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Identifying a Need for the Development of a Culturally Based Leadership Program for the Native American Ho-Chunk Youth

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**Identifying a Need for the Development of a Culturally Based
Leadership Program for the Native American Ho-Chunk
Youth**

**Augsburg College
MAL 597: Independent Study
Dr. John Benson**

**MAL
Thesis**

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**Charity Thunder
July, 1999**

Acknowledgements

I would especially like to thank Dr. John Benson for advising and editing my paper from its initial stages up to the present. During this time Dr. Benson was very insightful and this was very encouraging because interpreting the data was quite cumbersome.

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In addition, I want to thank Scott Beard, Executive Director of the Ho-Chunk Nation Education Department, and Penny Matter, Home-School Coordinator/Tutor at the Black River Falls Senior High, for sharing their thoughts and their commitment to helping the Ho-Chunk youth.

Most importantly, I thank my family for all of their support—spiritually, financially, and physically—which they had given unconditionally. I would not have reached my goal without their prayers and their encouraging words. Pinagigi.

Abstract

This study explores the need for a culturally based leadership program to help the Native American Ho-Chunk youth become effective leaders in their communities. There are but a few studies done on Native American leadership so I have chiefly relied on the empirical evidence collected from several Summer Ho-Chunk Youth Leadership Conferences. As a result, learning the Hocak language was identified as being critical to keeping the culture and traditions alive.

We proceed to do this in four parts. We begin with the statement of the problem. Secondly, we define and clarify terms such as: American Indian, tribe, vision, sovereignty, Native American leadership, culture and clan. Thirdly, we study data from the three leadership conferences for the years 1996, 1997, and 1998. Lastly, we conclude the findings of this study.

We discovered that the Hocak language is essential in any culturally based leadership program. Leadership cannot be separate from Hocak culture, and the essence of culture is language. Thus, culturally based leadership cannot happen without language studies.

It was our recommendation that the Hocak Nation look at the seven stages as a means of addressing stage eight--only a few elders speak. The seven stages indicate where the Nation has been and where they need to be. The stages are as follows:

1. The higher levels of tribal government use the language.
2. Tribal offices use the language.
3. It is used by employees (not supervisors).
4. The Native language is required in elementary schools, not as a second language.

5. The language is still very much alive and used in Native communities and even on a voluntary basis in school.
6. Still some intergenerational use of language at home.
7. Only adults beyond childbearing still speak.

As a result, learning the Hocak language was identified as being critical to keeping the culture and traditions alive.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	Page i
Project Abstract.....	Page ii
Table of Contents.....	Page iv
I. Introduction.....	Page 1
Statement of the Problem	
Background	
Need for Study	
II. Literature Review.....	Page 5
Definitions	
III. Empirical Part – Towards a Concept of Culturally Based Leadership	
Program.....	Page 7
A. Methodology	
B. Youth Leadership Conferences	
IV. Conclusion.....	Page 20
Culturally Based Leadership Program	
References.....	Page 26

Augsburg College
MAL 597
Independent Study

I. INTRODUCTION

Standing Bear's insights really pointed out the need to develop a culturally based leadership program. He said, "...if today I had a young mind to direct, to start on the journey of life, and I was faced with the duty of choosing between the natural way of my forefathers and that of the white man's present way of civilization, I would, for its welfare, unhesitatingly set that child's feet in the path of my forefathers. I would raise him to be an Indian!" (pp. 258-259).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this paper is to argue for the need for a culturally based leadership program to help Native American Ho-Chunk¹ youth become effective leaders in their communities. There are but a few research studies on Native American leadership and only a few empirical studies on Native American educational issues. Since the literature was so limited, I had to rely on empirical evidence to work out my program. What I used was several Summer Ho-Chunk Youth Leadership Conferences with which I am familiar. I saw in these Ho-Chunk Youth Leadership programs, that took place over a period of three years, exactly what I think is needed.

During these five day leadership conferences the youth had the opportunity to learn the technical concepts of leadership and to enlarge their understanding through group discussions with tribal legislators. The cultural aspect of the leadership conference was felt to be crucial to this leadership training. The two, culture and leadership, belong

¹ The Nation's main office is located in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, and the over 5,000 enrolled members reside within a fourteen county area including the four at-large areas (Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, & Twin Cities).

together. So the young people also studied Hocak spirituality, customs and values, language, and relationships (clan and kinship). This had the effect of making the youth more secure with who they were.

We hope to share in this study the need to continue this culturally based leadership program for the Ho-Chunk Native American youth. Our method to collect the data was by using the participant observer method and comparing it with previously obtained data from the leadership conferences held over the previous three years. For example, learning the Hocak language was identified as being one of the more critical needs for keeping the culture and traditions alive, and for developing leadership in this culture. The same is true for Hocak spirituality, customs and values.

It is our contention that there is a need to focus on a culturally based leadership program for the Native American Hocak youth and eliminate all other ways. Also, it is our claim that leadership cannot be taught in the abstract. This will proceed in four parts. We begin with a statement of the problem. Secondly, we define and clarify terms such as: cultural values, American Indian, tribal leader, tribe, vision, sovereignty, Native American leadership, culture and clan. Thirdly, we study data from the three leadership conferences for the years 1996, 1997, and 1998. Finally, we conclude the findings in this study.

Background

The Ho-Chunk Nation consists of four area communities covering a fourteen county area in Wisconsin and the fifth at-large area including Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Paul/Minneapolis. Its government center is located in Black River Falls, Wisconsin.

The total population is approximately 5,748 (April, 1998), 2,831 of the total population reside within the fourteen counties, the other 2,917 being at-large members. The Ho-Chunks were formerly called Wisconsin Winnebagos. The term Hocak (Ho-Chunk) is the original name for this particular Nation. "Nation" is the preferred term, and it is used in the same context as any other politically independent or sovereign state. The Ho-Chunk have always lived in the state of Wisconsin, although government removals have placed them also in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

The importance of leadership was identified at a tribal legislator's meeting held in June, 1998 at the Ho-Chunk Nation's Executive Building in Black River Falls, Wisconsin when the Ho-Chunk Nation Education Department proposed monies for the annual summer youth leadership conference. One of the council members indicated the past conferences focused only on language and culture. Since there were programs to address the language and culture, there was more of a need for the youth to learn the technical concepts of leadership. The council responded to this request with a criticism; past leadership conferences had not emphasized *leadership* enough, so they were reluctant to give money for more summer youth conferences. The proposal was denied.

This reaction has been typical. Even many American Indian leaders don't see that presenting culturally based American Indian views of leadership are relevant. They do not see that leadership is always tied to culture. The Hocak (Ho-Chunk) youth have wanted to learn more about the culture, their language, history, native foods, arts and crafts, respect, family relationships, career orientations, and talking circles, especially discussing youth problems and issues with elders and tribal staff.

However, the conference had already been scheduled, so parents of the youth became

quite angry because the youth were looking forward to learning more about the Hocak language and culture. They demanded a reversal of the education department's decision. They felt that cultural learning was indeed part of learning leadership, so they had indeed been doing what they said they would do.

It is important to the youth and their parents that these leadership conferences continue to provide the culture based aspect because it helps them to understand who they are, where they come from, and what they need to take better care of their communities. The social problems every community faces are well known: high school dropouts, teen pregnancies, chemical dependencies (alcohol/drug addiction), physical violence, suicides, etc. The Hocak community was no exception, but these problems have been 56 percent higher than in the general population, according to statistical data compiled at the tribal and state level.

Need for the Study

The lack of effective leadership programs is indicative of what the problems and issues are currently facing the Ho-Chunk Native American youth. As mentioned, most literature on leadership has focused on Native Americans in education with the exception of the two dissertations by Louie and Funmaker. For the purposes of this paper, Louie's research has helped to define terms such as: Native American leadership, visionary leadership from a Native American perspective, and other terms relevant to this study. Funmaker's study has contributed to defining the term "clan" and how important it is to the Ho-Chunk people. The specifics of the literature will come later in the review.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions

Locating empirical studies on culturally based leadership programs was very difficult because so few have been done. The few studies that have been done pertained to educational issues. Other studies have examined leadership and vision in Indian tribes. "The role of culture has largely been ignored in the study of leadership" (Louie, p. 41). Louie's (1996) study says, "vision was depicted as a "see" word, an image of the future" (p.13). "The tribal leaders' definitions cited four primary visionary attributes: future orientation, image orientation, unity/commonality, and spiritual guidance"(Louie,p.75). Also, "for Indians, leadership is a unique and unusual entity. It comes with a grave responsibility to the people and to their destinies as a society within the context of a larger society" (Louie, p.42).

The best work we could find on Native American leadership is the dissertation by Meyer Louie (1996). So we have adopted his definitions of the terminology we will be using. Louie's purpose was to explore the meaning and importance of "vision" in Native American leadership and to do so from a Native American perspective. They are as follows: (Louie, 1996, p.10):

American Indian: The indigenous people of the U. S., usually enrolled members of a federally recognized Indian tribe. This term is synonymous with "Native American" and "Indian."

Tribal Leader: The "formal leaders" (such as the Tribal Executive, departments heads, program directors, and Tribal Council members) as well as the "informal leaders" (such as the elders and spiritual advisors).

Tribe: A group or division of indigenous people of North America, recognized by the federal government as a group residing within the governmentally determined boundaries of a reserve or reservation.

Vision: An ideal and unique image of the future.

Sovereignty: A vision that one day all Native American tribes will be self-governing, autonomous, and free from the jurisdictional dictates of federal and state governments.

Native American leadership: Leadership that encourages organizations to create holistic workplaces that stress community, nurturance, authenticity, positive relationships, partnerships, support systems, balance, truthfulness, spirituality, and nourishment of the human spirit. Louie claims that this has been the model for Native American tribes for centuries. The ways ancient sacred ceremonies, were conducted, the talking circle, the powwow celebration, and listening to the wisdom of elders were all holistic in nature. Talking circles and the emphasize nurturance, balance, and support and the concept of "the wisdom of elders" presupposes it. Sacred ceremonies, of course, stress spirituality, but also balance, and nourishment. Powwows stress community, authenticity, and positive relationships.

Another important study by Funmaker (1986) has contributed to our understanding the clan system of the Hocaks (Ho-Chunks) which we would agree is also important for any American Indian leader to know. The Ho-Chunk Nation still maintains traditional patterns of social and political organization (Funmaker, p. 14). The tribe is divided in two "halves" or moieties: (a) the Sky moiety and (b) the Earth moiety (Radin, 1915). According to Funmaker, the four clans of the Sky moiety are named for birds and other beings of the heavens while the eight clans of the Earth moiety are named after animals and beings that inhabit the earth and the water (p.14). The Sky moiety includes the Hawk (or Warrior-Spirit), Eagle, Pigeon, and Thunderbird clans (Funmaker, p. 14). The Earth moiety includes the Wolf, Buffalo, Snake, Elk, Deer, Bear, Fish, and Water-Spirit clans (Funmaker, p.14). The principle political positions in the Winnebago (Hocak) tribe

rest with the Thunderbird, Bear, and Buffalo clans (Funmaker, p.15). Funmaker (1986) states, the other clans usually play supporting roles (p.15). They assist the Thunderbird clan and the Bear clan, the “Chiefs,” in discharging their responsibilities (Funmaker).

Funmaker defines culture as a product and governing factor of the social system (p.28)

Culture corresponds to a subset of organized mental phenomena. It is transmitted, learned, and shared by signs and symbols, such as language and ritual, which actors manipulate to encode and communicate meanings. It includes a pattern of meanings such as value standards which participants use to define and evaluate others’ actions. Other cultural patterns enable actors to conceptually define the world, communicate knowledge of it, and describe techniques for acting in it.

Other important aspects of culture are ritual, economics, government, and law (Radin, 1923: 182).

Using these definitions and descriptions, therefore, let us turn to the topic of developing a culturally based leadership program. As mentioned earlier, we will use data we have collected from each of three youth conferences.

III. EMPIRICAL PART-- Towards a Concept of a Culturally Based Leadership Program

A. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was conducted on-site in Black River Falls, Wisconsin where the larger population of the Ho-Chunk youth reside. We have here excluded those who live in the other four areas that comprise the geographic boundaries of the Ho-Chunk Nation. Our

sample consists of approximately fifty five Native American Ho-Chunk youth ranging in ages from fourteen through eighteen, the majority of them residing in the state of Wisconsin. These fifty five participants have attended the annual leadership conferences held every June for five days, the first in Hixton (1996), the second in Eau Claire (1997), and the third in Mauston (1998).

The data has been collected using the "participant observation method." I attended these five day programs and therefore include my own observations and impressions. In addition, however, I have consulted pre- and post-surveys. These surveys² had been taken from the participants (youth) at the conclusion of the summer leadership conference by the Ho-Chunk Education Department for the purpose of identifying those areas within the leadership program that might need to be modified or changed. The parents of the participants had signed consent forms informing them that the information given would remain confidential, and in any case the survey were not signed. What we were trying to determine was whether there is a need for a culturally based leadership conference.

B. YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

THE 1986 CONFERENCE

The first annual Hocak Youth Leadership theme was, "Outlook of Life For Our Winnebago Children/Hope For The Future-CHO-WEJA WOI-KA-RA-KJAMP."

This is precisely what the planners were envisioning for the Hocak youth--to help them gain an outlook of life and hope for the future.

² The data from the surveys remain at the Ho-Chunk Education Department in Black River Falls, Wisconsin and the field notes remain secured at the home of the investigator.

History

This first conference was held on August 11-15, 1986, at the Northwood County Park in Pittsville, Wisconsin. In May, 1986 the Education Subcommittee (Ho-Chunk) received a request from the young people to learn more about Ho-Chunk language and history. This request was carried to the education department on behalf of the Native American students from the Black River Fall School District. The department agreed. It was decided that the emphasis of the conference would be on language, culture, employment and training, personal development, and leadership development.

The activities and events of this conference were specifically tailored to the suggestions the youth themselves had made. Some of these were: to meet more of their tribe and to learn about their culture; to learn more about the way their ancestors lived; to learn more about their heritage; to learn to speak more of the Winnebago (Hocak); and to learn the ways of the Indians. Specifically, the conference offered cultural workshops such as these: extended family & kinship, language, and arts & crafts.

The extended family and kinship topic was designed to give the participants an opportunity to learn and practice using the Winnebago (Hocak) kinship terms. This was accomplished by presenting a chart of these kinship terms, which included the extended family laterally and intergenerationally. An elder helped diagram a typical family unit. All participants then divided into groups after the introduction and a brief explanation of the kinship terms was given. Each member of the group then selected a role within a family member by the appropriate kinship term and each person introduced their family members by name and kinship term to the workshop audience.

Another workshop offered arts and crafts presented by an elder. Her specialty was tanning deerskin hides. She captivated her young people by explaining the process of tanning and displaying the various articles that can be made from buckskin.

Yet another workshop was cultural and several elders taught the youth to play "the moccasin game."

The youth seemed to enjoy learning from the elders, not only these things, but also other activities such as storytelling, and conducting a pow-wow. Other workshop sessions included spirituality and values, history, employment and training, careers options.

In addition to such finely tuned topics, there were also a variety of others. For example, it was during the sessions on spirituality that the youth inquired about the spirit after death, the after life, and spirits that visit us on earth. One elder also spoke on values for young Winnebago (Hocak) girls.

A history session demonstrated how to set up teepees. In addition, the youth had an opportunity to learn Indian songs and games, the history of the Winnebago (Hocak) people, today's Winnebago (Hocak) people, beliefs of our people, what they did to prepare for war, the fur trading era, how to get things back Winnebago (Hocak) lost, and what it was like during the move back to Wisconsin after the reservation was established in Nebraska. The employment and training session included pre-employment training to assist them in acquiring future employment both within the tribal structure and out in the private sector.

The workshop on careers had representatives of various career fields speaking about their work. One was a Wisconsin State Trooper, another worked for the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and another was a Physicians Assistant, and there were others.

During the five day conference the elders tirelessly assisted in every event and activity when their expertise was required. This involvement taught the youth the importance of learning the language, native arts and crafts, and the general culture. Students came away from this camp with the conviction that heritage plays a critical role in each of their lives.

Following this 1986 Hocak Youth Leadership Conference, eleven more conferences (1998) were held annually just like this one with the exception of 1992. Let us look at one more of these, the 1996 conference, before we explain what happened when an entirely new concept was forced on the people in 1997. During this year in 1992, the Ho-Chunk Nation was experiencing political upheaval, during which time opposing political factions facilitated the Nation's funds to be frozen. This decision included program monies that were to be used to sponsor the Ho-Chunk Youth Leadership Conference. Unfortunately, the youth were adversely affected by that action because in 1992, they did not have the opportunity to learn more about their culture and language.

1996 Hocak Youth Leadership Conference

The stated purpose of this tenth annual Hocak Youth Leadership Conference, held from July 14 through July 20, was, again, to teach Hocak youth to take pride in their heritage, to learn their culture, and to teach culturally based leadership skills. This time forty eight students participated, camping out at the Triple "R" Resort in Hixton, Wisconsin. The events and activities this time included concurrent workshops on the following topics: Hocak language (taught by elders), arts and crafts (where they learned how to make moccasins), and leadership development activities. There also were general speakers,

recreational activities and field trips.

The youth this year developed a newsletter in which several of them expressed what they thought of the conference. One commented to me on learning the Hocak language at the conference. She said:

“This is my first year at camp and because of that I thought that the language class would be very hard. But then when we all got together in our groups and sat down, our teacher really made us feel comfortable right away. Plus, she was easy to understand and listen to and corrected our mistakes. She made the Hocak language easy to learn with lots of fun activities. So, now I have learned to count and say lots of words. Even pronouncing the words has come a lot easier. I’m really looking forward to coming next year!”

Another comment I heard was, “The most important part of the conference was the language class. I also made some new friends. My highlight was sleeping and canoeing. It was fun!”

Youth were asked to formally evaluate this conference (as they had been asked to do after every one of these conferences) after they were over. . They were not required to sign their names for purposes of remaining anonymous and completing it more honestly. They rated the presenters, the format of the conference, the purpose of the conference, and their degree of satisfaction with the knowledge gained from this conference. In addition, the education department requested their comments on the stronger and weaker features of the conference, what they would like to learn more about (pertaining to workshop topics), and any other comments. Again, as in all the others, the youth response was overwhelmingly positive.

The positive responses from this conference emphasized language, learning from the elders, dancing at the pow-wow, arts and crafts, Ho-Chunk treaties, traditional Hocak

ways, positive leadership, Hocak history and clans. In fact, the youth wanted to learn more about the language and the culture which they indicated on the evaluation forms. The conference was rated from 1 (excellent) through 5 (poor), and the categories included the presenters, the format for the conference, the purpose of this conference, and their satisfaction with the knowledge gained from this conference.

1997 Hocak Youth Leadership Conference

But now something astonishing happened! Not willing to let well enough, some officials decided to try something different. Instead of the usual culturally-based type of leadership training, they decided to cut out the cultural part. Perhaps without realizing what they were doing, they were borrowing from the wider American culture some of its current speculations about leadership and attempting to pass these on to Ho-Chunk youth. The results, as we will see, was disaster!

The theme for this 1997 conference was, “Leadership: Empowering Youth Through Education.” It was held during the week of July 28 through August 1 at the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. As mentioned in the introduction, the Hocak Nation Education Department had requested monies from the legislative representatives to sponsor this leadership conference, but had been turned down because, in their view, the previous conferences had not emphasized enough the technical concepts of leadership in terms of mainstream America's beliefs about what constitutes leadership.

It was an interesting chain of events that occurred following this council's decision. A newly formed Youth Services Collaboration Committee began to meet to plan for that leadership conference. There was considerable discussion about location, activities, and

events, to not only address the youth's needs, but to satisfy the disgruntlement of the Hocak Nation's elected representatives titled legislators. It was the decision of the Collaboration Committee to develop a schedule of events emphasizing leadership in political terms rather than culturally, as it had always been done before.

Since the emphasis of this 1997 conference focused more on political leadership it centered on the following activities: tribal representatives working with small groups discussing personal views on leadership, working to define what a leader is and discussing the five characteristics of leadership; tribal government process/government role-playing; problem-solving/role-playing, and empowerment. Part of these programs put the youth with tribal government representatives where they together discussed leadership and asked questions regarding their roles as tribal representatives.

This discussion was to help participants define what they believed a leader is and does. It was the job of the tribal representative to work with the youth to learn "the five things" that distinguish a leader from other people (Anonymous, 1998). Here is what the planners mandated that the youth learn:

"A leader is a change leader, a leader is a coach, a leader motivates, a leader communicates and a leader leads change. Hence, a change leader overcomes resistance to change from those who fear losing security, power, or status; and those who fear change because of limited skill, knowledge, or experience. A leader is a coach who develops people's potential, instead of judging their performance. A leader motivates when he or she sets the strongest motivators in motion: belonging, achieving, and recognition. In order to communicate and to lead change a leader gives support, discusses goals, and influences by inspiration, not by imposition.

Furthermore, a leader inspires people, sets an example, and builds trust. He or she makes things happen, is a mentor and coach, is respected and followed, has a clear purpose, single-mindedly pursues common goals, regardless of obstacles or temporary setbacks, leads people to accomplish what they thought impossible, and frees them from their inhibitions and

limitations."

Clearly, these principles were far too abstract to interest Ho-Chunk youth (or any youth for that matter!), and the students therefore responded with boredom and restlessness just as they would in a classroom setting where the teacher was giving a boring lecture. They were clearly glad when it was over.

In another session, five characteristics of leadership were discussed in the work group: intuition, creativeness in problem-solving, analysis, evaluation, and communication. For each characteristic an example was given in the form of stories and exercises to define and clarify the concepts.³ In addition, to help the youth understand the governmental process, a tribal representative was invited to share his experiences and views. These exercises and activities of the whole leadership concept were all tied to culture in order for the youth, by their participation and their listening, to see the correlation between leadership and their particular culture. In this case, the cultural component was taught to the youth in abstract terms because culture was left out of this conference thus making it less interesting.

To understand problem-solving and role-playing, the youth participated in the following activities: the "Indian Reserve Simulation"(Sawyer & Green, pp.107-115) to introduce to non-Indian students some of the social, economic and political realities that affect native people living on reserves; "Identifying and Building Cultural Strengths" (Napoleon, 1969, pp. 57-63) to have students reflect on the cultural strengths in Native communities and Native students, and also to strategize on how to use these strengths in the classroom; and "What Does It Mean to Be Indian"(Sawyer & Jack,

³ Elizabeth M. Christopher and Larry E. Smith, "Activities for cross-cultural communication," Leadership Training: A Sourcebook of Activities (1993): (Published by Kogan Page) 27.

pp. 48-49), to get participants to focus on a range of feelings and attitudes, realizing that as long as they would be happy and content with their definition of being Indian, other people would be less critical.

Moreover, the youth had the opportunity to hear two opening speakers at the general sessions discuss the concept of empowerment. Each of the two speakers developed a theme: "Empowering Yourself Through Leadership" and "Empowering Yourself." These speakers discussed the importance of education to the youth and how they can empower themselves by setting personal goals.

In the small group work, the youth participated in two activities called "Colonialism Game"(Stanford, 1969) and "Indian Self-Government" (Green and Napoleon, 1969). The first had three goals and they were these: to demonstrate the functions and effect of colonialism on an indigenous people, to examine the means used by a colonial power to dismember a traditional society, and to provide an experiential understanding of the historical breakdown of traditional cultures and how the effects of this breakdown affect native people today. The second goal was this: to encourage students to define what they mean by Indian self-government and to compare their definitions to their views of both Native and non-Native experts, and to stimulate discussion on what Indian self-government is, how it should be structured, and how to make it a reality.

Some youth, both during and following the conference, told me that the university environment was too academic and the classroom setting reminded them of school. The absence of cultural activities such as language, arts and crafts, and elders sharing their wisdom even angered some youth, as well as their parents. And the lectures in the classrooms they thought boring. Several of the students said they would not attend next

year's conference. It soon became clear the most important elements of the leadership conference had been missing in this year's experiment. I didn't talk to all of them, and I didn't have access to the official student evaluation forms for this 1997 conference (Were they so bad that they didn't want to share them?), but I would judge that this experiment in non-Hocak leadership training was a failure.

I argue this non-Hocak approach to leadership failed because the youth were not learning in a culturally based setting. The youth wanted to learn more of the Hocak language and the cultural activities because *all leadership is culturally based*, and here that cultural foundation had been eliminated. A few of the students shared their disappointment with me personally, pointing out the unnatural setting of the university and having to sit in the classroom was boring. According to the youth, learning the language was learning the culture, and listening to the elders was learning the history. As mentioned, culture and leadership go hand in hand.

Following this particular conference, I had parents tell me that the youth were very disappointed because the university setting was too much like school and the technical material was too abstract and academic. The parents felt it was a waste of time for the youth to learn about leadership with a non-Hocak approach.

1998 Hocak Youth Leadership Conference

Happily, though, the Hocak leadership learned from this failure and changed. The theme for the conference, in 1998, "A Cultural Gathering of Tomorrow's Leaders," was indicative of what had been learned negatively in the 1997 conference. Here the leaders decided to go back to an American Indian culture approach. For

example, they would emphasize culture and language throughout their five day conference. This one was held at Crockett's Resort in Lyndon Station, Wisconsin; from July 26 through August 1. This year the youth once again built traditional Hocak lodges in which they stayed throughout the conference. In addition to the cultural activities, each day of the five day conference was devoted to a specific Hocak program that directly affected the youth, and such as: health, housing, education, social services and administration.

The topics presented at the conference were: Hocak language and history, Hocak Bison Project, Hocak traditional court and trial court, Hocak respect and responsibilities, tribal leadership, budgeting, HIV/AIDS presentation, youth meet the legislators, youth meet the president, and youth speak out. At the beginning of each day the invocation or a prayer was said by an elder or by one of the Hocak adults selected by the conference coordinator. Another activity enjoyed by the youth were the talking circles where they discussed the topics of the day and other items of interest to the youth.

Henceforth, the leadership conference devoted at least three hours a day to language out of the five days--a total of 15 hours on language. The students were broken up into small groups and each of these was lead by a language teacher. Also, one of the language teachers explained what the youth needed to learn: "One of the things that I thought was real important for the adolescent to learn is the Hocak alphabet. Once they learn the syllables, the meanings--and they will be able to read and learn more."

Another aspect of the leadership conference was the speakers who shared valuable information and experiences with the youth. One of the speakers was the Ho-Chunk Nation's tribal judge who spoke very fervently to the youth about "paying attention during

the language classes because what is important is that you are very unique!" He mentioned the importance of learning the language before he spoke about his role as tribal judge and the tribal court.

Another important aspect of the leadership conference was for the youth to understand their responsibilities within the Hocak society. The cultural advisor's presentation was about kinship. She said, "In our society, Hocak society, each of the clans we belong to has a job--has a duty within our clan." In order to learn their responsibilities it is important for the youth to understand about their kinship and their clan.

The Hocak Nation's president stressed life experiences and what that means to the Hocak people. He shared with the youth that "those experiences that are acquired come with a price. We can't identify with the price unless we ourselves acquire it during the time we grace and walk on Grandmother Earth here."

Another part of the conference included cultural activities such as the moccasin game. The game was taught by a male elder and both males and females participated and learned as they went along. It was very interesting because it required intuition and careful observance of their opponents if they wanted to win. Other activities included basketball, canoeing, horseback riding, singing and dancing at the pow-wow.

The thirty evaluations completed for the 1998 conference resulted in the following order tallied on a scale from 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor): Youth Meet the President of the Hocak Nation, Youth Speak Out, Youth Meet Legislators, Language, HIV/AIDS Presentation, Tribal Leadership, Respect and Responsibilities, Tribal Court, Budgeting, Traditional Court, and History. Each category was rated according to how the youth selected what best described their opinion of the topics by circling the number as follows:

1 (excellent), 2 (very good), 3 (good), 4 (fair), and 5 (poor).

IV. CONCLUSION

We the People, pursuant to our inherent sovereignty, in order to form a more perfect government, secure our rights, advance the general welfare, safeguard our interests, sustain our culture, promote our traditions and perpetuate our existence, and secure the natural and self-evident right to govern ourselves, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Ho-Chunk Nation (Preamble).

Culturally Based Leadership Program

The purpose of this study was to identify the need to develop a culturally based leadership program for the Native American Hocak youth. Since there were so few studies done on culturally based leadership programs for Native Americans, I based my argument on the empirical evidence collected from the Summer Hocak Youth Leadership Conferences over a three year period (1996, 1997, 1998).

Inasmuch as a culturally based leadership program cannot happen without language studies, studying the Hocak language becomes a need. The Summer Hocak Youth Leadership Conferences, except in 1997, have been held in natural settings such as state parks and at resorts in Wisconsin. This serves the purpose of maintaining the true nature of the Hocak culture. During the five day conference the youth learn about leadership from a Native American perspective. They not only learn the technical concepts of leadership, but more importantly, they learn about Hocak spirituality, customs and values, language, and relationships (clan and kinship).

During the course of my participation observation role in the summer leadership conferences I had the opportunity to hear the youth express their impressions and their experiences. According to the youth, not only the cultural activities were important, but the natural setting motivated their learning. Because they enjoyed the outdoors and the activities such as, canoeing, basketball, dancing and singing at the pow-wow, and setting up the traditional lodging where they stayed throughout the conference. It was at the 1997 leadership conference where most of the youth expressed their disappointments and anger, stating that "the setting and the leadership material was too academic. It was more like being in school than at the Hocak Youth Leadership Conference."

Since there were so few studies, my study relied upon the empirical evidence collected from the summer leadership programs. According to Louie's study (1996) "...that much of the existing research surrounding Native American issues have been conducted in doctoral dissertations" (p.8). Louie did a study from Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI) that was restricted to Native American leadership; "it covered the years from 1963 to 1993 and produced a total of 26 dissertations" (p.8). "Of the total, only 10 percent pertained directly to tribal leadership; another 10 addressed topics in education and educational leadership related to Native Americans and Native American leadership; and the other six addressed miscellaneous topics" (p.8).

Language and Culture

This section of the 1998 conference is quite helpful in understanding why it is important for the youth to learn the Hocak language which is, to retain the culture. According to the Hocak Wazijaci Language and Culture Program, there are over 5,000 Hocak people, and based on this last census there are presently over 300 fluent speaker of the Hocak language. This would seem to put our language in Stage Eight of the Nine

stages, a very serious situation to say the least!

The nine stages emphasize the urgency of what lies ahead for the Nation if they don't take heed to teach and learn the Hocak language. The stages are as follows:

1. The higher levels of tribal government use the language.
2. Tribal offices use the language.
3. It is used by employees (not supervisors).
4. The Native language is required in elementary schools, not as a second language.
5. The language is still very alive and used in Native communities and even on a voluntary basis in school.
6. Still some intergenerational use of language at home.
7. Only adults beyond childbearing still speak.
8. Only a few elders speak.
9. No remaining speakers.

The Hocak Nation is in stage eight where there are only a few elders who speak the language.

But in the past, it is precisely the Youth Leadership Conference camps that have been trying to save the Hocak language. Elders teaching the Hocak language to the youth has always been a major part of the leadership conference since it began in 1986. In fact, learning the language has been one of the main reasons youth wanted the youth leadership conference in the first place. According to the Interim Coordinator (1998) of the Hocak Wazijaci Language and Culture Program, the "responsibility falls on each and every one of us, including our elders, who are still here today, and the parents along with the children to help preserve and keep this language alive."

During the course of this study (summer, 1998) I interviewed two young Hocak leaders to get their ideas about the importance of culture. The first was Scott Beard,

Executive Director for the Ho-Chunk Nation Education Department. His reply to the importance of culture was as follows:

"If we are going to survive as a sovereign Nation culture is vitally important. Hocaks are always saying how unique we are. I think that's true, but if we don't do something now to preserve that, it is going to die, our Nation, our uniqueness, our language, everything is going to die within the next two generations.

Once its gone, once the elders are gone with all that knowledge, we're never really going to get it back."

The other leader was Penny Matter, Native American Student Advisor at the Black River Falls Senior High School. Her reply to the question, What do you see for the future of the Ho-Chunk Nation in general and the Hocak youth in particular? was as follows:

"I'm an optimist and a pessimist at the same time. If I look at the Ho-Chunk Nation right now, it looks pretty gloomy. A lot of elders are dying and no one seems to be taking a strong stand to make sure our culture stays alive. But then again, maybe there's hope that the seventh generation is going to bring it back and I feel it's going to happen--I just don't know how. They're the ones who are going to figure it out and that's what I believe. They are going to get there. Kids might be saying, "It's right there," but the parents think they're too young to know. For those who may be drinking now, when they become elders it might be the young who will be teaching them about their culture.

What we have learned from these Summer Youth Conferences is that what they need most to learn is the Hocak culture in terms of the Hocak language, its clans, Hocak values, spirituality, respect for all living things, etc. We asked the Interim Director how you can separate language and culture. He answered, "I don't think that can be done, because language is the culture. If this culture is to survive we must have the language." In support of that, the Higher Education Coordinator chimed in by saying, "I feel that the the language itself is basis for our entire culture. So if we want our children to know what our culture is, they have to learn the language." Another youth stated: "I would like to pursue learning the language so the culture can go on and maybe I can teach someone else

later."

Overall, the data from the leadership conferences reveal a significant pattern in terms of events and activities, conference sites, topics, and evaluations. Throughout the five day conferences for each of the three years (1996, 1997, 1998) a mini pow-wow was held in honor of the youth. This cultural event has been very popular among the youth because it gives them a feeling of pride and an opportunity for each to appreciate their heritage in a meaningful way. During the conferences, here described in detail, the youth emphasized that they felt they had learned a great deal about their elders, their tribal government, and from the dancing and singing at both the pow-wow and other recreational activities.

Also, the importance of the setting and the responses from the youth played a critical role in each of their conference evaluations. The natural "outdoor" settings were critical to the success for all of the conferences since 1986. They were held at either state parks or at resorts so the youth could experience Mother Nature as part of what embodies the culture. Then in 1997, due to the Ho-Chunk legislators' decision, the conference was held "indoors" in a school setting (University of Eau Claire campus) and this, as we saw, turned out to be a mistake.

For the purpose of this study, our conclusion is that a culturally based leadership program needs to be developed for the Native American Hocak youth, but this cannot happen without the Hocak language component. Because the 1997 leadership conference proved that culturally based works and the other doesn't. The negative responses from the youth collectively stated that, "the school setting and the lecture type sessions were too academic." They were so disappointed that a few expressed not attending the 1998 Hocak Youth Leadership Conference. In comparison, out of the 48 youth that attended the 1997 leadership conference, approximately 20 youth were in attendance at the 1998

leadership conference. Although, the 1998 leadership conference included the cultural aspect the youth were still disappointed and refused to attend. The conference planners use this information to plan next year's conference. Clearly, the Hocak language and the Hocak culture continue as being most critical to the youth when it comes to learning leadership.

My recommendation in the development of a culturally based leadership program for the Native American Hocak youth falls on these many American Indian leaders who don't see that presenting American Indian views of leadership as being relevant to American Indian youth. Leadership is always tied to culture. Moreover, culturally based leadership cannot happen without language studies.

It has been proven that leadership cannot be separate from Hocak culture based on the research from the summer conferences. I suggest we look at the 9 stages that were used to indicate where the Hocak Nation was placed--at stage eight. This is a very serious situation and we need to address it immediately!

I only hope and pray that the Hocak Nation will fully commit themselves to learning the Hocak language because it is the only way the culture and the traditions will survive. In addition, a study should be done on the correlation between the students' school records and the leadership conference could not be established for this study. But I suspect there may be a correlation.

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