

Bonni: [00:00:00] Dr. Yolanda Flores Niemann talks about being presumed incompetent in academia on today's Teaching in Higher Ed number 123.

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Bonni: [00:00:22] Welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:50] I'm so excited to be welcoming to the show today. Dr. Yolanda Flores Niemann. She's a professor of psychology at the University of North Texas. And before that she served as a Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost and Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Utah State University and held numerous administrative positions at Washington State University. At Washington State, Utah State and the University of Houston, she also served as a faculty member of various academic units including psychology, comparative ethnic studies, women's studies, disability studies, Mexican American studies and black studies.

Bonni: [00:01:39] Today Yolanda and I have the pleasure of having the dialogue about her book *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Yolanda, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

Yolanda: [00:01:54] Thank you for having me. I'm excited to be talking with you.

Bonni: [00:01:58] As you know the reason that you're on the show today is that one of our listeners a member of the community and a recent guest Annemarie Perez had recommended that I read your book and also because she knew I had a goal of talking a lot more about culture and race and ethnicity that you're someone who really just produced a transformative work.

Bonni: [00:02:21] And so thank you for that gift because it's been a gift to me and I know to many others. The book by the way is called Presumed Incompetent. And I'd first love to hear you share a little bit, Yolanda, about how did you decide to write this book? How did it emerge into being.

Yolanda: [00:02:39] Yes. So I had published an article called The Making of a Token that was my experience in being tokenized at a university and my first academic job and that made the rounds like wildfire because people had not really written about those experiences.

Yolanda: [00:02:57] And there were so many of them that you know the the first author got really good that is the moves actually call me and she said I read your piece and will you mentor me and let's write a book - because there's too many of us having these experiences.

Yolanda: [00:03:14] So we got together the four of us the teachers got together we put out a call and frankly we got so many papers we turned away about three fourths of the papers that we got. So these papers were reading like it was 1950 instead of you know 2010 when we put out the call 2011 and 2012 as we were getting the papers.

Yolanda: [00:03:37] So we wanted people of color in academia to know that they were not alone and that the experiences they were having were not isolated that we want people to know that it's not about them it's about the situation.

Bonni: [00:03:50] When I was reading your book I was corresponding a little bit both with you and also with Annemarie and she spoke about how hard of a read it is. It's it's important but it is a difficult read. And she talked a little bit about sometimes she'd have to step away and then come back for it because she had her own experiences to reflect on.

Bonni: [00:04:13] And I was cracking up because as I was finishing it I did find myself needing to give myself a small break. And so at the same time when I needed a little break I started reading this decorating book by which is by a Japanese woman. I'll put a link on the show notes to it.

Bonni: [00:04:31] But it made me laugh so much because I was so used to - OK I'm going to go hear from another person and it's going to be difficult but but this is so important for me to do. And I'd have this mindset I'd get myself into. And

the stories are also beautiful. And this one was weird though because I thought well what are we doing talking about when you were little organizing?

Bonni: [00:04:52] Well, ok. So you know maybe this is a cultural thing I'm not really thinking about. And it turned out I thought I was reading your book and I read a different one for about 10 minutes till I figured out.

Yolanda: [00:05:04] Well they are painful stories indeed. And the reason they're painful is we can't believe that this is happening today and there are unjust experiences. It's unfair it's unjust and painful and frankly some of the times where we re read some of these we're just sickened by what we're reading.

Yolanda: [00:05:25] It's like really can human beings do this to one another. Is this possible especially in the in the ivory tower which we say you we think this is the most elite people the most educated the most well behaved and yet academia remains one of the most elite bastions of all industries of all organizations.

Bonni: [00:05:48] I am not going to ask you for a favorite story because I already know without even asking that that would be impossible but what is one story that stands out to you, Yolanda as being representative of the overarching theme of the book and that is what it means to be presumed incompetent.

Yolanda: [00:06:07] Well Sherrée Wilson's They Forgot Mammy Had a Brain as one of them and you're right. It's really hard to choose. I could go through each one of these stories. Carmen flugel Lugo's a prostitute and servant. Michelle Jacob's about American Indians. Linda Vō's about accent's, Kupenda's about being told that you know there are no spooks in this room.

Yolanda: [00:06:26] But I'll do Sherrée Wilson They Forgot Mammy Had a Brain and you know she reports people getting notes on their doors from the KKK, people telling her how well gee everyone in my family hates niggers but not me. You know I'm one of the good ones. You know I love black people or you know I had a maid and she was awesome. So you know black people are OK for some of us and not others and we're OK.

Yolanda: [00:06:54] Black people are OK in certain in servant roles but then being trotted around by academia you know being the only black person around. And then when academia needs you like on MLK days or you know frankly look what's going on today.

Yolanda: [00:07:08] I'm talking about all the African-American faculty out there and how the unrest and the crises that we're seeing today like in Tulsa and in Charlotte are faculty of color are being severely impacted by this because I imagine universities are trying them out further because they need a token to show that they're not racist.

Yolanda: [00:07:31] And I suspect that a lot of these black faculty are being called you know round up the black students go ahead and you know you know take care of them nurture them be their mammy.

Yolanda: [00:07:41] You know you know - be their mother. Her story is they forgot mammy had a brain. You know - be the nurturer. And I I cannot help but think about what's going on with my black peers in different institutions as they're at universities or dealing with student activism and outcry around what they're seeing on television. Universities need somebody to help them and they will call on their few black faculty to do this.

Bonni: [00:08:09] Whenever we're reading stories like this it's helpful of course to empathize and so as I read them I think gosh I can recall times in my own teaching experience where young people would maybe look to me to try to be their nurturer so I can at least have a tiny sense but I'm sure it's quite small because one of the things that you share about of your.

Bonni: [00:08:31] Both It's a challenge for the kind of scholarship that you did in this book but it's also a challenge for someone like me to necessarily fully relate or fully empathize and that is something called intersectionality and can you talk a little bit about what your definition is of intersectionality and then how it complicates research and then also complicates really empathy for people like me.

Yolanda: [00:08:56] Absolutely. So Carmen Lugo's the prostitutes, a servant, and customer service rep is a good indication representation of intersectionality although I think every one of our chapters speak to it in some way.

Yolanda: [00:09:11] So intersectionality refers to the the complications if you will of the dynamics of not just being a woman but being a woman of color. And then if you're gay that adds another layer and you're if you remember if you grew up in a low socioeconomic status that adds yet another layer.

Yolanda: [00:09:31] And in all of these different layers create dynamic who you are and how you fit within an organization how you believe you fit. But more importantly how you were perceived to fit by others.

Yolanda: [00:09:43] So for instance women of color as indicated in story after story presumed incompetent are often made to prove that what they're saying is true. So as one woman says I had to pull up statistics photos theories graphs possibly as evidence that what I was saying was true and then she finds out lo and behold that her white colleagues didn't have to do this. Up until then she thought everybody did this.

Yolanda: [00:10:11] And that's an example of how the intersections work here. So she's a well a person of color and a woman and the archetype in academia the archetype of professor is a white male. So a woman of color is already different in two ways. And and like I said if you read when you add a social class and gender identity that's that's more layers that have to be navigated.

Bonni: [00:10:35] And you talked about a bit early in the book on how challenging this was for some of your research because there would be reports around in X is true regarding ethnicity but they didn't even break out the layer around male versus female can you share a little bit more about some of those challenges have been countered I think a lot of them you mentioned were having to do with even some of the quantitative data.

Yolanda: [00:10:59] Absolutely. So in fact what are the phrases that that you and some of your listeners may find very common is the phrase women and minorities or women and people of color. And when you break that down you know it's way it's hard to tell. What are people talking about when when they're presenting data that says women and minorities you know so who are the women.

Yolanda: [00:11:23] And it turns out that when when these are deconstructed these phrases are deconstructed the word women tends to refer to white women so the phrase makes white women the de-facto women and then people of color are the men and women of color.

Yolanda: [00:11:41] And so and that that happens in research and it is my experience that most researchers do not deconstruct or break out the intersectionality. You know they just say women or they just say men or in some cases they'll say Americans and I've asked sometimes what I've been listening to

a talk at a conference after somebody has been talking on and on about Americans.

Yolanda: [00:12:04] And I'll raise my hand I'll say well can you break down Americans a little bit. Who are these people when it turns out that they're really for the white Americans because they haven't asked black Americans or Latinos who have a very different experience in the United States generally speaking than do white Americans especially in different domains.

Bonni: [00:12:24] Another word that gets used often in the book and I know is one of your areas of expertise is tokenism and I wonder if you share a story with us about it could be from the book or even from other research that you've done about how tokenism rears its head in academia.

Yolanda: [00:12:42] Yes. In fact one of the original story that I mentioned the making of a token that's in the book was published again in the book Presumed incompetent at the insistence of my coeditors is a really good representation of how that happens.

Yolanda: [00:12:57] So you know you start out as a faculty member you walk in and you're you're in my case a psychologist. So I've got a Ph.D. in psychology and I'm excited I'm going to teach psychology to researches in psychology but suddenly I'm being perceived not as a psychologist but as the the Latino faculty member.

Yolanda: [00:13:20] In my case. There were about 35 faculty in the department and only about four were women at the time. And at the time that I was hired I was the only person of color in the entire department and I was in the city of Houston.

Yolanda: [00:13:34] So it where there were a lot of the undergraduates were actually students of color but the faculty at least in my department were not. And so my identity became transformed from Yolanda the psychologist Yolanda the Latina and all the biases that people have about the stereotypes about what would a Mexican-American woman is.

Yolanda: [00:13:58] And then they began to see me through the lens of being a Mexican-American woman and giving me assignments having to do with that or in like I said being tokenized even things like forgetting to do my third your annual review because they weren't even think of me as a scholar even though I was publishing and doing things at all assistant professors are supposed to do.

Yolanda: [00:14:17] But when they forgot even in academia the third year review is absolutely critical. It's an up or down review and it's the precursor to your tenure review so that they even forgot to do it. Was was incredible and very telling that in their minds I wasn't even a scholar and I'd only been there three years and they had already transform identity in their own minds not in mine.

Yolanda: [00:14:44] So it's very powerful and tokenism generally occurs when people in the environment are fewer than 15 percent of the total. So let's say in academia that and in fact in psychology in my field about 85 percent of all faculty are white and in academia and in general the majority of faculty are white.

Yolanda: [00:15:12] So in academia in general it's let's see it's the national diversity has among males 79 percent are white and among female 78 percent are white. So in nationally only about 20 percent of faculty are people of color. So it is very likely that we're going to end up in these contests.

Yolanda: [00:15:34] But importantly tokenism is not just about numbers. It's about how you treat it when you're in that context. Are you in fact remained the scholar in your field or do you become the black person of the Latino person we're going to trot out when there is a crisis. Do you become the person who teaches our diversity studies.

Yolanda: [00:15:54] So for instance when one university was that I started the same time as a Korean-American man and within and he was in psychology and within a couple of weeks he came to my office and said I need help. I've been asked to teach the psychology of diversity course and I don't know a thing about that topic. My area is major depression.

Yolanda: [00:16:15] I know about major depression. I don't know a thing about diversity and I told the chair this but the chair said oh sorry you're you're the closest thing we got you got to do it. So that's an example of you know your identity being transformed how you become tokenized no matter how you think of yourself you cease to be the independent scholar that you walked in and become what the environment needs you to be because you are one of the few people of color in the environment.

Bonni: [00:16:41] I think it's easy to listen to stories as you're sharing and as we read your book and think and I know in my head I know I'm often thinking about

those other people who are tokenized and it's like a really easy way to go OK I need to protect. Or maybe it's not even protecting one's sense of self.

Bonni: [00:17:03] But it also could just be a real inability to be self-aware and aware of the ways in which we are tokenize in others. What are some of the less blatant ways that that all of us have this just it comes up we don't mean to do it we're not trying to tokenize it.

Bonni: [00:17:25] Is there such a thing as accidental totemism where you do have to become aware of it and we can't always be thinking about the others that are doing that to people of color.

Yolanda: [00:17:34] Oh absolutely and in fact I think the overwhelming majority of people do not do this intentionally. I think the situation when there are very few members of a group like people of color at all. It sets up the perception of those people of color. It sets it up for everybody.

Yolanda: [00:17:55] So you know the biases kick in even unintentionally. And so for instance just today in fact earlier today I did along with some colleagues we talked to we did a presentation for our graduate students about how to engage in faculty searches how to be successful in faculty searches.

Yolanda: [00:18:16] And as I was preparing my presentation my colleagues sent me his slides and he said and you might want to take the diversity angle. Well OK I'll be happy to take the diversity angle and then I was already going to talk about that.

Yolanda: [00:18:30] But I happened to have other things to say. I have a lot of experience but it wasn't an intentional dig on his part. It's just it's a function of like one of the only ones in the department he doesn't know anything about it.

Yolanda: [00:18:42] So like oh she must know something you know. So again it's not it is not malicious. It is a function of of of the way the hiring process is have ended up with having very few people of color in academia.

Yolanda: [00:19:00] And so it's it's it's it's a white people also to see people of color in a particular role as representative of their race as being the experts in diversity especially when academic institutions don't insist that white people also have to know something about diversity. So that means that shifts everything to only one small group. It's almost ghettoized if you will.

Bonni: [00:19:27] I've done a fair amount of reading about the disparity of salaries between men and women and of course that just breaks down you start to talk about intersectionality but I had a conversation the other day with a colleague It was really good.

Bonni: [00:19:41] And I suppose when I say this it's probably going to sound terrible but when you know the people who are committing these acts and you know they have kindness in your hearts I think it's easier to say gosh this person just doesn't know.

Bonni: [00:19:52] But I was talking about how you know one of the reasons why we might see women paid lower in higher ed than men is simply something I have observed on being on many search committees at my institution is that they will talk about oh well this man if he's going to come and relocate it's really expensive here in Southern California and he has a family because of course maybe that's come up during the hiring process right.

Bonni: [00:20:20] Well we need to go and advocate to the Provost to try to get him to be able to be paid as high on our salary scale as we can so he can afford to move here and move his family here and take care of them. I have never ever once had someone say anything even remotely like that about a woman.

Yolanda: [00:20:37] Yes. And that has to do with with our conscious and unconscious bias about the roles of men and women in society. Men are still perceived as the providers even though that has ceased being the case. You know for decades.

Yolanda: [00:20:50] You know women have shared that economic provider role and men mentors are stepping up to the nurture role as well. I mean it's an outdated model but it's the model that we carry in our heads. But the other thing about that, Bonni, is in my experience women don't always negotiate in the way that men negotiate.

Yolanda: [00:21:11] So for instance I've also by the way been very upper level administrative positions. I just returned to the faculty last year. So I have a lot of experience as an administrator and in that capacity there was a woman came to see me and said she was one of our most preeminent scholars and she said I make \$15000 less than the person in the office next door to me and we were hired at the same time and I have more publications and more grants and he does.

Yolanda: [00:21:41] And I asked her a very simple question I didn't know it was going to lead but I said well what did you ask for when you were hired. And it turned out that she asked for it. She got exactly what she asked for.

Yolanda: [00:21:57] And her colleague asked for \$15000 more and had gotten that. So I think we need to help mentor women to to not be afraid to negotiate. And there is a fear factors like oh my god will they say you know because they're afraid often because women are interchangeable or disposable that we'll find I'm not going to negotiate with her. You know who does she think she is. So women fear that we have to get over it at some point so that we can achieve pay equity because once when you start that far behind it's very hard to catch up.

Bonni: [00:22:33] Some of the research talks about when they actually there was a physicist Meg Urry from Yale was on the show gosh about a year ago I'll put a link to it in the show notes but she talked about some research that she was involved in around physics colleagues and that they would have them read the exact same script or look at the exact same resume.

Bonni: [00:22:58] And it all comes down to that. We we actually don't tend to accept the same kind of negotiation from women even if they do the exact same tactic that the man uses as well she's been way too aggressive versus he's confident. And one of the things that's been talked about is we can shift that as women if we think about it and we approach it as negotiating for other people.

Yolanda: [00:23:21] I mean that's spot on. And it is the case that like that we talked about before that people carry around these model of who men and women are and who they are as providers and who we're supposed to be interpersonally you know.

Yolanda: [00:23:34] So if we're we're not supposed to be assertive but men can for men are sort of they're confident that we're sort of we're a bitch. Yes. So all that stuff is still out there. But it's only when we started advocating for one another that they were eventually going to get past that.

Yolanda: [00:23:51] And in some ways I think it might be a generational thing. Certainly baby boomers are of that mind but the millennials are not in power yet so it's going to be hard to see how that shapes up. The millennials are are looking to be one of our most activist generations and one of our most social

justice and equality minded generations that we've ever had. So it's going to be interesting to see how they shape the change the lens.

Bonni: [00:24:17] When you talked earlier about tokenism. One of the things I took away from the book is that it isn't just about numbers. And I think maybe I would have oversimplified that before reading presumed competent that we don't necessarily make things better in our institution simply by hiring more people of color and talked a little bit about what is needed to stop ourselves from committing tokenism how do we heal that in our cultures.

Yolanda: [00:24:45] That's a great question. And you're absolutely right. It is not just about numbers because it's in some places with small numbers people are not tokenized. So it's important to remember especially in academia that the person is a scholar they're really a scholar first that the scholar actually that is their preeminent identity. You know we go to great lengths to get Ph.D.s or law degrees or whatever degree we have to to get us in these positions.

Yolanda: [00:25:16] However as long as other people in the department or the university do not pick up the slack on what needs to be known about diversity to make a university function, to be able to mentor students, to provide the classes that are needed.

Yolanda: [00:25:32] As long as that doesn't happen it's going to be very easy to say well you know like we have to have it in my Korean American friend like well you're the closest thing we got that the responsibility for knowing about issues of race class gender identity and being able to mentor students around these issues is a responsibility that needs to be shared.

Yolanda: [00:25:56] So I would say that the the primary thing that people can do is spread the responsibility for having that knowledge and not make assumptions that a person because it's a person of color has that knowledge or has the kind of expertise that's needed to conduct research or teach or mentor students in that area.

Yolanda: [00:26:18] Or rather everybody has to learn and then I think for the well-meaning people if that Wolf has spread they're not automatically going to turn to the darker skinned person and say oh it's got to be her. They're going to know that. Well all of us have.

Yolanda: [00:26:32] So who who who does who does this particular lend or aspect of it better you know who do we give that assignment to. We have to start somewhere.

Yolanda: [00:26:41] But you know the other thing I'm doing right now is on studying micro aggressions and some of these little insults if you will that people make that they don't even know they're insulting somebody when they say it.

Yolanda: [00:26:54] And one of that's one of the reasons I'm studying at it is and I'm actually developing training videos for faculty for some looking at faculty to student micro aggressions and these things that that faculty say to students that that are insulting the faculty member. Often don't have a clue that they were insulting somebody.

Yolanda: [00:27:14] So you know I think we need to be able to say well you know when you say this you know it hurt my feelings or it insulted me and then I don't know that you meant to. But what that meant to me. And and to be to be able to on the receiving end of that.

Yolanda: [00:27:32] And to be and act respond humbly and rather than defensively. Because we're all as you said we're always learning. And I think giving ourselves the gift or giving others the gift of responding humbly and giving ourselves permission to be humble and not to feel defensive when somebody is offended by something we said but rather taking the opportunity to learn from that moment goes a long way toward developing relationships and having further conversations.

Bonni: [00:28:03] I'm really looking forward to learning more from the research you're doing on micro aggressions. There's a great video that Vanderbilt's I believe it was the center for teaching and learning. I'll put a link to it in the show notes. That was a little illustration of some micro aggressions that both teachers and faculty can inadvertently do so I'll put a link there and I'm definitely looking forward to learning more from you in that area.

Yolanda: [00:28:28] Well thank you. It'll take me a few months. We're just now developing the films that we do intend to use him as training videos and it is my intention to make them to do PSA to put them online so that anybody can access them.

Bonni: [00:28:41] Actually as you were talking. I was sharing that one of the ways that I didn't realize I was doing this when I redesigned the Teaching in Higher Ed

Web site over the summer. I worked with a developer. We it's categorized now so I had to create a whole taxonomy.

Bonni: [00:28:57] And through that process I inadvertently created a little self-check around diversity because people's thumbnails of their pictures show up and there's five of them I think on the home page and then if you go to the podcast page then you see it think twenty five episodes at a time.

Bonni: [00:29:14] And so I definitely want to see very diverse faces there from every sense of the word. And if I ever start to see too many of the same kind of person but so one of the things I was very happy with over the summer was when I saw those episodes I thought wow this is diversity I love seeing this it's a beautiful picture to me. My one of my greatest contributions I think I've been able to make in my work so it felt really good.

Bonni: [00:29:40] But the number of episodes specifically on cultural competency at that time was only three. So I felt like I was able to do what you described earlier. I did have people of color many many many of them on the show but they came talking about their area of expertise which would be psychology, physics you know that kind of things that I had. Yolanda, this is the point in the show where we each get to give recommendations.

Bonni: [00:30:03] And I wanted to share about in NPR link that I saw of video that the title of the article which I'll be linking to in the show notes is He Will Be Our Brother, Boy, 6, asks President Obama to bring Syrian Boy to Live with Him and I'm actually going to play just a tiny bit of this so you can hear from this young boy instead of hearing me describe this young boy this boy's name is Alex, here's Alex.

Alex : [00:30:35] Dear President Obama, remember the boy who was picked up by the ambulance in Syria. Can you please go get him and bring him to our home. Park in the driveway or on the street. We'll be waiting for you guys with flags, flowers, and room. We'll give him my family. And you will be our brother. My little sister will be collecting butterflies and dragon flies for him. In my school, I have a friend from Syria, Omar. And I will introduce him to Omar and we can all play together.

Bonni: [00:31:12] I did warn Yolanda that it's really hard for me to hear that and not get teary eyed Alex's.

Yolanda: [00:31:21] Yeah I have tears over here. Oh my god that is so sweet. So moving on oh oh I just want to give that child a hug and say thank you.

Bonni: [00:31:30] In case anyone couldn't hear Alex's words he said "we will give him a family and he will be our brother. Katherine my little sister will be collecting butterflies and fireflies for him in my school. I have a friend from Syria. Omar and I will introduce him to Omar. We can all play together."

Bonni: [00:31:51] And I won't I won't I won't share this story about my week this week because I know we don't have time but I will be blogging about it. But I had instead of a six year old I got to have a beautiful conversation with some 18 to 25 year olds and it's been a difficult week it's been a couple of weeks.

Bonni: [00:32:12] There's been a lot in the news and we really got to have conversations about really complex things. And. I just loved that they can bring this from when they're 6 to when they're 16 to when they're 26 and we can we can heal when we have these conversations and when we focus our attention on the kindness and love that's in the world. So I just loved that video and I just encourage people to listen and get your tissues out.

Yolanda: [00:32:39] Yes. That's beautiful. At our university with the last one almost what's happened this week. Yesterday on my way to class I passed the library and on the library wall there were placards that people had taken poster boards and I don't know who brought the posterboard to the markers but they were writing messages on these poster boards and then taping them to the library wall and I couldn't move from them. I mean it was just the wall was plastered and I haven't been there today. I bet there's a lot more today.

Yolanda: [00:33:12] And they were there were beautiful messages from these college students about how they were feeling seeing what was going on in the news and what they wanted to do. And you know I think it's beautiful.

Bonni: [00:33:26] Yolanda, What do you have to recommend today.

Yolanda: [00:33:29] Well one of the classes I'm teaching right now is race in the United States. And I recently showed my students a film. It's a very old film and you might have heard of it it's called Eye of the Storm. And speaking about children this is about children.

Yolanda: [00:33:44] And there's another version of it called The Class Divided because it's been showcased in different ways. The Class Divided or Eye of the Storm.

Yolanda: [00:33:54] And this is the story of a white teacher named Jane Elliott who was in Idaho after MLK died she was trying to figure out how to teach her third graders about these important lessons about loving one another no matter who we are or the color of our skin.

Yolanda: [00:34:12] And she did something fascinating and she did it for like 17 years or something. And this film is about that. So these are all white students it was a white town. So she divided them up into blue white and brown eyes and she put a value on blue eyes and brown eyes so she said Well blue eyed people of today were blue or people are better blue eyed people get to have extra recess blue eyed people.

Yolanda: [00:34:39] It's just all these extra things the brown eyed people you don't drink in the water fountain you have to get a cup and then throw the cup away after you're done with it. Brown eyed people don't don't get to recess and oh look at that Brown look. Look at that look at Jeremy. He's brown eyed and look. Look how his face is doing that brown eyed people.

Yolanda: [00:34:57] So she's within the space of two minutes. She constructed eye color and put value on eye color and the response from these students how they absorbed it and took it in you know like you know yes blue eyes are brown.

Yolanda: [00:35:16] And then the next day in all fairness she shifted and she said I was wrong brown eyed people are better and she turned it around. But she even found differences and how quickly they went through the phonics cards when they were blue eyed and when they were brown eyed and depending on whether blue eye was up that day or not.

Yolanda: [00:35:32] And it was a tremendous lesson but watching these third graders be transformed they get their feelings hurt but also become vicious. You know and one of the things that stands up in my stand that in my mind is one of the boys said well you know he called us names and Miss Elliott says What name did he call you. She said.

Yolanda: [00:35:52] He says he called me brown eyes and he asked me you know and how quickly we can do that. And then you know the lessons we can

learn about how these are really constructions. And we we did them so we could undo them. So I'd it Eye of the Storm.

Bonni: [00:36:09] Wonderful. Well Yolanda you know that I've been looking forward to this conversation and also a little bit nervous but I think for the best reasons possible because I regard you so highly and I regard your work and you think you touched my life and I'm just hoping this is the beginning of a long conversation and that you'll be back on the show and can continue to share with us and teach us.

Yolanda: [00:36:32] Thank you. And I I'm very honored by everything you've said and this time that you've given me and I hope that it met your expectations. Thank you.

Bonni: [00:36:44] Thanks once again to Yolanda for being on the show and to Annemarie for recommending her what a wonderful conversation. I'm I'm just so excited to have future conversations and I hope some of you will pick up the book if you haven't yet. They'll be linked to it in the show notes at teachinginhighered.com/123.

Bonni: [00:37:04] And this is the point in the show where I say hey this is a great community in higher ed and if you want to spread a little bit you can help out simply by writing a review for it on whatever service it is you use to listen to the show or even just giving it a number of stars that really helps other people. It moves us up on the rankings so that people can find us in the higher ed category on the various services side really appreciate you doing that.

Bonni: [00:37:32] And thanks so much to all of you that give feedback on the show you can do that at teachinginhighered.com/feedback give ideas for future episodes and if you want to comment on this episode that'll be at teachinginhighered.com/123. Thanks again and I'll see every one who listens, next episode.

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