



## Transformational Teaching & Learning Conference

# MICHAEL WESCH

## 2018 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

TTLIC.TAMU.EDU

APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> | 12:00 NOON. | MSC 2300C

**EXPERIENCE AND NETWORK** with your colleagues at Michael Wesch's presentation on adaptive expertise, deep learning, and what it means to provide a real education

*Michael Wesch is a University Distinguished Teaching Scholar, Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology, 2008 U.S. Professor of the Year. He teaches at Kansas State University*



### LIFE 101: LESSONS FROM STUDENTS IN PURSUIT OF A REAL EDUCATION

For over a decade I have been considered a very good teacher. I have won several major awards, including a national Professor of the Year award. But if I measure my success based on my own students' self-perceptions of their happiness and success, the results are mixed. Some of my "best students" have struggled to find their way. They aced quizzes in the classroom but struggle with real-world challenges. Meanwhile, some of my worst students are thriving in the real world. To find out more about how and what my students are really learning in college, I started doing

true ethnographic fieldwork among students. I started by simply taking my lunches with them and listening to their life stories. I visited alumni in their homes and discovered how their education was influencing their lives today. Then I became a student again, challenging myself to learn new things to remind myself of all the struggles and joys of learning. I did fieldwork at frat parties, college bars, and midnight life-philosophy discussions. From these studies, I found that those who are successful find that what was most important was not the "stuff" they

learned, but how they have changed. Technically speaking, they moved beyond "routine expertise" and skills toward what researchers call "adaptive expertise"—a capacity to address novel, messy, complex problems that are frequently encountered in the real world. They moved from "strategic learning" to "deep learning." But they say it much more simply. They went after, and received, what they call a "real education." What is a real education? Why does it matter? And what can we do to provide one for them?