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## SPEAKERS

Dr. Thomas, Dr. Fowles, Liane Hypolite

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- D** Dr. Thomas 00:00  
Hey, are you rolling your eyes right now because yet another talented student is questioning their abilities?
- D** Dr. Fowles 00:06  
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- D** Dr. Thomas 00:21  
This is Black Social Capital. Today's guest is Dr. Liane Hypolite. Dr. Hypolite completed her PhD in urban education policy at the University of Southern California. And she is an Assistant Professor at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, California. Prior to her doctoral studies, Dr. Hypolite provided college advising to low income, racially minoritized and first generation students at a nonprofit and at a charter school. Dr. Hypolite researches strategies for achieving racial and economic equity for students transitioning from high school to college. Welcome, Dr. Liane.
- L** Liane Hypolite 01:20

Thank you for having me.

D

Dr. Fowles 01:23

I'm super excited to have you here on our show today. One of the reasons why I'm excited is because I've been part of your journey as you're conducting research. You know, I saw you taking notes I saw you working with students. I saw you after sessions, at restaurants and bars as we talked through some of your ideas and I'm so excited to just see the growth, from from idea to tangible outcomes and tangible jobs, right. And so I'm just excited to to spend some time with you today and and see what's next on your journey. So we'll take it away from here.

D

Dr. Thomas 02:07

Yes. So we are going to get started today with our Intellectual Capital Segment. This is a discussion of a Black scholar's research academic journey or current events in the professional world. And today we are going to hear about your research. So first question, what's the topic of your research and how did you become interested in it?

L

Liane Hypolite 02:31

Sure. So, the topic of my research, as you mentioned, Dr. Jaqui a lot about college access and success for our racially and economically minoritized students. And what really brought me into this research topic was probably my first job in college, which was working as a student employee and undergraduate admissions at Brandeis where I went to school and it really started just a job. I was giving tours of campus. I was doing like admin work, just inputting students who are interested in the university and putting their emails and their numbers. So really simple things. And by the time I got to my senior year, I was actually promoted to become a senior interviewer. And what this allowed me to do was interview students who were interested in attending university interviews weren't required. But there were some students who took advantage of them. And, and I saw that there were these buckets that were being created in this interview system. So on one side, you would have pretty privileged, in terms of race and class, students who were using the interview as a way to get ahead as a way to really add to their application and ideally give them a better chance of being admitted to the university. And so these were, you know, wonderful young people who were extremely involved, but you could also tell that they went to schools where they had access to a ton of advanced placement classes where they could take any language that they wanted to take where they could participate in a ton of different extracurricular activities. And students who often didn't really have to work, but perhaps they could volunteer, they could travel abroad. So it was,

for me a really interesting insight into- as someone who had gone to just like the big traditional public high school in my town, --it was insight into another part of us society. And then the other piece of my interview, students were students who were interviewing for particular scholarship programs. And there was a scholarship at my university called the Transitional Year Program. And essentially what it was is it was saying if you were young person who had gone to a high school that didn't have access to all of these resources, That other students did that you might actually be able to come into the university, you'd do one year of just taking courses with some of your class, some classmates who are in your scholarship program. And if you can prove that you can do well, then you'll be admitted to the university. So it's essentially turning a four year program into a five year program, and trying to use that that additional year to provide students with some time to get used to the university, some time to really get acclimated to the academics. And these young people. I mean, we're amazing, amazing. I mean, you're talking about people who had gone to high schools that you know, maybe they had one or two AP courses, the extracurriculars as students are coming up with it themselves. They were creating student organizations, they were leading student organizations because they weren't available, and they were making that happen. They had gone through so much in their own lives, personally. And I think that that I was really inspired by those young people. And I thought about like, what is it that these young people have to go through this like additional year of a program and, and all these other elements, which I was happy my university provided, but it also felt like it exemplified the inequality that exists in our education system. And so it was that experience that really inspired my research interest in college access and success.

D

Dr. Thomas 06:31

That's really interesting, because I mean, it sounds like these students were given an extra year just to get the capital, right, the social and community capital, right, that they just didn't have all along and it took a year right like, wow, that's mind blowing.

D

Dr. Fowles 06:51

Let's let's dive right into it. Right. So

D

Dr. Thomas 06:53

Okay, great.

D

Dr. Fowles 06:55

Let's let's talk a little bit about like your research process. Share a little bit about that. But ultimately, I really want to know, like, what did you find? And what do you want people to do with your findings? Right? We don't want people to just say, Hey, I did this research. Tell us how you want your research to be used, how it can really impact things moving forward?

L

Liane Hypolite 07:17

Absolutely. So I'd say the number one thing that has come out of both my professional experiences as well as the research that I've done following that, is really making sure that we're always centering the experiences of our most minoritized, our most marginalized students, when we're creating programs when we're thinking about institutional initiatives that are really going to change and move the needle when it comes to measures of academic success. I think that if we're able to do that as, as practitioners, as educational leaders as researchers, that we would be targeting all of our efforts towards the young people that structurally institutionally have really been ignored and left behind for far too long. I think even just that idea, what I try to do with my research is make sure that I'm talking to young people to students directly. I think that so often we're trying to be in silos of adults and leaders, and all of these words we use to describe ourselves, when really a lot of the answers are with our young people. They can tell us pretty succinctly what works and what doesn't work. And so I try to make sure that my research is really about their voices and trying to just propel the ideas and the perspectives and the experiences that they have to others so that we can actually use that information, which I think is the most important data to inform the decisions we make.

D

Dr. Fowles 08:49

All of the things that we really need are usually found within our end user, right? In this case, students, right? If you want to know how to improve Things No, go out and ask ask students. Be a part of their community in their circles, be a part of their capital. And then you can find some solutions to some of the big questions that people have.

L

Liane Hypolite 09:12

Definitely, I couldn't agree more. I think just because we're talking about education, k-12. higher ed students are definitely the center and the backbone of that, but I think this can be applied to anyone's work.

**D** Dr. Fowles 09:24  
I totally agree. We're gonna take a quick break, and we'll be back right after this.

**D** Dr. Thomas 09:32  
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**D** Dr. Fowles 10:12  
And we're back. So let's jump into one of our other segments. Of course we have two segments. As Dr. Jaqui mentioned, we have our intellectual capital. But Up next is our Community Capital Segment. And this is a discussion about your journey, best practices, professional lessons that you've learned. So we really want to dive into your journey. So first, tell us about your educational path. Talk about how you chose your institutions, how you pick your majors, your degree plans. Tell us that educational journey?

**L** Liane Hypolite 10:49  
Sure. Um, so I feel like it's really hard to speak about my educational journey and not talk about my parents who are definitely my my first and most important educators. Um, and both of my parents are from the Caribbean. So they grew up within a British inspired, because of colonization, education system that was really, really strict. You would get hit with rulers by your teachers.

**D** Dr. Fowles 11:18  
Not gonna let you rip the island.

**L** Liane Hypolite 11:22  
You know, it's Trinidad, so I just have to put us on the map, let everyone know we're doing big things. And say that because of their experiences being so intensified for them, it was like if you, if a teacher tells your parent that something went wrong, like you are

automatically going to get in trouble, like there's no debate and conversation about that. And so, I definitely my sister and I grew up with all of those those same guidelines. We always joke about the fact that my dad, he was so used to the fact that they had to wear uniforms. On the island when they were going to school that when I started at Boston Public Schools, he was like, Oh, you and your sister after uniforms. I was like, you know, I was a little kid. I wasn't sure if I was like, I don't think other kids have to wear uniforms. And this man was like, No, you're going to wear uniforms. We're the only two kids-- Yes, wearing uniforms and no one else was It was truly embarrassing. But I say today that this was my dad was a man very is a man very, very committed to education continues to be that way. And so he was a big part of the educational decisions that we've made moving forward. So once I went to high school, and I had a whole binder of all this college stuff that was being mailed to me and I would keep it like organized alphabetically all of this stuff and carry those habits with me to until today. And

**D** Dr. Thomas 12:58  
They worked

**L** Liane Hypolite 13:00  
He would go with me to my college tours. He actually was the first person in his family to go to college. And he always talks about the fact that he grew up like in low income housing, and he had plans to go to the military, like his older brothers, and people guys in the neighborhood was like, no, that's not really gonna work for you, like you should go to college. And it was really like those kinds of conversations that inspired him to go because I think my grandparents, they had just moved to the United States. They didn't know much about all of that. And so he was a big part for me, with going to tours, forcing me to ask questions during the tours, and making sure that I was kind of on top of the whole college process because it's pretty intense. And I would also say, you know, my friends whose parent who both of their parents had gone to college and definitely were more in the middle class bracket, I learned from them as well. Like I paid attention like, oh, what are you working on? What deadlines are you working working toward so all of those elements are really important in terms of my own educational journey. And when I was applying to schools, I pretty much wanted to say Massachusetts, my mom was also like, the expectation is you stay in the state and ended up getting admitted on a full ride scholarship to my undergrad institution, Brandeis University under the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship. And I remember that when I got that full ride, I mean, my parents were just like, we couldn't have even imagined that this would have been a possibility. And my dad, you know, sat down with me was like, Do you understand what it means to be able to afford to go to the school on MLK's name like, What do you understand the significance

of that? And so that was something that I always kept in mind with me while I was at Brandeis was just like, okay, you are on the shoulders of greats and you have to make sure that you live up to those expectations. And then, as Dr. Jaqui mentioned, And I worked at a nonprofit during college access and success work, and then decided that I wanted to get my master's degree because I felt like the impact I was having felt too small. And there are ways that my perspective has changed on that since then, but decided to get my master's at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. So it was a one year full time program. But I met so many wonderful colleagues and peers, who really continued to inspire my commitment to education in particular. I had so many different interests in different spaces, but I feel like that's what really solidified me wanting to continue to be in the field of education. And then after that, I decided that I want to be in an actual school as opposed to the nonprofit space and see what is it that's happening in our schools and how can I be more connected to our K through 12 system. So I worked as the Dean of College and Career advising at a Charter High School in the Boston area. And it was just this really amazing experience and at the same time an experience that was really challenging. You, you end up being you know what my dad was for me, I had to become that for 30 students, which compared to other guidance counselors who have hundreds of students, I don't know how they even manage something like that. But, you know, it was texts and calls all hours of the days from my students, their parents, like with questions and concerns. The college process isn't, you know, financial, the financial elements, a major part of it, but there's so many other things like my young people who were working and contributing to the income at home and taking care of siblings, walking them to the bus every morning, picking them up when school is done, and for parents to feel like you're just going to go to college and leave us? Like it was- there are so many other elements that are part of that conversation. But all of that work really inspired me to then pursue my doctorate and try to do research that I felt like would illuminate the realities of what was happening with young people that I felt like wasn't being accurately depicted in the research that I was encountering?

D

Dr. Thomas 17:08

You know, you said something about, essentially being able to do like college and life counseling that happens at the high school level, right? Or a small group of students of 30. Right? I just asked to write that down. Because that's, that's not something that happens. Anywhere anymore. At least not in, you know, the type of schools where I come from, right, I'm from South Central LA, our big schools, you might get one counselor for the entire population. And if you're lucky enough to have them, they need to do the, you know, sometimes they're doing the discipline. A lot of the times they're doing like the mental, like kind of touching on like mental health counseling, like behavioral counseling, and then they got to do the college and career stuff. And I just how amazing was it for

those 30 families to be able to use you as a resource if higher education or higher education, if K through 12 education could just, you know, provide that, especially at those critical high school years. My goodness

L

Liane Hypolite 18:10

Absolutely. And I just thought about that constantly. I was like, I only have 30. And I feel like this is an overwhelming position to be in because you're talking about young people who they've, they've heard about college, they want to go to college when it comes to really figuring out how do I answer these questions, like how do I connect to this application to this application? How do I connect to my my parents tax data to my financial aid forms like it is a ridiculously complicated process. And the people who lose out in that are our students who are going to be the first to go to college. In their family are our students who are low income students, are our students who are racially minoritized students. And when you have young people who are all of the above, they're they're just dealing with trying to learn so much. It's such a massive gap. And if you don't have a person you can contact at any hour of the day when those questions come up, you're just like, you're more and more likely to say, forget the process, you know. And so yeah, I think that was why I really ended up pursuing my PhD because I was like, it's wonderful to support these 30 students, how do I do more? How do I scale up the impact that I'm having?

D

Dr. Fowles 19:24

So one question that I have for you really is know this idea of what's next right? So usually, we ask about, you know, what's your, your current job and your responsibilities? But But for you, I'm really excited to to learn more about you stepping into a role as a professor which is amazing. What what's your what's your vision, or your mission as you step into a higher ed classroom right? I think that k 12 classroom is, is much needed. And it's gonna be some amazing folks that are gonna change in those classrooms. But how do you envision your your collegiate classroom? And what do you want to do there?

L

Liane Hypolite 20:11

Yeah, I am really, really excited about my next step. So, you know, I can't as I mentioned, I came into the PhD trying to think about impact how to make sure we strengthen systems as opposed to me trying to be as strong as I can for a system. And so why I'm so excited about my next role is that I'll actually be teaching adult professionals who have been in the field of education for in some cases for decades, who are getting their educational doctorates and who are leaders in both the K 12 system and the higher ed system. So



these are people who manage departments who are assistant principals or principals of schools. And just being able to create classroom environments so that these professionals who have an impact on hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of students, trying to make sure that I facilitate conversations facilitate skill building that will help them carry an equity lens and particularly a racial equity lens into the work that they do. And so what I really appreciate about this is that it you know, there's no delay, it's not kind of like my program where you have to be a full time PhD student, but instead you have people who are out there doing the work every day and perhaps something that they learn in my classroom, they can then implement the next day that I, you know, ideally would have a positive impact on students immediately. And so that's what I'm really excited about in terms of my next steps is is actually being in a position to think about how to do work that has a broader impact. And then in terms of my research, I want to move into the space of doing more participatory action research. So actually, instead of just interviewing a student, what were your experiences? What do you think about that? What do you think are potential solutions, being able to facilitate work with young people to learn about topics like structural inequality, and then use some of those ideas to think about how they can make direct impact on their environment. So that might be a college campus, it might be a high school environment, but trying to really think about impact and outcomes in my next stages, in the hopes that I can, you know, continue to just have a more positive impact on reducing educational inequalities.

D

Dr. Thomas 22:54

So professionally, right in your in your professional career, You know, before you went into your doctorate, it just seems like you were you were you are the type of person to take a look at discrepancies. And you have found your passion area in addressing those discrepancies. And I mean you very excited about what's coming right? What's coming for you Your next step your Yes, just, you're going to help a lot of people. Thank you. And I'm wondering, is there someone who helped you who did something who gave you some advice, um, to help you, you know, to push you over that you know that edge and just say I'm going to be courageous, and I'm going to try to fix this problem.

L

Liane Hypolite 23:48

The thing I will say is like, I've had so many wonderful mentors, so many people in my corner, and I just have to say Dr. Theo is just one of the those people that has truly invested in me as a person, um, from the very beginning, when I came into the Black Cultural Center, where he worked previously and said, You know, this is a space I feel really strongly about, I know you're doing great work, I want to make sure that we put that work on the map. And, you know, so many other people might say, okay, like, sure, you

know, do what you want to do. But he was like, if you are going to come here be a part of our community. He just he centered students, the way that I centered students, and I think that's part of mentorship is you can't just say, hypothetically, you should do XYZ you have to actually show that and that's what he has showed me through his professional work and watching him, work with college students and then continue to actually care about what happens to me even though you know, it doesn't mean anything for him professionally since he moved on to a new organization. But that's just how he is. He's a community builder. And that's something that I aspire and try to do in my own life. And in my own circles, I want to thank so many of my mentors who have gotten me to this point and who continue to every time I'm saying I say, you know, I don't know that I can do this. I don't know that it will get done. I don't know if I'm good enough. You just have people who will constantly push back on that and and let you know and remind you why you can do this work, why you should do this work, why you will do this work. And so I'm just I have all of the gratitude in the world for people like him.

D

Dr. Fowles 25:51

Yeah. Yall, I don't know this, but I'm slipping on Dr. Liane, about \$5 right now. You know, that just so you're aware?

D

Dr. Thomas 26:03

Well, in addition to maybe a person, um, Dr. Liane is there, you know, an org or two that you have been, you know, a participant of or a part of professional or social that you think has been really helpful in your professional development or in your ability to just be part of a community and impact the community?

L

Liane Hypolite 26:28

Absolutely. It was really important that I stayed connected to the work that is happening in Southern California and in Los Angeles in particular, I think that sometimes our graduate programs can be really isolating and I wanted to actively push back against that for myself. So I actually started attending meetings that this organization called So Cal CAN puts together and so they're a combination of college access and success programs across Southern California. So they're guidance counselor's, they're higher ed admin who are doing this work, they're nonprofit, they're foundations, they're all of these different types of organizations all focused on making sure we get more students into and through college. And being a part of that organization and then volunteering with them and doing some presentations for their young people. That was another sustaining factor and a professional space where I could really learn from people who were doing the work

and learn about what were the actual California based, Southern California based, Los Angeles based initiatives that we needed to be working collectively on to make sure that we were also politically pushing a lot of these agendas that we needed to to open up access and success for students.

D

Dr. Fowles 27:50

I want to jump in here as well. Just because I know that you know, given your your PhD journey There's also some opportunities to go to conferences and present and schmooze and shake hands. So what were what were some conferences, that people should look out for or what organizations within that kind of circle that that you said, hey, look out for this. I wasn't expecting, you know, this opportunity. But you can put some shine on that for me.

L

Liane Hypolite 28:22

Absolutely. So I'd say for me, given you know, my research has always been at that in between space of the K 12 transition into college. And so that's allowed me to be in a lot of different research spaces, which I've really appreciated. So I have kind of two buckets. I've had a bucket of educational professional organizations that I've been a part of consistently since starting my program. So the first is ASHE, the Association for the Study of Higher Education. And so this is a conference that happens in the fall and I found this to be smaller, more intimate space. For people who are focused on higher education, and so that's been a really wonderful space to flesh out some of my ideas for the research that I'm doing some of the papers that I'm working on. And then a bigger space, but a very important space is AERA. So that's just, I would say, the most massive educational research focused organization and they have their conference, which happens in the spring. And while it's massive, they have particular like smaller groups, pre conferences, different things that happen where you can find the intimacy that I think you want going to a conference because it can feel really overwhelming. So AERA is a great organization to be a part of, and you can definitely find smaller pockets of community within that so it doesn't feel so massive when you attend. And then I think the other element as a, I like to say that I do sociology of education work, and so on. wanted to make sure that I was still connected to the sociology world. And so I've attended their national conference which is ASA, the American Sociological Association, similar to AERA, it's pretty massive. And then they have the Association of Black Sociologists, which is ABS and they meet in the summers typically. And that is probably one of the strongest spaces for individuals who are doing work at the intersection of sociology and education, but sociology in any other topic, because you find the the Black scholars who are who were citing who are reading who are excited about they're all just there, and they're not there with any like, pretensions about who they are and what they are. It's really a space of beautiful

community where people can just gather and just have an underlying assumption that race and racism are a thing like you are I have no idea what you have to go into a space and have to explain that or have to try to defend that. But you can go into a space like ABS where I've always felt like, okay, I can just be there and be myself and not have to explain anything.

D

Dr. Fowles 31:14

I think it would be important for you especially because you're at the end of this PhD journey to share like a final thought or some advice for somebody that's just starting. Now that you're at the end of this journey, as you reflect a little bit like what what's the thing that that you would share ahead of time, that's gonna give somebody some light all the way through?

L

Liane Hypolite 31:41

Oh, my biggest piece of advice that I would give to anyone who's just starting their PhD journey, is that the the PhD is set up to make you feel alone to make you feel like you're supposed to be doing everything by yourself. And you have to do as well much as you can to not allow that to be your reality. I think for many of us community is so important and it's something that drives us that helps us thrive. And so for me having my cohort and then having a community of Black PhD students, having people like Dr. Theo who I could meet with and not talk about, you know, the internal politics necessarily of the PhD, having people from So Cal CAN who are out there doing the work and I'm, you know, I remove myself from the PhD altogether and just talk about what's being done on the ground, having my family where they just couldn't care less is necessarily that we're in the weeds about in terms of theory and data. They just want to know the big picture. I'm having friends to just go out with and have fun and not talk about any of these things with I think you just have to, if you listen to the culture, of the PhD will tell you like give up your social life give up all of these things for these couple of years sacrifice sacrifice. But I think what I found is that if you sacrifice those things, you do not have the energy and you don't have the drive that you need to actually get through it. The other thing I got for the first time a therapist when I moved out here and started my program, because I knew it was going to be such a big transition. So So set yourself up so that-- for first success, right, make sure you have your people in your communities of support. And don't just assume they'll be there. They require cultivating. So that's my biggest advice.

D

Dr. Fowles 33:37

Set yourself up for success when you build your social capital, right? Absolutely.



Dr. Thomas 33:43

Build your team.



Liane Hypolite 33:44

Mm hmm. Build your team and then keep maintaining your team. Keep feeding your team. It's not something that can just be done in one or two meetings. It's about all of that continued communication.



Dr. Thomas 33:57

Well, those were all of our questions.



Dr. Fowles 34:01

We definitely enjoyed you today. I'm looking forward to what comes next. And I think that's a wrap. We hope you enjoyed today's show. Remember, the way we build social capital is to build self and build others. Be sure you've got some notes on your tablet, computer or even using a pen and paper. Leave us a review, continue the conversation on social media @BlackSocialCap , and share the show with someone you know. Until the next episode, stay motivated and rise together.



Dr. Thomas 34:39

This is Black Social Capital.