Royel Johnson:

Good afternoon.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Hi.

Royel Johnson:

Hello.

Felecia Commodore:

Hi, everyone.

Royel Johnson:

It's good to see you all, it's good to be in community. If you are listening and watching, we are live in Denver and we're shooting the last episode of the ASHE Presidential Podcast. For those of you who I haven't had opportunity to meet and connect with, I'm Royel Johnson, Associate Professor of Higher Ed and Social Work at the University of Southern California. And I get to do this with my friend, Felecia.

Felecia Commodore:

Hi, everyone. I am Felecia Commodore. I'm an Associate Professor of Higher Education at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. And excited, this is our last episode of season four of the ASHE Presidential Podcast. It's been a great season, we've had some great conversations.

Royel Johnson:

Amazing, yes.

Felecia Commodore:

As you know, for those of you who've been joining us along the way, this is the first season that you can see yes, but this is the first time that we can also see you.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Come on, we love it.

Royel Johnson:

Yes, right.

Felecia Commodore:

So we are live and in color here and we have a live audience here, we're really excited. Thank you all for coming out. We're going to have a really great conversation today in line with our theme, The Bending The Arc, we're going to be talking about the arc of translating scholarship to practice. And we have some really great guests here to talk about what it means to take our work from inside these journal pages and these presentations, to actually working with the communities and impacting the communities that we are doing this work with. And these folks are the folks that really help us to bridge that gap, and so

we're looking forward to that conversation. So Royel, do you want to go ahead and introduce our guests?

Royel Johnson:

Yeah. So, join us in welcoming our special guest, Dr. Tykeia Robinson, who is Senior Manager, Transformation, Post-secondary Success at Gates Foundation.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Correct.

Royel Johnson:

Yeah. Let's make some noise.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Thank you. Hello, everyone. Great to be here. We love a finale. [inaudible 00:02:13].

Royel Johnson:

Next up, we also have Dr. Brandon Protas, who is the Interim Vice President at Complete College America. Make it up, make some noise.

So, like every episode of the podcast, we always kick it off with a quick icebreaker. Sometimes we do this or that, but other times we do questions that need answers.

Felecia Commodore:

[inaudible 00:02:33].

Royel Johnson:

And there's a few questions today-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

That's right.

Royel Johnson:

... that need answers. Okay? So Tykeia, if your life right now had a theme song-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Oh boy.

Royel Johnson:

... what would it be, and why is it playing on repeat?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Truth is, I'm tired. That's the first thing that came to mind. I didn't want to like-

Royel Johnson:

Options are few.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

... really. [inaudible 00:02:56]. I'm tired. I'm on the finale, the final leg, the anchor leg of a travel sprint. We've been doing quite a bit of travel with our work with Higher Endeavor, which we'll talk about in a little bit. But I've been to several states, back and forth across this country several times in the last several weeks and very excited to be closing out my sort of work travel for the year here in Denver. And I'm excited about the work, but the honest truth is that I'm very tired.

Royel Johnson:

We thank you for your service.

Felecia Commodore:

Yes.

Royel Johnson:

Yes.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Same question for Brandon?

Royel Johnson:

No, Felicia has a different question.

Felecia Commodore:

Oh, yes. Okay. So, here we go. If you could teleport anywhere for one hour of peace, food, or fun-

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Oh, gosh.

Felecia Commodore:

... where are you going?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Teleport.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

That's a tough question.

Felecia Commodore:

Try to keep it rigorous.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I've always wanted to go to Ghana to hear, to participate in Ghanaian drumming. I think that would be really relaxing. That would be fun.

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:04:07].

Dr. Brandon Protas:

But when it comes to food, I'm thinking like maybe rural Italy. I've never been.

Royel Johnson:

Oh, wow.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Oh, yes.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

But it seems like there's got to be great food there.

Felecia Commodore:

I love both of these choices.

Royel Johnson:

Rural Italy. Okay. Okay, one more.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Okay.

Royel Johnson:

What's the most ridiculous hill you're willing to die on?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Wow. Oh, there's so many. Let me think. I believe that we should be able to... I feel like leather is a year round fabric, clearly, and I will die on that hill. There are people who resist leather in the warmer months, but I feel like it is where... It's just one of the staples of fashion.

Royel Johnson:

Yes.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

And that's one hill that I'm willing to die on. I have more. Is that [inaudible 00:04:55]?

Royel Johnson:

I feel the same about wearing white.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yes, one of the rules.

Royel Johnson:

I feel like I should be able to wear white year round.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

We wear what we want. I don't... So, yes. So other hills, let's see. I'm a couch potato, I like TV. I will never... And here's one. You know the people that say you're supposed to, it's poor sleep hygiene to turn the TV off?

Royel Johnson:

Yeah.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

No, that's my emotional support TV. So, I keep it on.

Felecia Commodore:

Emotional support TV.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I set the timer and it goes off, I go off, it goes off eventually. And y'all pray for my sleep hygiene is probably terrible, but I'm a single woman living alone, I need the noise in my house. So yeah, those are the two that I'll share.

Royel Johnson:

I love it. You have one?

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Yeah, sure. I was going in a different direction. I have a lot of idiosyncrasies, which I usually keep to myself, which is probably better.

Felecia Commodore:

He's private.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Yes. But one of the things that I've tried to impart on others is that the foundation of any good sandwich is the bread. You can't have a great sandwich-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Agreed.

Felecia Commodore:

This is true.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

... with really awful bread.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Agreed.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Now, you can have great bread and the sandwich not be great because of everything else, but the foundation of any good sandwich is the bread.

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:06:11].

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

There is.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

So, I think making a sandwich, that's what you should be thinking about.

Felecia Commodore:

This is true.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I'm not sure if it's quite a hill to die on, but I feel like it fits.

Felecia Commodore:

Or like the hill of the loaf.

Royel Johnson:

It's a rock.

Felecia Commodore:

You like my [inaudible 00:06:24], my dad jokes?

Royel Johnson:

My foundation is the rock.

Felecia Commodore:

Period.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Last one, Felicia.

Felecia Commodore:

Okay. So, last question.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I thought we were done with the-

Royel Johnson:

One more.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Wow, [inaudible 00:06:33].

Felecia Commodore:

So, if you could swap jobs with any fictional character for a day, who are you choosing and what chaos would you cause?

Royel Johnson:

It's diabolical.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

So this isn't necessarily fictional, but I thought sometimes in a similar line, my alter ego, if I had it all to do it over again, I'm really revealing a lot here, is it'd be wonderful to be a modern dancer.

Felecia Commodore:

Oh, nice.

Royel Johnson:

Oh, interesting.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I love that.

Felecia Commodore:

I've seen you drumming, dancing.

Royel Johnson:

Dancing With the Stars.

Felecia Commodore:

Food in the rural hills of Italy. I love this.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I just don't let myself indulge, and so I've just never... I've shut that whole side off, but-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I like it. I love it. We need more of that. We need to welcome that brand into the party all the time. Oh, I'm also [inaudible 00:07:25]?

Royel Johnson:

If you want to, yeah.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I don't know. A fictional character. I've always wanted to be invisible. Oh, you remember Alex Mack?

Royel Johnson:

Yes.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

And how you could just be sitting here and just disintegrate into the chair?

Royel Johnson:

Yes.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I would love to be able to just leave very quickly. I love leaving. So, anytime I could just go-

Royel Johnson:

Irish goodbye.

Felecia Commodore:

"I love leaving," is a wild quote.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. My favorite thing to do. You know what I'm saying? It's not just arriving, it's also leaving is a highlight.

Royel Johnson:

It is leaving.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

It's for me. So anytime I could just... If I just didn't want to be there and I'm gone, that would be great. That would be the chaos that I would have called out. Just start a bunch of mess and poof, all right. I love that.

Felecia Commodore:

I want to answer this question because I have two people, and it's going to tell you a lot about my personality. I would either want to be Murphy Brown-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

From the television show?

Felecia Commodore:

From the television show.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Oh, man, blast from the past.

Felecia Commodore:

And cause all kinds of scandal in DC. Or going with that theme-

Royel Johnson:

Olivia Pope?

Felecia Commodore:

... Olivia Pope.

Royel Johnson:

I knew you were about to say that.

Felecia Commodore:

I want to fix stuff so bad.

Royel Johnson:

I knew you were about to say that.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Oh, man.

Felecia Commodore:

And tell people about themselves while I fix it, which I think will translate well into what we're talking about today.

Royel Johnson:

Yeah, this conversation. So I'm so excited about this conversation. What better way to capstone a full season of the podcast by engaging in conversation about what it means to connect the really important work that so many of us do in this room at this conference, to practice, to folks who are working on the ground. Right? It's an urgent moment in our country where we're trying to think about bridging the gap

between what we say, what we aspire, versus what we do, right? From your vantage point, why is research translation so important?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I came to higher ed as a practitioner. Working on campuses, higher ed was a field that I fell into just by virtue of enjoying my own college experience and wanting to be a part of cultivating welcoming environments for other students. And when I realized that it could be a profession, I threw myself into that work, but was quickly frustrated by feeling like there was not a lot of resources available for practitioners or the resources that were available were limited and targeted certain audiences and certain kinds of work. And so, that was one of the things that I was really troubled by.

And the more and more digging I did, I really fell into understanding student affairs research, higher ed research, and got bit by the research bug, wanted to be a part of creating the scholarship. But becoming a scholar and being cultivated in that training, I started to really live the dissonance between the way that scholars write and communicate and what the field is doing and have always wanted to be a part of translating across that gap, because the truth of the matter is on both sides, everyone is committed to the same thing. So it's like we're on the same team, but it's like we're all trying to play all positions as opposed to... It's like what basketball team has two centers, two-

Felecia Commodore:

This is right.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Everybody's trying to be a forward, we don't get anything done. Right?

Felecia Commodore:

Right, right, right, right.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

So I feel like we're on the same team, but because of disciplinary differences, cultural differences-

Royel Johnson:

Linguistic.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

... linguistic differences, and even power dynamics, there is this gap that persists. And I think as a scholar, the implication section has always been my favorite part because it's always been the so what, right? So yes, we're learning, yes, the knowledge is being generated, but what is going to result from this? And so in this critical moment, now more than ever, what is frustrating is that a lot of the problems that we are seeing, we have scholarship for. There are people who have been writing about this, there are bodies of work. People have been publishing in this area for years, but when we go into practitioner spaces, everyone's scrambling around what needs to be done.

So, what are the ways in which we can have conversations like this where we bring people together and play in ways that respect the expertise in the room? Practitioners have expertise.

Felecia Commodore:

That's right.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

And just as scholars do. So, what are the ways in which we can bridge that gap? And that's critical now more than ever, because we are spinning our wheels trying to answer questions that somebody's already answered and vice versa. So, yeah.

Royel Johnson:

We were literally just talking about this in one of the earlier episodes. Felicia was nodding to what it means to be at a campus as a higher ed scholar and for leadership not to take advantage and recognize that there are people who have been trained-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Exactly, exactly.

Royel Johnson:

... in this sort of... To be useful.

Felecia Commodore:

And pay other people a lot of money.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

For sure. Higher ed's are the only place where that happens, right? Where you can be a president of a university and your field of study is, what, civil engineering. So you know a lot about that and your training is in that, but now you're leading an organization for which there is an entire discipline and body of scholarship for, and you might have proximity to that scholarship, but you have not trained within it. And so, that is something that's a very real reality, I'm sure as you know, working with institutional leaders. But also want to ask Brandon if he had something to add.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Yeah. I'm going to answer this in two ways, if that's okay.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

The first is that I think higher education is under attack writ large. We've seen in the last year actually some slight increases in polling around how Americans feel about the value of higher education, slight, but before that's on a steady decline. We've also seen polarization and politicization of higher education in ways that I think should not be ways that we don't see higher education.

And so, I think of Estela Bensimon's work out of USC, originally Center for Urban Education, now the Race and Equity Center. And I remember the first time hearing her talk, and this goes back maybe 10, 15 years ago, and she talked about not hiding behind labels of diversity, but naming what we were talking about. Now, this was a different time. This was about, how do we actually reach that point of equity and

look at the students who we are serving and students who we are not serving? Not whether students are successful, but how do we do that as institutions?

Okay. Well, fast-forward to today, we're in a very different area, political space, but I actually think that that lens works for the same purposes in a different way, which is with attacks, for example, on DEI, we still need to know, who are we serving and who are we not serving? And looking at the scholarship and looking at the data creates a picture of the reality that if we want to increase higher education, if we want to increase college completion across our cities, across our communities, we need to look at the data to be able to act on that. And so, as opposed to now the backlash against, let's look at the data to be able to see where we need to go. So, that's the first part.

The second part actually relates to when I was working at a community college and I used to follow, this is before I joined Complete College America, so the story relates to CCA, but one of the things that Complete College America does is they take the research and they broadcast it to audiences that may not be reading the academic journals. And they are able to, or we, now this was at the time, put things in simple ways without simplifying the message. And so, I remember reading about guided pathways for success. And I remember saying to colleagues, because sometimes when you're so busy doing the doing, you don't have the time to reflect and you're trying to figure out, what can we do to improve student success on our campus? I remember saying to a colleague, "They tell you it is right here," but it's not just based out of advocacy for advocacy's sake, it's based out of the scholarship and that's where that translation takes place.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah. No, that's really great. And I think both of you touch on this, that we have data, that we have research. And often because higher education in particular is mostly an applied field, there's usually some kind of implications, some kind of practical recommendations to our work, but moving research into practice isn't always automatic. Right?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Right, it's not [inaudible 00:16:13].

Felecia Commodore:

It doesn't just happened because we said it should, right?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Right.

Felecia Commodore:

What have you learned in your roles about the cultural, structural, or relational conditions that make real translation possible? And what conditions tend to slow it down or stop it all together?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. I think the first thing that comes to mind is building upon what Brandon was saying, the translation piece, right? I think as the part of the dissonance that I was talking about before, writing scholarship, writing research journals, even book chapters sometimes, there is a way in which we are trained to write that can often

Royel Johnson:

Make it plain-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yes, exactly. That can often mire the message down in a lot of sort of words and theory and thought and pontification, and all of that is great, it has its place, but a lot of times if the room is on fire, we don't have time to read the full instruction books.

Felecia Commodore:

[inaudible 00:17:15] the constructs of fire.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. We don't need to explore the-

Royel Johnson:

The ways in which.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

The ways in which fire can spread easily and quickly. We don't have time to do that. So, I think that tends to be... Like messaging, language comms, those are some of the things that come to mind immediately. But I'm also thinking about some of the cultural considerations. And I think about higher ed and even the way that our campuses are structured in that very siloed way and very decentralized way. Every school has its own processes, own systems, own structures, and we don't do a good job of creating standardized modes of operation or have cultivating shared understanding or shared interpretation of things, and that also tends to be a barrier. And let's just be frank, there's a lot of ego in-

Felecia Commodore:

A lot of ego.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

... some of these spaces, which can also make things more complicated. But what we tend to see or what we have seen, particularly in the Gates work, it seems like, because we feel this too, even from a philanthropic space, a lot of times when we're engaging with our partners, I'm always pushing, we cannot continue to talk Gates-ian to the world at large. Every organization, I'm sure at CCA, I'm sure within your department, we all have our own sort of cultures and norms and ways of talking and ways of speaking, and a lot of times we just assume. At Gates, everything is an acronym. So you'll literally get an email and it will be like 80% type of a letter, very few connecting words. And so, if you're not careful, it's like, okay, you need a word bank or something to... you know?

Royel Johnson:

A glossary.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

But those are the kinds of things and they seem very trite or even trivial, we take for granted that we're going to do it, but being mindful of that stuff are really some of the ways in which we think about the word practice. Right? And so, I think it also makes me think about how we define practice, translating. Like if we're translating an idea into practice, what does that mean? Are we talking about shared behavior? Are we talking about policy? So, I think it comes down to defining terms, those are the ways that we create conditions. Aligning, taking time to reflect and make sure that we're all here for the same reason and doing the same things. Those are the things that help us to bridge that gap and do some of that translation work and guard against assuming that we're all on the same page when we may or may not be.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I will say, I've seen those PowerPoints, that there's PowerPoints slides to define the rest of the PowerPoint before you ever even get to the presentation.

Felecia Commodore:

Oh, boy.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yes.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

So, I think the answer is actually within your question, which is you said, what are the conditions? And so, I think about action research through practice as something that you can individually do. Particularly if you're an instructor, what can you do in your classroom and notice those changes? At Complete College America, we think about scale, and so when you talk about scale, we're looking at student success strategies. And people often think about, and these are important components, how do you change policies to enact those, and then how are you actually implementing those strategies?

But the third part that we talk about is policy, practice, and perspective. And perspective is about creating the conditions for change. How do you change those mindsets? So, very often we know this. We are very siloed in our institutions and to the two sides of the house, even though there's three sides when you count finance.

Felecia Commodore:

I'm going to start using that. Thank you.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Yeah. And we work within these small ways, and so you're not looking at that larger picture. You might know the students in your classroom, but then you start turning to anecdotal stories, again, going back to the reason for data. And so, what we need to think about is, how do we create those conditions for change where people are starting to understand and building that sense of urgency. When you look at change process, that's the first step of the process is, why should there be change? And so, before you can start looking at how you implement that scholarship, how do you utilize that scholarship to be able to create that sense of urgency to paint that picture? Because so often, the change is happening both in the brain but also in the heart and you have to be able to use both of those. So, it's really creating those conditions and having those honest conversations that allow for dialogue. It's not just giving the answer

because sometimes people need to work through it themselves to reach that answer for that real ownership, which goes beyond just buy-in.

Felecia Commodore:

And I think it's interesting you talk about, connecting what both of you said, creating the conditions of change, but also being on the same page and having the same definitions. I think some of the things I've seen in working with institutions, particularly around governance or changing their decision making processes, is that there's some entity, whether it be an institutional leader or an executive council, that's trying to implement a change based off of their definition of governance or some article they read in Forbes that says this is the best practice. And they assume that everyone on their campus has read this article or also agrees to this definition, and often when they meet resistance, they think people just don't want to change.

And what we often find when we unpack it is that they had a totally different definition of this governance, this decision making process than you did, and so they don't even understand what they're changing to because your definitions aren't the same and there hasn't been communication around like, "What do we mean when we say this thing?" And so, I think that's really also a really important part of setting the conditions of change is, let's make sure we're all talking about the same thing before we start moving.

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:23:30] change, right?

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah.

Royel Johnson:

The different theory. I want to go back to a point you mentioned around Estela Bensimon, and it was her presidential address where she, many years ago where she introduced this sort of idea of practitioner knowledge and the significance of that and that would have spent out to the equity scorecard and equity mindedness and so forth.

One of the most meaningful experiences I've had with practitioners involved both Felecia and Tykeia, years ago I had a grant from the Spencer Foundation and we had an opportunity to think about, how do we connect racial equity research to practice? And we invited practitioners into that space to be the discussants, to review our papers and give us feedback about the implications and the utility of the work. We also wrestled with the questions that we were asking, because the questions that we ask as researchers are not always the questions that are most needed on the ground or responsive to their realities. And so, we invited them to give us feedback on the kinds of questions that we were asking. I find that there was a very meaningful experience, but it was one of the few opportunities I've ever had in my career to connect meaningfully in that way with practitioners around research.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah, and I love that you said wrestle, not because I like to tussle.

Royel Johnson:

WWE.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

But I do think that another piece of this equation that is often overlooked is that resistance is a part of the work. And I think we often, when we get to a place of impasse or disagreement or contention or different perspective, it's like we just give up and just say, "We agree to disagree and go about our different ways of doing," as opposed to really contending with what the differences are, because I remember that engagement and it was very, very fruitful to sit and hear how other people perceive what you write. We're all writers and we can be sensitive about our things, right? Right, but that feedback is literally like the feedback loops.

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:25:28], yes.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Those are the things that really move work forward in every way. So I think again, adding to that, creating the conditions for receiving feedback and even leaning into resistance and difference are also parts of creating those conditions.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah.

Royel Johnson:

You know what's interesting, so we published a book out of that project. And one of the publishers who we went to to get a contract did not want to give us a contract because they thought we had too many practitioners leading the chapters.

Felecia Commodore:

So crazy.

Royel Johnson:

Isn't that interesting?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Very, yeah.

Royel Johnson:

That they were involved in the drafting and co-construction of this work, but they pushed back on who the authors were too.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

That goes back to that cultural piece and the ways in which this work has been politicized. And I think that that's a real contention that we have to name, because that's a reality. And I think as a practitioner, I've sat in rooms and felt like I was being talked to or talked at, and I've also been on the other side of that equation as a scholar and felt like, well, the practitioner's just not hearing me. So, I think there's these disciplinary divides as well, but we don't imagine those. It's not just a feeling, but there are real

implications. And like the publisher, you know what I'm saying? What is that? What is that, and how often does that happen? And as a scholar, I have had rejections because I'm writing from my vantage or my perspective. Let's say I'm writing as a Gates program officer and if I were to say that I was writing as an assistant professor, they would read it differently.

Royel Johnson:

Yeah. Absolutely.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Can I? Yeah, just real quick, that's a fascinating story. But think about what that means in terms of power and authorship and when scholarship means we can study and you're the subject of that and it has validity. But once we incorporate your voice and put you in equal level as a co-participant, then it loses its validity. So, thinking about what that means, that's very troubling.

Royel Johnson:

Yeah. Well, we didn't publish with that.

Felecia Commodore:

And it didn't get published. No.

Royel Johnson:

Talk a little bit about the capacity building necessary and what role philanthropy can play. I've been really pleased not to shout out WT Grant Foundation, but I do love their commitment around research practice partnerships and the sort of investment in that area. What's the kind of infrastructure needed and what role can philanthropy play in supporting that kind of work?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. So, I think we talked a lot about capacity building and we don't always define what we mean when we say it.

Royel Johnson:

What do we mean by it? Let's define it.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Let's [inaudible 00:28:16].

Felecia Commodore:

Let's all be on the same page.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Right. Let's create some conditions for shared understanding. No, but I think this is a fair point. So I think from, I can say from the perspective of the Gates Foundation, a lot of our capacity building work has been thinking under the larger umbrella of our institutional transformation work. And the Gates Foundation has invested substantially over the last several years, basically around the idea in terms of

eradicating race-based disparity or inequity. I think the language that is used in the strategy is that we want to eliminate race, class, socioeconomic status as predictors of success for students.

And so, when we think about that, I think there was a realization through some of the investments that had been done over the years that we were not going to program point solution our way to equitable student success. We were not going to do it one program at a time. Rather, it was an acknowledgement that a lot of the institutions, colleges and universities, higher ed as a field was not designed or fashioned to cultivate the success of students across racial identity groups. Rather... So if we're going to pursue that kind of equity, we need to dismantle some systems and create new ones, so wholesale institutional reform. And so, what does that look like in practice?

It often means that we need to think about institutional leaders, people who are on the ground, people, administrators, and faculty, but a lot of times when we're talking about that capacity building, it is about cultivating spaces where they can acquire and refine the skills and competencies and awarenesses, and have space to really do that work. There's not a lot of space within our campuses because we're running them, for us to really sit down and think intentionally about the ways in which we can improve our practice. And so, one of the ways that we improve our capacity to do that is that we are afforded with, whether it be technical assistance or professional development or even just space for convening peer network learning. These are the things, how are we helping institutions to gain access to the resources and the spaces where they can do the work of transformation? And transformation, meaning like wholesale or broad scale institutional reform or as the foundation defines it, changing an institution's structure, culture, and business model to center the success of all students.

So, when we think about capacity building, philanthropy's role in that is that we create space for institutions to do that. We provide resources, we provide rooms, we literally provide... We had a convening just last week, where we literally invited partners to come and think about how they can provide services to institutional leaders. We can hear from institutions and really understand what their current needs are as the climate and the world around them change. And so, we have built a network where institutions can enter that network through intermediaries like Complete College America and gain access to that kind of capacity building. And so, philanthropy's role in that is to support institutions in gaining the resources that they need to do that work.

Royel Johnson:

To do that work. Yeah, thank you.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Sorry. And I'll add as an intermediary and a lot of our funding does come from philanthropic organizations such as the Gates Foundation, what it allows us to do.

So, I remember when I was on campus, both at a community college and even before that when I worked in K-12, I remember two times where we received funding or a project and we had someone external come in and spend either a half day or a whole day with us. And I remember thinking, why did it take someone from outside to ask us one question that we talked about for over two hours and was the best conversation I've had about either K-12 or higher ed, in all the years that I've been doing this work.

Royel Johnson:

Because you can be a prophet in your own land. [inaudible 00:32:25].

Dr. Brandon Protas:

It's that, but it's also you're so busy doing the doing.

Felecia Commodore:

You're doing it, yeah.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

And what are our numbers today and what are we at? And you're putting out this fire, you're putting out that fire, that you don't have that moment to reflect.

So now that I'm at Complete College America, I feel that it's this privilege I get to be able to go in and lead those conversations, because I know what it was like on the other side of, you just asked one question and I've never talked to my colleagues that way before. But what allows us to do this is if we... Our goal is to make a significant change in higher education and college completion, that means working particularly with under-resourced institutions. If they are under-resourced institutions, they don't have the funds to say, "Let's bring you in to do that technical assistance." So, the funding from philanthropic organizations allows us as intermediaries and technical assistance providers to be able to go in to do that work for institutional transformation.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah. And I think Bernie, you bring up a really good point too of thinking about the people on the ground who are doing it and how they're often doing theory. Right? They're often doing theory, they're often creating theory through their work. But they don't have time to be sitting around-

Dr. Brandon Protas:

[inaudible 00:33:34].

Felecia Commodore:

Thinking of elements and frameworks and whatever. Right?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

And they don't have time to write it down at all.

Felecia Commodore:

Right, just, they're doing it, right? And I think this is a place where I think having intermediaries, having philanthropic organizations that give an opportunity to partner folks together that can help create a space to say like, "Hey, actually, what you're doing is a framework. What you're doing is a theory, and let's parse that out and see what that looks like when we actually try to concretize it."

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:34:09].

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah.

Royel Johnson:

I want to take this question just in a slightly different direction. And let me say, I'm so glad that you're at the Gates Foundation-

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yay.

Royel Johnson:

... as an org scholar.

Felecia Commodore:

Same.

Royel Johnson:

As someone who understands institutional transformation, as an intellectual sort of project, but also what it means on the ground. I've had conversations with funders before who have theories of change that aren't grounded in theory.

Felecia Commodore:

There's some applause in the audience you can't see. Yes.

Royel Johnson:

Because their funding priorities are shaped by your belief that this is going to change. And if you think investing in this is going to get you there, and I've literally had tough conversations with the program officers like, "No, I can share readings with you that may help." How do we, as researchers, work with philanthropy to help bring to bear our evidence so that you all also can have informed insights when you're thinking about strategy and investment strategy in that way?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. I think it's a good question, and I think I'm still working through the exact how. But I will say that in my experience, I feel like a lot... Okay, bearing in mind that I think the people who want to do this work, I think everyone's intentions are good, but a lot of times it's very easy to solution-ize when you don't have a real understanding of the problem, and so I think we rush to that. I think the rush is to, "Oh my God, if they would just do this."

Royel Johnson:

Best practices.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Best practices, silver bullet. I feel like this is... And I think there is a blind spot and just a genuine ignorance, no judgment, around understanding the inner workings of any problem. I can go in any room. Let's say I come into this room and say, "Wow, it's chilly in here. Let's open the window." That's a very incremental way to adjust the temperature, but if I had an understanding as to how the thermostat worked, where the vents are, I could move my positioning in the room and find comfort, or I could dig a little deeper. So, I think there are levels and layers of understanding that I think are helpful.

And so, if I had to offer some advice for scholars, I think there are ways. I think that our work is in helping to illuminate the perspective. And when it comes down to having those conversations of troubling, like, "Why do you think this will work?" It is about just asking the questions and then being able to demonstrate that there is another way or there is another vantage point. So, sometimes it's proven that you know how this works, and that's a lot of the work that that translation piece I think is something that we both have to do on both sides. Scholars have to learn how to translate, and practitioners have to learn how to listen and translate. So, I think the translation is, it has to be on both sides.

Royel Johnson:

It's bi-direction, yeah.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

It's bidirectional. And so that is what I would offer, but I feel like having spaces where we do this kind of troubling, this kind of conversation, again, leaning into that resistance.

Royel Johnson:

The wrestling.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. Leaning into that resistance, I think is really where the magic can happen.

Felecia Commodore:

And I want to speak to this too, and I've had these conversations with Tykeia, and I am really excited. We're seeing more higher education oriented kind of folks who know the scholarship and work in the philanthropic space. It's really exciting.

But I also think that there is a responsibility on academics and higher ed scholars to learn the language of the land that they're going into, right? And so as someone who does governance work and works with boards a lot, institutional leaders, we've had to learn. Most of the people in the room are not higher education scholars, but they're concerned about higher education, they have ideas around higher education. And we can go in and we can lay down all our theories and all our burn bomb and all the things we want to talk about, and they don't care because it's not their language. Right? And I think we make assumptions about when people present to us things in their language, whether that's business, industry, tech, however they understand organizations and institutions, that it's like they just don't get it.

And I think the more I work with the different groups, it's not that they don't get it, they don't get it like we get it. Right? And so it's figuring out, how can we, if we're going into a space where we know they don't speak our language, how can we translate what we do into their language so they can see like, "Oh, I can see now why what I proposed may not work."

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

You have to listen to learn and why. Why do you think this is the problem? What is at the heart of your... Why you want this and why do you want to do it this way? And then your job as translation is to provide an alternative that is grounded in scholarship, that demonstrates why your way could work. And the benefit that we have as scholars is that we often have evidence and scholarship to back it up.

And I also feel like to your point, Felecia, we have to learn the currency and what matters. Right? And so a lot of times in our theory and in our... A lot of our scholarly work takes time that people don't want to take or don't [inaudible 00:39:50].

Felecia Commodore:

Correct, correct, yeah.

Royel Johnson:

So there's a privilege, yeah.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

They're looking for the bottom line. It is a privilege to be able to really do a deep dive into something and explore it at the level that will result in the kind of change that you want to see. We don't always have the luxury of that.

Felecia Commodore:

That's right.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

And so, it's about understanding how to, to your point, Felecia, package what you want, package what you're after in a way that is appealing to the funder, because they have a bottom line. It's about better connecting your bottom line in theirs.

Royel Johnson:

To theirs, yeah.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah. Well, but Brandon, I have a question for you and I'm really excited that you're here and I know some of the great work that your organization is doing. But you actually work with an intermediary with actual institutions and systems, you're getting in there in the trenches and really taking these strategies that we come up with and putting them into practice and helping actually get them going on the ground. And so I was interested in your perspective on, what does that actually look like, right? So, what does it mean to put strategy into practice? And then also, where have you seen the ecosystem approach that we've been talking about really take hold or make a difference in that work happening?

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Yeah. Great question, and I'll combine these into one example of something that we just did earlier this year.

So, one of the areas that I've focused in, and it's also an area of focus for the Gates Foundation, is developmental education reform, the move towards co-requisite support. There's a lot of research on it, it all points in one direction. Without geeking out too much on that-

Felecia Commodore:

Geeking out's fine here.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I can talk for a while about it.

Felecia Commodore:

[inaudible 00:41:34].

Royel Johnson:

You're at a conference.

Felecia Commodore:

Right, a conference of geeks, yes.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

There's some great research that Nikki Edgecombe did when she was at CCRC that shows the leaky pipeline of how many students start in the lowest levels of developmental education. And by the time they get to and through just that first level math course, not even graduation, it's the first level college level math course, how few are left.

So, I know when I've done case making or done presentations, I can show that, I can show it in a graph and people might look and go, "Okay," and they'll go, "Yeah, but what about this one student? I had this one student who..." If we really want to geek out, it's because the students who actually survive that do really well. So what you see in your classroom can be true, even though writ large, it is not true. Right? So those are hard things to synthesize together. So, we know the research is there.

Well, part of what the ecosystem does is there's a network called Strong Start to Finish of which Complete College America is a part, and we do technical assistance around developmental education reform. And so we recently did something, it was actually here in Denver, where we work with four different states and I led a train the trainer activity while there was also policy work going on. And it's important that the two were there. So, we had leaders from system office and state, we were doing policy as well as practitioners on the ground.

And so using that example, first of all, we did 10 different examples in this great game that we developed called the co-rec game, but one of the activities was based off of Nikki Edgecombe's research. Instead of just showing the chart and talking through it and having a table discussion, we actually took 30 people, had them stand in front of the room and we did it with envelopes. And so, they represented 30 students in the classroom at that first level.

Felecia Commodore:

Wow.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

And then we went through and we said, "Okay, so actually before you tested into that first level, let's see how many of you actually enroll in that class. The rest of you sit down. Of those of you who enrolled, let's see how many of you pass." And you go through semester by semester by semester, and by the end there's very few people standing. And then when you process it, they just experienced it in first person. They were representing that student who either made it or didn't make it.

Felecia Commodore:

Wow.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

You could look around the room of how many were standing, how many were not, what is that like? Who are the ones who we leave behind? And it has a different impact than just showing that chart.

At the same time, then this was involved to say, "How do you want to work at policy at either the system or state level to move this forward?" So, this is an example of that scholarship in action that wouldn't happen just from that journal article alone. First of all, people may or may not read it. We can present it, but it may not be absorbed in the same way, but doing it through that technical assistance work, which quite honestly, allows people to wrestle with it.

Just one more caveat, the training the trainer, we thought it was all of the champions. For whatever reason there was some communication, where some people who came for the train the trainer who were still on the fence, which is what you would expect when you go and do this back on your campus. We weren't expecting to hear, but what was great is that wrestling happened in real time and you have to respect that versus saying, "The scholarship's out there, let me just tell you what the right answer is, and I'm going to ignore anything that you might have to say about that." That wrestling happened by the end wasn't necessarily what we expected, but people said, "You know what? I was on the fence, but I'm in a different place now," which is what we want to see back on their campuses. So, it's that, what we've been talking about, that translation of that scholarship into understanding the change process of how people make those paradigm shifts.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah. So, you took this research but made it real for people so that they could see how it applied.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Experience.

Royel Johnson:

An experience.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah, experience it. Yeah, yeah, that's great.

Royel Johnson:

I know we didn't get a chance to talk about the Higher Endeavor ecosystem and that work operates within the context of that. Maybe you can speak more to that.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. So Higher Endeavor is an ecosystem of service providers and intermediaries that are brokering that kind of technical assistance that Brandon just described, for participating institutions to gain access to the opportunities to engage in research in practice in order to build that sort of capacity or competency proficiency. And it is all designed to result again in that transformation or that wholesale reform of structural culture business model.

So, the foundation has invested in six intermediaries who have identified 200 plus institutions who by virtue of this work go through a process, a sort of needs assessment, and they identify what their transformation goals are, what are the things that they want to do to reform their campuses to address those student success disparities. And then they go on this journey of continuous improvement, which is, they engage in technical assistance and then they reflect on their institutional data and they make real data informed decisions about how to negotiate system structures policy, practice on their campuses in real time. And they're within Higher Endeavor for a period of time, two to four years. And the bet is that this will result in systems change that will move the needle on student performance, success.

And the idea behind Higher Endeavor is that creating these ecosystems and networks where institutions, as well as partners, and practitioners, intermediary service providers come together and engage in this learning, this ongoing learning around students success and institutional transformation and reform, that network learning facilitates this transformation on multiple levels. And another sort of central element of this work is that it centers equity and racial justice.

And so we're actually here, Brandon and I, representing the ERJ podcast, which is a critical element of the Higher Endeavor ecosystems work. And ERJ is technically a learning track, it's a part of the learning agenda for Higher Endeavor. And it is about making sure that this work of transformation continues to center equity and racial justice and keeps those things central to it. It's not like an add-on, but we're thinking about institutional transformation through that lens. And the ERJ podcast has been a set of podcasts that launched earlier this year where practitioners have been on to really talk about their stories of engaging, not only in this technical assistance, but also engaging with institutions as they are negotiating this process of institutional reform. And it's really been the thing that has taken off. It's gotten a lot of momentum because as Dr. Zamani-Gallaher said during her presidential address a few minutes ago, data without story-

Royel Johnson:

Without story.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

... are hollow, it's empty.

Felecia Commodore:

Right.

Royel Johnson:

So, I was so excited to learn about the ERJ podcast. Obviously, we think digital storytelling is important. And when Joy asked us to do the podcast four years ago, we were excited because it was a different format to engage a broader audience. And Felecia and I are always in amazement by the number of people who reach out to us. It's people who are not in higher ed who say that they have listened to the podcast, they have used the podcast.

Felecia Commodore:

My friends now have a little bit of an idea of what in the world I do.

Royel Johnson:

Who's signing up and getting notifications when the new episode releases.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Subscribe, absolutely.

Royel Johnson:

Yeah. I mean, I know you're a podcaster as well, but just talk a little bit more about digital storytelling and how important that is for reaching broader audiences and how you've seen it work in your own work.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah. It has been something that has been a total game changer for me and it's not something that I ever really pursued. Again, it was something that just was presented to me, but has ended up being something that has been fundamental to my scholarship, and it's taken me a while to get comfortable saying that. You guys know within our friends group, I tend to feel, I don't want to say on the outs, but I am the PhD within our friend group that did not take the faculty route.

Felecia Commodore:

You might have made the right decision.

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:49:51].

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Y'all never let me live though around, but you continue to remind me that, although I'm not in a conventional classroom, I am teaching. And so if we think about podcasting-

Royel Johnson:

And your audience is way larger than the audiences that we would ever teach.

Felecia Commodore:

And very well resourced.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

But no, I think to your point though, this modality of podcasting has really opened up and made scholarship way more accessible.

Royel Johnson:

Yes.

Felecia Commodore:

Yes.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

And what I feel like the beauty of it is, is I think as scholars we tend to think that we're the only ones that sit around and pontificate these grand ideas, but the reality is, most people have a stake and an interest. And with education being an applied field and something that we all have some connection to in our everyday life at some point, podcasting has made these conversations tangible to people who may not have access to collegiate classrooms or graduate study. And what's been most exciting for me is that they want to be a part, they want to talk to us. They want to engage, they have ideas, they want to contribute. And so, podcasting has also become a dialogue in some way, where it has led to so many other things.

And for me, I think in my own work, I'm thinking about it as this collective sense making. Sometimes when we read an article, you read it and you digest it, you sit with it, and you go through your own sort of internal reflection about it. But there is some value, and for me, it facilitates my learning and understanding when I'm able to sit around and process aloud. I am an auditory processor, but even being in partnership with you guys. How many times do I call Felecia and just say, "Let me run this by you, girl. Just let my mind roll for a moment."

So, because I think that collective sense making really does generate new ideas and keeps up momentum and excitement, and that's something that we've been able to see with the ERJ work. It's made the discussion of centering equity and racial justice within this work much more of a dynamic conversation. It is not just like this professional development piece that people just, "Oh yeah, we got to do that. Check that box." It is, how are we making sure that we remain attentive to this and attentive to keeping this central to everything that we do?

Royel Johnson:

For folks in the audience who are listening, they can find the ERJ podcasts on all platforms?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Anywhere you find podcasts.

Felecia Commodore:

[inaudible 00:52:19].

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Right now on YouTube, but yes.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Voices of Justice.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Oh, Voices of Justice is the actual name. I'm sorry. In my mind, it was just the ERJ podcast.

Felecia Commodore:

The acronyms, we talked about this.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

[inaudible 00:52:32]. Sorry, sorry. [inaudible 00:52:33].

Dr. Brandon Protas:

And I just want to respond quickly. No surprise, Complete College America also has podcasts which you can find on completecollege.org. When I think about scholarship, I think, to what end?

Felecia Commodore:

Yes. Me too.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

And in my mind, the reason why we do scholarship is to create action, to create change. It's not just study only for the sake of study, but it's the study to make improvements, to understand what we're doing and iterate on that. So, when I think about our podcast, and this relates to what you were saying with your book chapter, is we're talking to researchers, but very often we're talking to folks in the field who are applying that research.

Felecia Commodore:

That's right. That's right.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

And it's really important to have that full loop to say, "So you've read the research, you've done that. How is that impacting what you're doing on your campus to see the impact of that scholarship?"

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah, and I'm a pragmatist at heart, Brandon, so you just made my heart pitter-patter a little bit because I do think sometimes we're so proud of what we put out and it's like, okay, now what? What do we do with that? Let's make scholarship that we can put into practice and that people can use.

But I also, I love this idea of digital storytelling. And I remember very early on as a scholar and talking with people in policy, particularly, and how they really understood the power of a story that goes with data, that goes with scholarship. And I would talk to policy folks and legislators and they would be like, "Look, we can put all the data out there, but nothing's more powerful than bringing John up and having John tell his story down at the college and what happened. And there's a reason every time we have a State of the Union regardless of who's in the presidency, there's somebody up in the balcony that we're pointing to to tell a story about what we're trying to put forward."

But what I think in relationship to the stories we tell as scholars, that the digital storytelling really helps with is that it's live, right? It takes us so long to get our work out, that sometimes the moment may have passed for what we were trying to speak to. But with this digital storytelling and podcast of what are practitioners doing today, what is happening right now, allows a record or a very readily accessible, timely conversation about the stories that are happening right now that we need to know so that we can do the work right now and have the impact right now. Yeah.

Royel Johnson:

What advice would you offer to researchers in the audience who are thinking about how to better connect their work to practice?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I think bear in mind the, so what, of it all, and it really has to boil down to and what is the impact that you're seeking and really giving people actionable steps to make that happen. I think I will also say, listen as much as you talk and ask before you assume, and I think that those are just rules of engagement that we all should have anyway.

But no, I think I would say that there is a desire to connect. I think there's a hunger. We often say with Higher Endeavor, there's no shortage of work to be done, and so we're constantly looking for partners and collaborators, and everyone brings something to the table. And so coming to the engagement excited and willing and interested in thinking about how to contribute, is something that will get you far, but way farther than inflexibility and rigidity and any other kind of politic will get you. The truth of the matter is, our institutions are in dire need of help, and I think I say that as a scholar and as a practitioner. And so, coming in with that sort of ethos and culture and mindset and intention to be helpful and being willing to be flexible in how you go about that, I think is what I would offer.

Royel Johnson:

I love your point about, you said earlier about loving the implication section of a paper, and I think so many people gloss over that part. And I remember as a doctoral student, my advisor used to make us send a draft of our implication section to a practitioner we knew-

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I love it.

Royel Johnson:

... to review it.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Love it.

Royel Johnson:

Does this make sense? Could you apply this?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Right now.

Royel Johnson:

Is it relevant? Right? And that was a useful practice for me, and things that we aren't even, we can't even imagine because we're working on the ground in that way in terms of what it means to really implement what folks are saying.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I love it, and that's going to relate to my comment. Tykeia said her advice would be, so what? And I'm going to plus one that and go one step further. So I think about, what? So what?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Now what?

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Now what?

Felecia Commodore:

Now what.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

What is it you're studying? The so what is, why is this important?

Felecia Commodore:

I love it.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

The now what is, how do you apply that? And so, whether that may be in your particular role, but it may not be, and even if it's not, do what you were talking about is, I love when you said you brought the practitioners together and had that done.

Royel Johnson:

Oh, it was beautiful. Yeah.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

And if it's not that, then finding an organization-

Royel Johnson:

[inaudible 00:57:57].

Dr. Brandon Protas:

... whether it's Complete College America or another similar organization that's translating that work. Again, scholarship to what end?

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah. And I want to add to this question because I think it's really important to get both of your perspectives on this, because I know both me and Royel came from socialization in our doc programs from institutions and programs that took policy spaces and working with funders very seriously. And so, we were socialized and they're like, "How do you connect with funders? How do you connect with different groups like College Complete America?" But everybody doesn't have that socialization, and it's not that we always have folks running around the conferences from these spaces. What advice would you give to scholars who are trying to connect with organizations like the ones you're a part of to connect their scholarship with the work that you're doing?

Dr. Brandon Protas:

So I would say go to ASHE, but then don't only go to ASHE. Go to a conference that you may not think of going to. So, not per se a scholarship or a research based conference, but go to a student success

conference, and there's plenty of those out there from lots of different organizations. And the networking you're going to do is amazing there.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

I would add that relationships matter, and that's just the nature of this work, but it is about being willing to say what you want to do and just say it enough. And eventually, somebody's going to say, "I know somebody who's doing that." So as you're going to these conference spaces and doing that networking, really having a clear idea and even a solution or something in mind, if it's just an area or just a way to contribute like, "I do this really well." The more you talk about it and the more people you talk about it with, then you'll just want to expand and people are going to start to associate you with that thing. So, I would just be open. And for the introverts in the room, I know this is challenging for us. It is a skill that we must cultivate, but it does have its rewards.

Royel Johnson:

Let's open it up for some Q&A.

Felecia Commodore:

Yeah.

Royel Johnson:

Any questions? We'll give you a second to let it ruminate, develop.

Felecia Commodore:

None? Okay.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

We were that good. Huh? Yeah. We were that thorough, comprehensive.

Felecia Commodore:

Yes.

Royel Johnson:

Will you use the mic so we can hear? Right here, you can use mine.

Felecia Commodore:

Or he can use mine, I'm closer.

Royel Johnson:

Yeah, thanks.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:

Yeah, this is taped to the floor.

Felecia Commodore:

There you go.

Audience:

Thank you so much. I'm actually just really curious, Brandon, you mentioned a question that led to a large conversation when you were a practitioner. You didn't tell us what the question was. I was wondering what the question was.

Dr. Brandon Protas:

I actually don't remember what the question was. But I do remember we had someone, this is actually when I was in K-12, who came in, I was in Arizona, came in from Texas. And in this case it was a funder, it was not a technical assistance provider. And one question got us going for over two hours, and I wish I could remember what it was. I don't, but it was probably more just a reflection question that didn't have a simple answer.

Audience:

Have you asked a similar question of a similar group?

Royel Johnson:

Since then, right?

Dr. Brandon Protas:

Yes.

Felecia Commodore:

Ryan with the follow-up. Ryan said, "Let's follow up." Yes. Any other questions?

Royel Johnson:

Other questions? If not, give our panelists a round of applause.

Felecia Commodore:

Thank you.

Royel Johnson:

Thank you all so much for joining this episode of the podcast, for being a sponsor for the podcast this year.

Felecia Commodore:

Yes, thank you to our sponsors. And thank you all for coming out to this session. There were many other places you could have been and you decided to be here with us, and we don't take that lightly. And we hope that this was beneficial for you and that you take what you learned here today and go out and think about, what was it, Brandon?

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:
What? So what?

Felecia Commodore:
What? So what? And, now what?

Royel Johnson:
And now what?

Felecia Commodore:
So, thank you all.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:
Thank you.

Dr. Brandon Protas:
Thank you.

Royel Johnson:
And on that, we're done.
That's a wrap.

Dr. Tykeia Robinson:
Yeah, thanks guys.

Royel Johnson:
Thank you.