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Best of the Web

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Dr. Mader’s third contribution has been to students through her teaching. Her classroom is often the site of intense student debate, critical thinking, and hard questions about social justice. These student comments are representative: “You presented us with tough issues and challenged our thoughts and beliefs at every turn…I used to have a headache every time I left class, but it has made me think in ways I never thought possible before…This is the best course I have taken here as well as at other universities…I will remember this class and the concepts forever.”

These contributions are examples of Dr. Mader’s work in the College and the university. Although they did not always come without controversy, she has weathered those storms with persistence and patience. They exemplify her guiding belief: “Changing individuals is vitally important and a necessary first step, but it isn’t enough. Only when we also change ‘the system’ does permanent change stand a chance.”

Of note to readers is that Dr. Mader started *Colleagues* in the Fall of 1997 as a newsletter about the COE. The name came about as she was preparing the COE’s National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education report. In the report she wanted to use a word that described students as an integral part to the make up of the COE. She decided to describe students as “colleagues” in the education efforts of the COE.

“When trying to think of a name for the newsletter, this word stood out as to how educators talk about themselves within the profession,” said Dr. Mader.

After retirement Dr. Mader plans to relax, travel, spend time with her partner Pam Olsen, continue to work on grassroots causes near to her heart, and of course stay informed on all things affecting teachers and teacher education.

She plans to keep her *Colleagues* subscription.

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**Community Works Institute**

One of this issue’s articles, *Everyone Ought to Have a Ditch*, was reprinted with permission of the Community Works Institute. Their website provides a wealth of information, particularly their journal at [www.communityworksjournal.org](http://www.communityworksjournal.org).

As indicated on their site, “The Journal features essays and reflections along with curriculum overviews that highlight the importance of place, service, and sustainability to a relevant and meaningful education.”

The site is free to use with an optional fee less subscription, primarily for notifications of new content. The focus of the journal is the combination service learning and place-based education, both proven concepts that are actively championed by our Grand Valley College of Education.

**Dr. Patricia Polacco’s Author Site**

Renowned Michigan children’s author Patricia Polacco brought most of the room to happy tears at this year’s Wildly Exciting conference. As a particularly moving public speaker, she relates and connects directly to all ages and also addresses issues that are difficult to talk about in her books. Recently she was a participating author at the Library of Congress National Book Festival.

Dr. Polacco’s website offers users resources, images from her many books, as well as videos of interviews. In addition, Polacco provides curriculum support extensions designed to help educators utilize her books as a teaching tool in their own classrooms.

Some of her most popular books deal directly with issues involving learning disabilities and how the characters overcome them. While a small number of her works have elicited some controversy, her message of inclusion and joy in learning is one fit for all ages.