An Interview with APPLE Lecture Speaker Professor James Paul Gee

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INTRODUCTION

On February 6, 2015, the TESOL/AL Web Journal (represented by Nadja Tadic, Di Yu, and Yuna Seong) had the opportunity to sit down with Professor James Paul Gee, guest speaker for the 2015 Applied Linguistics & Language Education (APPLE) Lecture Series, hosted annually by the TESOL/Applied Linguistics Programs at Teachers College, Columbia University. Professor Gee spoke about his thoughts on his work and advice for current and future researchers in the TESOL and Applied Linguistics fields.
       Professor Gee is the Mary Lou Fulton Presidential Professor of Literacy Studies and Regents' Professor at Arizona State University. He is also a member of the National Academy of Education. His book *Sociolinguistics and Literacies* (1990, Fifth Edition 2015) was one of the founding documents in the formation of the "New Literacy Studies," an interdisciplinary field integrating language, learning, and literacy. His book *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (1999, Fourth Edition 2014) brings together his work on a methodology for studying communication in its cultural settings. More recently, his books deal with video games, language, and learning. His books *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* (2003, Second Edition 2007) and *Situated Language and Learning* (2004) discuss how good video games can enhance learning. Professor Gee has published widely in journals in linguistics, psychology, the social sciences, and education. We thank Professor Gee for his time in a very thought-provoking interview. We also thank Fred Tsutagawa for videotaping and Dr. Kirby Grabowski for coordinating the APPLE Lecture Series Interview.

THE INTERVIEW

Question 1: Introduction and Becoming A Researcher

Your research has included many facets, from psycholinguistics to discourse analysis, and the study of literacy, particularly in relation to technologies. We would like to ask you about your journey as to how you got into the field of linguistics, and what do you see as the common thread linking your diverse interests? **[Q1 Video]**

Questions 2 & 3: Education

There appears to be an effort in formal education to implement principles of sociocultural theory, and particularly the theory of situated learning, in teacher training and curriculum development. Do you think this effort has managed to accurately and effectively appropriate the tenets of these theories? And how effectively do you think schools have managed to implement new literacies and situated teaching into the classrooms? **[Q2 Video]**

In the evening lecture, you will discuss the notion of collective intelligence. This idea has been gaining a lot of traction in the tech community over the past five years or so. On a global scale, I think the users of wikis were the first to put this idea out there. Now it is quite common for teachers to assign online, synchronous, collaborative reading and writing tasks to their students. Are teaching and learning evolving in such a way that collective intelligence is a much stronger force than singular intelligence? To what extent does this diminish the equity divide? **[Q3 Video]**

Questions 4, 5 & 6: Language Learning

With your expertise in examining digital tools and learning, what is your take on the potentials and drawbacks of using web-conferencing and other Web 2.0 tools to teach languages, specifically? **[Q4 Video]**

You'll introduce a new theory of language, grammar, and discourse in the afternoon colloquium. How do you see this new theory helping us better design, utilize, and analyze courses taught via web-conferencing and other Web 2.0 tools? **[Q5 Video]**

Recently there has been a proliferation of research that asserts that students who read from a textbook will 'learn' more or better, than if they read from a tablet, or an e-reader. The same has been said for students who take notes with a pen rather than on their computer. It seems that very few people have a definitive answer as to why this could be. What does your intuition say about this? What do *you* think about this? Could you please discuss how learning, language, and literacy is affected by the mode through which it is delivered? **[Q6 Video]**

Questions 7, 8, & 9: Research

In your lecture on Language, the World, and Video Games, you will argue for a new paradigm of learning, one that could help amend the effects of, as you put it, human stupidity, which has brought us to the verge of disaster. What role do you think education research has played in maintaining or creating this stupidity and in bringing us to the verge of disaster? How could future research avoid making the same mistakes? **[Q7 Video]**

It has been about thirty years since the new literacy studies started to question traditional views on the nature and purpose of literacy. Over these thirty years, what have been the most insightful findings within new literacy studies? For teachers looking for inspiration and guidance, could you share your favorite experience illustrating the potential that digital media and new digital literacies can have for teaching and learning? **[Q8 Video]**

For students of discourse analysis, what would be your suggestions on analyzing online interactions involving multiple visual/audio modes and resources? **[Q9 Video]**

Questions 10: Advice for Scholars

In an evolving landscape in which the definition of "discourse"— both with a 'little d' and a 'big D'— is ever-widening, technology is changing and playing a bigger role in both educational settings and in everyday life. What advice do you have for future discourse analysts and researchers in all aspects of education? **[Q10 Video]**