

Dr. Nancy Hornberger's opening remarks from the 30th Ethnography Forum (2009):

***Ethnography for Social Justice in Education***

*Reinventing Anthropology* "is for people for whom 'the way things are' is not reason enough for the way things are ... who ask of anthropology what they ask of themselves ... responsiveness, critical awareness, ethical concern, human relevance, a clear connection between what is to be done and the interests of mankind" (Hymes 1969: 7).

On this 30th anniversary of the Ethnography in Education Research Forum, we reflect on Dell Hymes' vision of anthropology in the service of social justice. Some of you knew Dell well, others have never met him, so I want to spend a few minutes very briefly sketching and celebrating his life and contributions.

***Dell Hathaway Hymes***, anthropologist, linguist, and educator, is best known for his studies of the language and culture of Native Americans at the Warm Springs reservation in Central Oregon. He was born in Portland, Oregon on 7 June 1927, and after two years of military service (1945-1947), received his undergraduate degree from Oregon's Reed College (1950) and went on to study linguistic anthropology under Carl Voegelin at Indiana University. This was the beginning of his lifelong linguistic study of the Wasco tribe. His 1955 dissertation, *The Language of Kathlamet Chinook*, was drawn from texts recorded and published by Franz Boas. Between 1955-1960, he taught social anthropology at Harvard University and then went on to teach anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley (1960-1965).

Hymes' long association with the University of Pennsylvania began in 1965 as a professor of anthropology. Over his twenty-two year tenure at Penn he was a professor of folklore, linguistics, sociology, and education with a promotion to Dean of the Graduate School of Education (1975-1987), after which he and Virginia moved to U of Virginia, where he is now emeritus.

He was one of the founding members of the SSRC's Committee on Sociolinguistics (1963-1980) and served as president of the American Folklore Society (1973-1974), the Council on Anthropology and Education (1978), the Linguistic Society of America (1982), the American Anthropological Association (1983), and the American Association of Applied Linguistics (1986). In 1972, Hymes founded the journal *Language in Society* and served as its primary editor until 1992, including throughout his tenure as GSE dean.

Hymes was author and editor of numerous field-defining volumes, across linguistics, anthropology, folklore, sociolinguistics, education, and ethnopoetics including the following titles, in chronological order:

- *Language in Culture and Society* (1964), *The Use of Computers in Anthropology* (1965),
- *Studies in Southwestern Ethnolinguistics* (1967),
- *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages* (1971),
- *Reinventing Anthropology* (1972),
- *Foundations of Sociolinguistics* (1974),
- *Language in Education: ethnolinguistic essays* (1980),
- *In Vain I Tried to Tell You: essays in Native American ethnopoetics* (1981),

- *American Structuralism* (with John Fought, 1981),
- *Essays in the History of Linguistic Anthropology* (1983),
- *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication* (edited with John Gumperz in 1986), and more recently
- *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice* (1996), and
- *Now I Know Only So Far: Essays in Ethnopoetics* (2003).

A forthcoming special issue of *Text & Talk*, “On Hymes” edited by Jan Blommaert (2009, #2), gives some sense of the scope of Hymes’ influence, with contributions on

**Ethnography and democracy: Hymes’ political theory of language** - Jan Blommaert

**Breakthrough into action** - Ron Scollon and Suzie Wong Scollon

**Hymes on speech socialization** - Susan Ervin-Tripp

**Ethnopoetics as social practice: Alice Florendo’s *corrigenda* to “Raccoon and his Grandmother”**-Robert E. Moore

**The Implications of Hymes’ Amerindian work for understanding text and talk** - James Collins

**Dell Hymes’ visions of enquiry** - Ben Rampton

**Hymes’ linguistics and ethnography in education** - Nancy H. Hornberger

I first had the privilege of hearing Hymes speak at the 1980 LSA Summer Institute in Albuquerque, little dreaming I would end up being recruited by him to Penn GSE and better yet, sit in his classes for my first two years here, ultimately inheriting partial custodianship of the linguistics and ethnography he infused into educational research, theory, and practice here. In his prolific and powerful writings, and in his leadership of Penn's Graduate School of Education, Hymes proposed not only a vision but a set of ways of doing ethnography in education -- from ethnographic monitoring and the ethnography of communication to the ethnopoetics of oral narratives and the ethnography of language policy – that have inspired and informed researchers for a generation and more. In this year's Forum, we hope to explore the myriad uses educational ethnographers are making of these and other ways of working to change schooling and education for the better, in the ongoing project of reinventing anthropology.

Dell provided the context and recruited the people who made the Forum happen, including today’s keynoter Heath, and Perry Gilmore, David Smith, and later Fred Erickson.

**Shirley Brice Heath** received her doctorate in cultural anthropology and linguistics from Columbia University in 1970, and taught first at Winthrop College, South Carolina, where she started the longterm ethnographic research in three communities (poor white, poor black, middle-class white and black) that became *Ways with Words*. First published in 1983, this work is now an international classic – “the most widely cited study of children’s language use in and out of school” (Cazden 1999: 762-763 in Spolsky’s *Concise Encyclopedia of Educational Linguistics*).

Heath moved to Penn GSE 1977 and though she was here only three years before moving on to Stanford in 1980, she played a pivotal role in the beginnings of the Ethnography Forum, as the one who suggested a one time event become an annual one, organized by students. At Stanford, Heath was Professor of English and Linguistics, and by courtesy, Anthropology and Education,

until her retirement a few years ago, and she is now Professor at Large at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies. The range, scope, and sheer quantity of Heath's publications, accomplishments and achievements are too wide, deep, and abundant to do them justice here, but among her many distinctions, she is a MacArthur Foundation Fellow and a National Academy of Education Fellow, and recipient of the George and Louise Spindler Award for Scholarly Contributions to Educational Anthropology.

Her long time colleague and friend Courtney Cazden writes of Heath's having grown up in rural Virginia, where her grandmother ran the store in an otherwise all-black community, giving Shirley an early sense of herself as "other." She worked in the early years of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and taught migrant children in California, and later special education, reading, ESL, and more before ever enrolling for her Ph.D.

Since I always like to hear personal stories about the speaker being introduced, I'm going to tell you two brief stories of Shirley's impact on my own trajectory more than two decades ago, representative of the strategic mentoring she has provided to so many of us across several decades now:

In 1980, as I began to formulate my dissertation research ideas on bilingual education and indigenous Quechua language maintenance in the Andes, I wrote to her, seeking her advice, on the strength only of my acquaintance with her work on language policy and indigenous American languages and in ethnography of education. She wrote right back, encouraging me toward an ethnographic approach and pointing me to Hymes' memorable words in the 1964 AAA issue, p. 3:

"take as context a community, investigating its communicative habits as a whole, so that a given use of channel and code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which the members of the community draw."

In preparation for this introduction, as I looked back at her October 1980 letter, which I still have, I notice that she had just moved from Penn GSE to Stanford, not having yet unpacked her books. Little did I know I would be moving to Penn myself five years later, after first following her advice and carrying out a comparative ethnographic study of two Andean highland communities, one with and one without bilingual education.

Then in 1986, newly at GSE and about to publish my first book, based on that dissertation, I wrote again for her advice on a title, musing at the time on a possible title, *Teaching Tongues*, modeled on her Mexican language policy case study, *Telling Tongues*. She advised me instead to use a title that tells something of the substance of the book, mentioning that she wished someone had advised her the same. I did so and have passed on that useful advice to countless book authors since.

That said, Shirley continues to coin intriguing and memorable titles, such as the one we are tantalized to hear about today. *New Love, Long Love: Keeping Social Justice in the Public Mind* Please join me in welcoming Shirley Brice Heath as our opening keynote speaker for this 30<sup>th</sup> Forum.