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Associates Cohort 10: Diverse Educators Read, Converse, and Reflect Together

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A group of varied individuals sit around a convention room table: a middle school principal, a band teacher, an athletic coach, a middle school Spanish teacher, an ESL teacher, and a university teacher educator. They have two things in common: a passion for education and a determination to improve it. As personnel of a local school district and its nearby partner-university, they feel that by working together they can make improvements at both public school and teacher preparation levels. Surrounding tables include a university mathematics educator, an elementary and a high school principal, a school psychologist, a special education teacher, several classroom teachers of various levels and subjects-with between 2 and 30 years of experience--and two members of the district school board. Lifestyles of these individuals range from a 22-year-old Brazilian immigrant, to the almost-60 wife of a college president, to a 40-something principal who spends her summers performing in local theater.

Seated at the front of the room are the executive director of the university-public school partnership to which this district belongs, along with the district superintendent and assistant superintendent, who are facilitating the series of meetings. All participants are determined to renew schooling-but that is about all they share. Is this a context for confrontation and chaos? Or is it a workable setting for understanding, collaboration, growth, and renewal?

The executive director and the two facilitators are not worried by the group's diversity of experiences, interests, and perspectives. They have been in this room many times, with groups just as varied and just as passionate. This is the first session of Provo

School District Cohort 10 of the Associates Program, sponsored by the McKay School of Education at Brigham Young University (BYU), the Provo (Utah) School District, and the BYD-Public School Partnership. Each of the five districts in the Partnership holds its own Associates Program each year. The 25 participants in each cohort (usually 20 from the district and 5 from the university) are chosen for their variety and their commitment to the simultaneous renewal of teacher education and public schooling. Since the Associates Program was began in 1996, over 1000 educators have been involved.

Goodlad (1990) uses a striking metaphor for such diverse participants: "The now separate groups of educators must get their several mansions back in the same house, even if they continue to view their respective mansions as home" (p. 11). During their year of involvement, the associates will attend five 2-day retreats, in an attractive resort-conference environment within about 50 miles of their district, taking them literally as well as figuratively out of their mansions. After these retreats in which they draw their varied mansions of ideas and accomplishments together, learning to see past their differences and to benefit from them, cohort members return to their respective mansions to make them stronger. Darling-Hammond (1997) affirms benefits from this "planned diversity," resulting in "distributed expertise": "Individuals' different knowledge bases contribute to a more thoughtful and complete analysis of problems and solutions" (p. 125)

Most of the associates' time is spent in large- and small-group discussions, although they also hear guest lectures and presentations, view films and videos, and participate in other activities. Meals as well as hotel accommodations are furnished; some groups participate in evening activities, and some groups also visit exemplary

classrooms. This article will describe the development and general objectives of this program, then examine three important benefits, considering both theory and applications for each. Examples will be given from the experience of Provo Cohort 10.

Understanding a Need and Developing a Program

The Associates Program in the BYD-Public School Partnership (BYU Partnership) has evolved over 10 years of collaborative effort. Several individuals involved in early Partnership development had participated in cohorts of the Leadership Associates conducted by John Goodlad and his colleagues at the Center for Educational Renewal and Institute for Educational Inquiry in Seattle, Washington (see Smith & Fenstermacher, 1999). They had found this series of workshops , discussions, readings, and lectures to be a life-changing experience. Steven Baugh, then superintendent of one of the districts, later the Partnership Executive Director who introduced Provo Cohort 10, wrote concerning his Seattle participation,

> I came away from the experience changed. The ideas discussed within the moral dimensions had a powerful effect on me. They made great sense. I felt as though I already believed them but had been given a clear and passionate way to describe them. The concepts were at the core of why I had decided on a career in public education in the first place. I could study, think deeply about, and converse with others about the moral dimensions. The ideas gave me a reason to continue my own work as a school superintendent, despite criticism, long hours, and challenges with the day-to-day operation of a large school system. (Baugh & Williams, 2003, p. 11)

Robert Patterson, the education dean at the founding of the BYU Partnership program, and Kathleen Hughes, its first facilitator-also Seattle participants--explain that leaders of the Partnership felt a need "to expand the number of well-informed, committed supporters who would be both able and inclined to assist in advancing the agenda of renewal" (Patterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 271). Recalling how informed and committed they had become through their participation with Seattle group, they began to think about how such a group might help to meet local needs.

Adapting the Goodlad model became easier as Wilma Smith and Donna Hughes, facilitators of the Seattle group, prepared a Curriculum Resource Packet for school-university partnerships interested in forming their own programs. Dean Patterson was able to come up with $15,000 (later augmented by funding from the State), Kathleen Hughes was able to get a year's sabbatical from her position at Provo School District, and the BYU Associates Program was under way. During the first year (1995-1996) there was one associates cohort, with representatives from schools throughout the Partnership, administrators and faculty members from BYU, and personnel from the Utah State Office of Education. During the second year there were two, as one of the school districts decided to conduct its own program. By the third year, there were six (four of them district directed). During the following six years, all of the districts established programs, with university and partnership support.

Timothy McMannon (1999), a first-hand observer of the Seattle program, notes that to those involved in such endeavors education is "a seamless process of self-improvement" (p. xii). The goal of the BYU Partnership program has been to bring a somewhat awkwardly seamed grouping of ideas and opinions together with the

understanding, trust, and respect to make the product eventually seamless. Wilma Smith (1999), one of the founders and designers of Goodlad's Leadership Associates explained her work, "We wanted this program to make a significant difference in the hearts and lives of the participants.....We did not want the experience to be just one more conference, seminar, inservice session, or faculty development event" (p. 31). The BYU founders and facilitators shared this desire and centered their curriculum, as had the Seattle group, in Goodlad's moral dimensions of teaching:

- To enculturate the youth into a social and political democracy
- To provide access to knowledge for all students
- To practice a nurturing pedagogy
- To provide for responsible stewardship of the schools (Good et al., 1990)

Dufour ( ) notes that teachers *can* facilitate renewal in their schools. Goodlad and his associates (1990) affirm that the renewal will be stronger, more effective, and more lasting if it is done collaboratively by a broader base of stakeholders, including university teacher educators and faculty/administrators from the departments of the arts and sciences, in addition to public school personnel. Goodlad (1999) refers to renewal as "a high-order educational endeavor," and explains, "It is rarely a self-renewal because renewing organisms and ecosystems tend to seek out relevant support from others" (p. xviii). The goal of both Goodlad's Leadership Associates and the BYU Partnership's Associates Program has been to facilitate this process of engendering broad-based support.

Wilma Smith (1999) delineates three major aspects that were essential to the Seattle Leadership Associates, which have been guiding factors in BYU's program as

well: that participants should be able to "concentrate on the themes, participate in conversations (formal and informal) with their colleagues, and have time for reflection, a scarce commodity in the lives of most educators" (p. 37). These three aspects will be considered as they have been facilitated and manifest in the BYU Associates Program, particularly in Provo District's Cohort 10.

Concentrating on Themes

At the beginning and periodically during their year of participation, the associates are given books and professional articles to read in preparation for the sessions. Although the moral dimensions of teaching are disseminated and practiced throughout the BYU-Public School Partnership, conceptions and applications differ sufficiently that grounding is necessary before choices can be made (Soder, 1999) and discussions can be coherent. As DuFour and Eaker (1992) warn those who participate in learning communities, "Those within [the organization] must be guided by core values that grow out of the shared vision. Whereas vision represents the long-term target, values direct the daily efforts toward that target" (p. 37). Those participating in the BYU cohorts share the vision of the moral dimensions, but they need core values, as articulated in the assigned books and articles, in order to validate their thinking and guide their conversations.

Cohorts vary in the readings assigned, as facilitators vary in their experiences and districts vary in their needs. The following are typical: *The Right to Learn* by Linda Darling-Hammond, *The Moral Dimensions of Education* by John Goodlad, *The Public Purpose of Education* by Goodlad and McMannon, *First Democracy* by Paul Woodruff, *Amazing Grace* by Jonathan Kozol, and *Lives on the Boundary* by Mike Rose, along with a number of professional journal articles.

Reflecting on the Leadership Associates in Seattle, Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad (2004) recall, "It was fascinating to observe the nuances of their fresh insights into familiar concepts that had been little discussed with colleagues back home in their settings" (p. 148). Members of the BYU Partnership cohorts commonly have this experience. For example, Isabella, a young ESL teacher, had been struggling to convince her students, most of whom, like herself, were immigrants to the United States, that they were not "second class citizens" because their language, culture, and worldview tended to be different from those of many middle school peers. As Cohort 10 was discussing "The Indispensable Opposition" by Walter Lippman (1939), she found her answer: Differences are not to be suppressed or merely tolerated, but to be valued as essential to the function of any society. Isabella recognized that she must help her students understand that their participation was central to effective function of their school and community. The cohort agreed and supported her in this position, clarifying and reinforcing it. A month later, in the following session, she reported on ways that she had changed some of her conversations with her students.

Marissa, a middle school Spanish teacher in Cohort 10, felt challenged by some of the same issues. She was particularly moved by readings on equal access to knowledge, which included Mike Rose's (1989) narratives of children and youth whose deficiency in the English language and lack of home support had caused them to fail in school. Her school had a high representation of Hispanic students, many of whom felt little personal connection to the school community. "What can we do," she asked her Spanish classes, "to help native Spanish speakers feel more welcome and more at home in our school?" Her students pointed out that all the signs and diagrams guiding people around the school

were in English, making Spanish-speaking students and their parents feel like outsiders. The students worked out a plan to make bilingual signs for rooms and corridors and to create a large Spanish map of the school, to be prominently displayed in the entrance. The students invited their school principal (also a member of Provo Cohort 10) to their classroom, where they gave a persuasive presentation of their plan. Having participated with Marissa in reading and discussing the same items on access to knowledge, the principal was easily convinced.

Donna Kerr (1999), a participant in the Seattle program whose writings are distributed to be read in some of the BYU cohorts, puts a very human spin on the reading-thinking-sharing aspects of the Associates sessions:

> I sometimes find myself yawning at particular academic discourses that I well understand are utterly important, and it worries me. It is the teacher in me who yawns. .....As I interact with students, these works of philosophers (including myself), curriculum theorists, political and social theorists, historians, and others strike me as distractingly, disappointingly beside the point. They do not seem to help me know what to do, how to be with my students and myself, or more generally, how to cultivate living in democratic ways. (p. 127)

Certainly Isabella and Marissa taught their cohort and their school "how to be."

In written evaluations, participants of past BYU cohorts have recalled comparable experiences with new knowledge, awareness and insight into aspects of their profession:

> I am much more aware of issues in education that in the past I haven't paid a lot of attention to-like thestate of education in our nation.

The readings and discussions were of great a benefit to me in reaffirming what I am doing and why it is so important. It is so easy to forget your goal is to drain the swamp when you're waist deep in alligators. The Associates Program was a wonderful process to remind.

I am more knowledgeable about education, and "the more you know the more you want to learn." I definitely will continue to learn, read, and talk about research and to effectively implement new ideas.

I feel like I am more informed and my interest in education/politics has increased because of the discussions we have had and the books we have read and the videos-speakers we have had.

Participating in Conversations with Colleagues

Reading professional texts and reasoning on how they might apply to one's teaching-learning situation is only the beginning of exploring the moral dimensions in the Associates model. As Soder (1999) suggests in describing the Seattle program, "Talking is a critical element ... a way of conversing about the world that increases respect for individual difference and concern for the common weal" (p. 54). He adds that associates should "come to understand that wisdom comes ... from a variety of sources and not just from empirical research written up in narrowly focused research journals" (p. 66). Similarly, Fenstermacher (1999), again in the context of the Goodlad model, comments that open conversation in the program can "allow 'a thousand flowers to bloom' whereby your knowledge, my knowledge, and their knowledge may all be different but equally

respectable" (p. 74). The Leadership Associates in Seattle and the BYU Partnership Associates in Utah provide for this kind of conversation on both formal and informal levels and contexts.

Formal Full-Group Conversations

Provo Cohort 10 discovered the potential frustration and power of "a thousand flowers" when full group discussion centered on enculturating the young into a social and political democracy. Darren, a high school history teacher presented some background on "democratic" concepts espoused by Thomas Jefferson. He then explained how he was modeling democracy in his classroom by letting the students make decisions on areas of study, assignments, deadlines etc. The Jeffersonian concept of rule by the informed majority had worked very well for him, and he recommended it highly. The two English teachers from his high school agreed, emphasizing that students' reading and writing experiences need to be authentic and personally meaningful.

Brad, the middle school band teacher, could no longer control his frustration-"! guess I'm just not democratic, and maybe that means I'm not a good teacher," he sputtered, "but I can't do that. Can you imagine what the band would sound like ifwe voted on where to put a crescendo? I have the knowledge and the skills to lead this band; is it wrong for me to use them?" The coach joined in: "lfwe voted on everything we do on the field-or even on strategies-the kids could never agree."

The teacher educator, who had a little experience with reading and writing about the moral dimensions, reminded them, "Goodlad uses the word *enculturate-to* prepare them to participate and feel comfortable in a democratic culture. He doesn't say we have to apply majority vote or due process to *everything* we do." She turned to the band

teacher, "Can't we enculturate by providing *some* democratic experiences that students have the knowledge and maturity to handle? Choice among several appropriate marches, perhaps?"

"I agree!" The coach was decisive. The elementary special education teacher and her close colleague the school psychologist could affirm the potential advantages of well-structured choice and the dangers of unwise or uncontrolled choice. The three principals in the group had had a variety of experiences with democratic processes (including parent protest over the "democratic" election of the latest homecoming queen).

Sirotnik and his colleagues (2001) state that the Leadership Associates program was intended to be "characterized by a socialization process through which school- and university-based educators ... could transcend their self-oriented educator preoccupations to become more other-oriented" (p. 143). Once Cohort 10 made this transformation to appreciate the contexts and challenges of each other's teaching, they could attach richer and more varied dimensions to the term *democracy,* which all had felt they understood so well. Extending Fenstermacher's (1999) floral analogy, once they got their individual "flowers" on the table and learned to appreciate the variety in the blooms, the democratic arrangement began to make more sense.

Small group Conversations

According to DuFour & Eaker (1992), an important process in renewing schools is for individuals to learn to view their work from different perspectives. As in the democracy experience, large group discussions generate a wide range of perspectives and interpretations. In frequent small group "table" discussions, participants are able to bring perspectives together into tighter synthesis.

For example, in Provo Cohort 10, the small "table" groups were asked to come up with group definitions for *nurturing pedagogy.* At the far-left table, each group member expressed a view:

- Susan, the chair of the district school board, mother of many children, mentioned that nurturing should "inspire" and "motivate."
- Julene, an elementary teacher near retirement after teaching almost 30 years in a low socio-economic school, felt that nurturing should include meeting the personal needs of children, especially those who do not receive adequate affection in their homes.
- Katherine, a confident 22-year-old teacher from the same school, added that nurturing should help children develop confidence in themselves.
- Jean, the 60-year-old elementary school psychologist, expanded *confidence* to include *validation:* "Children need to feel that they are important, that they have potential." She recalled children of migrant farm workers who had never been validated by anyone--especially in a school.
- The teacher educator recalled the chapter the group had just read from Darling-Hammond's *The Right to Learn* (1997), which affirms that teachers must nurture students' talents, capacities and skills--help them learn to think critically and creatively. She also suggested the need to synthesize everyone's ideas (accompanied by eye rolling from Katherine--her former student-who had had enough "synthesis" at the university, thank you).

Alicia, the elementary school principal, attempted to bring things together into a reasoned product--as principals tend to do. Volunteering to act as the group scribe, she

added her principal's consciousness of "required content" and wrote on the chart paper posted beside the table: "Nurturing pedagogy is the synthesis of the inspirational, individualizing, and care-based elements of education with the content, knowledge, and skills elements."

During the subsequent sharing of definitions, Darren, the history teacher, teased, "It sounds so intellectual." Susan, glancing at the composition of this particular table, replied, "We're women-we have to get everything [and everyone] in."

Not all assigned conversations work this smoothly, of course. During another discussion a group composed of most of the same individuals had been told to talk about equal access in district schools, but ended up on how difficult it is to work with unengaged parents. What most remembered afterward was the story Jean told of the mother who was half an hour late for an appointment because she found roadkill on her way to the school and needed to take it home for dinner. The group did learn, in a rather striking way, to avoid becoming angry or jumping to conclusions when a parent is difficult to understand.

Informal Conversations

Feeding 25 people for a total of 10 days can be expensive, but Associates Program organizers consider these meals to be of special importance. Conversations begun at the formal round tables tend to continue as the table groups dissolve into a lunch line or regroup in the hotel "grill" for breakfast or dinner. Concerns raised or ideas generated re-emerge as different combinations of individuals move with their breakfast trays in the same general direction. The informal settings promote less directed, inhibited thought and freer, more personal modes of expression.

For example, Isabella and Marissa, the Cohort 10 ESL teacher and Spanish teacher, who had both graduated from BYU, told the teacher educator they had really enjoyed their university experience, but wished they could go back and take some classes in areas that as students they had not realized they would need. "What would help you?" asked the professor, thinking of the students she taught who were majoring in Spanish teaching and ESL. As the young teachers talked about the situation of minority students in their low socio-economic school and the additional knowledge they wished they had, the teacher educator was able to see ways in which some of the needed material could be slipped into her own courses as part of existing units and assignments. These needs and views would not have come up as a natural part of the day's focus on providing access to knowledge; they would not have been of much interest to most of the group. But they certainly affected ideas and applications for access to knowledge for these three individuals.

Written comments from members of earlier cohorts echo the experiences of Cohort 10.

> It is an excellent opportunity to interact with other educators who differ in experience and learn from and with them.

> The fact that we have a group made up of teachers at every level in our district and we are collaborating on issues brings us out of isolation and [gets us] working for the greater good. Inclusion of board, superintendent, and BYU profs was wonderful.

Diversity of composition of cohort is valuable. To listen to different viewpoints during discussion was enlightening.

I've gotten ideas from teachers at the program that I've used in my class and grade level. .....This was an awesome opportunity!

Reflecting: In Conversation and in Writing

Reflective Conversation

Conversation has benefits beyond sharing, and those who designed and plan the BYD-Partnership Associates Program have provided for this important aspect of learning. Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) claims that people learn by "articulating what they know." She clarifies, "Opportunities to talk give learners access to the pre-existing knowledge structures embedded in language, so that they have ready-made concepts and cognitive structures at their disposal when they are ready to use them" (p. 130).

Members of Cohort 10 had a moving experience with reflective conversation as they were asked to read *Freedom Writer's Diary* (1999), a compilation of journal writings by high school students in a racially/culturally diverse and violent area in California-fighting was constant, violent, and often deadly. Over a period of four years these students learned tolerance, nonviolence, respect, understanding, and eventually appreciation and unity. Both the elementary school and the middle school represented in the cohort were in areas with high minority and poverty populations; they experienced aspects of the conflicts described in the book, though not to the intensity of the beatings and killings related in the students' narratives. Cohort participants were asked in advance to reflect on the diary entries in terms of the four moral dimensions: enculturation,

access, nurturing, and stewards hip. With sufficient time AND the admonition to reflect, cohort members found personal and group meanings in the text.

For example, Cohort 10 still struggled with defining *democracy* and comprehending ways that enculturation can take place. Twice during the Associates meetings Isabella, the 22-year-old Brazilian-born ESL teacher, asked with a sense of deep frustration and sadness, "How can I teach my students the duties of citizenship when they are not citizens? When I myself am not a citizen?"

Her close friend and colleague Marissa, Spanish-teaching granddaughter of Mexican immigrants, called attention to a diary entry from a Hispanic student who discovered his personal citizenship when two of his closest friends were killed in a robbery attempt, leaving him as one of the oldest teens in the barrio:

> I didn't want the younger ones to look up to me when I was a loser. I had done so much to hurt my community and now it was time to do something to help it.....I guess it's never too late to change in life.....It really all depends on how badly one wants to change. (p. 63)

"He finds respect in assuming responsibility in his community," Marissa concluded. In her own life she had dealt with issues of position and respect in both Hispanic and Caucasian communities. She had become comfortable in her roles, but she watched her students struggle.

Others began to extend Marissa's reflection in directions she had not anticipated. The coach continued, "Responsibility took hold.....Students became insiders by making change-contributing to change." Thinking of the social and behavioral struggles of many young children in their Title I school, the group of elementary teachers and special

educators added that there are segments of society that "make us feel disenfranchised" until we do find our citizenship.

Susan and Anne, school board members of the majority middle class, brought up the way Freedom Writers from outside the barrio and the "hood" gained their own sense of responsibility as they reached out to those who were struggling for a sense of their rights, responsibilities, and citizenship:

> Even though I don't have my own sad story, I am willing to help, listen, and encourage other Freedom Writers to tell their stories .....Our camaraderie has more than just two sides, and I feel really fortunate to be a part of this new movement that's not just black and white. (p. 161)

The table of teachers/administrators from a high socio-economic high school put the question on a less personal level: "What in our school system teaches us that we are all part of the human race and which tell us that we are not?" The coach suggested that teachers can and should assume the decisive role: "The teacher [of the Freedom Writers] modeled the whole idea of being a citizen .....*She* helped them find their citizenship."

No definitive answer developed-none should, and none should be attempted. It is the nature and purpose of Associates cohorts to explore and reflect together. In the varied perspectives and through the sharing, all were renewed in their desire to serve, help, *and-yes-enculturate* their students as these young people--of all ages-are challenged in finding their own roles and goals in the context of democratic living.

Reflective Writing

Thus the process of using language to reflect begins in the conversations of the cohort groups. However, Associations Program planners recognized that through

writing, the symbolic and synthesizing language process can be extended further to make reflection more specific and meaningful.

Donald Graves (1978), a teacher educator in the area of writing pedagogy, makes an apt analogy for the effect of writing on experience: "Writing is a kind of photography with words. We take mental pictures when we're out walking, but don't really know what we have seen until we develop the words on the page through writing" (p. 24). The varied, fragmented nature of group learning that embraces readings, presentations, and discussions by a diverse group of individuals on the same topic needs a fairly complete development process in order to become clear, accurate, and useful. Impressions need time and proper (mental) chemistry in appropriate contexts to come together as meaningful pictures. The search for words forces the mind to clarify experience, and the slowing of the mind to accommodate the hand allows the mind to reach out to draw in and synthesize earlier knowledge and impressions.

For this reason, cohort members are given journals at the beginning of their first session, with time to reflect and write at the end of each day's meetings. Many choose to also write during breaks or after meals, when experiences were still fresh. Others find that reflecting and writing at night in their hotel rooms is beneficial.

On occasion some journal entries are shared (voluntarily) by participants during the meetings. In Cohort 10 the participant most often asked to read her journal entries was Julene, the elementary teacher with 30 years of classroom experience and a strong sense of mission for helping troubled children. "Julene says things so eloquently," her tablemates insisted. But on close analysis, it was not merely Julene's ability with language that made her written comments so impactful on her associates; it was their

depth, their feeling, their insights and applicability. She had gone through the same readings/discussions/activities as the others; it was her development that was powerful-she brought to the processing of her film the unique chemistry of her experiences, her beliefs, and her character.

Responsible stewardship is another moral dimension that was difficult for members of Cohort 10 to conceptualize and define.

The coach focused on his strong sense of stewardship for his individual students: "Parents of my students remind me of what my role is. Former students and parents of former students remind me as well."

The Title I elementary school principal wanted to reach further: "I am a member of a society that wants to bless all children."

But the principal of the largely minority middle school was cautious: "Someone's 'good intentions' can go in dangerous directions."

To break the tension (but still make a serious point), Jean-the school psychologist-suggested that if cohort members really wanted to understand issues of consciousness and regulation of stewardship, they should start an Islamic charter school-in their predominantly Christian community.

All cohort members were asked to think about these issues overnight and write out their own definitions of *stewardship*. The following morning small groups were asked to come up with group definitions-reflection on reflection. One of the groups brought together diverse opinions and experiences in this written statement:

Stewardship could perhaps be conceived as a series of concentric circles. The stewardship I *have* to assume is for a limited "assignment": my own children, my

students, groups or committees on which I have been "asked" to serve. But in the next circle is the stewardship I *can* assume: colleagues at work, friends in the neighborhood, or members of my religious congregation. Another circle is those I *may* influence: those who hear my contributions in a meeting, or perhaps hear me speak at an educational or public service presentation-possibly fellow members of Cohort 10. A final stewardship is those I *might* influence: those who read something I may publish or possibly hear something quoted by a student or parent from many years ago. Gradually stewardships become paler and less precise. Responsibility is less pronounced and defined. But any of these can be a joyful stewardship when it is a stewardship of choice-a stewardship of the heart.

Conclusion: Graduation

When the cohorts of the Associates Program complete their year of participation, all members receive a plaque with their name, cohort number, and year, with a couple of emblems and insignias. Some cohorts pass out programs with lists of names; others are less "official." Provo cohorts tend to keep formality and ritual to a minimum: plaques are handed around and passed back and forth. This wasn't quite enough for Brad, the band teacher-he began singing "Pomp and Circumstance" at the top of his voice. As veterans of more graduations than they would like to count, several of the others joined in. Once honored and certified, cohort members wrote final journal reflections, filled out exit surveys, and dissolved into conversations.

What did the associates take away, in addition to the pomp and the circumstance? All had a chance to get away from classrooms, offices, computers, and telephones-

although some kept laptops and cell phones close by. All had a chance to withdraw for two days from troubled and troubling students-although most found themselves thinking and talking about these students constantly. Whenever several participants from the same school got together, an informal learning community seemed to form. Whenever there was a presentation or discussion, regardless of the topic or direction, someone always had a student-past or present-who had met the challenge or struggled with the process. No matter where you take them, teachers cannot stop being teachers.

On a deeper level, each participant went through experiences, changes and renewal that were experienced differently. The moral dimensions are abstract concepts/ideals, and cohort members took varying definitions, perceptions, and applications into the sessions. They read a variety of perceptions and positions, becoming aware of issues and complexities that had not earlier been a part of their thinking.

Reading is one way of gaining information; conversation extends, enhances, and enlarges the reading experience. During both official and unofficial discussions participants learned to view their field through multiple lenses and to think as other people think. Interpretations generate interpretations, and ideas build on ideas-everybody contributed, everybody grew.

Finally reflection-both between and within seeking minds--allows still more of an individual's potential to emerge. We find out what we know as we struggle to find words for it. Associates engage in this struggle and this learning together.

Wilma Smith (1999), one of the original founders of the parent Goodlad program, wanted the Leadership Associates to "make a significant difference in the hearts and lives of the participants" (p. 37). Today in Provo District Cohort 10, some such differences have been achieved.

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