# Health and Human Science Matters Season 2, Episode 7: Vincent Basile

Matt Hickey: College of Health and Human Sciences has what I would call from one perspective, an eclectic gathering of discipline. From another perspective, I would call it a collection of focal areas that share some really important common themes around humanism.

Avery Martin: Welcome to Health and Human Science Matters, a podcast by Colorado State University's College of Health and Human Sciences. I'm your co-host and digital media strategist Avery Martin.

Matt Hickey: And I'm Matt Hickey, associate Dean for research and graduate studies. In our college. We make at our mission to optimize human health and wellbeing through discovery and innovation. Don't just take our word for it. Each episode we sit down with people who fulfill that mission, our college faculty and staff. And today we're lucky enough to have a friend and colleague from the School of Education, Dr. Vincent Basile. Tickled to have you.

Vincent Basile: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

Matt Hickey: Vincent, of course, I had the pleasure of getting to know you as a teacher and a mentor with Gabriel Navarro's thesis, and that was a real joy to be able to watch you in that setting. And as we both know, which is kind of a fun spinoff of Gabriel's story is there was a family connection there as well. So Gabriel's grandfather is my wife's uncle.

Avery Martin: Oh, wow.

Matt Hickey: So we were quite ... and she was just over the moon when I said, guess what? Yeah. So anyway, it was quite a bit of fun and I quickly gathered a immense amount of respect for how you handle your students. That was a fun experience for me.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, it was a good one.

Matt Hickey: Yeah, it was. And it's a microcosm of why we're here. I mean in every sense of the word. And one of the things I've always enjoyed about this college is those opportunities to sit on committees that aren't in your home department. I think it again, expands our vision. It helps us become better as teachers and mentors and how we back with people. So thanks for letting me be part of that. That was fun.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, that was a really good time. And I agree with your sentiment too, that having those opportunities to connect across departments and see how other people, particularly when you're brought in support of a student that is doing work that maybe is similar to your line or you have some connection to that student and you see how another department is embracing that kind of topic, that kind of works something that they don't normally do. It's really powerful in that, like you said, it really broadens your scope, but it sees the connectivity as we're so siloed in the academy in general. And to see that really by discipline is one way you can organize an academy, but also you can rethink it by organizing, by your focal areas is strands, epistemologies, all those kinds of things. Sometimes through just human connection, which I think is pretty powerful too.

Matt Hickey: And putting borders or fences on our imagination or our interest never really works, I don't think.

Vincent Basile: Yeah. We always wind up hanging out at the edges.

Matt Hickey: Exactly. Yeah. So we're interested in talking about a number of things, your scholarly activities, but also you as a person, your educational pathway. And so I want to start with an on campus kind of perspective and ask you to share, when we think about big problems, what are you tackling as a scholar that you would consider to be big problems? And what's the impact that you hope your work will have?

Vincent Basile: Yeah, I appreciate that. Framing the question too, because too often people want a siloed elevator speech and they want something that is indicative of something. Where do you fit? What's your paradigm? What's your pedigree? What's particularly interesting for me about having to answer questions that is that most of my work is situated in disrupting that in the first place. So it's always a weird thing to try and fit. Really what I want to say is, "Let's talk about the problems with your question," right? Yeah. But yeah, thinking about where my work situates with regard to social issues and those big problems, the easy way to open that up is to say that my work is really situated at the confluence of issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and education. But specifically, it's really situated in the foundationally in a racial frame and it's situated and really deconstructing a lot of systems and structures that exist just underneath the surface of most of our daily lives.

So while even though I am situated in education and some would argue decidedly situated in K-12 education, I really see my work in that big issue. It's really situated in deconstructing like social paradigms that perpetuate the inequalities that we live in our daily lives. And it's not situated in the psychology that, it's not situated in the individual contributions to that. It's situated in the systems and structures. So the very beginnings of my work might start with questions of how come people perpetuate oppression like accidentally or not on purpose or every day without thinking about it. How come people who are oppressed replicate that? These kinds of questions that seemingly don't really make a lot of sense if you just step back and think about it for a second.

If we take one step forward in that, a lot of the work that I do is around diversification in the K-12 teacher workforce, it's around deconstructing and decolonizing our education spaces, K-12 and higher ed. And it's around understanding the experiences that boys of color have in educational systems. I've done some really specific work in elementary ed, but really the frameworks that I use extend across all educational spaces and settings.

Matt Hickey: And I had the chance to watch a TED Talk you gave a while back on teenage boys of color who sit in this frame of maybe a knee jerk, almost a criminalization attitude towards them. Not by virtue of behaviors.

Vincent Basile: Right.

Matt Hickey: But by virtue of the way they look.

Vincent Basile: Yep.

Matt Hickey: So tell me a little bit more about that.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, yeah. That Ted Talk was, that was a really pivotal moment for me. Because that was a point in which I was able to bring some of the voices from paper and publication to presentation really. And that experience was awesome because not only did I was able to honor those voices of my participants in that research, but also I was surrounded by a lot of the really awesome people at that TED Talk convention. But that talk in particular was a culmination of a longitudinal research study that I had done a pretty robust one across, over about a year and a half. And what really came out of that research were two big components of that were revealed.

One was that boys of color in elementary school settings were dealing with this very ordinary, regular normative criminalizing experience in school. So they would just come into school and it didn't matter in any of the nuances that changed from day to day for them or who they were as individuals, just that because of who they were and what they looked like, how they dressed, their name, that sort of thing, they were just subjected to these really oppressive measures. And some of them were kind of obvious. They're ones that maybe might be easy to think about. But a lot of them were these really subtle nuance differences. The ways that the adults in the building automatically treated them, the ways that conversations happened about them.

What really stuck out to me years later, now that I've published quite a bit on that research and spoken about it and professional development about it, what really sticks out to me is how normative some of that stuff is. And what I mean is that there are a lot of people, teachers and adults, et cetera, that maybe at first when they first hear this, we start discussing some of these oppressive measures. They think, "Well yeah, that's just how it is. That's what they need." Or it's very normal. It's so normal. And when they start doing some of the work around deconstructing that, hearing them talk a few hours later about, "I can't believe I thought that was okay," is what really sticks out to me.

We're in a society where we have so many systems and structures that just indoctrinated us with this from day one that we don't stop and we move so fast, especially in education. So fast, that we never stop and think this is not okay, this is not okay at all. Actually, once you kind of see it, there's really easy stuff you can do. And some teachers do it. And basically the younger the kid, the more effective and quicker it works. And we might think about that as before students get really disillusioned that we can impact stuff pretty early.

And it's a bit opposite of how we've been treating things, honestly.bc we've kind of started with, "Oh, okay, here we've got all these boys of color that don't graduate from high school, so we'll start interventions at 11th grade." Right. Way too late. Way too late. This stuff needs to start way earlier. And it's actually pretty cool. I said have, I've seen plenty of teachers, some of whom are just in there fumbling around. They know something's not right. And so they're trying to fix it and they're fumbling around and they don't always know exactly what they're doing, but they keep doing it because the impact is so immediate that there's so many students that it's just having a relief from that constant oppression for a day is it's getting, they get a breath and they're in.

Matt Hickey: They know there's some fresh air out there.

Vincent Basile: Yeah. Yeah. That's exactly right.

Matt Hickey: Now I have to ask you your own educational journey, because your academic pursuits or placing a lens on a road that you yourself have trod. So talk to me about your own journey. How did you get here?

Vincent Basile: Well, to that tune, my own K-12 education was lackluster, let's say. I think my first positive memory of a teacher, I don't think it was until my junior year of high school that I ever even had a teacher who I generally thought was a decent human being to me.

Avery Martin: Wow.

Matt Hickey: Oh my goodness.

Avery Martin: And where was this?

Vincent Basile: So yeah, I grew up in Baltimore surrounding area.

Avery Martin: Yeah. Okay.

Vincent Basile: So I have really, when I go and dig back through my elementary school memories, I have really interesting memories that were normal. Like I said, they were kind of just normal to me when I go back and look at it and I think, "Wow, that's really ..." and some of them are fragmented. I have a memory of, I think in second grade where I think I had basically the equivalent of an argument with my teacher about some answer about something. And it was some scientific thing. And I'm fairly certain that I was correct about it. I knew stuff from all the, I always had my nose in into sciencey stuff when I was a kid. And so I just knew that what was on this piece of paper wasn't correct. And so then I had to spend a huge amount of time, many, many days, I don't really remember how long, but I just sit in the back of the room with a row of empty seats in front of me.

And so I was all the way back there for a very, very, very long time for effectively being disrespectful. And that was the whole issue, it wasn't whether or not I was right. I was disrespectful about it. And I think I have memories too of asking clarifying questions about things and being sent to the office for it. And they're all, I don't have an adult context to those memories. But I remember hating going to school, but I remember really loving learning about things.

Matt Hickey: The juxtaposition, my gosh.

Vincent Basile: And I think that paradigm still exists for me as a scholar too, that I really spend a lot of time trying to reconcile how schools cannot be places of oppression for really a lot of different groups of people and individuals. I think there's a lot of people that find going to school every day to be not a place of care or learning or protection, but a place of oppression.

And it's particularly when you put that in the context of it being compulsory, mandated by law, particularly when you're in an environment where the police are not consistently and culturally represented in your community as being functional to your protection but rather being there to control you or to police you or whatever. When you put that so you know, feel like the police are upholding a law that doesn't function for you and the law is forcing you to go to a place that feels oppressive to you, it's hard to reconcile then how to think about that same place as being a place to engage students. And so, particularly when it comes to science and mathematics education, I still struggle with that in my theoretical positioning on it. It's like, is this going to happen by some tweaks that we do in the classroom or in our curriculum? I don't think so.

Matt Hickey: At some point there was this decision, "I'm going to college," and again, was that a pathway that filed this consistent story we're talking about that was also maybe a manifestation of, you've already talked about this almost innate love of learning and I just haven't been able to channel it. So talk to me more about, all right, so I'm going somewhere and I'm going to study something, right? Yeah.

Vincent Basile: The winding up in college is a really sort interesting, weird thing for me because it follows that same notion. I ran track and field in high school and I connected really well with my team. So I had good friends on my team. So a lot of them were already going to college. So that was starting to get normalized to me. But I didn't really think I was just surviving day to day. So I didn't really think, I didn't have my act together. I didn't know what I was doing. But these three components that I think are actually really, really interesting to think through and reflect back on. One was my senior year, instead of putting me in calculus, I think calc two maybe or something like that, I had made, I'd been a problem in calc one. And so they put me in this experimental GT class for science and math students.

And I was the only, or maybe one of two seniors in there. And in that class, among other things, they also, they took me to this, I don't know, conference or something. And then they hooked me up with some folks at the National Zoo and I went and visited. And so again, it was like really, I didn't really know what was happening. They were like, "You should do this," and this is animal behaviorism and stuff, "You'd be good at this." I was like, "All right." And so on Sundays for a little while, I drove down there and they had this really structured early scientist kind of thing or whatever. And so I basically was back behind the scenes and the primate labs down there and I just fumbled around and did some stuff and then I put on a poster and they presented it. And I mean I'm not over exaggerating when I say that I was, I just fumbling around. I was like, well it's really cool and I would just engage stuff.

So we did that and I remember some folks were the judges that came by or whatever were, gave me all these positive comments. And then there was a person from Franklin and Marshall College, which is where I ultimately went, small liberal arts school in Pennsylvania. And this scientist there was like, "Hey, you should come to this school because we've got this primate lab with Reese [inaudible 00:16:23] did all these does experimental work." And I was like, "That's awesome." And so they gave me a packet or whatever. I didn't even know what place was, I didn't know where any college was. So I just gave name a thing. Great. And that was seed one.

Seed two was when my high school coach called me into his office and asked me if I was going to college. And this dude Al Dodds, he's retired, he still coaches, he's awesome. I still am in touch with him every now and again.

Matt Hickey: That's great.

Vincent Basile: We weren't tight but he'd just treat me a human every day. He is super respectful. And my track team was really good. The cross country team won the state championship and then when we were second or third or something in track. And so we had all these really great runners and I was a contributor but I wasn't the best runner on this team. But he still looked out for me. So after all these other star guys were kind of taken care of with college, he just asked me if I wanted to go somewhere. And I was like, "Well," so he just wrote down a list. He was like, "Go in the library and look them up. You're going to have to call these coaches because they're not going to know about you because you're not the superstar on the team, but you're good enough. And so get in contact with these people and see."So there was was a nice list and Franklin and Marshall was on that list too. So my mind, I'm like, "Oh here's my cross reference."

And the end piece on this. The third component that really actually made it happen was my English teacher, Roger Crawley saying that thing. We weren't really close or anything, but he was just a humanizing educator and found out later one of the reasons why he taught and did what he did. He was older, gay and had been through a whole lot of ... Because of his identity. And he lived with his longtime boyfriend basically in secret in our community, but was this pillar for the LGBTQ plus community at my high school. And so anybody who identified as part of that community would find a way into his class. It was all very secret. I didn't really figure it out till the end even.

But the fact that basically I was just tagging along for the humanizing experience. So I had him junior year and then senior year I got assigned to somebody different. So I wanted to see my counselor and I was like, "I need to get into this class." And my counselor, who was absolutely horrible to me was like, "Absolutely not. We're not doing this. We don't switch classes for that reason. You have to have a medical reason," or she's like, "Nothing but a medical reason." So I forged a note with one of my parents' signatures and my doctors, I forged both of those signatures gave to the counselor and I can't even remember what the because was, but somehow I don't even care that I'd get in so much trouble cause I didn't even care. But it worked. And they put me in Roger Crowley's class and Roger Crowley was as predicted, was very decent.

And then one day my way out from class, he just stopped me and again we weren't close, and he just stopped me and just asked me if I was going to college and I shrugged my shoulders and he was like, "Oh come here, come here, come here. Where do you want to go?" And I was like, "I don't even know." We had this relatively brief conversation and he told me come back at some other time. And he said that they just started doing this thing, a common app and there's like the stuff and you can do whatever. And so I just came back and I didn't even know how it all went, but he just helped me fill out the application and he was like, where do you want to send this? And so I put out the folder, I had my backpack, "Franklin and Marshall College."

So I applied there and got accepted and that's where I went. It just kind of all worked out. And so they just sent the thing and they showed up and I didn't even know how to register for classes or anything. They were just, my first semester I just had random classes because I didn't know how to not register. And the interesting fun side note is that I did not become an animal behaviorist because I couldn't find the lab.

Matt Hickey: No kidding.

Avery Martin: Wow.

Vincent Basile: Because that professor that I talked to told me one, she was like, "If you come ..." and she's like, "Come down to the lab, that's where my office is and I'll get you set up." Because it's a special program, it's a separate thing. And it turned out I found out later it was off campus, but I didn't know. And I didn't know there, I didn't even know there were campus maps. We didn't even have, I wandered around and after two semesters, I mean it wasn't like I was doing that every day. I just didn't know how college worked and first semester I was just trying to keep my head above water. And second semester I really made an effort four or five times. I was too embarrassed to ask anybody.

Avery Martin: Wow. What's fascinating is that your experience seems atypical within a group of scholars, but I feel like more students could relate to your experience than the stereotypical [inaudible 00:21:30] generation story.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I think the only difference is that just a lot of, like I said, a lot of doors kind of open up that I stumbled through it.

Matt Hickey: So you have to tell us now what you ended up majoring in as an undergraduate. Curiosity's got the best of us here.

Vincent Basile: So I wound up majoring in anthropology. I did a bunch of work in classics stuff first, which is a really interesting kind of way. I sort of just plowed through some of those courses early and I found them, I don't know, I guess I just sort found them interesting. But that ultimately led me towards anthropology. Really For me, the defining moment was when I took a course where I was really applying a whole lot of knowledge around DNA and evolutionary processes and all that animal behavior stuff. And so I was like, "Oh well this is right in line." And then when it started to intersect with social research, social behavior and starting to understand the beginnings of these systems and structures, that's when I really got interested. My advisor who I wound up sort of late in my collegiate career getting connected to my advisor professor, Michael Billy, I took a theory class with him and that's probably when I first became a theorist was that I just sat in the class and ate it up and was challenging everything.

I'm sure I was a pain in his .. but he honored everything that I came up with he was encouraging of instead of shutting it down. And I think that's really where some of my notions that things not that things just are for reasons and histories and contexts. And that first led me to be wanting to become a K-12 teacher and then later a researcher and theorist.

Matt Hickey: So tell me a little bit more about that. This journey from undergraduate student in anthropology to at some point going to graduate school.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, yeah. I fumbled around quite a bit after graduating and started to have this notion that I wanted to teach and it was this meandering path that ultimately brought me out to Colorado. And I wound up, again, just actively looking and stuff, but really sort of stumbling through stuff. But I found an MA plus program at UC Denver that really fit well with what I was interested in and they really, a lot of philosophical alignment with what I wanted to do and where I was at.

And so I enrolled in that and they just had the right kind of flow for me. And so I crushed that. It was a year and a half program and I finished it in a year because that summer I figured out how to take something like 24 credits or something during the summer. I was in class for 12 hours every day, six days a week during the summer. The schedule worked out for it, but I was so into it. So I would just pack my bag and ride my bike to the bus, take the bus, a whole production thing. And I finished and instead of having a valedictorian and they have an outstanding graduate award, which I got as well. And yeah, I was just doing me, I wasn't striving for that kind of stuff, but that stuff was all transformative. And that led me to my first teaching jobs.

I taught middle school and high school for about eight years in the region here in Colorado. But during that time I was, I never got disconnected with higher ed, so I was always working with professors and taking classes and all that sort of stuff. When I decided to pursue my PhD, which I did at Boulder, I was 60 credits plus past my masters at that point. Just from, because I was just always taking these courses and just doing stuff and I had funding for it. So I was like, yeah, sure, let's keep going. A lot of it was research based, connected with what work professors were doing and I wouldn't really even pay attention, but it took me there. And CU Boulder has this really profound program called the Monte Scholars program that supports emerging scholars who are doing work in areas of social justice and racial justice.

And the thought of not having to explain what I was doing and why I was doing it. Because at this point I spent whatever, eight years constantly explaining to administrators why we can't use these capitalist paradigms, why we can't use these sit in your chair and don't move frameworks to teach. It just doesn't work. And during the time I see that I'd seen so much horrible stuff that I realized I wasn't going to successfully make a change. And really anytime I tried to advocate for change, I'd get targeted, I'd get shut down really internally. And so I realized that any kind of impact for change means that you got, I mean we got to go one level up.

Matt Hickey: So we were lucky enough to have a job opening that was timing for you to be able to recruit you here.

Vincent Basile: Yeah. The timing, which seems to be the story of my life, is that the timing we were working out, that opening was part of a diversity cluster hire the CSU was experimenting with, which was also a really big part of what brought me here and why I'm here too, as that schooled and CHHS was making a commitment to really up in their game with that kind of work. And so that was really meaningful too. Previous to arriving at CU Boulder, I gotten pretty tired of being the only one. And once I got to see you, that's when I realized what it meant to be in community with people who are doing this work, people who share these identities and how much of a relief it was and uplifting and empowering. And so when the opportunity was to start working to be a professor in community with folks too, that was really a really thoughtful, purposeful thing that I think CSU engaged in. But also something that was really meaningful for me because I wasn't sure that I could go back to being alone.

Matt Hickey: One thing that is just singing to me in terms of listening to you talk is this notion of a love of learning.

Vincent Basile: Yeah.

Matt Hickey: Tell me what that means to you.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, I think early on I felt a sense of discovery and curiosity that sort inherent in many little kids. And I think maybe I kind of stayed a little kid a little bit longer than some others. But I really felt like, if I think back to being young, I felt a sense of empowerment from being able to understand a thing. And to me, and some of that I think is rooted in some of the social structures that we were talking about before, that there's power and understanding how things work. Not just the world around me, but how they work and why they work the way they work. And a lot allows you to navigate that space. But it's also a lot of power too with regard to things like stewardship. I think it's a lot easier for me to take care of the world around me or take care of my community or take care of my backyard with a deep understanding of how it all works and how it works together and why it is the way it is.

And I think later in life, that's been a real point of relief for me and a place for hope is that with learning comes revelation and comes empowerment, it comes hope. And I think also there's a certain sense of it that relieves the nihilism that might come from doing the kind of work I do anyways. That it's incredibly difficult to authentically do the work that I do, which is basically around dealing with these robust systems and structures that are rooted in historical oppression. We're talking hundreds of years of built systems, deal with those. Every day is hard. It's draining, it's mentally difficult. And I find a lot of hope and I find a lot of reprieve from that by being able to be at peace with knowing that I'm also always learning and understanding things that maybe are related to this and maybe aren't directly related to it. And to me that's the kind of thing as an instructor, as a teacher, I try to really pass that all into my advisees and to my students in class.

I have a son that I have a very close connection with. And same thing is that I care less about what he learns or what he thinks and more about that he's learning and that he's thinking and just say breakfast is fun at our house.

Matt Hickey: I'm sure. Well this is a perfect segue because it anticipates my next question. We want to, again talk about Vince outside of the academy a little bit. Where do you find your joy? What are some things that you, relaxing or just recreational pursuits, whatever it might be where we get to know you a little bit better in that sense as well.

Vincent Basile: Yeah. When I really strip it down, maybe at some point in my life I was a pretty complex person outside of my work. And along with learning, I also took a lot of pride and a lot of joy in experimenting and trying new things and learning new things. And so I'm one of those professors that drifts away and takes up something, takes it to a certain level of mastery and then it's like, all right, next thing. And so to that extent, I've played a lot of different sports, done a lot of different outdoor activities. I've gotten into a lot of indoor pursuits, everything from puzzles or deep dives into complex games and things like that. And same thing, I tend to, I'll get into it and then I want to know how it's made and how it works and how it does that sort of thing.

And as I've kind of gotten older and I've started to get a little tired and needed to slow down a little bit, very interestingly for me is that having gone all over the place, I guess I've proverbially, I found my way back home. So I spent a lot of my time now when I have free time, I maintain my mental and physical health running and competing. And I still do masters track and field races and I still sit down and play game once in a while. My family will, we do all different kinds of games and stuff too, but that's sort our quiet reprieve point.

Matt Hickey: Is your son ready to race you yet?

Vincent Basile: Yeah, it's funny ask because really, I think this past fall probably if I put a timestamp on it, I'm going to say I think September of 2021 is where he started to be faster than me than maybe I ever was in some events.

Matt Hickey: Does he find the same joy in it?

Vincent Basile: Yeah, he does.

Avery Martin: Awesome. That's great.

Vincent Basile: And I take a lot of interest in the fact that I've tried not to push him towards anything, but it's probably that combination of genetics and upbringing that he's gravitated his way towards some of the same stuff that I have. All of it's really about him just empowering to get the most out of it and enjoy it and do what he loves or whatever. So yeah, he's really into those things too. And he's into science and math and learning and all that kind of stuff, and I think he gets angry and pissed off at the same social structures that I do.

So I take a lot of joy in that. If I think about those other little tidbits that inform who I am, I'm into and really interested in classic anime and its influences on culture. I'm a huge golden age hip hop head. I was around Baltimore in the eighties when things came up, so you'll find me with a nice shoe collection around my style choices tend to try to keep a little bit of flare in what I do. I know folks see, but you might [inaudible 00:34:10] my custom Air Force Ones, which of course say PhD on the back.

Avery Martin: That's incredible. I was going to mention the forces.

Vincent Basile: Yeah. Yeah. But that's kind of how I roll. Music is a big part of my psyche, my identity, it's always playing in my house, that sort of thing. And much for anybody who knows these kinds of histories that won't be surprised to that some classic kung fu films are also like, sure, yes, the heart of where I gravitate back to towards, but music in particular has that heavily influence. It's a big part, big, big part of who I am and how I evolved. And it even informs maybe how I approach my social research. Sometimes I'll do little workshops and stuff for students either my own or sometimes at other places where some of my colleagues work around writing, talk about rituals and all these practices and stuff. And what people are sometimes surprised to find out that I write in, I think very much in the same ways that a lot of MCs put their stuff together too.

And so I quite frequently, when I'm writing, I get up for it. I always start by getting rhythm into what I'm doing doing. And I always write with my headphones on and with instrumental hip hop in the background. And so to me, I have a DJ who's put down a track and I'm laying down lyrics on top of it. And anything you ever read that I've written, I don't know if anybody else, it might be so embedded that you might not feel it, but if you just just put on some J Dilla instrumentals and read my work, you would probably feel the flow of that paper in that work. That's great. It's always there. And you'll see little quotes and influences and titles and things that are all influenced by hip hop and really any of that connective culture is present there.

Avery Martin: Who are you listening to when you're creating, when you're teaching? What's the pace?

Vincent Basile: Well, so this is an interesting question. So the reality of it is when my theory, let's say, so my theory construction is very much influenced by public enemy, Wutang, NAS, big parts of that. And that's largely because of that confluence of lyrical sharpness, good produced beats, but also raw, what I'm saying. The imperfect. Now when it comes to the actual writing process, you'll tend to connect that better, like I said Dilla, strong, like those strong, smooth jazz infused beats. Things that, not even just in the lyrics, but in the production value, have that social consciousness to it is really, really important to me. I think you find me writing to a lot of [inaudible 00:37:22] Mos Def, Common. There's a certain smoothness that needs to be there. So that rough and raw stuff that influences my theory, that my theoretical thinking is then kind of supplanted with that much more jazz infused smoothness that needs to be there when you're communicating and piecing it together.

That really affirms my notion that the connectivity of hip hop culture, our lived experiences and our theoretical frames are all, they're all part of it. And as I have made arguments that long before any anthropologist or sociologists were digging in deep and building these criminalization conceptual frameworks, Dead Pres was talking about it, Mos Def was talking about it, Public Enemy were talking about it long before. And hell if hip hop, which is a soundtrack of a whole generation, if that isn't a powerful ethnography, then I don't think people really know what ethnography is.

Matt Hickey: It's a good thing you're here. One of us has to be cool. Otherwise we'd lose out on these great questions.

Vincent Basile: I appreciate it.

Matt Hickey: So I want to pull you back onto campus for a couple questions as we wrap up. And one of them is, when you think about a day in the life of Vince as a scholar or things that I'm really chasing right now, what does that look like?

Vincent Basile: Yeah. I actually was recently also asked this by somebody else about what, what's a day in the life? And I had to pause because of course COVID and so many other things are influencing what that looks like. But even outside of that, and before that, one of the things that I suddenly realized as I contemplated this question is that for me, a day in a life is, it's atypical in that my days are just not the same because I have, there's so many aspects of what I do and it would be impossible to create a regime for it. So my life takes me into elements of traveling around the state for research or for professional development or collaborative meetings. It involves on campus. Sometimes I'm teaching PhD courses at night or sometimes I'm teaching teachers of color who are in the field. And so we're meeting offsite or virtually online.

And those happen all different times of day. Sometimes I'm visiting students in classrooms and a lot of student teachers, once they graduate, we stay connected. We have a really strong alumni network. And so sometimes they get a text and everything stops because somebody's got a problem or an issue or something to celebrate, and that requires the attention. But sometimes I'm writing, and then I do a lot of collaborative work with people both on campus and off campus too. And so a lot of times it's moving around to find where they are and where those good places are, and connecting, being who I am, usually that's over food or over drink. So a lot of good stuff happens in a lot of very ordinary places, I think.

Matt Hickey: This dynamism you're describing here really is what adds vitality to our professions and our lives. I've been coming here for 25 years. I haven't been bored anything. So you really describe it so well, thanks for that. I appreciate it.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, yeah.

Matt Hickey: So two questions that are sort of structural. So you find yourself as a faculty member and colleague in this College of Health and Human Sciences. What speaks to you about being a member of that particular community?

Vincent Basile: Yeah, I really dig it because College of Health and Human Sciences has what I would call from one perspective, an eclectic gathering of discipline from another perspective, I would call it a collection of focal areas that share some really important common themes around humanism. What I really appreciate about that is that it makes it very normal to be interdisciplinary and to be across content or to be outside of the box. So you don't have to, when you're thinking about things, you don't have to get everybody on board with not doing what in this building is doing. We're all already there.

I actually experience that the most in my graduate courses. And so I have students in my courses, I have advisees, and I'm on committees of students who are investigating the confluences of race or gender and the historical context of that with regards to fashion and design, construction, construction management, higher learn, higher education, higher learning, occupational therapy, and being able to very easily engage in those kinds of, I guess, cross-platform, cross department types of activities easily and in ways that people aren't like, "Well, that's weird." I think that's really meaningful and I dig it. I like it.

Matt Hickey: It's fun not to get the standard stay in your lane, buddy routine. You've used the phrase confluence so often. I think that really describes the lane's merge. That's the way life is, right?

Vincent Basile: Yes.

Matt Hickey: So I love it. That's great. The next layer up is CSU, of course, and CSU proudly puts forward and I think really tries hard to embody this notion of a land grant. So what does that mean to you?

Vincent Basile: Yeah. I kind of really lean into this land grant thing. When I decided to accept the invitation to work here, that was a part of it. And so to me as a researcher, I'm drawn to these tensions. I think there's so much opportunity to learn in the tension and the tension that exists behind being a land grant institution with history, with a history, just like every other land grant institution in this country of being situated on stolen land and being charged to be connected to community. And when that charge happened, while also clearly not being connected to everyone in the community, and now we're in a place and space where there's some reckoning that that's happening with that history. But also we continue to have the charge to live up to the Land grant mission. And that's a tension.

And to me, one is that the land grant mission is one of the justifications for me to do my work without being questioned is that I don't have to do this work where there's the most money. I don't have to do this work just on this campus. I'm supposed to be serving this region. And so I take that very seriously. A lot of my work takes me outside of, I actually do very little work in Fort Collins. A lot of my work takes me outside and I service the region, and I take that very seriously. And it also means that it's not other institutions where they might be a little bit more free to ignore the histories. We're not. And so I really like the fact that we have to reckon with this all the time. And there's, like Tim said to me, I'm drawn to those places and spaces because that's where most of the learning happens. I'm into it and I'm into its complexities. And even at times there's hypocrisies to it, there's tensions, and there's also really amazing stuff that happens because of it.

And I kind of dig it. The ways in which we're connected is to community is pretty powerful. And I really like driving around the state and seeing extension, CSU extension offices all over the place where I live. I go down, I in the middle of nowhere, down south. I mean, what think a lot of people consider in the middle of nowhere, the people down there don't, but you know, see those extension offices down there and see that folks on there are very imperfectly trying to make that land grant mission into fruition. And it means something.

Matt Hickey: I have to tell you, as good as I think these are going to be, they're always better. And so thanks so much for coming, for being willing to share.

Vincent Basile: Yeah, I think this is a great idea. This is a really meaningful way to elevate and to create multiple dimensions of what we do as individuals, but also just the whole college. This feels timely.

Avery Martin: And that's the show. Thank you for listening to another episode of Health and Human Science Matters.

Matt Hickey: Be sure to listen to the rest of season two as well as our episodes from season one. And if you want to learn more about our College of Health and Human Sciences, go to www.chhs.coloradostate.edu.