Changing Language

NIOS Lesson 2015

Set –
Have students discuss the following questions in pairs or as a class:
• What terms of the previous generation are no longer socially acceptable?
• What changes have you seen in your lifetime?
• Why did this change happen? What prompted the change?
• What changes do you think we still need to make?

Procedure
Watch “Proud to Be Video” – Reaction to name of Washington football team

React in quick written response
• What did you think of the video clip?
• Were you aware of this controversy?
• What are your initial thoughts on the debate?

Share your reactions with a partner.
Discuss as a class.

Possible discussion questions:
• What negative impact does the current name have?
• How would it affect the team and town if that name changed?
• What reasons do some people give for wanting to keep the name? How convincing are those reasons?

Closing
Create your own #ProudToBe.
Example: #ProudToBe Dutch and Irish
#ProudToBe California native

More in depth lesson
Complete the shorter lesson and pair with additional content below.

Read either or both articles on mascot challenges and changes:

Stanford Mascot Change – Mercury News
http://www.mercurynews.com/sports/ci_26994229/name-game-washington-redskins-could-learn-from-stanford
Great article on Stanford’s change from Indian to Cardinal

NPR – High School with Arab mascot
Article on a Southern California high school and their controversial mascot: an Arab.
Watch new video clip on Washington Football
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW__6RO-N0
Poses the idea that Washington football is still passionate and inspiring without the racial slur

Closing
Write a letter / blogpost regarding this topic
- convince the owner or a diehard fan that the name change is a good thing
- write about your own experience with pejorative language
- reflect on how connected you feel to our high school mascot and whether you would mind a change
- debate the difference between privately owned teams and public schools – should either have offensive mascots? Neither? Why?

One more clip
Change the Mascot Reaction
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KxUaN-aq4
This is a great recap of news clips covering reaction to the Change the Mascot ad. It does ask for support to the group’s Kickstarter at the end, but it gives fantastic context for this conversation.