Hope, joy, caring... why not start the new term with optimism! This issue of PAIDEIA presents two complementary articles; both encourage us to remember that teaching is an interpersonal endeavour in which knowledge, skills, and values intersect, and as a result of which minds and spirits engage.

The first article (p. 2) on Making Connections is by Denise Larsen, Ph.D., R. Psych., Professor of Counselling Psychology at the University of Alberta and Director of Research at the Hope Foundation of Alberta. Dr. Rosemary Polegato from the Ron Joyce Centre for Business Studies at Mount Allison contributes a piece about Caring (p. 7).

This theme of joy and caring pervades our August 29 Fall Teaching Day, too, and information about that is to be found on page 6.

Welcome back to those of you who have just returned from sabbatical—and an even warmer welcome to Mount Allison to those who have just arrived at the University this fall. Happy New Year!

Eileen M. Herteis, Director

Congratulations to two colleagues in the Department of Geography and Environment who have won prestigious teaching awards this summer.

Dr. Michael Fox received the Award for Excellence in Teaching Geography at the Canadian Association of Geographers 2012 conference in Waterloo.

Dr. Colin Laroque received the 2012 Association of Atlantic Universities Distinguished Teaching Award, which recognizes him as one of the most exceptional professors in the region.
Making the Connections that Engage Us in Teaching and Learning
Denise J. Larsen, University of Alberta

The future never becomes completely present without first rehearsing, and this rehearsal is HOPE.
- Jorge Luis Borges

In some large measure, education is about contributing to the creation of good futures, good futures for students and, most expansively, better futures for the world. We might consider education as part rehearsal for better futures, a process during which new possibilities for good futures are creatively imagined, vigorously explored, and bravely enacted. With education, a student’s mind and heart can open to possibilities previously unimagined. In the process of learning, both students and teachers can make space to envision new futures with which to engage.

Hope, and questions about its role in human experience, once attracted only the attention of theologians and philosophers. However, the last thirty years have seen an explosion of research interest in hope within the social and health sciences. Thousands of studies on hope now populate the research literature. I believe that an early review of the construct bears relevance to teaching and learning today.

Hope is “a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful” (Stephenson, 1991, p.1459). It is this movement toward a personally meaningful future that seems crucial when reflecting on the role of hope in education. As Parker Palmer asserts (1988), our chosen disciplines and our career aspirations are often born of a deeply and personally meaningful connection: “[w]e were drawn to a body of knowledge because it shed light on our identity as well on the world. We did not merely find a subject to teach – the subject also found us” (p. 25). From this perspective, hope provides both inspiration and drive. It is about the meaningful personal and professional connections that engage one in learning and teaching, providing the purpose and energy needed during times when the work of learning and teaching becomes difficult.

Today, the virtual avalanche of research on hope spans both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. In a recent review of much of the quantitative research on hope, Cheavens, Michael, and Snyder (2005) conclude that “hope is beneficial in virtually every circumstance which has been measured” (p. 127). Indeed, with respect to student outcomes, research consistently reveals hope playing a potent role including higher grade point averages. Further, in educational work at the Hope Foundation of Alberta, our ongoing conversations with teachers and students demonstrate that although hope does not eliminate struggles, it motivates teachers and students to persevere, to imagine new possibilities, and to take necessary small steps (LeMay, Edey, & Larsen, 2008).

Regrettably, an awareness of the importance of hope does not necessarily equate to an ease in holding and sustaining it. Many scholars and educators believe that the hope of the teacher or helping professional is essential (Koenig & Spano, 2007) to supporting student hope. Li and Larsen (2012) remind us that teachers, seen in a position of authority and apparent objectivity, are often perceived by students as offering both direct and tacit...
messages about what may be educationally and occupationally possible in students’ lives.

“Rarely are the deeply personal connections held by faculty members spoken aloud – those hopes that draw the university teacher to an academic career, the hopes of who one might become as an academic, and the hopes of what one’s life contribution might be.”

Yet, however important teachers’ roles are in supporting students’ engagement through hope, the challenges to teacher hope are significant (Snyder, Shorey, & Rand, 2006). Large institutional contexts are often difficult settings within which to live out meaningful career hopes. In the case of university teaching, concern for a vital and effective university professoriate has been an ongoing focus of study for decades. Research on university worklife consistently identifies the challenges academics face in highly demanding and competitive environments (Larsen, 2009). Rarely are the deeply personal connections held by faculty members spoken aloud – those hopes that draw the university teacher to an academic career, the hopes of who one might become as an academic, and the hopes of what one’s life contribution might be.

Yet leading researchers suggest that it is just these hope-filled connections that are necessary to sustaining a teacher’s hope with her or his students. For Snyder et al., “teachers must stay connected to their hope-filled roots in order to remain models of hope for their students” (p. 172). Teachers require a connection with the joy and inspiration of hope-filled activities both at work and in their lives beyond work.

Interested in the role of hope in teaching and overall academic worklife, I turned to university professors for stories of work (Larsen, 2009). I wondered about stories of work, stories of teaching, and whether requesting stories about hope would be a meaningful focus of conversation. Employing narrative inquiry, I began research conversations with two faculty members in my own discipline of counselling psychology, neither of whom I had known prior to this study.

Working at different universities, one participant (Meagan) was an untenured faculty member, while the other (James) was a faculty member five years from retirement. In creating the research texts, I sought to lay their stories of worklife alongside each other, while specifically attending to themes related to hope. During our research conversations, Meagan and James reflected on the stories that drew them to academic work, stories about what offered hope at work, and experiences that drained hope.

I need not have wondered whether conversations about hope would be meaningful. Though both participants first thought that they might have little to say, our initial conversations lasted 2-3 hours. What each hoped for in becoming an academic had taken shape over many years. Stories of hope at work were intimately linked to what each participant had come to love or believe was important in life. Deeply held hope provided important motivation and conviction for dedicating one’s working life to teaching and the academy.

James described the importance of hope and meaningful life purpose this way: “People are asking … Where is the hope? … If we don’t go there then people do say, ‘What’s the point?’ People give up … so hope may appear … a bit abstract or elusive, yet it’s so central and integral.” Indeed, both James and Meagan
identified the desire to meaningfully contribute to the lives of others as central to their own sense of hope at work. As Meagan put it,

“At the end of my career, I would like to be able to say I opened the door of possibilities for others, for students, and for colleagues too ... And that I was able to set the stage for people, to provide that platform ... or the props that they needed to go on their journey. You know ... a sense that they can be all that they can be” (p. 154-155).

However, the work of sustaining hope as academics was no easy task for either Meagan or James. Both struggled with institutional values and criteria for success, often seeing these as misguided requirements for ensuring job security and advancement. Competition and the lack of meaningful community drained energy and hope. Over many years, James had witnessed significant changes in university culture:

“It’s a challenging time for a lot of people because it can be very lonely and isolating ... And when you are in situations of loneliness and isolation you don’t sense much hope, you don’t feel much hopefulness about the future ....” (p. 158).

Clearly aware of threats to hope, Meagan and James also believed that it was important to identify personally meaningful ways to sustain hope at work. While they identified several important sources of hope, I will confine this discussion to three sources that the participants identified.

First, collegial mentorship was one crucial source of hope for both participants. Meagan found hope in a close mentorship with a senior faculty member. In this relationship, Meagan found support for her convictions, her actions, and her struggles in her early work as an academic. James also found hope as he mentored new faculty members.

A second vital source of hope for James and Meagan was found in their relationships with students. James experienced hope in witnessing the development of his students, “when I see a graduate student come to terms with something or I see a student develop a newfound skill that gives me hope” (p.160).

Finally, Meagan discussed the importance of remaining connected to deeply held hopes at work, suggesting that these provide grounding when faced with dominating institutional expectations: Be clear as to your purpose, what brings you there ... and use it as a guide ... as a model or a mission statement or something that you can hold onto because in all the demands and the business and the expectations ... I found it easy to lose track of that ... It is almost like a guiding light that you need when the way gets dark ... (p. 162).

My conversations with Meagan and James revealed one other interesting effect. It seems that turning our attention toward a thing can make its presence more apparent. Hope is a folk-term, meaning that it is a word and multidimensional construct that we often use in everyday life. During follow-up interviews, James commented on his heightened awareness of hope. It seems that by reflecting on hope during our first interview, his had become more explicitly attuned to it. As he said, “It’s like owning a red car. Once you have one, you notice them everywhere!” (p. 163). I believe that James’ reflection highlights one more possibility for supporting hope: the possibility that by intentionally attending to the threads of hope in our stories, we become more aware of its presence.
References


"Education is when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don't."
-Pete Seeger

**TEACHING TRIANGLES**

Denise Larsen mentions mentorship as an important source of hope . . . if you are interested in this topic, please consider participating in PCTC’s Teaching Triangles Program.

Each Teaching Triangle consists of three teaching colleagues who do the following:

Visit a class taught by the two others (two observations each);
Reflect on that experience and what they learned from their colleagues’ teaching; and
Share reflections with their Triangle partners, individually and as a whole group.

Teaching Triangles are designed to enhance teaching and learning through a collegial yet structured process of classroom visits, self-reflection, and discussion. The purpose of these visits is not to evaluate your colleagues’ teaching or give them feedback; rather it is to reflect upon your own teaching. Together, the Triangle participants serve as a broader mentoring or learning community.

Watch for an introductory meeting early in September!
You are warmly invited to attend the 2012 Fall Teaching Day in Crabtree Auditorium from 9-noon on Wednesday, August 29 (Refreshments at 10:15 am)

**THE JOYFUL DIALOGUE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**  
(9-11 am)

Dr. Diana Austin  
3M National Teaching Fellow  
University of New Brunswick

Dr. Diana Austin’s teaching philosophy is a distillation of joy: Teaching is not something done to or for students, but an enjoyable, challenging experience shared with students. She believes that education is a “joyful dialogue” in which teachers share their fascination with and knowledge of their subject. She is convinced that, if the circumstances are right, everyone can experience this joy. What contributes to those circumstances?

**Authenticity:** Authentic teaching involves teaching from who we are and also reaching out to who they are.

**Collaboration:** Students’ enthusiasm increases when they feel like valued partners in a dialogue rather than spectators at a performance.

**Effort and achievement:** Students need to be challenged by the material, yet have the tools to accomplish their tasks—thereby they discover the joy of believing in themselves.

An inspirational teacher, Diana Austin will share some of her own strategies for creating joy and engagement in the classroom, including her TOGS rubric (Thought-Organization-Grammar-Style) which converts assessment into an engaged learning opportunity.

**CARING FOR AND ABOUT STUDENTS’ LEARNING**  
(11 am-noon)

Dr. Rosemary Polegato  
AAU Distinguished Teaching Award  
Mount Allison University

What connects good teaching to good learning? Part of the answer lies in the strong empirical evidence that students respond well when teachers know what they’re talking about, are prepared for class, communicate well, and are enthusiastic. But what underlies these four qualities and marks them as key measures of teaching effectiveness from the student perspective? Individually and collectively, these measures suggest that the teacher cares—about the subject matter and about students’ learning. Caring in this sense connects teaching to learning; it transforms detached consideration of subject matter into a humanized interaction.

The session will explore how teachers communicate their caring for students’ learning in both obvious and subtle ways.

Please re-join us at 3 pm (also in Crabtree Auditorium) for "This Professor is Biased": Thinking About the Uses of Student Evaluations of Teaching, the 2012 Tucker Talk, featuring Dr. Andrew Nurse, Canadian Studies.

Reception follows at Cranewood.
Caring Connects Good Teaching to Learning
Rosemary Polegato
Ron Joyce Centre for Business Studies
Mount Allison University

What connects good teaching to learning? The answer lies partly in the strong empirical evidence that students respond well when teachers know what they are talking about, when they are prepared, when they communicate well, when they are enthusiastic, when their feedback is valuable, and when they make themselves available for consultation. But what underlies these six qualities, and what makes them so universally accepted as key measures of teaching effectiveness from the perspective of students? Let me suggest that, individually and collectively, these six qualities send the message that a teacher cares not only about the subject matter, but more importantly, about students’ learning. In turn, this caring motivates students to care about their learning, too.

Let me be clear that when I speak of “caring,” I am not talking about heavy emotional labour or about being on e-mail day and night in case a student wants to make contact at 2:00 am or about joining Facebook or about granting extensions without documentation for serious requests. “To care,” according to the Oxford Dictionary online, means to “feel concern or interest,” to “attach importance to something.” Care is “serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly.” Caring, then, connects good teaching to learning: it transforms detached consideration of subject matter into humanized, accessible delivery that goes beyond what the discipline tells us—teachers and learners, alike—to consideration of what it means to us, our communities, and the world.

Dee Fink in his 2003 book entitled, Creating Significant Learning Experiences, articulated what teachers want for their students: to be engaged in course activities, to take away lasting learning, and to make a difference in students’ lives. (He read our minds!) To this end, “caring” is one of Fink’s six integrated learning outcomes (along with more familiar outcomes, such as foundation knowledge, application, and integration). He challenges us to think about how our teaching can motivate students to care, or care differently, about the phenomenon and ideas they study, about themselves and others, and about the process of learning.

Caring in the university classroom has been under-rated and subject to erosion. Many believe all caring to be the purview of counselling services, health centres, co-curricular activities, and “overly enthusiastic” professors. It is even considered by some to be politically incorrect; “they care too much.” Further, in the quest to treat subject matter with rigour and through the lens of analytical research frameworks—to ensure everyone knows that the discipline matters—it is easy to sterilize the wonder out of discovery and enquiry in the classroom.

So what might be left of caring that is of importance to teaching and learning? How might caring be expressed in the classroom in a way that supports significant learning? Let me offer some encouragement about how caring for learning can be cultivated in students. To begin, I note that the word “teacher” contains the four letters of the word,
“care,” and if one likes a more traditional version, each letter can be used to form “careth.” I prefer the shorter form, and use each of the four letters below to share my thoughts on caring about learning in university education.

C is for CONNECT – CONNECT to emotions and people. I learned a lot about connecting from Dr. Bunbury who taught Organic Chemistry at 8:15 am three times a week to a large class; the full-year course was a requirement for Chemistry majors, pre-med students, nursing students, and Home Economic students. It was challenging subject matter, at times, terrifying. But students were motivated to learn because Dr. Bunbury cared about whether we were “getting it;” he used abundant examples that reflected diverse student interests. He would fly across the board with excitement when he got to what he referred to as the “good part.” During office hours, he would guide us in our own thinking—what part of that elusive chemical structure or formula did we not understand? Dr. Bunbury was also a fixture at the annual Science Fair; he would react with wonder as puffs of coloured smoke rose from his concoctions, as though someone else had prepared the carefully orchestrated demonstration, and he was seeing it for the first time. Dr. Bunbury taught me that we need to CONNECT.

A is for ACCESS – ACCESS to the richness of environments around us. Most teachers have been influenced by the concept of standardization, the notion that every student needs to know everything, know it in the same way (from a specific teacher), and take the same test. It is the typical “one-size-fits-all-or-not-at-all” approach, and standardized testing (suitable in some contexts) has reinforced the practice. But we all know this approach leaves too many students disengaged. Zundel and Deane (2010) suggest that we can involve others in helping students learn – their peers, community members, other learning institutions, and themselves. Environments outside the classroom expand our teaching resource base.

For example, a few years ago, I started looking for an alternative to replace my typical three-hour exam for Consumer Behaviour. I’ve settled on a 40% Consumer Ritual Project as the alternative; students identify a ritual in their behaviour that is tied to consumer purchases. Each 25-page project is unique—because each student’s ritual is unique. But to make sense of their rituals, each student must go through the same process of analysis to draw out relevant ideas, theories, and frameworks from the course and from their discoveries through required library research. Through this alternative exam, students ACCESS not only the library, but also social and community situations, such as snowmobile races, Chinese New Year celebrations, and their own apartments.

R is for REFLECT- REFLECT on what is learned. Students are often required to reflect in some way on their studies. Assignments, with critical thinking at the core, have been in our repertoire since universities began. Journaling is a more recent approach to reflection. But how can we move towards regularly including the affective—the feeling aspect—as well as the rational aspect in reflection. And how do we move towards holistic reflection rather than piecemeal reflection? I’ve had success guiding students’ reflection through Course Learning Portfolios; students, in effect, are given the opportunity to be actively engaged and
responsible for the assessment of their learning in a whole course or in their program. We need to learn more about how to encourage students to REFLECT on their learning.

**E is for EDUCATE – EDUCATE for the future.** Bass and Good (2004) pointed out that the word “education” has two Latin roots: *educare*, which means to train or mold, to preserve the past by passing it down to the next generation of learners. It is characterized by foundational knowledge, and learning is directed from the front of the classroom. Learners are nurtured to understand and carry on what is known. The other Latin root, *educere*, means to lead out, to elicit, and to consider context and change. Learning is directed by the learner; the learner questions and challenges. Learners get to know themselves as independent thinkers, to be intentional about learning, and to care about themselves, others, and the fruits of their learning.

Clearly, students need to have a chance to be responsible for their own learning, to have a role in leading their way into the future. The world they face is vastly more unpredictable than the world that so favoured the *educare* approach to university education. Students need to be awakened to their own interests and values, to follow their curiosity, to be creative, and to connect to the world around them. Indeed, asking students to be responsible for themselves as learners is in conflict with teaching approaches that are based primarily on the *educare* root of education; a dose of *educere*, perhaps through experiential learning components, is needed to provide a balanced education. Caring, then, means that we need to EDUCATE about the past and for the future.

I invite you to continue to support, in whatever way you can, teaching and learning environments that care about learning and learners. We all want students to be concerned about their studies, to take pride in the work they produce independently and with others, and to rise to the occasion of a challenging assignment.

So CARE with abundance – look for ways for you and your students to CONNECT to the subject matter, to ACCESS off-campus environments, to REFLECT on learning, and to be fully EDUCATED. Our world of teaching and learning is not a perfect world, but it *is* built on ideals – and one of those ideals should be caring about learning.

**References**


