

## WinkWorld April 2003

Hello Friends, Dawn and I just sent off the final manuscript for *Passionate Pedagogy*. This month in WinkWorld, we will be sharing a small peak into each of the chapters of the book. Happy reading.

### **Preface**

What's love got to do with it? The purpose of this book is to provide clear, clean, and concise pictures of passionate pedagogy in a broad range of contexts and to lead the readers to reflect on their own personal pedagogy. Diverse examples of pedagogy in action will be taken from multiple contexts.

The focus will be on our personal and professional principles and their inherent links to pedagogy, policy, and politics. Discussions will be grounded in the belief that each person has principles, beliefs, and assumptions that inform actions. These principles are often unexamined. Our goal is to challenge the readers to reflect on their own personal beliefs and how those beliefs can be turned into passionate pedagogy. Much has been written about the place of love and passionate in life? We will extend that to the place of love and passion in teaching and learning.

### **Chapter One: Passionate Pedagogy - The Spiral of Literacy**

*What matters is passion. (Hillman, 1996, p., 160).*

In this book we will talk about love, learning, and language. We will ask you to think about what you love, and we will ask you to think of ways that you could use that passion to enrich teaching and learning. We will ask you to ponder your own pedagogy.

What's love got to do with it? As we seek to find answers to this central question, we will use visuals to expand our thinking. We have chosen a spiral to capture the idea that at any one time, our understandings are similar to a dot on a continuum of professional growth. The purpose of the spiral is two-fold. First, a spiral provides something solid to grasp, as we reflect; and second, the spiral demonstrates the continuum of learning and developing. For example, think of literacy: How did you learn to read?

### **Chapter Two: Passionate Pedagogy - Learning, Living, and Loving**

*Education is radically about love. Paulo Freire*

"What is your passion?" a graduate student asked on the first night of class. Silence fell upon the room. This spontaneous question triggered for us a rethinking of our own pedagogy. It is often said that inquiry leads to discovery-this was the case for us. This is a book of how reflection and transformation can lead to passionate pedagogy.

We reasoned that if the students in class were courageous enough to ask about passion on the first night of the graduate class; if Paulo Freire could speak to the primacy of love in learning; if Plato could take on love in learning in *The Symposium*, then we, too, could write honestly about our belief in the power of passion in pedagogy. A few years ago, no one could have told us that we would eventually write about love, passion, and joy in the context

of teaching and learning. We did not learn this in undergraduate school, in our teacher preparation classes, or in graduate classes. Teaching and learning with students taught this to us; life taught this to us.

### **Chapter Three: Passionate Pedagogy - Theoretically**

*A meaningful connection to the past demands, above all, active engagement. It demands imagination and empathy, so that we can fathom worlds unlike our own, contexts far from those we know, ways of thinking and feeling that are alien to us. We must enter past worlds with curiosity and respect. Gerda Lerner, Why History Matters*

In this chapter we will ask you to reflect on the past to rescue the future. Our goal is to paint a broad picture of the various perspectives, or paradigms that have affected teaching and learning in the 20th century. A paradigm is a particular perspective. We will articulate the various schools of thought, their leaders, and their legacies. We will write about their competing and their complementary ideas. Our goal is to share the dominant ideas, which have affected our experiences in schools over generations. We think of this as a "moral arc of history" (Intrator, 2002, p. 264), in which we will share our perspective.

If you are a preservice teacher just beginning a teacher preparation program, this chapter will provide a glimpse of the theoretical underpinnings of your program. If you are an inservice teacher reviewing for a comprehensive test, this chapter will serve to capture the big picture of your learning. If you are a policy maker or interested family member of an educator, this chapter is meant to capture the world of schools.

Think of it this way: in schools, much is visible: how well a school is maintained, student work on the walls, even the overall atmosphere is visible and palpable. More is invisible, below the surface, however. The visible is a manifestation of the invisible: the theories, opinions, and true driving forces behind schools. Sometimes, our assumptions and opinions about teaching and learning are centered only on the visible. In this chapter, we hope to see also what is below the surface.

Our wish is that your own reflections on the dominating educational assumptions will lead you to re-think and re-own your conclusions, just as we have done. In this chapter we tell the story of schools from the perspective of our own experiences. This is a story about significant ideas, past, present, and future. Eventually, the ideas lead to action. Theory becomes practice. Reflective action is not easy. We honor the teachers and students who walk the walk.

### **Chapter Four: Passionate Pedagogy - Collaboratively**

*What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Vygotsky, 1986, p. 188*

This chapter will look at ways that collaboration can enhance teaching and learning. The centrality of caring across and within communities unifies the collaborative projects, which we will describe in this chapter.

Collaboration, for us is not a selection of methods; rather, it is an approach to learning and living, which is grounded in a critical and caring perspective. Critical, for us, does not mean to criticize; rather, it means to see below the visible surface, to reflect deeply, and to take action. Caring, is not in opposition to critical; rather, it is a sense of respect, honor, or love.

The pedagogical principles of collaboration and caring within the framework of a critical perspective can be turned into practice in various ways in multiple contexts. In this chapter, we will describe classroom practices, which represent this understanding of collaboration.

## **Chapter Five: Passionate Pedagogy - Parentally**

*Parenthood is just the world's most intensive course in love. Berends, 1983, p. 20*

Parents are the first and most important teachers of their own children. In this chapter, we explore what families and caregivers can do to facilitate learning in school and in life. Our assumption is that readers of this book are students and/or teachers and much more. The personal and the professional cannot be separated; the personal is the professional. In addition to being teachers and learners, we are members of families, as daughters, sons, fathers, mothers, cousins, brothers, sisters, and grandparents. This chapter addresses human connections, which are at the heart of schooling and life.

The home is a child's first learning environment. Children spend far fewer hours in school than at home. By age six, a child has spent 700 hours in school and 52,000 hours outside of school (Trelease, 2001, p. xviii). What takes place in the home becomes the child's foundation when they enter school. These experiences enrich or hinder a child's learning in schools. Each child is unique. Each child has inherent interests and strengths. We encourage families to find, celebrate, and enhance the approach to learning and life unique within each child. "Instruction, after all, does not begin in school" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 208).

## **Chapter Six: Passionate Pedagogy - Bilingually**

*There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the education program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas Writing for the majority, in Lau v. Nichols, 1974*

It's a tough time to be a bilingual teacher educator; it's a great time to be bilingual. Dickens was right: These are the best of times; these are the worst of times.

If we ask people if they want their kids to speak English, the answer is yes. Bilingual people want it; English-Only people want it. However, notice that, when we ask people if they want their kids to be bilingual, the answer is often the same, yes: Bilingual people want it; English-Only people want it.

So, what in the world is going on here in the public debate about bilingual education? Lots. When we ask people if they are for bilingual education, most will say no. When we ask people if they want their kids to be bilingual, most will say yes. As any parent knows (or, as any researcher knows), how you ask the question determines the answer you get.

In this chapter our purpose is to establish the principles and practices of bilingual education by telling stories of our shared experiences with multiple language programs. It may appear at first glance that some of the narratives have little to do with bilingual education. However,

taken as a whole, we anticipate at the end of the chapter, readers will have generated their own answers to: What is bilingual? How do you do it? Why does it matter? Some of the stories within this chapter speak directly to non-bilingual education majors and teachers; some of the stories are for the battered and bruised bilingual educators, who are trying to survive in-the-trenches as we write; and other stories here are for your families and neighbors and ours. As this chapter is written in layperson language only, all supporting research will be shared in the chapter notes.

## **Chapter Seven: Passionate Pedagogy - Spiritually**

*Authentic spiritual practice is not a naive experience. It does not lead us away from reality but allows us to accept the real more fully. hooks, 1994, pp. 119-120*

Spiritual exploration is fluid, dynamic, and constantly evolving. Much like teaching and learning. Spiritual exploration requires receptivity. Much like teaching and learning. Spiritual exploration follows a path laden with surprise and mystery. We never know what joys, sorrows and unexpected events we will encounter. Exactly like teaching and learning.

This chapter explores the integration of heart and soul within the context of an academic curriculum. One does not mean the other must be sacrificed. We propose that more learning takes place when teachers' and students' spirits, their internal essence and innate goodness, are intimately involved in the classroom and the subject being studied. It is the awareness of a broader connection with a compassionate intelligence connecting us all that opens the door to learning.

Passionate spiritual pedagogy recognizes the sacredness of each and every child. Passionate spiritual pedagogy fosters an interactive relationship seeking truth, between the student and what is being learned. Passionate spiritual pedagogy helps prepare students for the real world and the rest of their lives.

We assume that the readers of these pages will reflect diverse perspectives, paradigms, and prior experiences. For example, one elementary teacher, now working on her doctorate, wrote us when we asked her how her spirituality affects her teaching, "I am not conscious of any spiritual traditions anywhere in my life, inside or outside of the classroom." When we asked a university professor the same question, the response was the opposite. "I cannot remember a time that I have not said a prayer before teaching a class. I have so much respect for the wide variety of experiences students bring to class that without calling on a source greater than myself, I simply am not enough. I pray students learn what they need to know." Another university professor surprised Joan one fall semester on the first day of class, when he passed her on the sidewalk and quietly said, "Remember, when you look into the faces of the students tonight, you are looking into the face of God."

## **Chapter Eight: Passionate Pedagogy - Politically**

*We cannot sit back and wait. It is not a cyclic thing, as in the past. We have to fight it right now. That is in the spirit of Dewey, which I am not quite hearing as strongly as I think I should. (Louise Rosenblatt, age 96, AERA, 2001)*

It turns out that we do not and cannot teach all we need to know in teacher education programs. Some things take time. For example, it takes time to re-think the assumption that education takes place on some purely apolitical pedagogical plateau.

In this chapter, we will explore the multifaceted relationships among pedagogical principles, practices, and politics. We come from a tradition of thought, which assumed that pedagogy and politics were poles apart. However, our experiences teach us something very different. As we begin to think more critically about teaching and learning, we soon come to realize that politics is a part of education. How can it not be? Schools are filled with people, lots of people who bring a diversity of thought, perspectives, opinions, and experiences. Schools are social; schools are cultural; and schools are political environments, which reflect the world around them. People and politics swirl through the same spiral of life and learning. Teaching is professional, public, personal, and political.

## **Chapter Nine: Passionate Pedagogy in Action**

*Look, my friends, there is no possibility for greater achievement without running risk. It seems possible without freedom you cannot risk. When you are not free, you have to risk in order to get freedom. Education is a game like this. Constantly teaching is not to spend a weekend on a tropical beach. It is to be committed to the process of teaching and committed to the adventure and creation, both teachers as teachers and students as students (Freire, 1994).*

Personal and professional excitement and energy strengthen one another. Personal passion and professional passion cannot be separated. Each is intimately interwoven to the support or detriment of the other. Excitement is contagious. Students are drawn into its wake despite themselves when the teacher brings genuine curiosity and enthusiasm into the classroom. We, as teachers, know there are two main ways to do this: be genuinely excited or fake it. We've all experienced both. We also know that pretending to be excited, especially for extended periods of time is exhausting. Feigned enthusiasm ranks as a significant component in teacher burn-out.

This chapter is a guide to infuse passion and energy into life and teaching, making teaching and learning a dynamic and meaningful process for both teacher and learner. This can sound quite abstract and unattainable. This process is broken down into pragmatic and practical exercises and insightful reflections that can be implemented in life and in the classroom tomorrow.