"YOU'RE IN AMERICA. SPEAK ENGLISH!": CHALLENGING RACISM AND LINGUICISM THROUGH A TRANSLINGUALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

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A QUERY TO BEGIN WITH…

When someone says in a public space, "Speak English, you're in America!", we are appalled. (Or we should be.)

And yet, in our own college courses, we tell our students, "This is an American class. Speak English <u>only</u>!", or variations of the same idea.

Why?

Why should voicing English proficiency be equal to silencing another language?

Why should acquiring English proficiency be equal to giving up the ownership over other languages?

Why should English proficiency be equal to Language X, Y, and/or Z deficiency?

A MULTILINGUAL (AND MULTICULTURAL) U.S.

- A changing U.S. landscape -- a much more (visibly) multilingual and multicultural one

- And yet languages other than English tend to be silent (and silenced) in many public and formal spaces, including classrooms

Growing linguistic diversity at home

% speaking a language other than English at home

U.S. residents age 5+
21.6%

U.S. citizens age 18+
15.3%

20

11.0

14.1

10

0
1980

2016
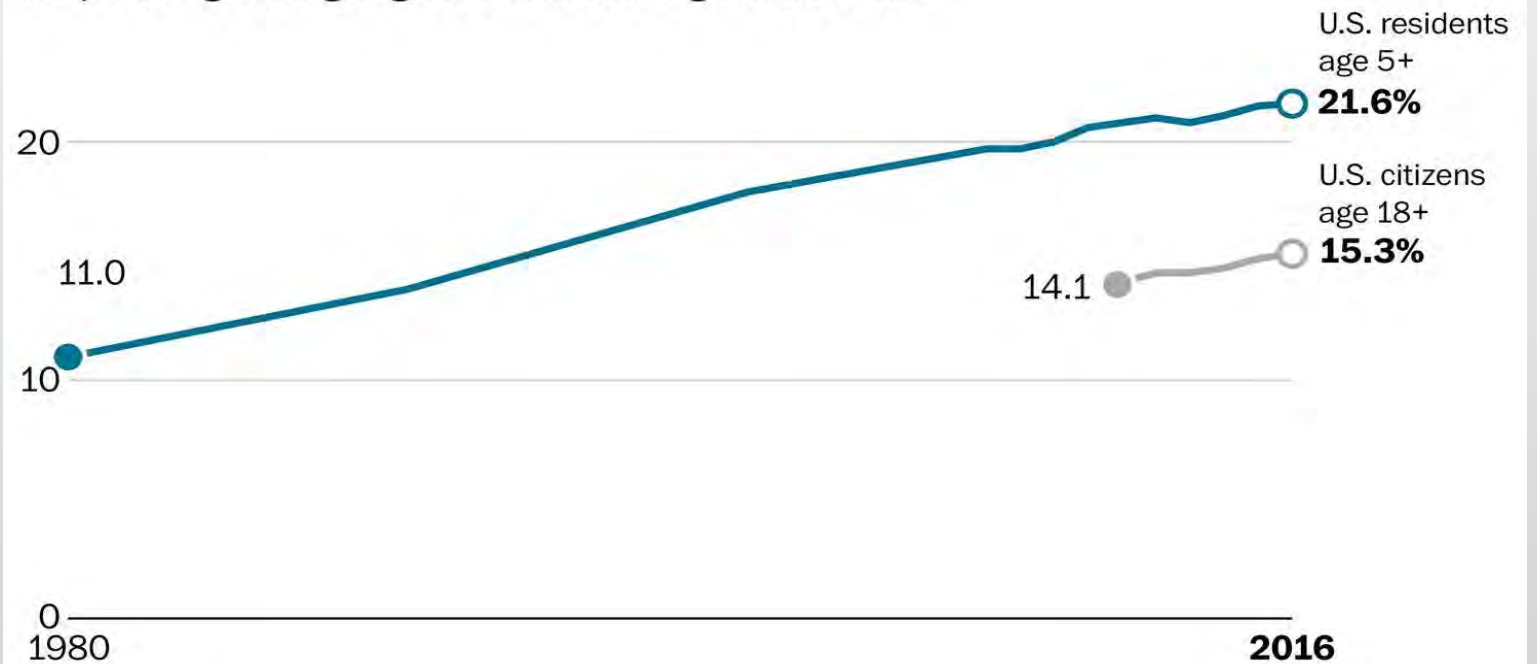
Source: U.S. Census

WAPO.ST/WONKBLOG

# U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A GLOBAL MICROCOSM

Community colleges:
- serve the community
- attract minority, immigrant, and international students (<u>and</u> faculty & staff)
- are amongst the most diverse higher education settings in the U.S.

Educational goals in a globalized world

To be successful in today's world, our students need to be
- translingual: able to use codes from different languages in contextually appropriate ways
- interculturally competent: recognize and navigate cultural boundaries successfully
- demonstrate global competencies: investigate the world, recognize and weigh perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action
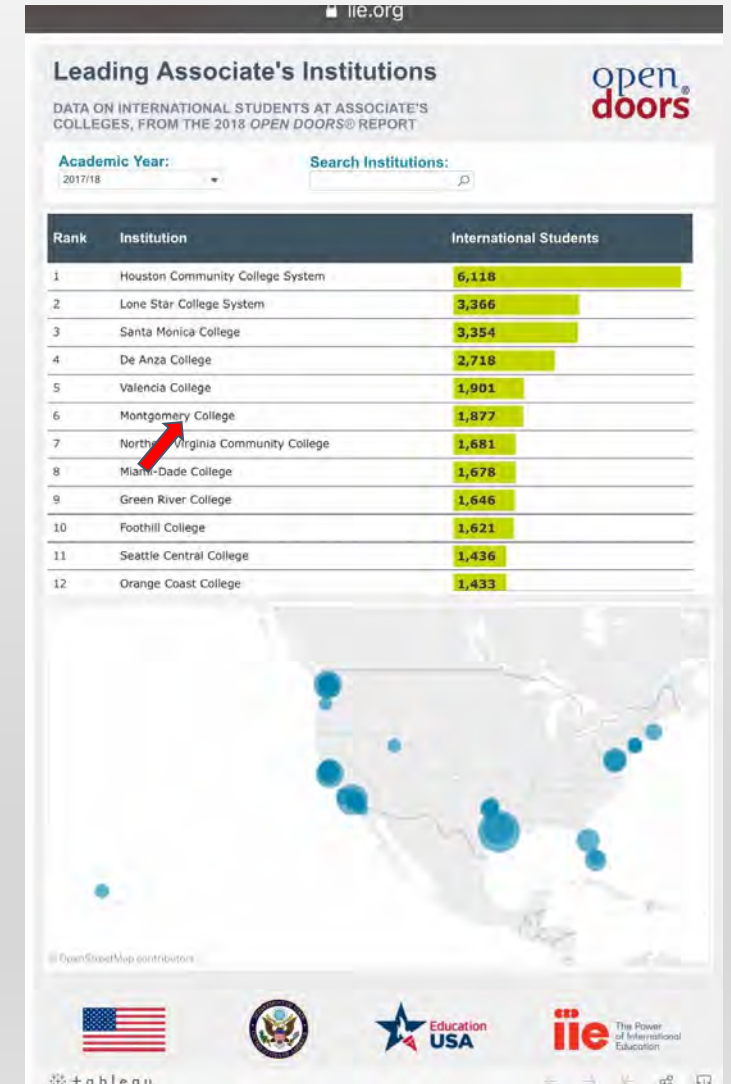
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE: A SUPER-DIVERSE CONTEXT

The most racially and ethnically diverse CC in Continental U.S. (The Chronicle of Higher Education)

MC has a diversity score of 0.78 (Community College Review)

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE AT A GLANCE

Established	
Montomery College	1946
Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus	1950
Rockville Campus	1965
Germantown Campus	1978

Employee Status - Fall 2017

	Total	FT	PT
Total Employees	3,154	1,863	1,291
Credit Faculty	1,331	481	850
WD&CE Faculty	338	0	338
Administrators	91	91	0
Professional Staff	798	735	63
Support Staff	596	556	40

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

51 Mannakee Street, Rockville MD 20850

Phone: 240-567-5000

Office of Institutional Research & Analysis

9221 Corporate Blvd. Rockville MD 20850

www.montgomerycollege.edu/research

Phone: (240)567-7316 Fax: (240)567-9129

December 20, 2017

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Demographics - Fall 2017

Gender	Headcount	%
Female	12,205	53.4%
Male	10,670	46.6%
Ethnicity		
Asian	2,636	11.5%
Black	6,261	27.4%
Hispanic	5,617	24.6%
Multi-Race	682	3.0%
Nat. Ame. & Hawaii Pacif. Isl	118	0.5%
White	5,225	22.8%
Foreign & Unkown	2,336	10.2%
Age		
20 and under	9,943	43.5%
21 - 29	8,702	38.0%
30 and over	4,230	18.5%
Residency		
In-County	20,364	89.0%
Out -of- County	1,187	5.2%
Out - of - State	1,324	5.8%

Student Course Load - Fall 2017

Full-Time	8,060	35.2%
Part-Time	14,815	64.8%
(Enrollment by Time of Day)		
Day	14,871	65.0%
Evening	2,398	10.5%
Both Day/Evening	3,930	17.2%
No Time/Distance	1,676	7.3%

Special Populations - Fall 2017

		% of Enrollment
OIRE New-to College	4,228	18.5%
International Students (I.I.E.)	1,898	8.3%
All non-citizens	6,131	26.8%
(represents 165 foreign countries and areas)		
Took Web-Based Classes	5,820	25.4%
Students with Disabilities	1,546	6.8%
Preparatory Coursework	5,998	26.2%
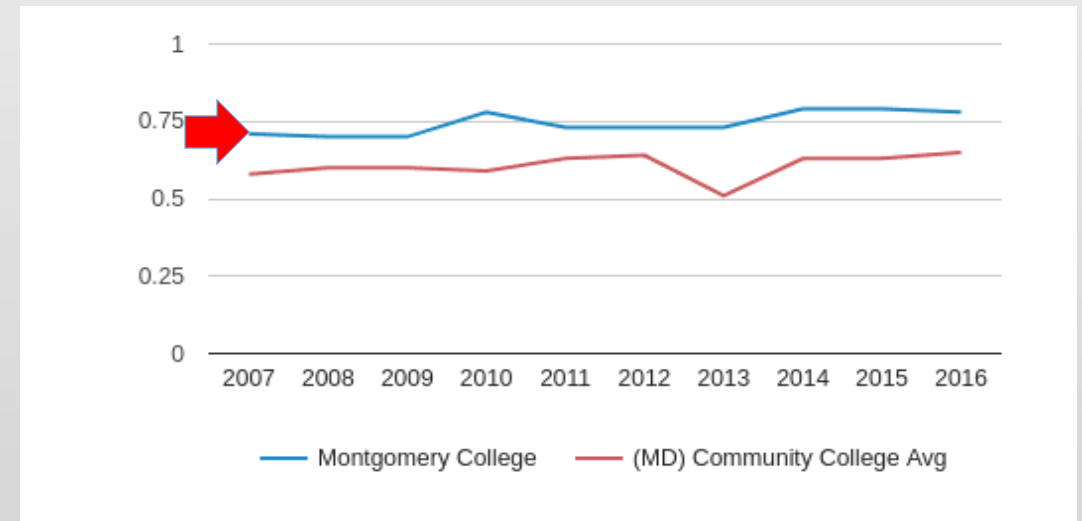
TRANSLINGUALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY (TRP): THE THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

- Focuses on communicative competence, not replacement of one language (variety) with another language (variety), nor denigration of any language (variety)
    - Because the linguistic contexts are inequitable, especially in academic settings, it *is* important to teach all students the codes of what is valued as 'standard' and 'correct' in academic settings, but to do so in ways that do not discriminate against or devalue other languages and language varieties.

- Understands that English as a pluricentric language
    - Variations within English as a global language
        - Many 'standard Englishes'
        - Local variations in the English language codes, histories, and cultures

- Challenges linguicism
    - Linguicism: Discrimination based on language and the the idea that *a* language 'variety' is more 'correct' or more 'important' than another (e.g. 'Standard' English vs. AAE; English vs. Spanish)
    - The use of any language should feel like a choice, not an imposition.

TRP IN THE CLASSROOM: THE APPLICATION

- Raise student awareness
    - language use
        - E.g. Variations within English (aluminium vs aluminum)
    - cultural ways of organizing information
        - E.g. Linear logic vs. cyclical logic

- Plan classroom conversations
    - Encourage students to use all languages responsibly
        - Facilitates inclusive communication when working in small groups (e.g. group French speakers together for some activities)
        - Enables a natural shift from common 'home' language 1 (e.g. French or Spanish) to common target language 2 (in this case, Academic English) as students complete assigned tasks

- Design course assignments
    - Encourage students to bring in their L1 or C1 as appropriate into their assignments
        - Writing about their identity or what 'home' means to them
        - Presenting pertinent information from global contexts (e.g. the students' home countries)

TRP IN THE CLASSROOM: THE IMPACT

- Build students' confidence about themselves as capable language users and learners
  - Validating their existing bilingualism/multilingualism, while building their translingual competence
  - Creating spaces for students to draw upon their identities and lived experiences in meaningful ways

- Engage students in the learning and acquisition of academic English more deeply
  - Students are more receptive to new ideas and rules pertinent to Standard American English
  - Students gain more metacongnitive awareness of how to use these ideas and rules in contextually-appropriate ways

- Prepare students for global academic and professional realities
  - Academic skills, including critical thinking, that students will be able to apply to future coursework
  - Successful interpersonal and intercultural communicative competence that students will be able to use in local and global multilingual settings

NEXT STEPS?

Composing a textbook, which will eventually be open-access (= free for students; = available to colleagues to use and adapt in their own classrooms)

Thank you!