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We get our insights and inspirations for teaching and learning from all kinds of sources. Many books have influenced my teaching including works by Parker Palmer, bell hooks. Writings by public intellectuals discussing higher education and teaching including Martha Nussbaum, Derek Bok, and Ira Harkavay have been very formative for my approach in the classroom. Amid these as well as other teachers and students, I have learned to keep my eyes, ears, and heart open for resources. One never quite knows from where her next inspiration might come. My own research in eco-theology recently brought me back to the 1990 book *Dharma Gaia*. This book is a collection of essays linking Buddhist traditions and teachings with ecology, specifically James Lovelock's "Gaia theory", reconceiving earth's body and atmosphere as a living co-originating organism. It struck me that this dynamic linking of thinking and values with and through a vital, interdependent organism was a beautiful model for teaching and learning, especially in the liberal arts. Students, faculty, and institutions of higher learning should be about learning and have values that indicate their identity in and beyond the classroom. And what could be a more useful image of teaching and learning than interdependency, a shared environment in which ideas, research, values, and action among students and teachers moved a question forward. These essays reminded me that co-origination or interdependency is not a watering down of contributing elements. Teachers do provide information, set boundaries, and make assessments. And students both receive our teaching as well as offer it back vitalized by their own ideas and/or questions. The give and take of a lively classroom is quite like this interdependent environment. In it all elements are enriched and enriching as education flows in the give and take of thickening and simplifying, affirming and challenging what we describe, analyze, evaluate, and believe. If we are using experiential learning techniques, this model is particularly pertinent. It reminds us of the seriousness of reciprocal relationships among students, faculty, and community partners. All in all, the image stirred by *Dharma Gaia*, edited by Allan Hunt Badiner urged me to remember and give myself as a teacher to the rich, ecological dynamic of a continually creating classroom. There is not space here to discuss each of the essays and how they contributed to my thinking about teaching. Of course, your responses will be different than mine anyway. But I do want to highlight two of them to give you some idea of how I was drawn to this book as a resource.

In DeSilva's essay, "Buddhist Environmental Ethics," I was reminded of the holistic approach to teaching. We enrich our classrooms when we engage our students with a deep respect for their whole being. This means we cannot ignore the developmental dimensions of their learning process. Where are they in their life cycle? What are the values they are exploring through texts and methods we introduce to them? How can we appropriately be attuned to their experiences, stresses, and direction? Naturally, there are limits in our classroom situation - these are good. Certain information must be conveyed, but how will we each decide the middle ground of substantive rigor, humane attention and respect, and flexibility in response to our students. How will we teach holistically? In David Abram's essay, "The Perceptual Implications of Gaia," I was reminded that each classroom creates its own atmosphere, and that it takes time and attention to fully perceive that. My Early Christian History class this Fall will not be the same as last Spring's. As I perceive our class atmosphere, how will I follow our breath? What are the

pressing questions and goals of myself and the students and what are their shared effects in our environment? I was reminded of the mystery and magic of a classroom. It's not easy to wait and breathe in order to perceive how learning will most fruitfully take shape. There are dead ends, wonderful discoveries of unknown canyons, new touches, seeings, hearings. This mystery in the atmosphere cannot be reduced to empirical technique, the classroom is a learning-living biosphere. Certainly, the essays in Dharma Gaia do not provide explicit formulae for better teaching. It was not written with that in mind. But reading it, I found a wonderful source of imaginative images, unexpected and relevant patterns, and profound insights relevant to all teachers and learners.