



6-1999

Matters of Consequence

Mary Laycock

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/tl-nirp-journal>



Part of the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Laycock, Mary (1999) "Matters of Consequence," *Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/tl-nirp-journal/vol13/iss2/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice by an authorized editor of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact und.common@library.und.edu.

Matters of Consequence

“[In all of nature] there is no possibility of a detached, self-contained local existence.”
Alfred North Whitehead¹

Our local existence, as Whitehead calls it, is defined almost completely by our family when we are young. Throughout childhood, we depend on our parents for housing, health care, nutrition, transportation, safety, clothing, fun, information, education, socialization, affection. In the teen years the peer group begins to shoulder many of these agencies, thereby dividing adolescent loyalties between the old guard and the vanguard. For many adolescents there is no contest at all, as the peers inexorably become the company of choice. Then, as one seventeen-year-old boy once told me in an interview, “Having a family is a real problem.”

When we reach eighteen, many of us leave home and—independent of patient parents and old pals—make a first attempt at a “self-contained” life. At college, we begin to rely more and more on ourselves for everything, even (or especially) our education. Years later, some of us come to see that solitary study might suit medieval monks, but nothing surpasses the tried and true colloquial review for informing our thinking. The articles in this issue are generally about the fact that we do need others, precisely in that special striving: lifelong learning.

Susan May and Dolores Furlong (“Teaching and Learning Relations: A Journey of Experience and Meaning”) write an interesting description of a masters degree designed for people who live at a distance from their Canadian campus and complete their coursework “independently.” The lengths to which their students go, to forge relationships with their teachers and peers, are compelling reading. I found this article heartening in this (what I previously would have called dismal) dawn of the age of distance learning.

In “The Needs of Beginning Teachers: Preparing for the Journey,” Kathy Sanford writes that the sincere support of colleagues and supervisors, and the layering of three types of knowledge obtained from various sources, act together to steady the faltering student teacher as she takes her first career steps. Sanford shares several painful classroom vignettes (from the supervisor’s perspective) as illustrations of the student teacher’s struggle.

As an elementary teacher, Leslie Kramer, a staff developer’s dream, always needed others to continue her learning. Her article, “The Impact of Professional Development on One Teacher’s Thinking and Practice,” reveals the complicated thought processes and affiliations of a curriculum developer who wants to refresh her own teaching. Her description of the gleaning of the best of practice from three disparate programs makes for lively reading. What could a cemetery visit have to do with braiding yarn? Kramer will tell you.

Finally, we have included in this issue a piece that is unusual for us because it is not naturalistic. Kathy R. Connor and Nadine Killmer’s article “Project Opportunity: An Alternative Teacher Education Program” reports on a survey done to evaluate a new program in teacher education. We chose to publish this because the aspects of the program that predict its success: coordination of a

¹Whitehead, Alfred North, 1938, *Modes of Thought* (p. 138), New York: Free Press.

team, a revamped curriculum (including a megamethods course), and especially its cohort *groupness*, are exciting ways to reconsider teacher education.

Mary Ruth Laycock is back and invigorated. I want to thank her for taking a leave so I could edit this journal for a year! I am also grateful to Bev Solseng for all her help, and to our reviewers who make such a thoughtful contribution and never complain about short deadlines. There is no way in the world we could have a detached, self-contained, local existence and still publish Teaching and Learning, so we thank you all: Jane Arnold, Dianne Hardy, George Hein, Rebecca Kamm, Caroline Owens, and Jon Travis.

Kathy Gershman
Acting Editor