

## WinkWorld August 2004

Hello Friends,

In this edition of *WinkWorld*, I'm sharing a few selected pages from the new 3rd edition of *Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World*, which I sent off to the publisher yesterday. If all goes well, it will be available in November. You may recall that the 2nd edition (the little blue book) had 5 chapters; the next edition will have 8 chapters. The selection I am sharing comes from the new beginning.

Our daughter-in-law, Lisa, has been using baby signing with Austin, our 22-month-old grandson, since he was 6 months old. It is fascinating to watch him communicate his needs before his language develops. They were with us on the ranch, and it seemed he could easily add several new words per day. For example, he learned to sign *Grammie*, *BopBop*, *Auntie Dawn*, *Wyatt*, and *horse* all within the first couple of days he was here. He hears well, and he can say a few words, but until his language emerges, his baby signs sure seem to prevent a lot of the normal frustration of toddlers, who cannot yet express their needs. Thank you, Lisa, for sharing.

Dawn, our daughter, captures a phone conversation between the two of us when she explained to me How To Play Jelly Beans, which her three kids had just taught her. It strikes me as a great language game.

In *Prairie Pedagogy*, I share a glimpse into our life here on the ranch this summer.

In addition, here are links to a couple of new additions to my web pages: another timeline and the handout for our Dripping Springs, TX presentation, August 9, 2004.

<http://www.JoanWink.com/sched/spring.pdf>

<http://www.JoanWink.com/gifs/timeline072704.jpg>

Happy Reading.

Joan

---

***Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World, 3/e***, (a few selected paragraphs taken from the draft of the pre-copyedit version of the next edition)

Kids, cows, and computers are central to my life. Family, friends, and fun fill my days. Pedagogy and passion sustain me, as I continue to focus on power and problems in schools and society. Critical pedagogy has taught me that power and problems have one thing in common: there will always be enough for all of us. Think of it this way: power and problems are not finite; they are not fixed; and, they certainly are not like a piece of pie, in that if I give some away, there will be less for me. Power is the process of collaborating with others as we seek varied solutions to complex problems, which are ever changing.

Critical pedagogy continues to teach me that critical pedagogy is also complex and evolving. It is not finite; it is not fixed; it is not easily defined and understood in a neat little package. However, initially, I think it is helpful to understand that critical does not only mean criticize. Critical also means to see deeply what is below the surface; think, critique or

analyze. Pedagogy does not only mean how a teacher, teaches. It is about the visible and hidden human interactions between a teacher and a learner, whether they are in a classroom or in the larger community. Critical pedagogy looks for the why which leads to action.

*Pedagogy is to good interactive teaching and learning in the classroom as critical pedagogy is to good interactive teaching and learning in the classroom and in the real world.*

The publication of the second edition of this book enriched my life with new ideas, friends, and surprises. One surprise continues to be a group of questions, which I am asked: What is it like to write a book? Where do you write? When do you write? What do you do? This group of questions makes me realize that there are many people who want to write. Because of these continuing questions, I have chosen to begin this third edition with a peek into the context of the changes in my real world as it relates to writing and thinking. As I answer some of your questions, we will generate new ones as we seek multiple answers to complex problems. It is my wish that this interaction between us, will encourage you to write. As we write, we think. As we think, we solve problems and find new answers. Critical pedagogy calls us to this action.

The first edition of this book was written in the midst of my real life as a professor at a state university. I was teaching fulltime, and most pages were written between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. and on weekends. I longingly watched other professors go away and write in peace during their sabbaticals. The second edition was written in the midst of my other real life on the prairies during a sabbatical. The anticipated peace of the prairies seemed illusive, as the compelling reality of ranch life often took priority over a paragraph. Lives are filled with change and contradictions, and yet we are often surprised when we bump into this predictable life process. Schools, too, continue on a path of change and contradiction.

Now, the third edition, and I am writing at the university and at the ranch as I juggle my two oh-so real worlds. The fact that I am even writing a 3rd edition takes me by surprise. The opportunity came at a moment when I was sure I could not find time for one more project. Classes and an ever-growing family made this seem impossible. My real world, if anything, is more real. How do I write? In the nooks and crannies of life, and always somewhere precariously balanced between grit and grace.

Even though my real world has changed little since the publication of the last two editions, the world has changed drastically. As I continue to marvel at the influences on my life, I now shudder at the outside influences on schools. My years of public school experiences do not prepare me for the reality of classrooms for teachers and students today. Never have diversity and democracy been more threatened by outside influences, which tend to come from those who have far less experience in schools than I. In this edition, I will address those influences, specifically controlled curriculum, high-stakes testing, bilingual education, accountability, and the frightening links between cooperate powers and the powers of the government.

Pearson (2003) expresses my feelings when he longs for the opportunity to write of his passions, and not politics. It is a luxury, those of us with experience and knowledge of teaching and learning cannot afford. If only I could write of languages, literacies, and cultures. Would that I could. If I have learned one thing in my years in schools, it is that language and thought are the same thing. He who controls our language controls our thought. Language is now controlled via mandated curriculum. Pearson (2003) warns that if

this continues we will have a generation of teachers who revere controlled curriculum. I would add that controlled curriculum is controlled language is controlled thought.

*Followed to its logical conclusions, the politics we are currently implementing will lead us to a generation of teachers who pay homage to externally imposed standards rather than to the needs of children and their families as the primary criterion for determining what students do in their classrooms. To establish their curriculum, they will look over their shoulder rather than look their students squarely in the eye. (pp. 14-15)*

When language is controlled in schools, thought is controlled in the future. This is damaging to a democracy. Our work is now; we cannot fail. We are called by Paulo Freire: to name, to reflect critically, to act - there it is: the best definition of critical pedagogy.

Now here is the point: each of us has our own real world. It informs us; it enlightens us; it amuses us; it challenges us. And, each of our worlds is a part of who we are. Each of our worlds contributes and enriches us and others. Our own unique real world is the culture we know best; it is where we feel most at home; we speak the language; we know the perspective. No one's real world is the best; it is just what we know. No one's culture is the best; it is just what we know. No one's language is the best; it is just what we know. Critical pedagogy has enabled me to appreciate and celebrate others' ways of knowing - even when I don't understand and may not have experienced them.