

**My Lens:**

I am speaking foremost from the perspective of an educator, an elementary school teacher. So when I think of "The Life of the Mind," I think of cultivating the mind... facilitating learning... *teaching students to learn.*

**From Convocation Speech:**

- 1) Dr. Rosenberg, early in his speech, quoted Dr. Pedro Jose Greer who asks all of us, "If we don't fight injustice, who will?" He asked us to ask ourselves, "If I don't do this who will?"
- 2) Dr. Rosenberg also spoke of the "pace of change" and how we are in a period of rapid change: (a) These changes are occurring in technology (we see how cell phones, texting, and twittering accounts for almost 100% of communication between students), and (b) possibly the way people think: Dr. Rosenberg mentioned the work of Daniel Pink who suggests we are moving from a society of objective thinkers (knowledge workers) to a society of holistic thinkers (meaning makers).

**How I tie this to the context of K-12 education:**

*The issue:* The dropout/ pushout rate in Miami-Dade is near 50% (higher for African American and Hispanic students). This is unacceptable.

*Relationship to points from convocation speech:*

- 1) Somewhere we (collectively) are failing at "fighting injustice," and if we don't do this, who will? Why are we failing?
- 2) In part an unfortunate consequence of the pace of change there is a growing disconnect between K-12 teachers and students, *and* between K-12 education and the University.

**Closing:**

In academia, we are on the front lines, and Dr. Rosenberg and the HTGR papers were inspiring in speaking of using our resources/ our research/ our professors for *local engagement*, to solve practical problems. Because, I would love to see this trickle down to *practice* in our under-resourced schools... Or better yet, for our research to "trickle-up," if you will, from our under-resourced schools (the "researched" becoming the "researchers"). To me, that's how you extend "The Life of the Mind.'

**Personal Story:**

I was lucky enough to spend 2 years on a research project with a group of students from Edison High School. One day we navigated through a sea of red tape to bring those students to FIU for the day. The day included a discussion with pre-service teachers, a university-style dining hall lunch, meeting with admission counselors, etc. These students were juniors and seniors, most had never been to a college campus before, didn't know anyone in college, and after a day, they *all wanted to come to FIU*. Problem: Up until this point, many had no plans for their post-high school life. Many of their friends had dropped out, they knew little of SAT, ACT requirements, FAFSAs, etc.... How did they get to this point without that knowledge? This is how we stifle "The Life of the Mind." Where is the disconnect? What is our responsibility?