

MICHEL

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So one of the major goals of the course is for-- because we all speak a language, or sometimes many languages. And what the students get to understand at the end of the courses is that we all hold dear to an attitude about language. And some of the attitudes are positive, for us and for others. But oftentimes-- and this is actually one of the major issues that we discuss throughout the course, is that-- sometimes we have attitudes that have a negative impact, severe negative impact, on the lives of other people, the life of sometimes entire communities and nations.

So I hope throughout that, students can actually take this theory that is in the course, and see ways in which they can apply it to themselves, to their communities, to their countries. So clearly, the case that I have in mind the most is my own Haiti, where attitudes about language have been one of the engines that have really gone against the interests of most Haitians, that have allowed a few to keep the majority, and the oppression.

But then-- this is true also for the communities. So I was very pleased to see that the students took that objective very dearly, and including some who, in the course of this class, have applied what they've learned, and taking it outside, including volunteering in, say, the dual language program that just started in Boston. It's a dual language program promoting the use of books in Creole and English, and where students are immersed from kindergarten in both Creole and English.

And now there's a student who took that class, my class, and was volunteering in that classroom-- for Kindergarteners who were learning in Creole and in English. And to me, that's a dream because it's one case where what you learn in the course can be directly applied in the real world context, which can make actual positive change in the lives of these children.