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Matters of Consequence

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Matters of Consequence

School is out! Three words that spell freedom to be for many students and teachers. Freedom from nine months of struggle to pass the test, make the grade, and survive another barrage of public criticism that schools do not measure up.

We have until Labor Day to brace ourselves for the election year rhetoric ahead when education again becomes a plank in the campaign platform of political candidates who, wanting to dawn the mantle of “education president,” will expose our missteps and their misinformation through yet another campaign season. Promises will be made in the name of achieving “excellence,” imposition of standards; and the mantra testing, testing, testing will be chanted. Come January 2001, we will return to business as usual: The fattening of defense, not school budgets, and support of corporate, not social, welfare.

For those of us whose vocation includes authenticity in teaching, learning, and assessing, it becomes increasingly difficult to remain optimistic regarding the promises of national political candidates who claim empowering poor children includes taking away access to health care, nutrition, and education.

How will we continue to name ourselves *teacher*, our calling *teaching*, and allow our students to name themselves *learners* in this oppressive climate? How can we ensure that our identity survives the contentious political debate ahead?

The articles in this issue of Teaching and Learning highlight some possibilities for being, becoming, and teaching from who we say we are.