

# Chronicles of Quaker Education



## Learning Through Inquiry

### A Quaker Tradition

*Friends schools are known to be vigorous learning communities centered around Quaker values. This issue explores how academic vigor and quality of learning are directly related to the Quaker philosophy of education.*

Open-ended questions are powerful tools that stretch children's curiosity, reasoning ability, creativity and independence. Query-based learning, or inquiry learning, allows each of us to benefit from multiple perspectives, building knowledge in a collaborative exploration. Friends schools invite students and faculty members into inquiry learning in corporate worship and in the classroom in a unique expression of continuing revelation within diverse communities.

The query is a Quaker tool for corporate and personal reflection, which provides a structure to test belief and action repeatedly. This pattern of asking and answering relevant queries lends itself perfectly to an educational setting. Queries are used in classes and faculty meetings to inspire reflection and dialogue toward the goal of building a caring, respectful community. Examples from *Faith and Practice of Friends School of Baltimore* include: "How can I contribute to a learning environment or meeting that incorporates respect for each person's own knowledge and perspective? In what ways can I seek a greater understanding and knowledge by sharing what I am learning with others who are sharing with me what they are learning? How can the very quality of our interactions with one another change society?"

Taken further, learning through inquiry shifts the educational emphasis from the product, or "right answer," to the process, developing critical thinking skills and broadening students' engagement with content. Nancy Starmer, Head of **George School**, Newtown, Pennsylvania, notes this Quaker connection of learning through queries in an in-service session with visiting Professor of Educational Psychology Jim Baucaum. Baucaum shared research that demonstrates that having students ask "reflective and elaborative questions" literally opens up new synapses and connections in the brain, connections that make the brain more receptive to new and different points of view.

Jane Fremon, Head of **Princeton Friends School**, New Jersey, reflects on the Quaker connection to learning:

*Quakerism, since its founding more than 350 years ago, was conceived as a search for truth – an experiential, constructivist, collaborative, and transformative faith tradition. As such, Quakerism offers a solid foundation for a pedagogy that shares these same attributes. The Quaker underpinnings of our school's educational philosophy lend both weight and clarity to the experience of students in the classroom.*

A central tenet of the Religious Society of Friends is "continuing revelation," the notion that Truth continues to be revealed to us, and through us, and that we have a shared part in discovering it. The implications of unfolding Truth are powerful for places of learning which are open to this engagement of the spirit and the mind.

Denton, Paula, EdD (2007). "Open-Ended Questions," Responsive Classroom Newsletter, February 2007, [www.responsiveclassroom.org/newsletter](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/newsletter).

Friends School of Baltimore. *Faith & Practice of Friends School of Baltimore*. [www.friendsbalt.org](http://www.friendsbalt.org)

Fremon, Jane (2007). Princeton Friends School newsletter.

McHenry, Irene, Jane Fremon, Nancy Starmer, and Harry Hammond (2004). *Readings on Quaker Pedagogy*, [www.friendscouncil.org](http://www.friendscouncil.org).

### Inquiry Learning in Action

In *Readings on Quaker Pedagogy*, Irene McHenry explores a definition of Friends education: *learning through inquiry, reflection, collaboration, and service, amid a culture of respect*. Teachers at Friends Council workshops and in-service sessions have used these defining elements to generate strategies to help reinforce these conditions in their classrooms. The following advices were contributed by participants of Educators New to Quakerism and in-service sessions.

#### How can teachers help students to learn through inquiry?

- Take time to go over alternative methods to solving problems.  
*There is great value in seeing that one can jump into a problem at different entry points.*
- Give children the time they need to express ideas and solve problems.  
*Allow all to be deep in discovery.*
- Share thought processes.  
*Respect grows from paying attention to each other.*
- Use "KWL" charts (Know, Wonder, Learned).  
*As a group or independently, chart "what we know," "what we wonder about," and, during and after the discussion or investigation, "what we've learned."*
- After a written test, have students express their new learning in a game, skit, demonstration, or other non-graded activity.  
*Make it clear that the point of learning isn't just to do well on assessments.*
- Encourage students to reflect on a time when a strong opinion that they held changed.  
*"What led to that change of opinion?" Help students feel proud of being open rather than proud of being right.*
- Value appropriate participation as much as correct answers.  
*Keep the door open for future contributions.*
- Invite students to analyze the content of the day's lesson.  
*"How is this material new?" "How does it add to previous knowledge or does it stand on its own?" "What does it add?"*

*Come to Educators New to Quakerism and continue the list!*



## Inquiry Learning through Action Research

Friends school faculty and administrators who are members of the Friends Council's Institute for Engaging Leadership know the power of inquiry learning, as they experience it through conducting action research projects within the Friends school network. The action research process is cyclic and spiral, alternating between action, critical reflection, and new action inspired by reflective learning and insight. It is an emergent process, which continually evolves as understanding increases. The action research projects that begin in the Leadership Institute have positive ripple effects throughout the Friends school network and beyond.

Friends Council Leadership Institute members design and implement their research projects over the two years of the program. Snapshots from projects from the 2005-07 group give a glimpse of the inquiry-based approach to school research:

### How can teacher observation contribute to professional development?

**Nancy Aranda, Westbury Friends School, Westbury, New York**

As supervisor of instruction at Westbury Friends School, I decided to explore different approaches to teacher observation that may better serve to improve teaching and learning in our classrooms. I asked myself, What do we know about student learning that we could use as learners ourselves? My subsequent actions were based upon the observation that when my students are given an opportunity to contribute to the design of a learning experience, a sense of ownership results, and can lead to greater personal investment and, ultimately, deeper learning.

### How can we better listen to the voices of our international students and their families?

**Anna Bertucci, Oakwood Friends School, Poughkeepsie, New York**

As is often the case in independent schools, we communicate a great deal with our parent body in a variety of ways because we feel we are part of an important partnership and we need each other's support to best educate children. But what about our international students? Have we allowed two very different models of communication to develop within our school? My goal was to glean best practices for both closing any communication gap between the school and our international families and to enhance the experience of our international students while they are here.

### How do Friends schools cultivate healthy governing bodies, providing strong leadership through strategic policy development and guiding fiscal support, within a framework of Quaker values?

**Ari Betof, George School, Newtown, Pennsylvania & the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia**

While this work is still in its early stages, the bulk of what I have done thus far has been around three interconnected paths of exploration:

- Understanding the evolution of governance and fiscal support of Friends schools by reading primary sources and original texts written between the early-nineteenth century and present;
- Collecting preliminary data from all Friends Council member schools focusing on board composition and board fiscal support in collaboration with Irene McHenry, Friends Council's Executive Director, and the Friends Council on Education 2006-2007 Governance Survey of Friends Schools; and
- Preliminary exploration of the impact of Quaker values on Friends school Boards based on theoretically overlaying literature from the National Association of Independent Schools and related sources about independent school governance with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting/Friends Council's *Governance Handbook for Friends Schools*.



### An Action Research Project

## The Spirit that Informs the Practice

Friends school communities yield tremendous power for learning, both for adults and for the children within them. In these intentional communities that are religiously, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse, people are united by Quaker practices. Through Quaker processes for worship, inquiry-based learning, and decision-making, each member of the community can share responsibility for nurturing the Quaker heart of the school. This empowerment and engagement provides enormous opportunity for personal, professional, and organizational growth.

A new publication from the Friends Council on Education is designed to sustain and deepen this dimension of Friends school communities—*Advices & Queries for Friends School Community Life*, by Sean Compagnucci, Dean of Students at Thornton Friends School, Silver Spring, Maryland. Inspired by the Faith and Practice documents of twenty-three yearly meetings across the country and around the world, the collection of queries and advices supports members of Friends school communities in examining how their daily practices and interactions reflect Quaker values.

Sean compiled and adapted the queries as part of his action research project as a member of the Friends Council's Institute for Engaging Leadership. "It's my feeling that

institutions with a strong Quaker ethos direct their attention first to the manner in which the work is carried out—the spirit that informs the practice—and second to policies or structures, as helpful as these are in a supportive role. I notice a parallel in monthly meetings—in which all members take responsibility for the care and nurture of the expressly Quaker aspects of the community. This led to the idea of creating advices and queries that schools and school employees could use to examine how their practices reflect Quaker values, just as meetings do," explains Sean.

Copies will be available for purchase from the Friends Council on Education in November 2007.

*Do we endeavor by example to cultivate in all members of our community a sense of openness and expectancy about life?*

*Have we encouraged and built each other up, speaking only what is helpful? Do we show concern and respect for our colleagues by avoiding and discouraging needless and destructive criticism?*

—from *Advices & Queries*

*More than 670 faculty, staff, and trustees of Friends schools took part in Friends Council on Education workshops and peer networks last year. We're looking forward to the wisdom and insight that YOU will bring to this year's programs!*

See the program calendar on the back panel.



### Governance Matters!

The Friends Council on Education is offering expanded support for good governance in Friends schools. This fall and winter, Friends schools across the country are putting together teams of trustees for regional Saturday workshops and a weekend workshop at Pendle Hill.

Last year more than 250 Friends school trustees took advantage of the opportunity to learn from each other in an experiential format:

- "I valued having time to really focus on my commitment as a trustee as well as hearing other people's stories."
- "Each component of the workshop was valuable. The structures for each session—foundation, small group work, and then reflection—allowed us to more fully integrate the information. This is how we all know we should teach."

Workshop dates on back panel.

Registration is open: [www.friendscouncil.org](http://www.friendscouncil.org).

## Dig Deep

into the Quaker Nature of Learning with resources from the Friends Council on Education: [www.friendscouncil.org](http://www.friendscouncil.org)

### Advices & Queries for Friends School Community Life

Sean Compagnucci

Available November 2007

### Meeting for Learning

Parker Palmer

### Readings on Quaker Pedagogy

Irene McHenry, Jane Fremon, Nancy Starmer, Harry Hammond

### Schooled in Diversity ACTION RESEARCH

Pat Macpherson, Action Research Coordinator; Darryl J. Ford, Editor

## What is the Friends Council on Education?

*Preserving the Heritage, Inspiring the Future, Strengthening the Core*

The work of the Friends Council on Education preserves the heritage and core values of Friends schools. The Friends Council provides critical resources and professional development for people working in the distinctive and irreplaceable environment of Friends schools, while inspiring the future of Quaker education.

## Ambassadors of Friends Education

Congratulations to the Friends school teachers who were selected to attend Columbia University's Klingenstein Summer Institute 2007:

- Lindsay Anderson, **Moses Brown School**, Providence, RI
- Jeff Basler, **Olney Friends School**, Barnesville, OH
- Brooke Coleman, **Westtown School**, PA
- Eric Jimenez, **William Penn Charter School**, Philadelphia, PA
- Corbin Treacy, **Abington Friends School**, Jenkintown, PA

*"The Klingenstein Summer Institute is a wonderful experience for teachers who, early in their careers, recognize that their vocation in life is to educate and guide the younger generations. Of the 70 teachers selected to attend this year's Institute, five of us were from Friends schools."*

*I feel many of the practices teachers should strive for in educating the young are accomplished at Friends school: learning-as-a-process and creating inclusive and diverse learning communities. While other schools value these concepts, I am convinced that Friends schools are at the vanguard of such endeavors. By our beliefs and explicit mission statements, we are letting our lives speak. I feel so proud and blessed to be teaching in a Friends school."*

— Eric Jimenez, William Penn Charter School



## Countryman Speaks

**Saturday, November 3, 2007**

• **9:30 am** — *Breakfast for Educators*  
Arch Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, Pa.  
RSVP: fcheeks@afsc.org

• **1:30 pm** — *Annual Public Gathering*  
American Friends Service Committee, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, Pa.

All are welcome to join in discussion with innovative educator Joan Countryman in Philadelphia, Saturday, November 3, 2007.

Joan will discuss her groundbreaking career in Friends education, and her experience service as founding head of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa. Quaker beliefs such as respecting the dignity in every person and the value of self-reflection are important elements of the program, Countryman said.

"There is a zulu word, *ubuntu*, that means 'I am because we are,' that I can find my humanity in relationships to other people," Countryman said. "And that strikes me as very similar to our principles in Quakerism, about respecting the light in everyone."

Joan has served as head of **Lincoln School**, Providence, Rhode Island, as a longtime administrator and teacher at **Germantown Friends School** (GFS), Philadelphia, and was the first African-American graduate of GFS.

## Meeting for Worship

### Experiential Learning for Individuals & Groups

Perhaps the most palpable discovery learning in Friends schools takes place within students and faculty members in weekly meeting for worship. As part of his doctoral study at the University of Pennsylvania, Mark Franek, Friends Council publications work group member and outgoing dean of students at **William Penn Charter School**, Philadelphia, used surveys and focus group interviews to explore the impact of meeting for worship on Friends high school students.

Mark writes in the introduction of his dissertation:

*Despite the diversity of faith and practice among Quaker school students, every Quaker school holds a regular and required "meeting for worship," which generally occurs once a week. The meeting for worship experience is the unifying and ubiquitous practice of all Quaker schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of the children in meeting for worship at one urban Quaker school. What impact, if any, did meeting have on their perceptions of their cognitive-moral development and their*

*educational lives? Did meeting affect how students perceived themselves and their relationships in their immediate school community and beyond?*

Student responses revealed that meeting for worship has enormous potential for powerful individual and group growth experiences. This potential is not actualized equally by everyone. Responses demonstrate the importance of providing a "pedagogical pull" and nurturance of the worship experience through worship and ministry committees of students and faculty. Other responses reveal the power of meeting for worship to "illuminate and reinforce bonds of friendship," build community, and internalize concepts of harmony and equality. It is Mark's hope that the findings of this study may help current and future students, teachers, and administrators at Quaker schools better understand, value, and transfer the lessons of meeting for worship and apply them to their personal and professional lives. Contact Mark for more information: markfranek@gmail.com.

## Global-Mindedness: IB Program

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. A growing number of Friends schools are interested in and have become authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate program, noting a synergy with the goals of the international educational program and the Quaker philosophy of education. The IBO works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment (<http://www.ibo.org>).

*"Perhaps the most powerful statement contained in the IBO's 'Criteria for an International Continuum' reads, 'The IBO is unapologetically idealistic in believing that education can foster understanding among young people around the world, enabling future generations to live more peacefully and productively than before.' I think that we at Wilmington Friends strive to maintain that same idealism, that we try to teach our students to apply what they learn in the classroom to the world around them, that we teach them that they have a responsibility not simply to learn but to act. Inquiry-based learning encourages our students to question, to think critically and conceptually, to see connections between disciplines, to understand the complexity of the world, whether it has to do with the politics of the Middle East or the chemistry of biofuels and the ethical debates that surround it."*

— Bryan Garman, Head, **Wilmington Friends School**, Delaware

*"The Friends' School's Purpose and Concerns talks of developing 'women and men who will think clearly, act with integrity, make decisions for themselves, be sensitive to the needs of others, be strong in service and hold a global perspective.' The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) seeks to 'develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect,' through becoming 'active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right' (IBO Mission Statement). For us at The Friends' School, the parallels are significant."*

— John Green, Head, **The Friends' School**, Hobart, Australia

## Membership Notes

### New Heads: Welcome!

Congratulations to the following school leaders, named as heads of Friends schools:

Gay Firth  
Connie Belfiore, Interim  
David Kern  
Lili Herbert  
James Grumbach  
Sandy Maliga, Co-Director  
Bob Lentz, Interim  
Sharon Dreese  
Ruth Joray, Interim  
Jody Althouse  
Timothy Madigan  
Nancy Donnelly  
Darryl J. Ford  
Jean Dinneen

**Friends Center for Children**, New Haven, Connecticut  
**Friends Community School**, College Park, Maryland  
**Friends School of Charlotte**, North Carolina  
**Friends School of Minnesota**, St. Paul, Minnesota  
**Friends School of Portland**, Maine  
**Friends Western School**, Pasadena, California  
**Greenwood Friends School**, Millville, Pennsylvania  
**Haddonfield Friends School**, New Jersey  
**Quaker School at Horsham**, Pennsylvania  
**State College Friends School**, Pennsylvania  
**Stratford Friends School**, Havertown, Pennsylvania  
**United Friends School**, Quakertown, Pennsylvania  
**William Penn Charter School**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
**Wrightstown Friends Nursery School**, Penns Park, Pennsylvania

Best wishes and gratitude to these former heads who are embarking on new adventures: Earl Ball, Terry Bergman, Tom Goss, Marsha Holliday, Sandy Howze, Deb Kost, Sheila Lunger, Craig Sellers, Marty Severn, and Mary Zeigler.

We honor the dedicated work of faculty, staff, trustees, and families of **Northern Virginia Friends School** in Oakton, Virginia. The School closed in 2007.

### Seedling Schools

Congratulations to **Friends Center for Children**, in New Haven, Connecticut, and **Friends School of Charlotte**, North Carolina, both of which opened their doors this fall. Welcome to a new membership applicant, **Alexandria Friends School**, Virginia, an upper school that was born out of **Thornton Friends School**.



[www.friendscouncil.org](http://www.friendscouncil.org)

# Reflections

From the Heart of Our Mission...

*The Friends Council on Education provides leadership in drawing Friends schools together in unity of spirit and cooperative endeavors.*

What is the Friends Council on Education and how does it take up its leadership responsibility? As an umbrella organization, the Friends Council on Education serves the function of coordinating all of the Friends schools in the United States in a network of support, shared resources, and empowerment.

Emergent leadership from our member Friends schools is the key to enacting this mission. Over the past five years, three of the Friends Council's strategic initiatives formed the foundation for collaborative work advanced by emergent leadership: Governance, SPARC, and the Leadership Institute. In addition, cross-school peer networks have evolved into dynamic manifestations of emergent leadership and collaboration.

**Governance:** Historically, the Friends Council has hosted one weekend a year for trustees and heads to explore governance issues and share best practices. Last year, the governance program took a quantum leap through eight regional Governance Matters workshops co-led by a bevy of governance consultants with years of expertise in Friends schools. More than 250 trustees and heads engaged with enthusiasm in this endeavor. This year we are offering regional gatherings in addition to a governance retreat at Pendle Hill.

**Spirited Practice:** Leadership has emerged through the SPARC program (Spirited Practice and Renewed Courage for teachers in Friends schools). This program is based on the principles of Parker Palmer's "Courage To Teach" work in public schools; we add Quaker process and practices as classroom teachers and administrators share their experience and wisdom. This program is built from the leadership of teachers in their schools and

empowers that leadership to go back to the schools. SPARC alumni now facilitate the program.

**The Institute for Engaging Leadership in Friends Schools:** The Institute actualizes a vision of many leaders in the Friends Council on Education network. Martha Bryans' dissertation research at University of Pennsylvania clarified the need for a way to systematically mentor and develop future heads for Friends schools. This fall the Institute is starting its fifth year. Four new heads of Friends schools have been selected from the 29 graduates to date.

**Peer networks:** Subgroups of educators across Friends schools meet to share resources and support for each others' work, especially around facets that are particular to working in a Quaker institution. These self-organizing systems can only exist when leaders from Friends schools volunteer to plan and facilitate the meetings. In the past five years, the number of peer networks within the Friends Council's systems has grown from two to fifteen, with new groups starting each year.

As the Board of Directors of the Friends Council begins visioning for future initiatives, the support of trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff of Friends schools lends strength to the continuing revelation at the heart of Friends education. Our collective work allows the Friends Council to draw Friends schools together in unity of spirit and cooperative endeavors. Together, we preserve the heritage, inspire the future, and strengthen the core of Friends education.

*Shirley McHenry*

# Quaker Education

CHRONICLES OF

Learning Through Inquiry

FALL  
2007

Friends Council on Education  
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Events for Faculty, Staff, and Trustees in Friends Schools

## Workshops

**Educators New to Quakerism** at Pendle Hill  
*Three separate offerings*

January 30-February 1, 2008  
February 21-22, 2008  
May 8-9, 2008

**Facilitating Quaker Decision-Making in a Friends School** at Arch Street Meeting House, Philadelphia  
Monday, February 11, 2008

**Mindfulness: Skills for Powerful Learning and Inner Peace** at Pendle Hill, January 16-18, 2008

## Peer Networks

**Development Peer Networks:** May 6, 2008, Westtown School

**Diversity Peer Networks:** October 18-19, 2007, Pendle Hill

**Early Childhood Educators:** March 7, 2008, Media-Providence Friends School

**Friends Environmental Educators Network (FEEN):**

April 16-18, 2008, Carolina Friends School

**Friends Schools' Students of Color College Fair:**

October 20, 2007, Westtown School

**Heads' Assistants:** December 6-7, 2007, Friends Select School

**Humanities Peer Network:** December 3, 2007, Friends Center

**Librarians:** March 10, 2008, William Penn Charter School

**Public Relations Peer Network:** May 20, 2008, Arch Street Meeting House

**Joint Meeting: Quaker Life in Lower & Middle Schools with Service Learning Peer Networks:** November 16, 2007, Cradles to Crayons, Horsham, Pennsylvania

**Upper School Religion Teachers:** December 10, 2007, Friends Center

**Visual Arts Peer Network:** October 26-27, 2007, Oakwood Friends School

You're invited to

**an Educators Breakfast with JOAN COUNTRYMAN**

9:30 am, Saturday, November 3  
Arch Street Meeting House.

See Inside...

## Governance Matters!

**for Trustees & Heads of Friends schools**

**Governance Matters weekend:** Nov. 9-11, 2007, Fri-Sun.

at Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pa. *Financial aid available.*

**Governance Matters Regional Workshops:**

Oct. 13 Wilmington Friends School, Delaware

Oct. 27 Friends School of Baltimore, Maryland

Dec. 1 Friends Select School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Apr. 19 Connecticut Friends School, Wilton, Connecticut

Apr. 26 Lincoln School, Providence, Rhode Island

May 3 New Garden Friends School, Greensboro, North Carolina

Preserving, Inspiring, Strengthening . . . Friends Education