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Culture and Place: A Legacy Darrell Kipp Helped Create

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Abstract

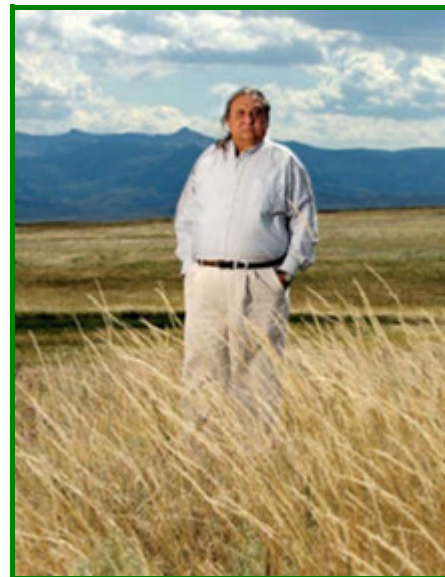
Darrell Robes Kipp was a Blackfeet elder who was a national leader in the language immersion movement. He co-founded the Piegan Institute, and its schools have become a model for those seeking to preserve and promote their native language. In addition, he served as a Visiting Native American Scholar at Oklahoma State University. In that role, he helped the Adult Education graduate program infuse culture as a natural part of the learning process. From this base, the Adult Education program created a course called Culture and Place and which was taught several times. This course was based on the assumption that culture and place are inseparable and that they reinforce each other. Following campus-based preparation, this course involved students traveling to on-site locations in Montana to interact with local adult educators and to Highlander Research Center in Tennessee. The students found this experience a transformational event in both their education and their lives.

Remembering Darrell Kipp

If every time an elder dies in a cultural community, it's like a library burning down, then on November 21, 2013, the Blackfeet Tribe lost their Library of Congress. For on that day, Darrell Robes Kipp passed away. Kipp was a Blackfeet author, historian, film-maker, and, most importantly, educator. Kipp rose from a humble background on the Blackfeet Reservation to become "a leader in the language preservation movement" (Ogden, 2008, para. 70).

Valuing Education

Kipp's life experiences taught him about the struggle for an education and the value that it can



provide. Kipp came from a household where his mother had completed 10th grade and his father had finished 3rd grade. His first 8 years of schooling were in a one-room schoolhouse in a rural community on the Blackfeet Reservation which was 10 miles away from the main reservation community where he completed high school. Although he was not adequately prepared for college, he persevered and earned his bachelor's degree with a major in English in 1966 from Eastern Montana College (Kipp, 2000, p. 2). Following a tour of duty in the military, he returned in 1970 to the Blackfeet Reservation and taught English at Browning High School. However, he did not find this a fulfilling experience; Kipp said, "As a student I was an inmate there, and when they hired me as a teacher, I was essentially a guard" (Ogden, 2008, para. 46). By 1974, Kipp was on his way to Harvard where he graduated with a Masters of Education degree with a focus on social change and institutional change (Kipp, 2000, p. 2). At Harvard, "Kipp came to understand that his people were collectively suffering from something akin to post-traumatic stress syndrome. Language, Kipp believes, has the power to heal those wounds" (Ogden, 2008, para. 31).



Kipp had a passion for learning and focused this on his native language and culture. Along with Dr. Dorothy Still Smoking and Thomas Edward Little Plume, he co-founded the Piegan Institute in 1987. The Piegan Institute is a nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to researching, promoting, and preserving

Native languages. The vision of the Piegan Institute is both local and national where:

Our community-based objectives are to increase the number of Blackfeet language speakers, to increase the cultural knowledge base of community members, and to actively influence positive community-based change. Our national objectives are to promote support for Native language issues through advocacy and education and to provide a voice to the national and international dialogue on Native Language restoration. (Piegan Institute, n.d., para. 3)

Language Immersion Movement

The tool that Kipp and his co-founders used at the Piegan Institute is language immersion. The language immersion model is an educational process that immerses the students in the native language throughout the entire school day. All school subjects are taught in the native language. Only Blackfeet, or Piegan, is spoken in the Piegan Institute schools. The Piegan Institute's schools are based on the belief that "the best way to acquire a second language is the same way children acquire a first language: Immerse students in a second language-rich environment rather than the traditional teaching-learning situation" (Reyhner, Echo-Hawk, & Rosier, 2009, p. 91).

Under Kipp's direction, the Piegan Institute established several immersion schools, and

Current results reveal that the program has had a profoundly positive influence on Blackfeet youth. There is an increase in academic achievement, positive Native identity, self-esteem, and an increase of young people speaking in their Native Blackfeet Indian language. (Benham & Cooper, 2000, p. 169)

Since its founding, the Piegan Institute "has developed a national reputation for innovative programming, and its success inspired Kipp and his colleagues to launch Nizipuhwahsin (Real Speak) School, a Blackfeet language immersion school for children kindergarten through eighth grade. The school offers a complete



curriculum in Blackfeet and has won international recognition for its success reversing the decline in the number of native speakers of Blackfeet” (Newberry Library, n.d., para. 2).

Kipp contributed to the language preservation movement with both action and ideas. Not only has his Blackfeet language immersion school for grades K-8 “become a model for indigenous peoples worldwide” (Ogden, 2008, para. 5), but his clearly articulated ideas and encouragement have provided guidance on how to develop successful native language programs. In his often-referenced book, he starts with a summary that provides a laser-like focus on the priorities for success:

Keep in mind that the language is the key. There is nothing else. There is no other priority. There are no other issues. There is no reason to defend your motives, your actions, or your vision. You do not defend yourself, your own language fluency, or lack of fluency. You do it. Action is the key. Native children who are actively speaking the language are your only results. (Kipp, 2000, p. 1)

Kipp offers four simple rules to implement these priorities for developing a program to revitalize the language. These rules are:

- Rule 1: Never Ask Permission, Never Beg to Save the Language
- Rule 2: Don’t Debate the Issues
- Rule 3: Be Very Action-Oriented; Just Act
- Rule 4: Show, Don’t Tell. (pp. 5-19)

To complement these rules, “use your language as your curriculum—botany, geography, political science, philosophy, history are all embedded in the language” (p. 1).

Kipp’s commitment to preserving and promoting the Blackfeet culture through its language is recognized and appreciated by those who knew and worked with him. Kipp “was the one who sounded the siren [for language preservation]....He wasn’t the only one, but he was the one who sounded it very loudly on a national level.... He’s sort of legendary in that sense” (Ogden, 2008, para. 71).

A Personal Note and Call to Action

The giant described above is the man that most of the world knew as Darrell Kipp. Lesser known is the way that he helped energize the Adult Education program at Oklahoma State University. During the Spring Semester of 1999, Darrell took time out of his busy schedule to serve as a Visiting Native American Scholar in a project funded by the Kellogg Foundation. The purpose of the Native American Visiting Scholar program was to bring outstanding scholars from the Native American community to campus to serve as a role model for others and to help the university reach out and provide more services to the tribal people of Oklahoma. During this 8-week appointment, Darrell





taught two graduate-level seminars. One was on the main campus in Stillwater, and the other was on the rapidly-developing campus in Tulsa. The remainder of his time was devoted to activities that he initiated that he thought would help the university better serve the people of Oklahoma.

Darrell's presence dramatically changed the Adult Education graduate program at Oklahoma State University. Through the dynamism of his personality, the stories that he told, the examples that he shared, and the readings that he encouraged, the students overwhelmingly grasped the importance of culture on learning. Although groundwork had been laid previous to Darrell's arrival, his presence and actions were the catalyst that clearly signaled to students that it not only was permissible to relate culture to learning but that it was also expected for critically thinking students to make this connection. Suddenly, students realized that they could draw upon their own experiences to give meaning to the content about which they were learning. Darrell's rules of not asking permission and being action oriented opened a flood gate of excitement and liberation that remained throughout the history of the program. As word spread about the key role that culture played in the graduate program, a record number of minority students enrolled in and graduated from the program. While many other factors entered into this overall success rate and into the validation of culture as a key element in the learning of these adult graduate students, Darrell's role in this process was remarkable

because it was in his classes that the students first recognized their new empowerment related to culture.

As a result of this newfound spirit and thirst for learning, a series of courses were developed that were titled Culture and Place. The central idea of these courses was that the local culture and the place in which it exists are integrally linked. In addition to energizing students and their families, the courses received the 2003 Curriculum Innovation Award from the Commission of Professors of Adult Education. Like so many other action projects, the details of this project have not been formally documented in the past. However, they are now being recorded because reflecting upon this exciting time and the legacy that Darrell helped create at Oklahoma State University remind me of the haunting words in *The Shawshank Redemption* when Red (Morgan Freeman) talks about Andy (Tim Robbins): "Still, the place you live in is that much more drab and empty now that they're gone. I guess I just miss my friend."

Culture and Place

Culture and Place was an Adult Education class that was been taught over a 4-year period during the summer school session. It was based on the assumption that culture and place are inseparable and that they reinforce each other. It involved students traveling to on-site locations to interact with the sites and with directors of adult education agencies to view and discuss the impact





of the local culture on the development and operation of the agency. These classes involved students traveling from Oklahoma to Montana and to Tennessee. Each location was visited twice. Class sizes grew from 16 for the first class to 54 for the last class.

The Culture and Place class developed as a result of the relationships and interests stemming from a W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant received by Dr. Gary Conti shortly after his move from Montana State University to Oklahoma State University (OSU). This grant provided for various Visiting Native American Scholars to come from Montana for an 8-week period to teach classes at OSU and to conduct liaison activities with the local tribes in Oklahoma. The purpose of the grant was to provide Native American scholars with teaching experience in higher education and to help establish ties between the OSU Adult Education program and tribal communities. In addition, the activities associated with the class provided a public recognition that culture, the discussion of cultural issues, and the recognition of cultural origins were a legitimate part of the Adult Education program.

As a result of the classes taught by the Visiting Native American Scholars, the concept of the influence of culture on learning was infused into the Adult Education curriculum. The visiting scholars taught courses both on the main campus in Stillwater and on the new and developing campus in Tulsa. The greatest

impact was in Tulsa, and these classes had some students who drove 120 miles from Oklahoma City.

These classes and the development of a cultural theme related to the program facilitated the recruitment of ethnic minorities in the program, and the Adult Education program grew to have approximately 30% minority students. This was over 50% above the minority representation in the state population, and the Adult Education program was recognized by the Graduate College for its leadership in the graduation of African-American and Native American students. The activities from the Kellogg grant for Visiting Native American Scholars and the classes that developed from it played a key role in making this high minority success rate possible.

Several classes and activities developed as a result of the seminars taught by the Visiting Native American Scholars. One of the visiting scholars was Dr. Dorothy Still Smoking who is an international leader in the language immersion movement. Language immersion is a process of preserving and promoting native language by creating programs that totally immerse the learner in the language and its cultural ramifications. While Dr. Still Smoking was in Oklahoma, an all-day conference was organized on the OSU-Tulsa campus to provide the participants with information about the immersion concept and to stimulate them to take action to begin to implement the immersion concept in their tribal communities. In addition, it was hoped that the





participants would become aware of the language situation in other tribes and that they would begin to develop stronger networks with others concerning the immersion concept. The conference had approximately 110 participants representing 19 tribes. The students from the Adult Education program participated in the planning and the conducting of the conference. As a result, they gained direct experience with cultural issues in the Native American community and observed the impact of culture on learning and on people's lives.

Several additional classes developed from the seminars taught by the visiting scholars. One class was a cooperative effort with the Graduate College. The Dean of the Graduate College had a special commitment and sensitivity to Native Americans and their role in the history of Oklahoma. This was reflected in his hiring practices and in an interdisciplinary committee that he had set up. Despite his constant efforts, he was not successful in getting any classes related to Native American topics started in Tulsa, which is just a little over an hour's drive from the tribal headquarters for the Cherokee Nation and near several other tribes. Therefore, one Visiting Native American Scholar seminar was rolled into a regular 3-credit class and was promoted to the entire community. Since most native languages are oral, art serves as a means of documenting and communicating many things that are done in writing in communities with a written language. Therefore, various expert Native American artists were enlisted to present in the class. Their art included

numerous media such as painting, pottery, jewelry making, and beading. Most of the class sessions were held in the artists' studios. One session was held in the Gilcrease Museum where the artist's work was on display. The class was initiated by a presentation by the Chief of the Cherokee Nation. This class firmly established the commitment of the Adult Education program to a cultural component in its curriculum and excited students about the influence of culture on learning.

Three other classes reinforced and further developed the commitment to culture in the curriculum. One was a course on Comparative Cultures: African-American and Native American Cultures. As a result of the course emphasizing the role of art in transmitting the culture, the students requested a course that would allow them to explore the similarities and complementary nature of the African-American and the Native American cultures. In addition, the students requested that Dr. Still Smoking be asked to return to teach a class that further explored her work with Blackfeet elders. Since the elders in any community are the keepers of the knowledge, a qualitative research course was developed on Research in the Community. Finally, another qualitative research seminar was taught on Writing Personal Histories by another Montana scholar that the students had met as a part of the cultural exchange activities. Collectively, all of these activities created a climate in which the students consciously reflected upon the role of culture in learning. As a result, students repeatedly



voiced the need to actively go on-site to actually experience the cultures about which they were learning. This led to classes being planned to visit Montana to learn more about the Native American cultures and to visit Tennessee to learn at the Highlander Research and Education Center of Myles Horton.

The Culture and Place classes were taught for four summers. The first and third year the classes went to Montana; the second and fourth year they went to Tennessee. The courses were originally taught under a "special issues" number, but a permanent number was later approved for the course. Each of the classes involved approximately 1-week of travel on-site. Class meetings before the travel involved orientation sessions related to the travel, discussions of readings for the course, and assignment of group topics for responsibilities during the visit. Post-visit activities involved discussions and reflections on the visit.

Culture and Place in Montana

The central focus of the classes that visited Montana was to explore the concept that culture and place are yoked concepts. That is, they are inseparable and pull together. To do this, a variety of adult education agencies were visited. Knowles' classic categorization of adult education agencies was used: central function, secondary function, allied function, or non-educational agency (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, pp. 151-177). Agencies were visited in both Montana and neighboring Alberta, Canada. These agencies included world class and local museums, interpretive centers, historical societies, a progressive ranch, tribal and Canadian community colleges, Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, Chief Joseph Historic Site, the Blackfeet pow wow, the Piegan Institute language immersion school, a cultural preservation agency, buffalo jumps, and a Native American community center. The readings for the course included: *Saga of Chief Joseph* (1941/1965) by H. A. Howard, *Unbounded Horizons: The Responsive Mind in Place* (1998) by E. L. Kittredge, and *Tribal Education: A Case Study of Blackfeet Elders* (1996) by D. Still Smoking.

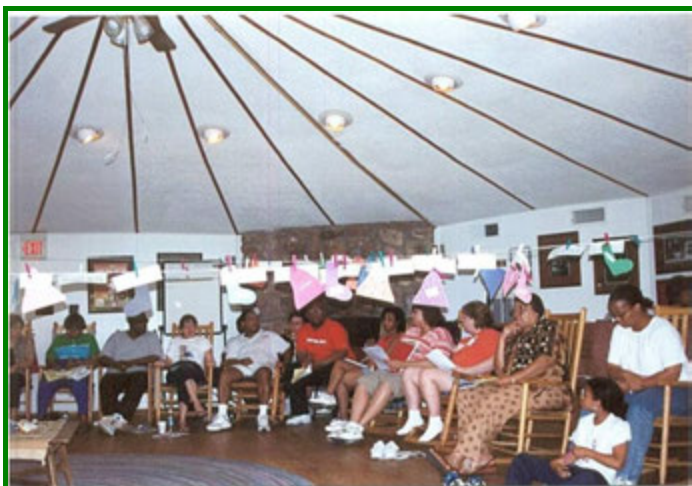
In addition to students doing unique things such as



participating in a pow wow and walking the sites of ancient buffalo jumps, other things developed from the trips. As a result of the informal discussions, one student volunteered her technical expertise to develop a website for the progressive ranch that was visited; she used this as a class project at the technical college which she teaches and thereby introduced her entire class to the Montana culture. Another student formulated her dissertation as a result of discussions between sites. Both Montana and the students experienced the impact of racial diversity as a group with a large number of African Americans traveled a state with less than .01% Blacks. The visit to the Cree community center in Medicine Hat, Alberta, sparked a theme for a doctoral dissertation writing class that was formed when the students returned. Finally, the visit to Montana created a tremendous desire by students to visit the Highlander Center.

Visits to Highlander: Harvesting Seeds of Fire

Highlander Research and Education Center is a very special place in the Adult Education movement and the efforts to empower disenfranchised groups in America. The center, which is often referred to as Highlander Folk School, was founded by Myles Horton in 1932 in Tennessee. As a true continuing educator, Horton declared that "nothing will change until we change—until we throw off our dependence and act for



ourselves” (Moyers, 1983, p. 248). With this guiding principle, Highlander has been in the forefront of the Labor Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, environmental issues, and international cooperation of disenfranchised people. Highlander holds the copyright on “We Shall Overcome,” and Horton was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize early in the 1980s. In his two-part special on Horton and Highlander for the Public Broadcasting System, Bill Moyers pointed out that:

In the early 1950's, Horton turned the emphasis of his workshops from union organizing to civil rights. Highlander was now a principal gathering place of the moving forces of the black revolution. Martin Luther King came; so did Rosa Parks, Andrew Young, Julian Bond, Stokely Carmichael, and scores of unsung foot soldiers in the long march of Southern blacks toward equality. The state tried to close it down; the Klan harassed it; state troopers raided it. But Highlander seemed indestructible, and so did Myles Horton. (p. 248)

Rosa Parks attributes her courage for standing up to oppression to her experiences at Highlander. Martin Luther King was the featured speaker at the school's 50th anniversary. Throughout the years, countless adult educators have turned to Highlander for inspiration and for a source of ideas on how to apply adult learning principles in a fashion that will result in community-based change.

The ideas and mission of Highlander and the adult learning principles practiced by Myles Horton had a

central role in the graduate program in Adult Education at Oklahoma State University. In addition to visiting Highlander several times and interacting with Horton, one of the program's professors, Dr. Gary Conti, had published several articles and booklets on Horton and Highlander. He also hosted the last trip that Horton made to the reservation communities in Montana. Because of the importance of Horton's ideas and of the faculty connection with Highlander, students in the graduate program had read much about Highlander. However, just covering the ideas of Horton as part of other classes did not satisfy the learning needs of many of the students in the program. The OSU students in Adult Education had studied these things; now they wanted to visit the actual site and to experience and touch history. Therefore, they took the lead in requesting and organizing a continuing education experience that extended the functions of a traditional educational program.

The purpose of the class was to study Highlander while at Highlander and in a Highlander fashion. Therefore, the trips to Highlander were organized as retreats. While conferences are organized on the behaviorist model, retreats differ from conferences in that they are based on the humanistic model. People come first, and the agenda is a flexible guide to facilitate their learning. At Highlander, music is an important vehicle for providing people with a common oral language, and the folk stories of the people are a





mechanism for helping them reflect on their past and their culture. Consequently, the course was set up to analyze the role of adult education in social justice movements by doing a case study of Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School.

Together the students and faculty planned a course that involved both an in-depth study of the principles and practices of Highlander and also involved a field-trip to the Highlander Center in New Market, Tennessee. This course and retreat was organized under the title of “Harvesting Seeds of Fire: The Highlander Experience.” The academic and preparation stage of the course involved students meeting in formal and informal groups to discuss readings, view videos, and listen to audio tapes related to Highlander and the movements with which it has been associated. Study groups were formed related to Music and Culture, Civil Rights, Participatory Research, Paulo Friere, and Economic Development and Community Action. Each of these groups was responsible for a presentation at Highlander. Students prepared for this learning experience and their presentations from a library of books that had been purchased from the bookstore at Highlander and from books written by or about Myles Horton.

First Trip

After numerous weeks of meetings and reading a common core of material, the group set out from Tulsa to Highlander, which is located approximately 20 miles

from Knoxville. The 27 people in the group caravanned in personal autos so that group learning could occur during the trip. Those in the cars included the graduate students, family members, and special guests who had a burning desire to learn more about Highlander. Like the typical participants in workshops at Highlander, the group included a diverse group in terms of gender, age, and ethnic origin including Blacks, Whites, and Native Americans. Two cultural leaders from the Blackfeet Reservation, two community educators from Montana, two teacher-educators from Ohio, and one international student from Africa participated. Since the trip was approximately 800 miles, the group stopped in Memphis for the evening. While there, the group visited Beale Street and Graceland.

In the Highlander fashion, the exact format for the three-day workshop at Highlander was generated by the participants once they arrived. Because of the role of music in Highlander’s history, the Music and Culture group took the lead in weaving elements of music and culture throughout all of the sessions. The clock was completely disregarded, and educational sessions and informal meetings were held throughout the day and night. Meals were learning sessions. Informal discussion groups met throughout the day and evening in the meeting rooms, the library, and the dorms.

The purpose of the retreat was to talk, think, and reflect about Highlander while actually at Highlander. To further stimulate this, two Highlander-style mini-workshops were embedded within the overall work-





shop. One workshop was conducted by a community educator from Montana and started the participants in the process of writing their personal histories. The other workshop was conducted during one of the breaks and taught the participants how to bead.

This class was a transformative learning experience for all those involved. The aura of being at this special place and of actually finding and holding documents in the archives written and signed by famous Americans such as Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King impacted everyone both intellectually and spiritually. Participants left with a changed spirit about themselves, their educational program, and the power of education. The group members continued to exchange photos, e-mails, and impressions long after their return home. One student changed the focus of her dissertation research because of the visit, and another planned a trip back to Highlander for a more in-depth search of the archives. All felt that they have joined as a foot soldier in the march for human justice that Highlander signifies.

Second Trip

Because of the long hours spent in travel and because of the learning opportunities that are possible when in a group, a 54-passenger bus was chartered for the second visit to Highlander. This allowed guests, spouses, significant others, and children to participate in the activity. In order to plant the seeds for a future generation, the costs for three of the children were covered by a special fund available to Dr. Conti from a gift from Dr. and Mrs. Charles R. Sachatello. Learning

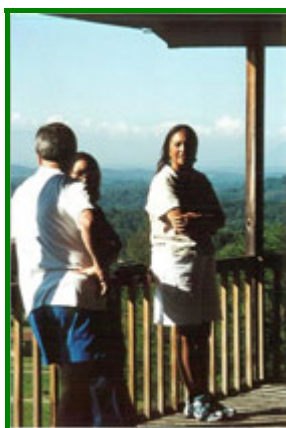
activities on the bus included songs and viewing movies that dealt with either social justice, authority, or teaching themes.

One night on the trip was spent in Memphis. This allowed the group to dine and spend an evening on Beale Street. More importantly, however, it allowed a visit to the National Civil Rights Museum. This museum is built on the assassination site of Martin Luther King, Jr. and is one of the most powerful reminders in the country of the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement. While there were numerous elementary school groups visiting, our group was one of the few totally integrated groups in the museum. While we know the impact the museum had on us, we can only speculate of the impact on hundreds of young Black children who saw our group members embracing each other in tears as they went through the museum together.

The Highlander trip provided the Adult Education students with a chance to touch history. Everyone in the group was critically conscious about the fact that they were interacting with one of the most crucial elements of American history and that one of their adult education agencies played a central role in this history. Both history and their chosen field of study and professional practice came alive for them!

Just as with the Montana trips, several spin-offs resulted from this visit to Highlander. Two of the participants used their jobs to plan trips for community groups to the National Civil Rights Museum. The students developed a new and deeper sense of the historical perspectives of social justice issues and of the social role of adult education.

Most important, the students experienced a bonding from a common and emotional experience; this bonding allowed them to function as a community in order to support each other through the dissertation process. Finally, seeds have been planted with a group of young people who will carry on the movement.





Discussion

Culture and Place was a series of four courses that allowed the Adult Education program at Oklahoma State University to link adult learning with the context of the culture and place from which it evolves. The courses developed from the activities of the Visiting Native American Scholars program, and the recognition of culture in the curriculum was a factor contributing to the program recruiting a high number of minority students and to them graduating. The courses involved visiting numerous adult education agencies and analyzing how the mission of these agencies is driven by the culture of the local place. These visits provided the students with powerful transformative experiences that vastly expanded the horizons of their educational program and that truly made their educational program a life-changing experience.

Transformative Experience

The students describe these classes as a transformative experience. When they use this term, they understand and mean it in the way described by Jack Mezirow (1991). These are experiences that transformed their perspectives about themselves and about the role of culture. They gained experiences that provided them with concrete examples of important historical events. Moreover, they developed a new understanding and respect for their field of study. Accompanying this was an increased awareness of their

responsibilities as an adult educator. The students who participated in these classes made constant reference to them and consistently said how this participation had changed their lives. Their written comments were also consistent and can be summed up by these two comments: “This course was a reflective INSPIRATION! Thank you for having it!” and “This course was one of the MOST memorable and valuable of my doctoral career—offer more like this.”

Uniqueness

The program was unique because of the place that it visited and the way that it was organized. Highlander has been a catalyst for learning related to social action for over 80 years. The success and power of its adult learning principles have withstood the test of time (Conti & Fellenz, 1986). While there are other special places in the history of the adult education movement in the United States such as Chautauqua, none have had the impact on overall history as has Highlander.

A course on Highlander could have been faculty planned and conducted on a traditional campus. However, this course involved the faculty providing the initial structure and the beginning reading list. Students quickly took control of the exact format of the sessions at Highlander and presented the content. Since music and culture are critical elements used at Highlander to encourage dialogue and reflection on one’s experiences, the Music and Culture group took the lead in organizing the retreat. These themes were reinforced with the mini-



workshops on writing personal histories and on beading. Significantly, the first workshop ended with the group linked together in a darkened room holding candles and singing “We Shall Overcome”.

Quality

Most of the participants considered this class the most important educational experience of their lives. All evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. One African-American student wrote that this class fulfilled a dream that she has had for years since first hearing about Highlander but one that she feared would never be achieved. In a follow-up note, another wrote that she was still in awe that she not only got to visit Highlander but also had a chance to introduce her son to Highlander and to actually conduct a workshop there. As for her son who was on his way to England to work on his master’s degree in history, he applied to the graduate program at Oklahoma State University and earned his doctorate in adult education when he returned from England.

Service Provided

This class provided a unique educational experience for adult learners interested in issues of social justice. The graduate program at Oklahoma State University was expanded to include an in-depth analysis of a special topic that was of great interest to the students. The course was created in response to a student request, and students were involved in every aspect of planning and conducting the course. Community educators from Montana, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Alberta were invited to participate in the class. Thus, the class allowed several adults the opportunity to purposively direct a personally meaningful educational experience.

Contribution to Continuing Education

This course demonstrates that when continuing education activities are based on sound adult learning principles, they can be extremely successful and can be transformative learning experiences for the participants. This course was initiated by the student’s need to know,

was fueled by participatory practices, and resulted in reflective experiences for all. It allowed students to give meaning to their experiences. Moreover, it stimulated them to plan further learning projects.

Replicability by Other Institutions

While the exact atmosphere and dynamics of this class can never be duplicated, the planning model and principles upon which this class were based can be replicated by any continuing education program. Two concepts are especially important. First, classes should be held where they are most appropriate; while one can talk about places like Highlander, many valuable learning situations can only be experienced by direct field visits. Second, learning is a participatory process; those interested in the learning experience should and can be involved in planning and conducting the learning experience. When these two concepts are combined with innovation and trust, incredible adult learning experiences are possible.



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