

Dear Dr. Paulo,

Thanks you for your letter to us, the teachers, about fear. You ask me, a teacher, to consider what it is that appears as the object of fear, that obstacle or situation. And, you ask me to consider myself as the subject of that fear, dealing with it in my mind and body. When you speak about fear of not understanding a text, as your example, “reading the word,” I am curious if you are really directing me toward “reading the world.” How do I insert myself into the world facing fear? How do I interact, intervene *with* the world? Sometimes I think ‘knowing’ the world critically, as you say, feels overwhelming. Why it is what it is. I see suffering. In our Case Study in class about schools in Syria I was sad and worried. Is that ok? If I dig a bit deeper, I see the courage of the teacher, and the children sitting outside in chairs among the rubble of war with books in their laps, coats on their backs. When I see that, I see humanity. I feel solidarity in my consciousness.

Consciousness to me means how I see the world. So seeing those photos of the makeshift school in Aleppo expands my consciousness to include those children in my thoughts and then my actions in my own world. I cannot go to Aleppo but I can be the best teacher I can be in my place in the world, my part of humanity. I must act always with vigilance, a critical mind, and with love.

I will write again soon,

Karen Meyer