

## Episode 1: Melissa Baralt on Second Language Instruction, Global Learning, and Global Citizenship

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>> STEPHANIE: You're listening to Making Global Learning Universal, conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration, and complex problem solving in higher education on campus, online, in local communities, and abroad. I'm your host, Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University and coauthor of *Making Global Learning Universal, Promoting Inclusion and Success for all Students*.

>> MELISSA: And it is perfectly okay for teachers who come from methods that were very popular in the past. Maybe that's all that they know. If they can equip in their classroom and integrate into their practice one single task weekly, that's great because we, as practitioners, we need to constantly be reflecting on our own practice and how are we growing as professionals, but also what skills are we giving our students, what are we equipping them with so that they can go outside and be participants in society and help to make society better.

>> STEPHANIE: Melissa Baralt has an important message for all would be global learning faculty. Fear not. In her words, global learning isn't some massive endeavor. It's about a change of instructional perspective and some tweaking of how you engage students in meaningful tasks and assess them. I found this conversation the perfect inauguration for this podcast because Melissa makes plain what global learning is. Fundamentally, it's about validating our students' diverse needs and perspectives and involving them in collaborative efforts to analyze and address complex problems that transcend borders of difference. She's making the case for why global learning must be universal. For her, global learning is a social justice issue. And Melissa, even though she's a linguist, she also talks in different disciplinary languages. She has appointments in modern languages, biomedical engineering, and the school of education. She can speak firsthand about how global learning can and should be applied across the curriculum. We recorded this conversation on Valentine's Day. So here's our love letter to global learning.

Hey, Melissa.

>> MELISSA: Hi, Stephanie.

>> STEPHANIE: Let's start with -- you just tell the world a little bit about yourself.

>> MELISSA: Sure. Well, first of all, thank you so much for having me here today. It's really an honor and a pleasure to speak with you again. I adore your work, and I am very grateful for your work. My name is Melissa Baralt. I am an associate professor of psycholinguistics. I have joint appointments here at FIU in the Department of Modern Languages and Department of Education, in our Center for Children and Families in Psychology and also Biomedical Engineering. So as a linguist you can see how our field very much can encompass the humanities, and I love that I can do that at FIU.

When it comes to my teaching, I teach within the Department of Modern Languages. So in my pedagogy I am a methodologist. I train future language teachers.

>> STEPHANIE: And you have a big idea that you would like to share, because we chatted a little bit before we started recording.

>> MELISSA: Yes.

>> STEPHANIE: And you shared this idea with me that I think is so important to our listeners. So go for it.

>> MELISSA: I think -- so as somebody who has the gift of being able to work so much with teachers, my main message about global learning for teachers is that global learning is not some massive endeavor or new methodology or 300-hour long training that you need to do to incorporate into your teaching. It's not that at all. All that it is is simply a change of perspective and some tweaking of how you are engaging your students in meaningful tasks and assessing them. So global learning is how can we work together to try to solve real-world problems, whether in our local community or global problems, and we can all do that.

But a key difference would be, for example, with language teaching in my field, instead of assessing students with a multiple choice test or a very grammar based test where we are asking them to fill in the blanks, how about asking them to in groups create a website about how and why Spanish is so important in Miami or create a social media platform where they are informing the community, society at large, of tropes about Spanish language in this country and why it's important to use another language. Or even go give a presentation at a local elementary school here in Miami and talk to 4th graders about, hey, keep on speaking your Spanish with your families and your friends. Be proud to be Hispanic and speak Spanish. You can do it. We're college students, and this what we do. And that's -- see the key difference there? And that's, I think, what global learning really equips us to be able to do, is change how we are actually engaging students and learning, and frankly learning with them.

>> STEPHANIE: That's a beautiful articulation of what global learning is all about in your words and for your life and how you engage with your students.

>> MELISSA: Yes.

>> STEPHANIE: You're describing the actual things that you do with your students in your language classes. Melissa, when I took language in high school and university, we did not do that. I mean, that was not what my experience was. My experience was learning the vocabulary. My experience was diagramming the sentences. My experience was learning about the culture within which the language was embedded some. My experience was having some language partners, doing literature analysis, but it had nothing to do with engaging with a community or advocacy or anything like that. And I'm wondering, is that the way language is generally taught now? Is what you're doing on the cutting edge or is it --

>> MELISSA: Well, I have to say with language teaching methodology my field is famous for its pendulum swings of different fads. So it's a fascinating field to study just from a historical perspective, looking at how methods for teaching languages have changed even over the past 50 years. We have so many different methods for teaching languages. So many of us are very familiar and have experienced grammar translation method, audio-lingual method, the silent way. There's so many different ways to teach and use a language and very communicative ways of teaching language, the direct approach.

Right now, thanks to years of accumulation of research and second language acquisition which is relatively a new field, we are really espousing task-based language teaching. But even today in 2019 task-based language teaching is realized in very different ways across the globe. There

are some countries who require, that mandate that languages be taught in a task-based way, but of course a teacher's interpretation varies.

>> STEPHANIE: Could you unpack what task-based language instruction is?

>> MELISSA: Yes.

>> STEPHANIE: And when you do that, my follow-up question for you is, can these different methodologies be incorporated into a global learning mindset, if that is your mindset as a faculty member, teaching future teachers or teaching heritage language learners?

>> MELISSA: Right.

>> STEPHANIE: Is it one or the other or can it be both?

>> MELISSA: I think that they align so well. So whereas if you visually want to think of global learning as kind of this -- so this premise where okay, how are we getting our students to collaborate, to work together, really work together to try to solve societal problems.

And then task-based language teaching is one way of putting that into practice. So it's the methods with which you are engaging them in global learning activities. And again, whether it's global learning or doing global learning or doing task-based language teaching or TBLT, I cannot emphasize enough to teachers that it's not a massive endeavor. It's really quite simple.

So to give you a definition, all that task-based language teaching is is teaching with, learning with, and assessing with real-world tasks. So instead of like the example I gave you before, assessing learners with a translation paragraph or multiple choice, are we giving them real-world tasks that they actually need to be able to do with the language in society.

And I'll quote one of my favorite professors and colleagues, Dr. Mike Long. He is a professor at the University of Maryland. He has said that task-based language teaching is really a social and moral duty. When we are teaching languages, it's our social responsibility to give our learners tasks that they can do with that language. Because if you think about it, many language learners around the world are language learners by lack of choice. Whether it's war zones or refugees or migrants or a movement, those people need to be able to learn these languages in order to survive.

So if we have the gift of being able to teach a child or a young person or an adult another language, are we really equipping them with the skills to go out and do in society via that language all that they need to do to have a good and meaningful and healthy life and survive.

>> STEPHANIE: Okay. You are an interdisciplinarian, right?

>> MELISSA: Very much so.

>> STEPHANIE: So when I hear you describe task-based language instruction, I'm thinking that that concept, the task-based piece, is applicable in any discipline.

>> MELISSA: I agree.

>> STEPHANIE: Right?

>> MELISSA: And there's different kinds of interpretations of TBLT. A strong version of task-based language teaching would require that you start out with a needs analysis with your

students, and that can be as simple as a one-page little questionnaire that you give to your students and you say, what are your goals with this language. What do you need to be able to do. Can you write down five activities or tasks or skill sets, things that you need to do. And that might include filling out a job form or writing your resume in the target language or registering a child for school in that target language. Asking your students what their real -world needs are.

And then from there you can design and derive tasks from their needs. So you design a task, and you of course plan the methodology around that task. You're basically equipping them with the capacity to go out beyond the classroom walls and do that real-world task in society.

And I do. I think that can be applicable to any field, but it's -- I will say too it can be overwhelming for teachers who have say 250-300 students and feel that they have to learn a whole new method. It's not that. TBLT. Even if you are incorporating one real-world task into your practice once a week, that's still doing TBLT. That's kind of a slow integration of it.

And it's perfectly okay for teachers who come from methods that were very popular in the past, and maybe that's all that they know. If they can equip in their classroom and integrate into their practice one single task, weekly, that's great. Because we as practitioners, we need to constantly be reflecting on our own practice and how are we growing as professionals, but also what skills are we giving our students. What are we equipping them with so that they can go outside and be participants in society and help to make society better.

>> STEPHANIE: So this piece about social responsibility as faculty members, this is important, and it's definitely a change in state of mind for us as faculty members because as scholars we are rewarded for becoming experts in tiny, very specific aspects of our field. And in terms of our own professional development and advancement we are often rewarded and pressured sometimes to wall off that area of our expertise.

And what I hear you saying, correct me if I'm wrong, is that we need to jump over that wall. We need to see what is beyond that wall. We cannot impose upon our students the requirement that they become the same type of subject matter, experts, that we are no matter how much we love that tiny little piece of real estate. We have to ask ourselves what is it that our students who come to us, our tens or hundreds or thousands of students that come to us, what are their lives about. We have to ask ourselves that question. What do we really want our students to be able to do with this information, with the knowledge and skills that they are gaining in our courses. And that may involve, as you are implying here, asking our students what's your life about.

>> MELISSA: That's precisely what task-based language teaching asks that we do. So this needs analysis -- and there are a lot of resources out there. There's a whole research line of needs analyses, and there's many different sources and methods.

So needs analysis by definition is frankly a rigorous study where we're looking at, in a triangulative way, what are our students' real-world needs with the language. Granted, most teachers are not researchers who have experienced applied linguistics and have the time to do a lengthy needs analysis.

So just from a teacher perspective, even if you can start out with a simple questionnaire, and you can give this to your students on the first day of class. Tell me what your real-world needs are. What do you want to be able to do with Spanish.

This semester I'm teaching my very first online, fully online Spanish for Heritage Speakers course. I asked before we started the semester for students to fill out a questionnaire. It was anonymous, telling me what their -- just about them. How do they use Spanish if they do in their

daily lives? Tell me about their families. Tell me about how are you doing with the balance between school and life. Tell me a little bit about your life and how can I make sure that this course helps to support you. What are some real-world things that you want to be able to do in Spanish.

And, Stephanie, I learned so much. 95% of my students in this class work full time. And I had a couple of people comment, thank you so much for asking me this because my schedule is crazy, so how do I balance this time. A lot of them speak exclusively Spanish with their parents or their grandparents.

Many of them gave me concrete specific things that they need and want to do in Spanish, whether it's a job interview, fill out a resume, be able to help in customer service in Spanish, be able to help if you're working as a nurse, check in a patient in Spanish, write social media tweets in the Spanish language. And a lot of them said, I really want to be able to continue talking with my grandparents and speak better with them in Spanish. And many expressed if they have children, wanting to be able to continue speaking Spanish with their kids.

So thinking of all of those different needs, how can I then interpret those into tasks that we do for the course curriculum. So each week I am designing tasks around a grammar component, but the grammar is not the focus. The focus is the real-world tasks that I got from their answers on that initial questionnaire and then I embed the grammar in there, and I try to give to the best of my ability feedback not preemptively but retrospectively where they have done the tasks already, and then I give them feedback on their own linguistic output.

>> STEPHANIE: Okay. So the students get to choose the task for themselves. I'm just trying to unpack this and understand specifically how you do it because I'm sure our listeners are thinking, hey, how do I do this. How do I apply this? Probably not to the language course. We have people that teach everything under the sun, from anthropology to chemistry to zoology.

>> MELISSA: Right. Everybody does the same task each week or tasks. But I try to vary them and make sure that across the whole semester I am designing and giving them real-world tasks that meet everyone's needs from that initial needs analysis questionnaire I gave them.

>> STEPHANIE: Okay. So maybe this will lead us to a little bit of brainstorming, live brainstorming, but I'm thinking about -- you brought it up earlier. What about that professor who has 200 students in their class? How could they do that?

>> MELISSA: Well, I would say that, first of all, anything is possible. So how can we, and in the online platform, and I have to say this. And I know that my fellow teachers and colleagues out there who teach fully online, online teaching has a lot of what can feel like frustrations and limitations, and half of the e-mails have to do with I can't access the course or I can't get my video to upload. Just technical issues, solution and brainstorming. But the online environment has amazing, wonderful affordances that really fosters second language acquisition and language learning and language use that are, I think, even better than a face-to-face platform.

So how can I as a professor maximize those online affordances and really give my students the opportunity to be using the language as much as they can. And, of course, heritage language learners are a very different population than foreign language learners. They have unique needs and unique gifts. So how am I learning about all of their gifts and maximizing the course so that each student really thrives and can use his or her Spanish or her linguistic variety and give them feedback that encourages them to continue to want to use Spanish.

So here's an example. I'll give you actually two examples of tasks that were in different areas of language production, and then of course the way that I did feedback for this population. So one

was students had to record themselves interviewing a family member. The instructions said friends can count as family too. So interview somebody who is very meaningful to you in your life and ask that person about their favorite childhood memory.

So that's a task where they have to use their Spanish to interview. Of course, I gave them specific requirements, time limits, etc. And then afterwards, the videos of these students, I had so many videos of my students talking with (Spanish) their grandmothers and watching my students sit down and spend 20 minutes with a grandparent, just listening to their stories. It was amazing.

So the way that I give feedback, so everyone has to turn in their video to me and, first and foremost, the feedback is, this is amazing. I am so proud of you for using your Spanish. What a gift that you can talk with your (Spanish) or your best friend who is your roommate, and I'm proud of you, and I hope you keep up your Spanish.

And then I give language based, grammar based, lexical based feedback based on their linguistic production. So I'll say here's some feedback. So here where you said, if the student is embedding or co-switching in a lot of English or just doesn't have the terms in English, here's how you can say this in Spanish. I'll give feedback on a few grammatical forms whether they're erroneous, so how to say it target like, or if they use a form. It's very important with heritage language learners to honor and give space and really make sure that their own linguistic variety, that they know it's a valid variety. This is outstanding.

Another way to say this is XYZ, etc., if it's very unique to only one specific linguistic variety. And then I have them read that feedback, and then as a follow-up secondary task, they have to do this. So they have to acknowledge that feedback and go back and watch their video and then transcribe for me the sentence, their own sentences that they said, incorporating that feedback into their production.

And so let's say the grammar focus of that week was the preterite and the imperfect, which is the past tense in Spanish. Also, we need to go back and every time your grandmother said a verb in the past tense, write that down for me. Why did your grandma use the imperfect or the preterite tense? What do you think? So that gets them to, first and foremost, psycholinguistic theory supported here is they are using the language entirely in a fully meaning base way. Interviewing a grandparent.

And then the grammar focus retrospectively is based on their own unique production where they are really having to think about language and grammar. And that therefore helps them to internalize okay, my grandma said this and this in Spanish in preterite and imperfect, and here is how I can spell these verbs. And then my students had never ever studied Spanish formally. They of course speak it natively because it's what they have heard from birth with their families.

So a lot of them indicated on the needs analysis I want to have better grammar knowledge and better writing capacity in Spanish. So that's one way of doing task-based language teaching, and real task, and then teaching grammar around a task methodologically.

>> STEPHANIE: Okay. There's so many in that, and I think our listeners are probably going to be thinking how does that -- how could I take that staged feedback that you just described and apply it to specific knowledge and skills that I'm teaching in my course. So that's a thing. The staged feedback where you are giving your students some specific -- first of all, you're validating their unique approach which may not be the same approach that you would take or someone else would take to solving that problem. Secondly, you're giving some suggestions for alternative approaches.

>> MELISSA: If they want to, because I have to say for many of my students, speaking Spanish is their identity. That is to be honored. Imagine. Unfortunately, the way that some people can approach heritage language teaching, whether it's Spanish or Chinese or Korean, so you have what is supposed to be a safe space for these learners, and they come in and they are trying to speak in their heritage language, and then for every "grammatical" mistake they make, it's like that's wrong. No! That is not how we should be teaching heritage speakers.

We should be teaching them in a way that empowers them and lets them know it is a safe space to use your Spanish, to speak your best. And after you do, I'm going to give you some specific feedback on some of the areas that you said you would like improvement on or help on. So we do. We do a lot of linguistic variety diversity or dialectal differences, but it's so important to honor those.

>> STEPHANIE: And learning in any discipline, you are learning a type of language. You're learning the concepts. You're learning the mindset of that particular discipline, and students will make the same kinds of errors or they will think outside the box, and sometimes it's hard for us as faculty members to get our minds around the way that our students are thinking.

So we first begin with some kind of validation. Finding some kind of truth, some kind of excellence in what the student is doing or even attempting to do.

The second thing that I heard you do is then giving like a slight redirection or another alternative that the student might or might not want to take.

And then the third piece that I heard in your feedback is asking the student to be metacognitive, to then go back and look at their own work, and you give a specific direction to the student to go and look for something specific, pull it out, analyze it and think about it.

Now, to get back to that first -- to the question that I had about how do you do this in a large group. Could students theoretically do that with each other?

>> MELISSA: They absolutely can. That is precisely one way for somebody who is teaching a very large class to facilitate that. And I want to emphasize with task-based language teaching, ideally, we can focus on meaning first. We are giving them a real-world task that is solely focused on meaning, because a task by definition needs to be focused on meaning. It needs to have a gap. It requires students to do something in order to complete the task. They are using their own resources. They are not just regurgitating what a book or the teacher says, and there's a clear outcome. They have something to show for having done that task.

In the task example I just gave, the outcome was the video that they turned in, and it was fully based on meaning because they were sitting down and interviewing a family member or loved one or best friend, etc. So I, in this case watching the videos, I give that retrospective feedback. But what you can do in the online platform, for example, one of the affordances is we can -- say you have 50 students. You can pair your students in two groups just for this activity. Maybe just four students.

And so the follow-up or secondary task is everybody watch each other's videos, and you have to be very specific. So I would say, I would include four very specific items that they have to do to complete this task. Watch your peers' videos. You have three other people in your group.

No. 2. Make a comment on what you liked most about their video.

No. 3. Okay. You are going to watch -- you're now going to re-watch student A's video, student B's video, student C's video, student D's video. Write down all of the verbs that you heard that student's family member say in the video.

And then No. 4. Okay, guys. Let's all -- in your group together I want you guys to -- and this is where we have a synchronous posting and they can chat. Did we hear -- where do you guys think -- where did you notice that the family members were using the imperfect versus the preterite. What do you think are the linguistic reasons for which we would use this aspectual version of the verb and that? Can you give me a definition of that? And then you can say, did anybody hear some verbs that we might be able to say in another way. So for heritage learners it's very important to me to not frame discourse around making mistakes or errors.

Here's a classic example. My dear colleague Erik Camayd-Freixas. He's a famous interpreter. He hears this often too when he's doing interpretations. So this form, Iga (phonetic). So when people say the correct subjunctive form of this verb (indiscernible), but people will -- and this is something that students do. The very linguistic varieties that we are all speaking that are not a standardized variety of that language is what in fact changes languages. But many people say the erroneous form Iga. But so many people say it that it is -- and you hear it in the street. You hear it in society. I think it would be wrong -- socially, culturally wrong to say to a student that form is wrong, because what if that student's mother and grandmother employ that term.

So as professors when we are working with, when we have the privilege of working with and serving heritage speakers to equip them and empower them with using their heritage language in U.S. society, that is not a wrong form. Excellent. I love that. Very good. I loved your video with your grandmother. Here's some other ways that you can say it and give them the metalinguistic knowledge around that form.

So here's the verb. Here's how we conjugate it. You are right. We do hear this other version all the time in society, and your family and my family says it too, etc. But here's another way that you can say this. And this is in fact the form we would use with standardized Spanish. But of course it's important to know standardized Spanish is not a real thing. It's just this societally created linguistic variety of Spanish that people who are in positions of power speak.

>> STEPHANIE: You are -- it's responsiveness all over the place. You're talking about being responsive to your students, their specific family needs. You're talking about being responsive to your field. You're talking about being responsive in terms of what the skills and knowledge that higher education at large is equipping our students with. There's a lot of responsiveness in it. And I know that another aspect of your work has to do with culturally responsive pedagogies --

>> MELISSA: Right.

>> STEPHANIE: -- which is of great interest to the field of higher education at large because we know that our culture is evolving. That's something that you were just talking about. The culture is evolving, and even higher education, our culture, is evolving.

So can you share a little bit about the work that you do around developing pedagogy, pedagogical materials that respond to the needs of our students but also that are -- you're engaging with other faculty colleagues at other institutions to help them be more responsive as well.

>> MELISSA: Right. And I would say -- actually, I'm engaging with other colleagues to learn from them and make sure that we -- those in my field of psycholinguistics, we have done so



much of our training in laboratory. We study the psycholinguistic constructs that are involved with how the brain acquires another language.

I have gotten to a point in my career where it is not possible to continue and to best serve my students without learning from rich linguistic anthropology and people who are in different fields and ethnographers and people who engage and really study and look at the human experience. If I were to focus only on psycholinguistic forms and target like production, I would be a disservice to my students.

So, amazing gifted scholars from whom I have learned so much include Philip Carter here at FIU, Andrew Lynch at the University of the Miami, Jonathan de la Rosa at Stanford, Holly Cashman. She's at New Hampshire. Who do incredible work on Latinx young people and their language and ideologies in our society about speaking another language and what these young people inherit.

Unfortunately, very, very negative messages in our society that to be an American citizen, this is an English only speaking country. So it is a societal problem when a Latinx person is put down or publicly ostracized for speaking Spanish, and we have seen this on social media. These messages get put forth all the time by our elected officials. This is America. You need to be speaking English only.

So my kids in this class, I'm asking them to use their Spanish and to speak Spanish when these unfortunate and damaging tropes are going around U.S. society of what it means to be a Spanish speaker. And my colleagues and another amazing colleague, her name is Uju Anya. She's at Penn State. She focuses on black identity in a Spanish language classroom and heritage learner experiences and how learners, minorities, can or cannot frankly really gain an ethnracial affinity in the classroom.

And that's our responsibility as teachers to be giving our students safe spaces where they can feel that they can belong to a speech community of that target language. So if I were to focus only on grammatical accuracy, that's a disservice because I am not thinking about the ideologies that my students have to face outside of the classroom.

>> STEPHANIE: If I hear you correctly, you're talking about giving your students safe space to connect to the concepts, to connect to the skills, and I'm thinking, as I'm hearing you talk about that, that you're also discussing giving faculty safe space, to do the kind of work that you do.

So when you say if I were to simply remain in the lab and do the peer research, that that wouldn't be doing your students the service that you seek to serve. Now that's not to say that we don't need people who are lab rats, of course. We really need in the scholarly setting in our universities and colleges, we need people that are doing the pure research. We need people that are focusing in their coursework on the kind of background knowledge and these fundamental skills, especially in many of the professions, like if you're going to become an accountant or if you're going to become an engineer or a doctor. You do have to put in a lot of pure research time. You have to do a lot of reading and regurgitating of concepts and vocabulary and know the parts of the body. There's a space for that.

But we also through global learning -- I don't want to interrupt you -- need to make a space for those of us who want to go the step further to okay, how do we take this and apply it and how do we even interrogate the cultures around which or within which we can apply these things, given our gender, our sexuality, our cultural background, our socioeconomic status. How do we take that pure research and that background knowledge, apply it in real-world settings, and

invite our students to think about the freedom with which they may or may not have to apply what they learn?

>> MELISSA: Right. What you just alluded to, Stephanie, yes, of course, rigorous empirical research is important, but here's an example of why all of this coming together is so essential.

My work over at Biomedical Engineering on our engineering campus at FIU, I for the past couple of works have been working with my team. So we are investigating the cognitive benefits of bilingualism for preterm born children. So all of these children are now between 6 and 7 years old, and we are giving them tests measuring their executive functioning. They were all born preterm here in Miami.

So we are indeed finding that bilingual preterm born children have enhanced executive functioning compared to monolingual preterm born children. What this means, bilingualism helps preemies. But every single Hispanic mother who has participated in my study has told me that her pediatrician and/or her child's teacher told her to stop speaking Spanish. Because of the child's history with premature birth, they do have some attentional deficits, etc.

So you see where I can no longer progress in psycholinguistics without acknowledging linguistic anthropology and language ideology, and I'll quote Jonathan de la Rosa. One of his latest books is about language teaching as a form of social justice, and that's where it aligns so beautifully with global learning because that's precisely what global learning is asking us to critically reflect on in our own teaching of okay, remember that so nice brief definition, how are we getting our students to work together to solve societal problems, and I love that.

And so methodologically I can make that into a task, but how am I getting them to really think critically about solving a problem.

>> STEPHANIE: And sometimes those problems are the problems of the field.

>> MELISSA: Very true.

>> STEPHANIE: The problem of being a bench scientist. So what are the ethical implications? What are the social implications? What are the personal implications of doing that, of conducting an interview, of doing this empirical research, and then getting to the point where we're asking whoa, I'm hearing the people that I'm engaging with as my test subjects struggling with things that I have the power to speak out against. Where is that line?

And I think this is an important point that you're making, Melissa, because so many of our peer social scientists, peer scientists are asking this important question. Where's there room for me with global learning, right?

I'm a medieval historian. What societal problems do I have and my students have to struggle with? And sometimes it can be the appropriation of that knowledge in current forms. For instance, with medieval history, I have spoken with medievalists who said, well, one of the things that we're struggling with as a discipline is the appropriation of our studies of medieval history and of literature and symbols for racism. So that is a current -- that's a current problem to deal with. And sometimes we have historians who will say that's not happening. So where is there room for me?

Well, there's room in terms of the critique of the field. Whose voices are being heard? Whose voices are being shared? What kind of evidence counts as historical evidence? These are global learning problems. They require multiple perspectives, different disciplinary perspectives,

but also different cultural and gender-based perspectives to see the gaps, right? And empowering our students and our faculty to speak out around those gaps.

So that's -- I don't know if we meant to go there together, but I think some of the things that you're talking about that you do with your students have direct implication for faculty in our research and the kind of work that we do outside.

>> MELISSA: I couldn't agree more. I love that you asked that question because I think that you're right, and that is, how do other fields see the applicability to them. But I would say to that, No. 1, we can always equip our students with the capacity to further knowledge and improve this world. There's so many societal problems even right outside our doors right here in Miami.

And I would say for as the example you just gave a medieval historian or somebody who studies women's poetry from the 17th century, I think that there are themes that are universal and not anachronistic. So misogyny or racism or discrimination or lack of having a voice. How has that theme still continued to be in existence today and what can we do about it? How does the #MeToo movement play a role with a space in which voices are heard? Do we see anything back then? Was it poetry as a space where voices were heard?

One thing in my Department of Modern Languages, I'm a psycholinguist working alongside literature specialists and people who study film and culture. I love -- even though we're fundamentally in different fields, I love what I learn from them because I would say one of the greatest things I have learned from my colleagues is that art and literature and film is one of the safest spaces universally to express and share discrimination and hardship and pain, which seem to be taboos universally across many cultures. It's not safe to talk about mentally, not being well. So mental illness or depression or feeling that you have no voice or have no power. And so I love that my colleagues study this.

There actually is a safe space in society and there always has been that space for that expression, but how now could we apply that to our lives and how can we make that even better. My students are experts in social media, and I think that's certainly a space where so much is being shared and being revealed and being brought to light.

And I will say one of the things that you and I were talking about earlier were resources for global learning. One of the spaces from which I most benefited was actually -- and it was just a quick two -our workshop that we did with you, but across that table I sat that day with -- there was a chemistry professor, a business professor, somebody who does human rights, somebody who does law, I the linguist, and then a chef. Wow! That was -- it was so helpful and illuminating to see how they apply the concept of okay, how do we get our students to work together to solve societal problems across their fields, and seeing those examples helped me so much.

>> STEPHANIE: So you're saying in a comparative sense --

>> MELISSA: Very much so.

>> STEPHANIE: -- experiencing how other faculty in vastly different fields are approaching these things enabled you to think about your field differently. That is really what I'm hoping will happen when our listeners are reflecting upon hearing about your experience about being responsive to your students' needs, giving space for emotional --

>> MELISSA: A safe space.

>> STEPHANIE: A safe space for connection. The work that you do to validate your students' mistakes or to validate what others might view as mistakes, but you view differently. You view them as an opportunity or a learning experience or even a perfectly valid way of expressing one's self.

>> MELISSA: That's exactly right, yes.

>> STEPHANIE: And so what I'm hoping is that our listeners will take this way of thinking that you have and reflect in the same way that you did in that workshop. How does this apply in my chemistry classroom? How does this apply in my business classroom? How might I make small steps to understand my students a little bit better, to connect, to enable them to connect in emotional ways to the field, and to the kinds of -- to the problems and the concepts that we are studying, and help them feel safe, help our students feel safe.

>> MELISSA: Yeah. If somebody who does tourism and teaches cooking and baking can do this, anybody can do this. I think one of the best examples might be the way I kind of changed how I was assessing my learners. So in the past -- here's a good example. Philip Carter, my colleague here, he's done so much work with the design of the languages of the world class. In the past it might have been a final examination assessing students' knowledge of everything covered in the course up to that point. So a sit down paper test.

>> STEPHANIE: Well, why wouldn't you do that?

>> MELISSA: That's just the way it done, right?

>> STEPHANIE: Right.

>> MELISSA: But with global learning application, and I want to make this plea one more time. It is not a massive hard thing to do. It is just giving your students the space and tasks and the capacity to work together to solve a problem.

So instead of that sit-down test, what if you put your students into groups and they have to identify a language related problem, whether it's the disappearance of our world's languages or language ideology that you can visibly see here in Miami, and that prevents a 6-year-old from wanting to speak Spanish with her parents and therefore maintaining her bilingualism and reaping the benefits of bilingualism. How can you solve that problem?

And honestly, the biggest challenge for students with this final project is coming up with the problem, but that's where they have to work together. And, Stephanie, I learned so much from my students because it was things such as, well, I remember I really stopped wanting to learn to speak Spanish when I was in elementary school. So we think that's the problem. So we are going to go give a presentation to a local elementary school here and talk to these kids.

I had two groups in my class gave presentations to elementary students here in Miami-Dade County. And seeing them talk to these children -- for children to see university kids say I'm bilingual, and I speak Spanish and English, and I speak Portuguese and English, and I speak Spanish, but I study Korean. And then we had one student who spoke five languages because he's from West Africa. The students were like wow, how did you do that.

But talking to them, in the United States there is racism, and there's racism around speaking in another language, and we're going to talk about that explicitly because we want to make sure that you kids know that you can and should feel proud to speak your language with your parents and family members and out in society. And if anybody ever tells you that you should be

speaking English only, here's what you can say to them. That right there, that's working together to solve a problem versus a sit-down test.

>> STEPHANIE: And that is why we call it global learning for global citizenship.

>> MELISSA: Yes. That's why we call it that, and that way of assessing frankly changed my life. I have never seen anything more meaningful, because I went with them, seeing my undergraduates present to elementary students. It's this community engagement, community service. And one of the schools, the principal came and the hands raised. Everybody wanted to share. It was really, really a powerful learning space. And my students gave them a presentation on linguistic diversity. That's how I measured their knowledge.

>> STEPHANIE: That was going to be my question. So basically you were observing your students correctly applying the content of the course. It's just changing the space from applying that content on a piece of paper or on their keyboard to applying that content in a real-world space that is meaningful and important for that student and achieves a secondary positive impact for our community.

>> MELISSA: Exactly. With the goal of trying to, even with a baby step and even in the space of one little solve the problem of harmful language ideology that can affect how students talk and use their heritage language.

>> STEPHANIE: You covered your content and students made a change in the world.

>> MELISSA: Yes.

>> STEPHANIE: Both and. It doesn't have to be either or.

>> MELISSA: Yep.

>> STEPHANIE: It can be both and with this change of mindset. Melissa, global learning has changed you.

>> MELISSA: Oh, my gosh. So much. I have learned -- I think it's easy for faculty who have so much to do, and I know that and I honor that. Trust me. My schedule is nuts but --

>> STEPHANIE: I know. Just for us to try to go and have a meal together or grab a cup of coffee, forget it. It's taken like seven years.

>> MELISSA: We have to plan a month in advance. But it's easy to get into this mindset of God, this is another thing I have to do and learn. It's actually really not that -- it's saying hmm, how am I critically reflecting on my pedagogy. How am I advocating for being a professional in the field of education? How am I serving my students? And how is what we do in my classroom space, physical or online, helping me and also my students to go out and be participating and engage citizens for a better global world.

It's really given me concrete examples of the types of tasks that I give them in my class and how I am measuring their learning. So the presentations of my students at the elementary schools, my physical position, I was on the side. I was on the sidelines. The show was theirs. The show was them. And that, I would say, is the most meaningful and powerful way to show learning, because they did a PowerPoint presentation on language diversity and all the linguistic diversity that we have here in Miami and what language ideology is.

And one of the groups had the students, there was fourth graders in that school. They all had to repeat, everyone say language ideology. Language ideology. These fourth graders had never talked about these concepts before. That, I think, is so much more effective, and this is not based on my opinion but based on my students' feedback to me.

One thing I learned from Isis Artze here at the CAT here in the library. I try to go to professional development workshops often, and she actually taught me once, you know what? A really good idea is to do what you call a mid-semester check. She even gave me a few examples of short brief questionnaires. How are you doing. How are you feeling. What's working for you so far. What's not working for you so far. How can I be a better teacher? And students are very honest. And that right there -- so admitting that I'm co-learning with you guys. I think that Languages of the World class designed around my colleague's Philip Carter's book in fact was perhaps one of my favorite classes. And that was the first time I implemented global learning into my teaching. So surely that can't be a coincidence, right?

>> STEPHANIE: Speaking of coincidences we are recording this interview of Valentine's Day, and you just spoke about your pedagogy in terms such as honesty, checking in, getting out of the way, allowing people to be who they are, emotionally connecting.

>> MELISSA: How are you, yes.

>> STEPHANIE: Validating differences. I don't know if I said that already, but that was a really big one. This is how we -- this is how we love people. This is how we love disciplines. This is how we love our students. This is how we can love our work. And I just think that there's no better way to celebrate Valentine's Day than talking about how global learning can enable us to be loving human beings through our work.

>> MELISSA: One of my favorite quotes is "Work is love made visible." And that's very much what we do here as educators. If I may share, I think one of the most powerful moments, a moment from which I learned, during that Languages of the World class last semester was in talking about language ideology and harmful tropes around U.S. society and discourse that we hear.

I had a student. He's from the Bahamas. He told us how his teacher told him once that he needs to speak good English. He needs to speak better English. Just for him to share that and then to be able to talk exactly how he really talks and the way his family talks for the rest of the semester in that class, he was one of the most vocal voices we had. And I was grateful to him for sharing with us his story of experiencing language prejudice and how that made him feel and, frankly, for sharing it with our other students because some of my students had not experienced that before.

And when we can see that, a friend sitting right next to us has actually experienced prejudice just because of the way he talks, that right there is a powerful lesson, and it really made, I think, the final project of solving a societal problem that's language ideology or language related that much more meaningful because it affects even my buddy in class. It was a very amazing group.

>> STEPHANIE: Thank you, Melissa.

>> MELISSA: Thanks for having me, Steph. Again, teachers out there, colleagues, global learning is not hard. It's just a way of making our teaching have greater impact and assessing our learners better. It does not consume a significant amount of your time. I promise. It's very easy to do. And, Stephanie, if you don't mind, you are one of our best resources here at FIU, so if anybody has doubts, they can contact you.

(Laughter).

>> STEPHANIE: Thank you.

>> MELISSA: The workshops where we get to meet other colleagues and how they are doing across the disciplines, those are really helpful, and that's just two hours out of your day.

>> STEPHANIE: Fantastic. Thank you again, Melissa.

>> MELISSA: My pleasure, Steph. Thanks for having me.

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