

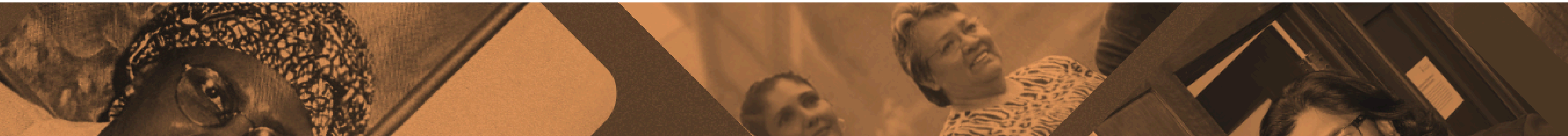
KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Lance T. McCready, Ph.D., OISE/University of Toronto

Access and Equity in Higher Education Research

Symposium

October 4, 2024



Agenda



Background

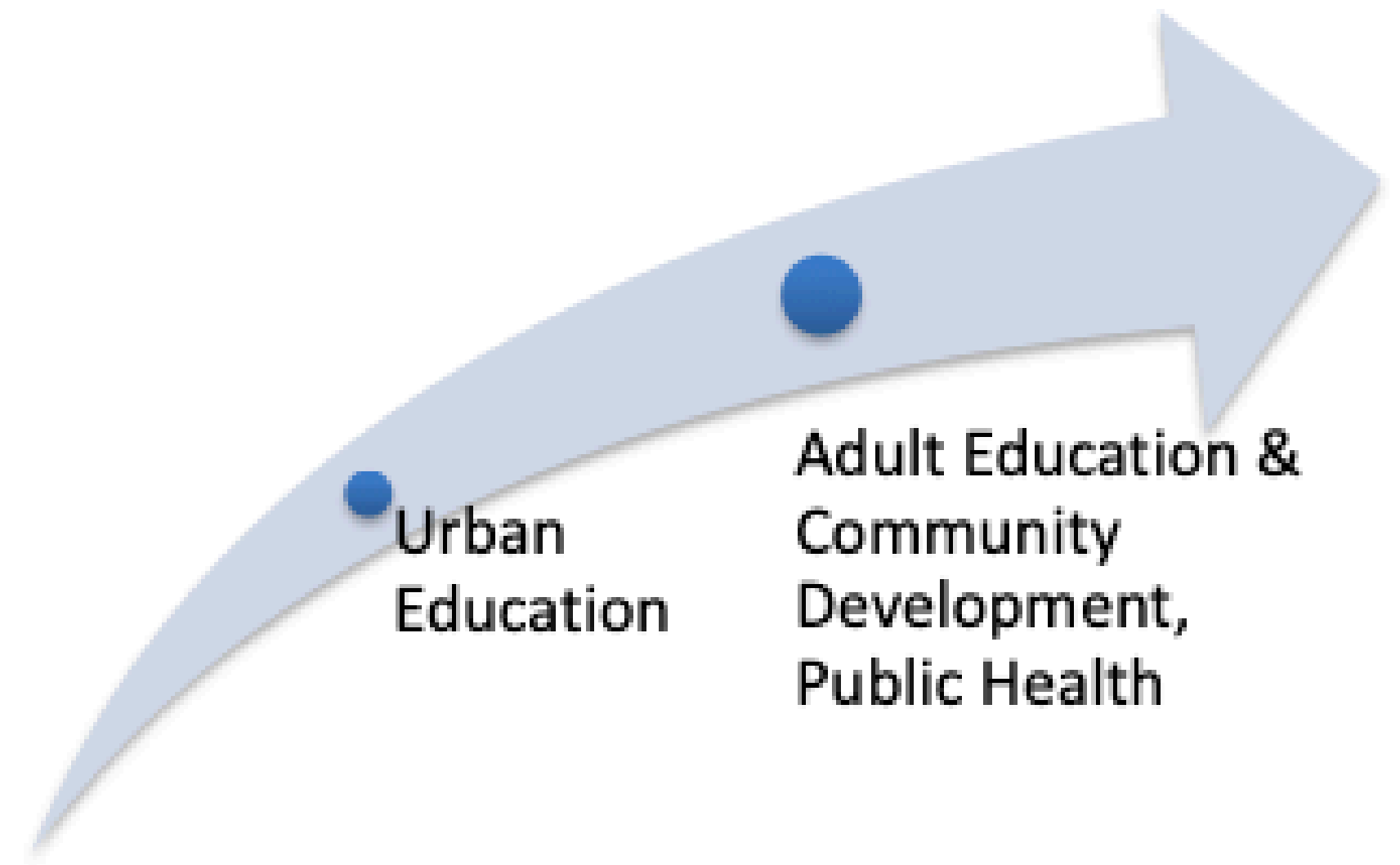
Reflections

Objectives

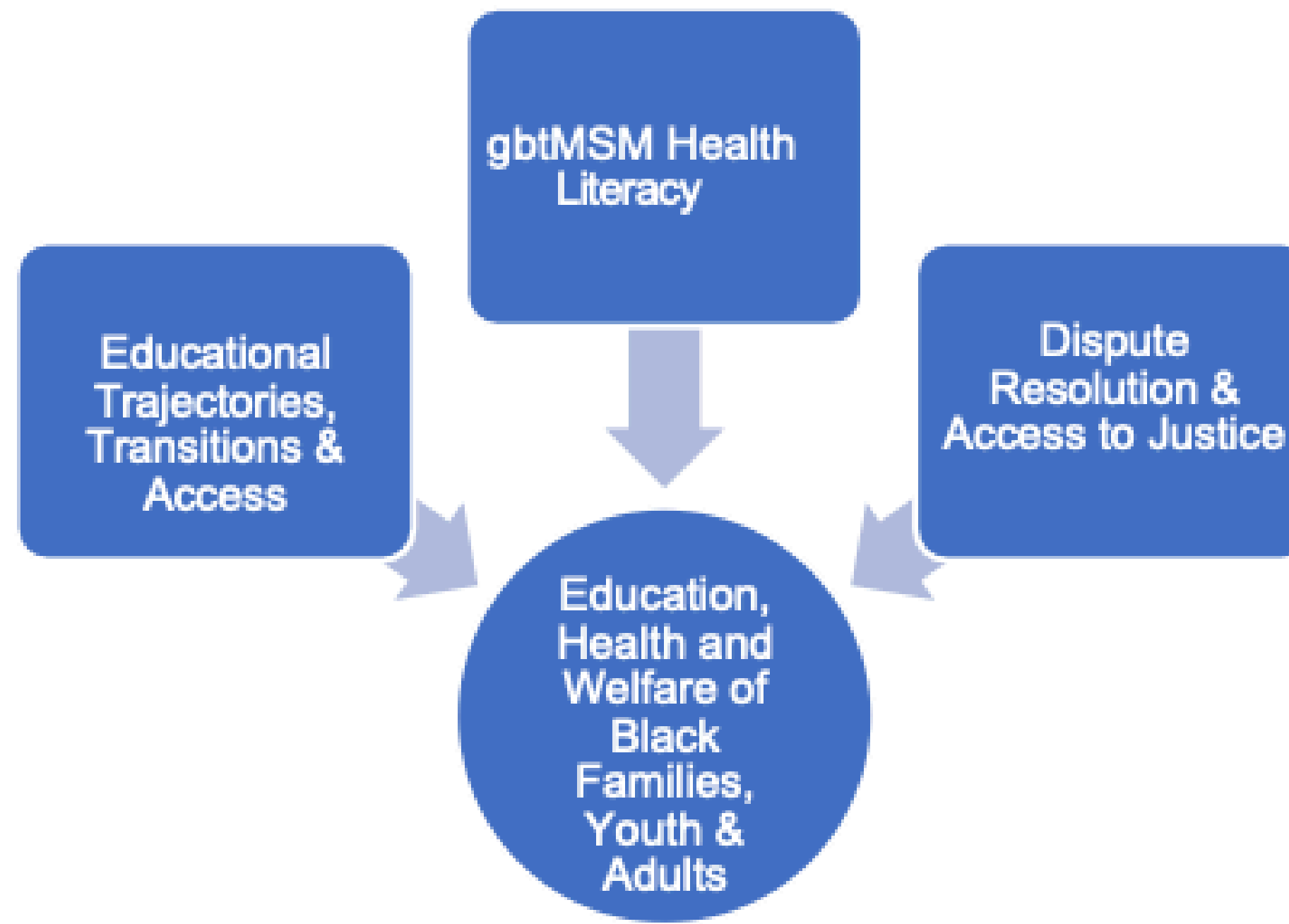
BACKGROUND

Social & Cultural Studies in Education

- Psychology
- Sociology
- Anthropology



Research Program



Key Question

Why organize a research symposium on access and equity in higher education for mature students (AEHEMS)?

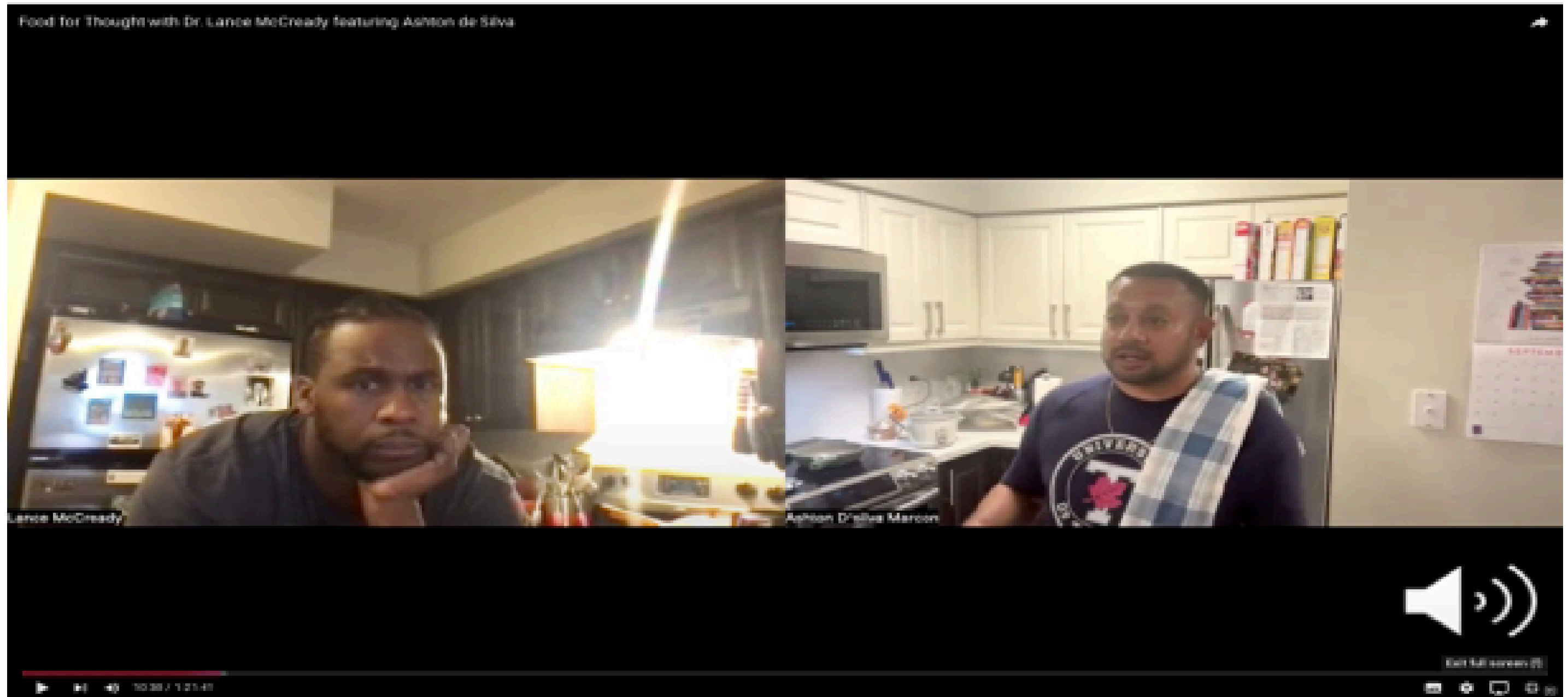
Reflections

Joyce Jacobs-El McCready

- Born November 24, 1937. Grew up in Brooklyn, NY and Chicago, IL., graduated from Bushwick HS.
- Married my father William Floyd McCready in 1961, divorced 1972.
- Earned an AA in Hospitality Management, then worked in restaurants and cafeterias for Riverside Church and NYU. Transitioned to a career as Culinary Arts Instructor for Job Corps in NYC and Manhattan, KS.
- Went back to school at Hunter College in the 1980s (in her 40s) to earn a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition & Food Science, but never finished due to economic and social pressures related to working full time and being a single mother.



Food for Thought: Piloting a Podcast with Dr. Lance T. McCready (TYP Director) & Ashton de Silva (TYP Alum)



- I want to know more about the pressures my mother, and mature students like Ashton, face and how they navigate those challenges, and how they think earning a bachelor's degree will transform their lives, and if ultimately it does. **We need more narrative research that documents the lived experiences of mature students.**

Critical Review of Literature

Sociodemographics

- Recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation policies and strategies of Canadian universities continue to focus on traditional age college students and university graduates (in their late teens to early twenties). Mature students tend to be older, have more life experience, family and work (Stone and O'Shea, 2013).

Access & Equity in Times of Crisis

- A range of HE policies related to admissions, financial aid and credentialing may serve as barriers for prospective mature students who want to access HE. Policies are more likely to serve as barriers when they do not take into account the ways global crises are changing the context of mature students' everyday lives, including their access to HE.

Teaching & Learning Strategies

- University admissions, academic support and financial aid policies may fail to account for issues such as wars and genocidal displacement, technological literacy and language, employment instability, the rising cost of housing, (Merill, 2015; Chen, 2017; Hyland Russell and Groen, 2011; Baker, Irwin and Freeman, 2020).

Student Support Services

- Mature student retention and attrition rates suggest that universities need to adapt existing policies and practices to be more specifically tailored to the needs of this demographic (Mason and Atkin, 2021; Gilardi and Guglielmetti, 2011).

Transitional Year Programme

- **TYP website:** “TYP began at Innis College, University of Toronto, in September 1970, with approximately 25 students and, except for the 1976-77 academic year, has been in continuous operation since. The programme has its roots in the Black community in Toronto, having emerged out of two community summer programmes in 1969 and 1970, which served to prepare a small number of students for entry into York University.” (<https://typ.utoronto.ca>)
- **Coalition Building on Campus website:** “The Transitional Year Program at the University of Toronto was founded in 1969-1970 to “give economically and educationally disadvantaged students a chance at university education.” The multiracial program emerged out of Black community initiative, but came under attack throughout the late 1970s, following a 1976 review of the program called its reported curricular focus on Black Studies into question. The story of the TYP thus emerges as a chapter in the struggle for Black Studies at the university.” (<https://coalitionbuildingoncampus.ca/cboc-story/the-typ-at-u-of-t-part-1/>)
- **The history of TYP points to the need for research on university access programs** that documents not only the programs’ impact on student academic and employment outcomes, but also the ways access programs foster equity and accessibility through bold curricular and pedagogical initiatives.



Objectives

Goals of the Symposium

- Reflections on my mother's journey through higher education, the history of the Transitional Year Programme, and a critical review of literature on inspired the goals of symposium to:
 - 1) Disseminate existing knowledge on mature students' access to HE
 - 2) Identify gaps literature that point to future research directions
 - 3) Build a network of scholars and practitioners to support equity and access work for mature students across Canada and internationally

Organization of the Day

- **Keynotes** provide a rationale for the symposium and delve more deeply into issues of Access & Equity in Times of Crisis, Student Support Services, future directions for research and policymaking.
- **Paper sessions** address gaps in literature on Access & Equity in Times of Crisis & Teaching & Learning Strategies.
- **Roundtables** provide an opportunity to learn about strengths and limitations of university-based supports for mature students, and discuss possibilities for new and/or additional forms of support.

Questions? Comments?

THANK YOU!!!

Lance T. McCready, Ph.D.

lance.mccready@utoronto.ca

**University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education**