

## SO OTHERS MAY SEE

So as not to take up your time or to burden you with my affection, let me thank you for all you have done to allow others a right to see. Your efforts are part of a story that will continue on without you, and it is because you cared enough that your students will see the option to do the same. You have allowed meaning to those who are building their own, and for this I am truly grateful.

For some of you it has not been easy, but you have seen what your caring has done. How the shy now speak, how the overlooked can see more clearly what they own. Their education has been yours, a path to the questions we all ask but answer in different ways. Here is where meaning holds all of us in that fine light of change.

I thought a lot about you when writing these words and how tiring it can get to believe in those who often find it hard to believe in themselves. It is never easy for students who seldom notice what they carry into the classroom, or the education they've been handed that seldom fits their grip. I know this, you know this, but the student rarely does. An institutionalized mind seldom looks at itself. No, rather it looks at the format of expectations, the dominate politics of learning that indoctrinates and demands conformity. Unfortunately this is where education permits those cracks that consume so many, those accepted casualties of a system that blindly suffers from itself.

And this is where you come in. Where your ability to see beyond the so called limitations of others is so vitally important so as to know more of who you are teaching rather than what you are teaching. For any of us who have ever suffered the limitations of others, this is crucial to understand. And yet, how often do we discuss these movements necessary for change? And how will change occur if it is not recognized by those who must do so first before others can begin? You see, your freedom will be your students as well, but it will have a lot to do with how you make freedom available to others, and this is never easy. Why? Because you will have to teach through other teachers before you who were taught by other teachers before them. This will have an effect on what you will try to offer. Thus you will have to construct your own ties to trust and commitment, patience and belief, for which learning works best. Just remember that what gets in your way will get into theirs as well, and that the best way to assist them on their journey is to remember your own. Come on you remember what it was like, the distances you kept, the places you hid in plain sight when you compared yourself to others. It is so isolating when one measures their insides to other peoples outsides. It folds us into ourselves, blocks the light of our own understanding and makes us susceptible of losing sight of ourselves so as to duplicate the form of another. Here is where we give up our originality, where we trade in our voice to sound like others, and embrace that fearful self-consciousness rather than the necessary consciousness of self.

So please my dear colleagues, do not hesitate in questioning what I have written here. I am only trying to offer you what I have been taught by those we teach. Theirs is a unique magic, a rare

and exclusive insight that is seldom consulted when understanding what they need. Student knowledge is the beginning of the worlds wisdom, and all we have to work with is to assure that these students pass this onto their next teachers.

Now for those of you who are just starting off in your teaching careers, I will offer you this.

Please know that it will be lonely at times. You will more than likely feel inadequate and unprepared. You will question if the students are really paying you any attention one way or the other. This is where you will have to try harder to overcome what overpowers any of us, fear, and what we fail to learn from it. For some of you it may be the way your voice stutters when covering technique, or the hesitations you feel when critiquing their imagery. But trust me, every class will be your teacher if you let it. Every experience will refine your sensibilities and soon that voice you worried so much about will begin to take on a presence all its own. Believe me, this happens. All of a sudden you will hear yourself say something you did not think out completely. You will find the words coming together when you needed them most. In those instances it will be as though you are hearing another voice in you that you too are experiencing with your students. This “teaching voice” is a entity all its own. It will find you in time, it will discover you as you make room for it to exist. It is not something to control, but something to nurture within your self by thinking about what matters most.

Just know that every class is its own entity, every student a world unto themselves, and that you will have to work with what you are given. This is never easy when caring for those who seem more angry than they are, and less available than they appear. And yet, here is where you will have to develop your aptitude for translation so as to know what languages they speak. Some will only repeat the ones they were taught, while others will test you against their own. They will asses your value in an instant and decide your worth, or not. Do not worry about this. Rather, take the time to look into them, their own individual depths, their own unique presence. Here you will know who you are teaching and what it will take to bring them closer to their own understanding. From this you will see how to offer assignments that will help them to see themselves, to see what they feel most strongly about, and how they may breathe life into what they believe in most. Give them this and they will in turn give you something to talk about, to celebrate, and to build upon further. But please remember that learning cannot occur unless everyone is allowed to do it in their own way. It is the balance of this expression that allows us to see, and its practice which takes it beyond sight into a place that is unique to us all. Do this and the eyes before you will have a chance to not only see, but to breathe, taste, and listen. They will be able to connect to the those things just out of reach, meanings that will define their form, and choice that will inspire change. For some, the unknown will not pose a threat but will provide an invitation to what they may add to its presence.

We are all a mystery to what we do not know and there are never enough facts for those who do not believe. The trick is not to limit oneself to a finite understanding of an infinite world. Share what you own. Know that teaching is not a secret to be kept, but a reflection to project to others for learning to take place. Do this and you will see how light in its truest form is emitted by all of us.

Now, if you should need any clarity on what I have written here or wish to contradict my findings, please contact me at [dga2@humboldt.edu](mailto:dga2@humboldt.edu). We could talk over any topic of teaching and learning, seeing or meaning. This is something we've often been lead to believe that we must do on our own and that is what makes it so hard to do at times. I will say nothing to change your beliefs, but will merely offer my opinion if change is really necessary.

You are far more capable of knowing this . . .

One last thing. For those of you who may be wondering about some resources to use in bringing greater inclusivity to your students. Here are a few suggestions of where you might find those who mirror the qualities of those you teach. I hope it helps.

## EN FOCO

En Foco is a non-profit organization that nurtures and supports contemporary fine art and documentary photographers of diverse cultures. Primarily U.S. residents of Latino, African, and Asian heritage, and Native Peoples of the Americas and the Pacific.

<https://enfoco.org>

## ZONE ZERO

Zone Zero is a grand repository of creative energy first created by the photographer, Pedro Meyer. It is an excellent resource for a diverse conceptual understanding of what is happening in photography today. I recommend it highly for what it can offer and inspire those who are wishing to expand their visual knowledge.

<http://zonezero.com/en/>

## LENSCULTURE

A vast international interpretation of styles and concepts that cover all aspects of technique and directions. They promote wonderful options of expression along with great opportunities to participate on a global scale.

<https://www.lensculture.com>