewen the guy who wrote *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, I don't know if this was in that book or in a different book of his, but he talks about the case, because what happens is the plaintiffs in the case Gong Lum, use white racist reasoning, to argue on behalf of getting their daughter into the white school. They say, if the black race is a danger to other races, it's just as much a danger to the Chinese as it is to whites. So it's dangerous for us Chinese to be with them too. So that's why we should be in the white school. So Loewen talks about, he says it's a legal strategy. He says that the plaintiffs and the lawyers for the plaintiff didn't actually believe it. But he does acknowledge that what it does is fortify white supremacy. So

that's what happens to a Chinese girl in Mississippi. She goes to the colored school.

And then I'm going to let Patrick ask because I know Patrick, so I'm sorry. We'll, we'll go here and then.

(1:12:53) **Participant 9:** Okay, so I want to thank you because I have been trying to under, struggling to understand something and I think I understand it from what you've said, I've been a public school educator for most of my life. Well, almost. Yeah. So almost. And there's, most of the people in my school are younger than me. And there's a trend which I have not understood, and I think you put your finger on it, and that is that white people teaching white people about racism

Joy Williamson-Lott: Which has a place, right?

Participant 9: But I have not understood this until you mentioned the comment about SNCC. People say, you know, go back to your communities, the problem is we have racism in white communities, that's where the problem is, go back to your communities and work with them. So I guess I'm asking you, if you would say more about that.

Joy Williamson-Lott: Well, I think, I mean, I believe it, right. But I also think that there needs to be cross-conversation. I just think what often happens, it's like when you're the only student of color in a classroom you're like, so how to black people feel about that? I don't know, I can tell you how I feel about it. And so that's the danger in have, and also, so that's one danger, right? Another is that assuming that a person of color has, knows how to run these kinds of conversations, like so the reason I know all this black history is because I studied black history. I wasn't born with it in my head, just because I'm black. I had to study it. It's the same thing with trying to have race conversations. They go sideways really fast. I've made some go sideways really fast. Because I don't appreciate pandering and I'm not really a Kumbaya kind of person, either.

So I think there is, there is deep value in, in white people talking about racism, even acknowledging that it even exists and trying to figure it out and working on self. And then there are other times when other kinds of conversations are useful. It's trying to figure out which time and which place works, but they both have a place.

Participant 9: Okay, thank you.

(1:15:00) **Participant 10:** Thank you for taking my question. Thank you for this, thank you for saying nice things about our teacher ed program. So you started with the premise that about what you talked about what historians why we should listen to historians in these conversations. And, and you said a good talk about successes and pushbacks. So can you, we're working on a lot of stuff to try and support schools to do better for everyone. Can you globalize a little bit and is there something we can learn from history as we're working on these issues about pushback, about being prepared for pushback. Is there some things, some things you could leave us with to think about as we work on these issues?

Joy Williamson-Lott: You know, I wish I had the book with me, there's a book called *Colormute.* Because she, the argument is by Mica Pollock. And she says the problem is we're not, we're not she says, we're not colorblind, what we are is color mute, we refuse to talk about race. And I, one of the reasons I like the book is because it's a, it's about a high school, it's a case study of a high school and it's all about race in California. And in the back, she has tips for teachers and, and being able to anticipate how things will go off the rails, right, or people will try and appropriate it. And she has this list in the back of the things that you can anticipate that people will say, it's like the all lives matter. Black Lives Matter versus all lives matter or it's not just blacks. It's also about class or it's not just race, it's also about class. But I think that we should just anticipate pushback because the kind of, when I talk about like a mass movement, that is incredibly disruptive to the public school system, it would demand a whole kind of like all kinds of changes in the curriculum, teacher training, pedagogy, teacher assignments, even the way the curriculum is taught, like more humanities, like I think what's happening now, like you have humanities teachers versus just English and history, or ELA and history. You know, but I, I am both soothed and frightened by what I'm about to say. So as a historian, I understand things take time. So again, I'm not necessarily worried about that, you know, because I understand that reforms, you can't [snaps] they just

don't and I think we have to give reforms time to take and then evaluate before we throw them out again. So in one sense, I'm not concerned with how fast things can happen, on the other hand, how many more generations do we have to lose? And so there is a sense of urgency around this. I think, not that our teacher ed program is doing this, but people are often seeking the magic bullet. And so for me, it's hard to globalize, because one of the ways I understand even the black freedom struggle, is as local struggles. And so, when I think about change, educational change, I'm okay with local change, district change, school-wide change. So, it's hard for me to kind of, to go, I think there are definitely things that we can anticipate that will happen in terms of pushback, and we should just anticipate pushback. But be prepared for it and not be dissuaded or demoralized for it. Tons of work to be done. We have to stick at it and be together in partnership to make it happen.

Thank you all for coming. I hope to see some of you in my classes eventually.