Beth Ann Fisher

In Dr. Russ Hurd’s *Inquiry into the Profession* (EDPF 19525), Beth Ann Fisher’s assignment was to construct a personal philosophy, expressing her beliefs about teaching, learning and schooling in the context of current American society. Fisher’s work resulted in a mobile of “elements of squares, movement and the outer green ring,” which, she explains, “symbolize how I hope my beliefs will take form as a teacher.”

What I Believe (For Now) About Teaching, Learning, and Schooling: Mobile Interpretation

I have constructed this mobile to describe my current beliefs about teaching, learning, and schooling. The elements of the squares, movement, and the outer green ring symbolize how I hope my beliefs will take form as a teacher.

Squares: The squares symbolize the diversity in our society that is reflected in classrooms. All of the squares are the same size since everyone involved with the education process (students, teachers, parents, administrators, community members) has contributions to make; all are equally important for the success of the class, school, and society. The equality of the squares reflects the need for equity in education. Students, regardless of their race, ability, class, or any other factor, are entitled to a quality education – the best that our society, as a whole, can provide. The squares are on the same level; the teacher in a facilitator role prepares students for leadership and aids them in taking ownership of their own learning process. The bright colors represent the ability of all students to succeed and develop to their potential.

Movement: The mobility of the squares within the ring depicts many levels of movement. Students are in different places, having different needs at different times. The role of the teacher is to begin with students where they are and provide learning experiences that allow
them to develop their knowledge and understanding of both subject matter and how it relates to their world. The movement also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge; students learn best when new information is connected in meaningful ways to known information and when connections among various subjects are made. The constantly changing dynamics of the mobile illustrate the societal factors brought into the classroom; these factors should be recognized, respected, and, in the case of problems, addressed as necessary. Interactions within the safe learning environment utilize group-process skills, developing the socialization of students; in the context of the community, these interactions can also develop democracy skills, as well. There exists a spirit of interdependence and cooperation among the learning community — what affects one member affects all. The ripple effect that actions create is also experienced in the school, the district, and society.

Green Outer Ring: The outer ring symbolizes the larger community and the society in which schooling takes place; teachers and schools work within society's framework for education. Learning that takes place in a close relationship with society has relevance; it is learning that has value now and in the future. The enveloping ring also embodies the overarching, metaphysical reason for education (which everyone engaged in education should have) that gives meaning and structure to the learning process.