



Conversations in Urban Education

The Intentional Layering of Love, Imagination, and Expression as a Pathway to Freedom: A Conversation with Drs. Detra Price and Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz

Abstract

This conversation was first imagined as an interview with Drs. Detra Price and Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz about their groundbreaking book *Advancing Racial Literacies in Teacher Education: Activism for Equity in Digital Spaces*. With a focus on fostering and learning from students' digital activism by purposefully weaving together pedagogies for racial justice and multimodal literacies, their book and their scholarship is the perfect fit for this special issue. However, much like their book that recently won the Divergent Publication Award, these two scholars and visionaries are not easily boxed in. Thus, while our conversation begins by exploring how arts and technologies can come together to promote

healing, we also delve into the intentional layering of love, imagination, (un)learning, artistic expression, amplification, and trusting relationships as essential components for building the world we want to live in.

Keywords

love, healing, humanity, community, freedom, imagination, creativity, dreaming, alternative futures, unlearning, archaeology of self™, racial literacy, digital literacy, culture, poetry, art, design, innovation, technology

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CAMI: I want to start by thanking you both for being here today. I am genuinely

thrilled to be spending time with you—such brilliant educators and such beautiful human beings as well. I've been someone who's been lucky to learn from each of you over the past several years. And something that I really admire about you both is that you're scholars who don't just talk or write about education for healing and liberation, but you also embody every day the best of what education can be. And in doing so, you model for the rest of us a more loving path forward.

So all of that is to say, I'm very excited our readers are going to get to learn from you, and I'm grateful for your time and willingness to share. And so, before we jump into specific questions about your work, I thought of course it makes sense to start with introductions. And I wanted to invite you both to orient our readers by telling us a little bit about yourselves, your relationship with education, and maybe also what you see as your guiding hopes or your purpose in the work that you do.

YOLANDA: Hi, everyone. I always follow Dr. Detra Price. So, I'll jump in after she speaks. Is that okay, Detra? You know I love to follow you.

DETRA: Yeah. My name is Detra Price. I am currently at The Ohio State University. I have a dual role there. I'm a professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, and I'm the executive director of our Center for Digital Learning and Innovation. And thank you, Cami.

YOLANDA: Okay. I'll jump in. And I think the question was the hope for education. So Detra, why don't you go ahead and address that, and then I'll just come back. The guiding hope for education. . .

DETRA: My hope for education lies in two parts, really our humanity for each other, our ability to *be* committed to honoring and loving each other as human beings. And my other hope lies in imagination and creativity. I *hope* our K-12 learners, our teachers, our families, and those of us in higher education can start to imagine a kind of alternative present that could point to what is possible for the future. To me, that signals a need to speculate about the type of world we want to live in. And [we] ask ourselves, how do we become designers of that world so that we can honor each other's humanity more fully?

That's my hope—that we can create spaces where people can see that as a possibility. And yeah, I really hope to be part of that process.

YOLANDA: Well, that is definitely your heart and your work, Detra. I am Yolanda

Sealy-Ruiz. I am a professor of English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. My guiding hope for education overlaps with Detra's. The foundation of it is that teachers will learn to love their students. And I mean *really love* them to the point of caring about their futures, right? Loving them boldly enough as they would love a child in their own lives and want them to flourish.

My hope also lies in what COVID-19 has revealed as a lack of attention to teachers' mental well-being as well as students' mental well-being. And I think, for me, in the work that I'm doing, particularly around the [Archeology of Self™](#) and racial literacy, it's trying to get teacher education programs to pay attention to the professional unlearning that's needed. Unlearning that *we ignore* our mental health as teachers, unlearning that *we ignore* how students are showing up in their sadness and their trauma, and thinking that programs will just catch up. They don't necessarily have to do an Archeology of Self course, but *can we please* pay more attention to the self and *why* the self is teaching at this moment? So, my hope is that eventually teacher education programs, including my own, will catch on to paying attention.

CAMI: Wow. Well, what a beautiful way to get us started. And you both are—no surprise—but affirming and reminding me exactly why I wanted to interview you for this issue. You're both such visionaries, right? You each have this ability to imagine, to create, to build in really beautiful ways. And our theme for this issue is focused on thinking about technology, art, and education and how those tools can be used to promote community healing, sustenance, and resilience as well as racial and social justice. So, before we talk more specifically about your work, I want to invite you, since you are such visionaries, to share what comes to mind when you think about the ways that art, technology, and education are related to community healing, sustenance, and resilience. And from your perspective, how do these topics connect to this broader pursuit of a more just world and the broader visions that you have, as well?

YOLANDA: Wow. Cami, first of all, there should be... like I know there are podcast awards, right? But that question is an award-winning question for any podcast, but especially one centered on education. So, thank you for that.

I want to quote Jessica Care Moore, "Poetry saves lives." I want to quote Audre Lorde, "Poetry is not a luxury." And I want to quote myself to say that I write to free and heal myself. And poetry as an art form in my life, creative writing as an

art form in my life has—*no doubt, no hyperbole*—saved me. It has given me a space on paper and in my mind to create an alternative reality.

If you look at any movement for societal change—and this is so powerful—I had Akemi Kochiyama, Yuri Kochiyama's granddaughter, speak to my class. We were in the [Yuri and Malcolm Archives](#) at Columbia University, and we were talking about the power of her grandmother through photography, through poetry, and just having socials. Every time the Kochiyama had folks come over, there would be songs. There would be dance. There would be poetry.

And, the last thing I'll say is in the African tradition, as we look at enslavement processes and what that did to us, you have to look at the hush harbors where people went all the way out in the woods to dance, to release, to scream. You also have to look at the role of the Black church and spirituals and dancing and art. Romare Bearden, James Baldwin. . . I could go on and on. So, we actually have a legacy before, during the Harlem Renaissance, and even now, to show how art allows people to cope, to create, and to pretty much save themselves. And last but not least, you know Robin Kelly's work on freedom dreaming and his incredible book is focused on Black artists because Black artists have *always* been able to imagine a world that is not yet. We have to have art.

DETRA: Oh my gosh. Yes, Yolie! Yes, to all of those things. And yes to all the beautiful ways that you continue to help English educators or people who are teacher educators who want to work in the English field, and even those way beyond it. But, definitely, the work you've done to make that such an intentional part of what your program offers. Because I think if we don't try to be in conversation with our future teachers, it's really difficult to go in and try to unlearn a whole school. If we're able to *really* start working with folks as they are forming those dispositions about what gets cut in the budget and what they allow or what they decide to stay silent about when it gets cut in the budget, right? Because part of it is who makes the most noise when they're in schools and their budgets for arts are cut? And we need people to advocate for that from the very beginning.

And so, I'm always so grateful for the ways that it shows up in your work because there is such a need for it. And I'm also grateful for the ways we've been able to think about what that looks like in our classes that we've taught individually and we've taught collectively. Art is a part of our teaching. Even when we were online during COVID, our students were making art. They were making collages. They

were creating and expressing themselves across different modalities in our class. Our texts, some of them were pieces of art. They were gallery pieces. So, I think it can't be said enough about the layering, *the intentional layering*, of where art shows up in our lives and in our work because it continues to break those boundaries. And it shows what's possible when we can name—just like Cami said earlier—it's not just a conversation we want to have with people. We want to be able to show how it's possible in all the ways that we live.

There's not really much more I can add to what you said, Yolie. But I'm thinking about art as being an expansive way for us to grow and dream. And I think part of the answer to that question is, when we are in communities with others, when we are entering into communities to do work with people, and to do work with families, teachers, and students: What are their dreams? And how do we have those dreams and hopes guide the work we do with them? And *art should always be a part* of how it manifests. Art should always be one of those pathways that shows up.

I also think technology goes hand-in-hand with artistic expression. We saw that in the metaverse gallery that we created in our class. We saw the pieces that people actually made. Some of them were print-based. Some of them were digital-based. But then *the sharing* of it, and *the amplification* of that, and getting that message out, to me, is also where the tech comes in.

So, it just always goes back to imagination, right? How do we help people imagine the worlds or the places that they really want to be a part of? Particularly as they're making the place they want to live, but they also have this foot in the world that's filled with racism and that's rooted in capitalism and colonialism and patriarchy. *We have to have art* for them to decompress and to make sense of the world.

I don't know if I consider myself an artist, but the way that I can engage in art is just like Yolie said. It's one of the most freeing things I can imagine. And if we really care about racial equity, if we really care about any type of social justice, *the heart of that is freedom*. And I do think art is the way to get there. So yeah, it's either you care about the freedom and you give people the path or stop talking about it.

YOLANDA: Woo! Woo!!! I'm sorry to interrupt. I'm on silent. The mic is on silent. But I couldn't hold back! I had to come off and say, whoa. And exhale, Detra. Wow.

CAMI: Absolutely. I was also on silent and I'm just nodding along, saying yes, yes! It's just beautiful to hear both of your reflections on this, and I think our readers are going to be so lucky to read it. I think it will probably by now come as no surprise to our readers that you all have published a very beautiful, very necessary, and very impactful book called [*Advancing Racial Literacies in Teacher Education: Activism for Equity in Digital Spaces*](#). Just as a reflection of how much this book has already contributed, it was published in 2021, so just a few years ago. But it's won several awards and recently won the 2023 Divergent Publication Award for Excellence in Literacy in a Digital Age Research.

And so I want to, of course, talk about this work. But before we really talk too much about the content, I actually want to ask you to think back to the beginning. Because I know there are people who have big visions like you both do, and who want to have a positive impact. And so, I want to know, how did it start? Where did it begin for you? When you think back to creating and writing this book together, what was the story of how it came to be? Or what inspired you to focus on these topics?

DETRA: You have to tell it! No, Yolie!

YOLANDA: No, no, no! Detra, you tell the best story!

DETRA: No, please! Yolie, you've got to start us off! We'll both jump in, but you tell the story so beautifully!

YOLANDA: Okay. Well, let me just say that the book almost didn't happen. That's the first thing. And it doesn't mean that Detra and I wouldn't have done something else. But this specific book, which we are so grateful for all of you who have read it, and for the folks in the beautiful organizations that we're a part of, have found value in it to give it awards. It's still selling. Schools are still asking for it. But, it almost didn't happen.

But what's so important, and what I want to say is for anything, but especially when you're going to work with someone and do something as intimate as write with someone, *you have to trust them*. And I trust Detra with my thinking, with my theory, *with anything* that I have done, that I produce, *I trust Detra*. And in a quick moment, an outside force tried to interrupt that trust.

In terms of getting into it, when we finally did pull through it, we have to give props to Sarah B. She's no longer at Teachers College Press, but she, and Detra

will tell the story, but she saw us give a joint presentation. And she said, “I think that’s a book!” And it was at RESI. It was at the Reimagining Education Conference at [Teachers College]. Detra and I would always present together. We both care about racial literacy. She taught me what I know about digital literacies, and vice versa. We’re each other’s mentors. But it was Sarah that really kept nudging us throughout that process, whenever the external forces tried to break us, we would suddenly get an email asking, “How’s the book coming along?”

And to some extent I think—Detra, I don’t know if it was like that for you—but that was the affirmation that this is something that the world needs. So, let us not be impacted by external forces, and let’s do what we’ve been called to do.

CAMI: Absolutely. I have to chime in and say that I’m tearing up listening to you share all of that because I know that you both do the same for the people whose lives you touch. You are that same voice of encouragement and helping people bring out the best of themselves and bring out the work that really matters. So, I’m tearing up hearing that story.

YOLANDA: Thank you, Cami, for your part. Thank you for being able to feel. Because Detra and I have shared a lot of tears over this, even as we tell the story. So, thank you for your openness to feel what we have carried.

DETRA: Yes. Yolie, you always remind me of why I’m so grateful that the universe has you in my life. *There are so many reasons*, but part of that is if you cannot be yourself and be in the moment of who you are and be vulnerable to open up your life in ways that let people see your humanity, then this really isn’t the work for you. And you show that just so elegantly and so gracefully. *Every time* I’m on a call with you, I learn a different way to be okay to just show up as me.

And *sometimes that’s hard*. But I think of you. I evoke you. I bring you with me. I carry your spirit. And I know, if you were beside me, how I would show up in those spaces. So, I just show up in those spaces that way, even if you aren’t technically there. And I think that this book was a way for us to gain clarity, too, about *we know who we are*. But when there are outside forces, and you know, the noise gets loud, being confident enough to know at your core who you are and how you love and care for each other, that was so easy for us to come back to.

And I think there was a conversation that we were nervous to have. Like, we . . . *we are beyond friends. We are sisters*. And we can’t let a book get in the way of that or of other things. And so, I feel like that was the piece too that was like, “Do

we just need to stop so we can be good?” [Laughs] Because nothing was worth losing you in my life, right? There was nothing worth that.

And so, at any rate, I think sometimes these stories are important because the love and the care and the gentleness and the trust, as Yolie already said, was always there. But *it did* take someone else to see something in how we were together that was *bigger* than that moment, that 30-minute talk. It was bigger than a 30-minute talk. Even though that was great, and we were content with that.

YOLANDA: Detra, she probably saw our sisterhood. She probably saw how we flowed with each other. She didn’t know our level of friendship, our sisterhood, none of that. But she saw something; yes, in the work, but I also think she saw *something in us*, Detra.

DETRA: Yes. And I feel like that’s that openness, Yolie. Like, what does it look like to be open to the gifts that people can bring into your life? And I think that this book, the process, has helped reaffirm that. I didn’t know Sarah, and we get a million emails from people. Most of the time, it’s like, “No. You know, there’s no point in me opening it because I know I don’t have time.” [Laughs]

But that’s what Sarah’s email has helped me realize. It’s that even if I don’t have time, this interaction can set off a chain of interactions that *I can’t even imagine*. And so, being open to the blessing people could be in your life is *a really important lesson*. This book has been that. But also just being open *to accepting* a meeting with her. Because I think I was like, “We don’t have time for this.” [Laughs] You know? Because I’m always the Capricorn.

YOLANDA: You are the Capricorn! I am the Libra. [Both are laughing together]. Why don’t we just try? Why don’t we just listen? But you made time, and thank God you did.

DETRA: I mean, it’s beautiful.

CAMI: I also hear the themes of *relationships and humanity and community* as you both share. Those pieces are at the core of this work. And so, it’s almost like we’re coming back full circle already to your visions and really staying true to that. I hear *all of that* in this story about how this came to be. So, I guess, could you summarize it for us? Tell our readers who—maybe some of them have read it, maybe some of them haven’t—but what’s it about? What’s the book about?

YOLANDA: Detra, please! And the reason I say “Detra, please,” is because racial

literacy is important *for sure*. The digital is not as easy for teachers. And I know, when I was co-teaching the class with Detra, when I say she's my mentor in terms of all things digital, *that's not hyperbole*. Like, Detra helped to design the course and was also mentoring me in the process. It was the digital that our students struggled with. In writing the book, we hope that we show teachers that you can *embrace the digital*, not as an extra or ancillary, but *as the actual curriculum*. I think it is important for teachers now more than ever.

CAMI: Absolutely.

DETRA: Yolie, you are always so generous because I was thinking you were my mentor as well throughout the whole process and pushing my thinking. *Always pushing my thinking* in a way that affirms but also pushes. I leave a conversation with you and I'm still thinking about that conversation days later. And what does it mean for me to actually put some of those ideas into practice? And I think that, you know... goodness, gracious. You can't pay for that. *What does it mean to have someone in your life that inspires you and pushes you and affirms you?* Like, that doesn't usually exist in one human. So, I echo everything you say back with the role that you played in the book and the course, particularly around my own racial literacy development and how important that is.

I think two things I would add, Yolie, is that we wanted a framework for the two topics, or two areas or disciplines, that people often silo. We wanted a framework that said, "Stop siloing them! Be in conversation." Because we see this as another iteration of work that is in a long line of equity-oriented pedagogies, right? We see this in the same iteration as Gholdy Muhammad's work and Gloria Ladson-Billing's work and Django Paris's work and Samy Alim's work. We see this as that iteration. If this work is tied to culture, just like Yolie said, it has to be tied to the digital. And if it's tied to race, it has to be tied to culture. And so, *all these pieces are so intertwined*. We just wanted to break down the silos. We really just wanted people to be in conversation and in community that really weren't in conversation and community.

And often, both of those topics are also the add-on. I thought, when I was a teacher, every PD [professional development] was, "Here's the curriculum, and now I want you to go learn how to make it culturally responsive or think about race." Back then, it was multiculturalism. So, we don't have to say what year that was in. [Laughs] But those were the buzzwords, right? The frameworks to think a little bit more deeply about race. And I actually don't even remember if I ever went

to a workshop as a teacher where the word race was in the PD. *It just wasn't there, right?*

And I think about the same thing for technology today. It's like, "Here's the curriculum. Now you've got to figure out what to do with these computers." And we just wanted to stop that. We wanted to say the things that have always been on the periphery of the curriculum really *should be at the center* because these are tied to culture and identity, and we should be thinking about them in more integrated ways.

YOLANDA: Detra, that's beautiful. I think what I'd love to add is that the book is also somewhat personal in the sense that we talk about our own racial literacy. We also give snapshots of our teaching, right? Working with young people, from young people all the way up to higher ed. So, for the reader or for the listener of this, *it's for you*. We have drawn on our experience collectively. I don't know, maybe 50-60 years collectively of teaching and working in K through 16 environments. So, that's one thing I want to say. There's a little bit of the personal there.

What I also want to give a nod to is who wrote the foreword and who wrote the afterword. Like that's a major thing for us because Jabari Mahiri just came out with a great book a few years ago on really troubling racial literacy, having us really think about it in different ways. So, to have someone who has spent time to write a book looking at racial literacy a bit more deeply, to really sanction this book was a beautiful experience for us. And then what can we say about Rebecca Rogers? She's one of my mentors in racial literacy.

But to have Jabari open the book and Rebecca close the book, specifically drawing on the incident from January 6th, right? I think in some ways, it becomes almost a historical text that we're freezing a moment in time. George Floyd had not yet happened, but there had been *so many others* when we were writing it. So many other deaths of innocent Black and Brown people. That was the environment that we were in, and then talking about how it should be talked about in the classroom when the racial events from the environment are playing out in the digital *every day*.

So, if we pull back—and thank you, Cami, for this moment—to really see the landscape on which this book came out is pretty powerful. And I'm beginning to see it as a historical moment in time, but also a book for now and for the future. That's what I would say for anyone who wants to pick it up and read it.

CAMI: I hope everyone who's reading will pick it up and read it! I remember when I read it, I wasn't shying away from racial literacy, but I most certainly was shying away from technology. And I think it was because, as a classroom teacher, I was always so overwhelmed. There was so much to juggle. And it was like, "Oh, this is another thing that I need to figure out and learn. And I don't have time for it. So, we're just going to do it on chart paper." You know? And this is when I was a classroom teacher. So, when I read the book, I remember being like, "Oh, my gosh! They are so right. It's not okay for me to shy away from this. It's absolutely essential." It really opened my eyes to the importance of integrating technology into our teaching.

And so, one of the things that I think is special about this journal is that we bring together a lot of different perspectives. In addition to leading scholars and writers in education, we also include those who tend to be underrepresented in educational research and publishing. So, people like students, families, teachers, activists, and community members. Considering our audience is broad—obviously, there're so many important impacts for teachers—but what are some of the main takeaways that you think are most impactful for a broad audience to think about when it comes to how technologies can be leveraged to build racial literacy and to build toward this kind of world that we want to live in?

DETRA: The first thing I think I would say as a takeaway is that you don't have to stay where you are right now. But you could think of your work as a continuum. And so, I think sometimes that overwhelming feeling is when we see the examples that people give us of what they're doing around racial literacy development with their students or what they're doing with technology or what they're doing with the intersection of those two. And it's like, "I don't even know how they got there. You know, I'm just trying to get the Google Doc to work!" And it feels like I don't have time to try to figure that out. Because if I spend an hour doing that, I'm not grading. I'm not providing feedback for my students. I'm not prepping my class, right?

One takeaway is to think about this as a continuum. Think about the intersection as a continuum from consumption to production. And if your work around racial literacy and technology is more consumption-based for your students, then take some baby steps to start moving towards a more production-oriented pedagogy, so that your students are producing content across print and digital media that examines racial literacy, that examines who they are as racialized beings in this

society and what that means.

And then, of course, the advocacy piece. You know, *what do you care about? What is on your heart?* What is the work that you were put on this planet to do? And how can you work with other people towards that goal? You know, really believing that you have a purpose and that you can be an advocate for that. And I think if you could think about the baby steps towards that, and it could be *very small* baby steps. *No one's measuring it.* There's no award for getting there before the person down the hall. You don't get more Starbursts or cupcakes or whatever it is, right? [Laughs] If you feel like you are doing things that other people in your school aren't doing, your responsibility—in my mind—out of love and humanity is to go stand by other people as they walk towards that space too. So, it should be a continuum. We all have work to do.

CAMI: Thank you, Detra. I knew that this conversation today was going to bring me so much joy and hope and imagination because it always does any time I get to talk to you all. But I'm just loving it, and I'm so excited that other people are going to get to read it and think about everything you've both shared too.

I know we're coming to the end of our time together, and so I want to ask a couple more questions as we start to wrap up. The first is that I want to come to you, Yolanda, because you're an accomplished poet. You talked about poetry at the beginning of this conversation, and you've published two very beautiful anthologies of poetry, [*Love from the Vortex and Other Poems*](#), and then recently, you also published [*The Peace Chronicles*](#). In addition to all of the creative writing that you do, you bring in technology as well. You curate playlists that go along with your poetry, and you have filmed your poetry as spoken word, and as part of a digital anthology. So, it's just a powerful example of how these things can come together. And so, I wanted to invite you to share a little bit about the artistic and creative work that you do and how you see it as related to education, community, and this pursuit of a better, more just and loving world.

YOLANDA: Cami, these questions! You're knocking them out of the park. And I mean, like big stadiums—Yankee, Wrigley, the whole thing. Let me try to keep it short, but let me just say this. When I say that I write to free and heal myself, that is indeed the truth. Even in my academic writing, I'm trying to free myself of what the academy has told me is the way to write or the way to think. And so, I try to use that almost as a canvas, right? To resist a lot of the lies that the academy offers.

In terms of the artistic, I think the two books of poetry have been a wonderful example of when you try to put something in the world—not just for selfish reasons, but actually I was trying to heal and offering others to heal—that the possibilities are endless. And so, from the books has come a recent exhibition at the [Jazz Museum](#), where I read my poetry alongside jazz. And then there's a video. Gholdy Muhammad, my bestie, her husband is a rap artist. There is a rap song for the book. The books have been taken up to have classical music concerts. So, concerts and art exhibitions at Teachers College. There was a multimodal exhibition including audio and video and print and performance. So, these books, I feel really not only freed me but opened me up to what Maxine Green talks about and what other creative imaginaries incite us to do: to really explore the possibilities of where the words can take you.

So art, everything that Detra said, art has to be in the mix. The digital has to be in the mix. Music. All of that. *We need all of it.* It's not an and/or. And I feel like that's what my research does. And then, putting poetry into my academic research. Also thinking about how the [TED Talk](#) and the videos are woven into my academic writing with screenshots. *I'm just playing and having a great time.*

CAMI: And we need more of that! Not just in higher education, but in K-12 too. I mean, there's just so much possibility when you think about the work that you do, and the model that you offer all of us and how important it is for schools and for kids and for families and communities.

Detra, I have a similar question for you. You are also a creative and critical thinker who is not afraid to experiment with new technologies and push past the boundaries of more traditional approaches to pedagogy and research. You also recently co-edited a book, [Black Girls Literacies: Transforming Lives and Literacy Practices](#), and as you mentioned, you are the new director of the Digital Education and Innovation in Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University.

And so, I wanted to invite you as well, especially since the work that you do is so aligned with what this issue is about. What are you currently playing with or dreaming about in terms of how we can leverage emerging technologies for liberation and for education that is healing and sustaining?

DETRA: Thank you for that question, Cami. I want to say two things. Yolie, your model of *how to be* in the academy. I know we talked about being, around disruption, and being a disruptor, right? Or an interrupter. But it's *so much bigger than that*, Yolie. I think you don't recognize, and maybe don't hear enough, about

how inspirational your work is to all of us. How *you genuinely show me every day* to keep dreaming bigger, to keep pushing—and not for credit, not for publications, not for awards—but just so my heart is full. Like, this is such a different goal.

And the communities you have been in with people, it just... I cannot tell you enough about how much it shows what is possible. And I think that's really at the heart of all of this work. *Show me what is possible. What could be possible?* And I think you do that *so beautifully*. And this is maybe the only opportunity today to tell you. So, I'm going to tell you because it's on my heart. So, the answer to the question is: Show me what is possible.

CAMI: I was going to say, that's a beautiful, beautiful contribution regardless, so...

DETRA: So, in a nutshell, I've been thinking a lot about hubs and networks and community. And what would it look like to design? I thought a lot about this during COVID and was finally able to get an industry partner to help support this dream of creating a creativity and innovation design network.

And the purpose of this network is to put faculty and undergraduate students in communities. Whether it's community organizations or K-12 school communities, to dream with them about what could be possible around social change with media. And our goal is to be out in the community. We are doing that this semester. It just launched this year.

And we are working with communities to figure out what are the issues and problems that are impacting people feeling like they belong, feeling like they are fully seen and valued and have a space. And how can we leverage media-making to address those issues and those concerns? And so, it's *really* about every day waking up and wanting to try to figure out, what is my job going to look like today? And *not in a bad way*, but in a way that is guided by the people that I work with, right?

And so, that's sort of what I'm working with now. So, some of that looks like podcasting. Some of that looks like stop-motion animation. Some of that looks like wearable technologies with sensors. Some of that looks like virtual reality goggles. And it's a little bit everywhere right now. But it's responsive to the needs of the people that I'm able to work with *every single day*. So, that's currently what that looks like.

CAMI: What a beautiful note to bring it all together. Gosh, I said the word

beautiful a lot today! I might have to edit the transcripts. [Laughs] But I was going to say, what a beautiful note to end it on. And I also chose a quote that reminds me of both of you. So, I'm going to read that and then invite any last thoughts before we wrap it up. It's a quote from bell hooks. In her book *Teaching to Transgress*, she wrote:

The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy ... I add my voice to the collective call for renewal and rejuvenation in our teaching practices. Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions - a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom.

And I'm sure the reason I chose this quote resonates for all of our readers because it's come up in our conversation many times today. But any last thoughts or words?

YOLANDA: The only thing I'll say is the first sentence of that quote framed my tenure statement. That's it. And this year, I will be publishing an edited volume. It's the 25th anniversary of *All About Love* by bell hooks. So, with Autumn Griffin, we have a book *All About Black Girl Love*, which will have a party opening at AERA [American Educational Research Association]. bell hooks is a guiding light for me. Detra?

DETRA: Yeah. I mean, I feel like we both have evoked her spirit and her work in so many different areas in our lives. And I think her work to me, and that quote to me, just speaks... it kind of goes back to the award that our book most recently won, The Divergent Award. What does it look like to do this work outside of a boundary? And how can we keep trying to erase all the boundaries around what it's supposed to be, to just keep dreaming? And that... that's landed on my heart right now. So, thank you for that.

CAMI: Thank you both for being here. Thank you both for the work that you do. Thank you both for the people that you are. You are an absolute blessing.

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