Reading(s) with Ted

Marylin Low
International Educator, Hawaii

Reading(s) with Ted has been disquieting, contingent and never enough. Three short weeks one summer seven years ago in a course on curriculum theory, Ted’s curiosity with psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, and deconstruction was contagious. For me, there was no antidote. Shifting from the center to the margins of curriculum theory, I found myself ex/in/cited by the im/possibilities of re-writing sites of living pedagogy—sites where the taken-for-granted were slashed—‘/’ a significant marking for Ted. His attentiveness to the slash worked to loosen the ‘truths’ and certainties of education, opening to the difficulties and vibrancies of living pedagogy. And, reading(s) with Ted continues to be elusive, uncanny, and remarkable.

I write as testament to the difference Ted has made in my life, both professionally and personally. Over the years, he has continued to create spaces for conversations ‘nearby’ that evoke/invite/provoke my work, my life. Teaching me to be wary of language and its hegemonic tendencies, he invites me to listen to language as a way of understanding what pedagogy has become. He asks me to risk reading pedagogy differently. And, engaging in such practices, as he knows, has gotten me into trouble with the ‘authorities’ more than once! I continue to be drawn to the messiness and difficulties of everyday pedagogy—the cracks and in-betweens—where uncertain terrains are constituted in liminal spaces of my uneasy and ‘off track’ writings. I get lost. I risk detours, not knowing in advance where they might take me. And, I am ever grateful to Ted for the ‘trouble’ I am in. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

I write out of the Pacific and bring to bear readings with Ted to my work. Attending to recurring global and local dialectics surrounding the impact of linguistic exchange and its effect on literacy in Pacific island schools is messy and difficult work. For many Pacific island children, being and becoming literate reverberates in socio-historical contexts of colonial exploration and exploitation. Families in US affiliated states of the Pacific are living out a language legacy of local oral traditions and global English promises. No longer can it be assumed that the local language is the language of home. Questions of language(s) incite global/local chiasms in the dialectics of linguistic exchange. Intergenerational conversations in the Pacific pulsate from multiple positions—resistance to and acceptance of the homogeneity, hybridity, co-existence of language(s)—invoking vibrant on-going conversations, and, Ted is always nearby.
About the Author

Marylin Low lives in Hawai'i where she works with Pacific educators and children of oral traditions around questions of language(s) and literacy(ies). She is particularly interested in bilingualism as/in resistance to global English and in global/local dialectics on linguistic and cultural exchange.