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CSUSB Pedagogy Forum 2021: “Inquiry as Inclusive Practice: On the History and Politics of Our Disciplinary Languages”

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CSUSB Pedagogy Forum 2021

Closing Address Transcript

“Inquiry as Inclusive Practice: On the History and Politics of Our Disciplinary Languages” by Dr. Thomas Girshin

START - 00:00:00

I just, I want to just start by thanking everyone for being here. This has been such a rewarding and energizing experience for me so and I hope for all of you as well.

So thank you to the high impact practices committee for sponsoring this event.

And for their many contributions. And I want to thank deputy Provost, Claire Weber particularly and wish her happy birthday. For her support of this event from its first kernels.

And of course my deep gratitude and appreciation for all of you who participated by crafting such engaging and insightful presentations and roundtables.

And thank you to Dr. Natasha and cows key who so graciously was willing to serve as our keynote for delivering such a powerful message in her address about the relationship between high impact teaching practices and inclusive teaching practices.

You know, thinking now about her address I find myself reflecting more on the assumptions we make about how our incoming students have been prepared.

And what we are preparing our students for.

And I'm also inspired by Dr. John Cassavetes invitation to view high impact teaching practices as starting points as frames, through which to inquire more precisely, into how our students are learning.

And so it's wonderful to gather with you all for what is above all for me celebration of the essence of what we do here.

CSU SP gives student learning first birth, and its mission statement. And I see firsthand the commitment and dedication to teaching.

Among my colleagues here every day.

Today we shared some of the fruits failures and successes of this dedication.

As Dr. Jim Kosky suggested teaching and learning is a map is as much about asking what we don't know about what is high impact for our students here and now and in these conditions, as it is about sharing and building on what we do know.

Very often it is about sharing with one another. And with our students the journey of moving along various stages of not knowing.

I'm bringing attention to, not knowing because it positions us as scholars to ask questions about what we do not know.

To inquiry inquiry drives intellectual activity as scholars and teachers we are moved by what we do, by what we do not know, driven to ask new questions.

The biologist Stuart Firestein argues it is unknowns that are the foundations of science.

Science produces ignorance, he writes, and ignorance fuels science.

So, for me, the wonderful contributions of my colleagues today, and the value of a forum such as this why I get excited about it, is the opportunity to see what questions are being asked.

and what questions still need to be asked

Dr. Tsao a new way, Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Arizona State University raises a question that needs to be asked perhaps above any other.

Why does higher education continue to produce such racial inequities

pointing to the lockstep increase of remedial education quote unquote I should say remedial education with increases in bypass students, and I would add often a decrease in funding per student.

New Way introduces the acronym how habits of white language, new names, several, including hyper individualism stance of neutrality objectivity and a political reality and clarity order and control.

Noise argument is not that these linguistic edifices are necessarily bad.

And he's certainly not arguing that bypass students are not capable of taking up these habits.

Rather, he's arguing that part of what it means to teach language, and I would suggest that this means teaching the languages of the various disciplines, just as much as it means teaching the language as just as much as it means teaching writing in an

English class.

It means to teach language as historically situated as necessarily political.

Many of you may have seen the headlines when white Georgetown Law professor was fired for her racist remarks in which she lamented that in her perception.

It was her black students who are perpetually at the bottom of her law classes.

Now, many others and, including the Georgetown Black Law Students Association have commented on this already on the clear individual bias revealed in her statements.

And so I want to focus on another comment the professor made that you can also see in that video but which has received last attention.

And, which reveals how a new ways habits of white language, were at play. In this particular case, the professor states.

When he did talk. They were a bit jumbled.

It's the best way I can put it it's like okay, let me reason through what you just said.

Is this not as a new I would say the professor howling her bypass students as a new way asks, What is the racialized nature of preparedness for our schools, colleges, or our literacy classrooms.

In 1974, the conference on College Composition and Communication adopted, not far from here in Anaheim.

The resolution students right to their own language.

I want to read the resolution info here.

We affirm the students right to their own patterns and varieties of language.

The dialects of their nurture, or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style.

Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity.

The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another.

Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers and immoral advice for humans.

A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage, the highlights.

We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

What does this right to language mean it doesn't mean the right to your own language in your own time.

It doesn't mean keeping one language private and learning another one for use in public.

Want to suggest that perhaps the greatest impact we may be able to make on our students is to accept with genuine tolerance, their use of language to do work in the world.

And this means for many of us decoupling the idea that the purpose of a writing course is to correct our students language.

The difference disciplined, highly specialized languages of the academy are rooted in white middle class grammars and white middle class values is not an assertion that the consensus of linguists who trace the relationship of one to the other quite clearly.

I see institutions like ours as perfectly situated to the leaders and anti racist approaches to language instruction, because of the extent to which linguistic diversity is made visible here, including world English is my challenge to all of us is to

What are some ways we can teach our students to be observers of the language demands of our disciplines.

How can we help them flush out their observations with historical and political context,

not advocating that we all become linguists or literacy experts, writing intensive courses work best when writing is used to facilitate disciplinary learning.

When writing is used to achieve reflection analysis and deep learning of disciplinary concepts, advocating simply that when we teach, we remember that all language expectations have a history and politics.

And that we be tolerant of languages that represent histories and politics that differ from those gray FIDE and the discourses of our fields are that different from our own.

We become keen observers of language and teach our students the same, we move away from a binary corrective approach to language difference.

Maybe it looks like, what the biochemistry professor at Trinity did which Dr. Jim house be shared with us. Bring poetry and music into a lab course.

Maybe it's giving students opportunities to analyze and reflect on disciplinary languages, consider the difference between the edict avoid the first person.

And the question, Why might first person point of view be discouraged, in this field.

And moving toward inquiry.

I hope we may move away from a punitive relationship toward language differences and open up greater opportunities for our students to engage to belong and to matter.

Thank you.

END - 11:28:00