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A Curriculum: The BANFES 1990 Study Tour. "Innovations in Primary Education"

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A Curriculum: The BANFES 1990 Study Tour
"Innovations in Primary Education"

A Thesis Presented

By

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Introduction

This Master's Project grew out of an experience that I and several other individuals shared from about March through July 1990. It would not be speaking out of turn, I trust, to assert that the work we engaged in -- the time and effort, the laughter and thinking and blood, sweat and tears that accompany perhaps all intensive, educational, group experiences -- provided us a fine opportunity to examine and clarify our perspectives on how adults learn, and on how we, as trainers and facilitators, influence that delicate process.

We, the staff as well as participants, pooled our cumulative knowledge, skills, attitudes, and aspirations with the intent to create an environment and a structure of activities that would foster inquiry, curiosity, insight, enthusiasm and confidence. Some of the concrete results of our collective efforts are captured in documents generated after the program ended, such as reports, letters, proposals, minutes of meetings, and lesson plans. Some of the intangible results include reflections, "aha's," questions and musings lingering in the minds of those who were somehow involved in the experience, and who were therefore affected by the process.

Obviously, I can speak only for myself. I have developed this two-part master's project as a way to synthesize my own learning, to pull together the significant concepts I have been exposed to in the course of four semesters of graduate work. I have tried to apply them to a practical experience, the BANFES Study Tour, and to identify the "fit" -- areas where the theories and concepts matched and helped me to understand the actual experience, and areas of discrepancy, where I was surprised or confused or found the conceptual frameworks somehow lacking in analytical potential. In those latter instances, I identify questions for further study -- questions I hope to explore further in the course of a doctoral program and related practical and professional settings.

Specifically, the project is structured as follows:

Part I: Conceptual Paper

- A. Brief review of the literature
- B. The Study Tour experience
 - 1. Description
 - 2. Process comments
- C. Questions for further study.

Part II: Trainer's Manual, including:

- Background information and program overview
- Needs assessment instruments
- Orientation packets
- Session plans
- Process comments
- Individual projects
- Scrapbook
- Photos
- Evaluations.

Brief Review of the Literature

I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.
Confucius

Trust the process.
Trust the learners.
Trust yourself.
Anonymous

"I never teach my students. I only prepare an environment in which they can learn for themselves." A. Einstein

"Teach the learners rather than the material." Fredi Munger

Adult Learning Theories

The core of my graduate work so far has focused on questions of how adults learn, for example:

- * How do adults learn naturally?
- * What conditions enhance their learning?
- * What characterizes an environment that encourages their active involvement in and "ownership" of their learning?
- * What skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and values on the part of the learning leader (trainer, teacher, consultant, mentor, facilitator et al) promote learning? and
- * How do we determine and measure if and when learning has taken place?

The scope of this paper will, obviously, not permit an exhaustive discussion of such a broad arena. Each of the schools that has dominated the field of adult education in the course of the last few decades has generated enough discussion and controversy to merit volumes of reflection. In the last two years I have been introduced to as many as fifteen major approaches to the challenge of educating adults, including these schools: liberal, progressive, behaviorist, humanistic, radical, social/psychological, professional, oppression/liberation, feminist, transformative, taoist, phenomenological, and charismatic/visionary. I am well aware 1) that variations exist within each of these philosophies, and 2) that for the most part these traditions originate in a very limited range of cultural contexts. I am currently interested in expanding my understanding of what else is involved in the learning experience, through, for example, the lenses of cross-cultural experience, gender analysis, motivation such as organizational change and economic uncertainty, the role of resistance, and levels of self-awareness and personal development. My intent in the next few pages, however, is to identify some influential thinkers and salient points from the mainstream literature. My focus is limited to experiential learning, and nonformal (out of school) education. These will serve as the cognitive "hooks" on which my understanding of the BANFES experience hangs.

* Malcolm Knowles: Andragogy

"As people grow they accumulate an increasing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning, and at the same time provides a broadening base to which to relate new learnings." (1980, p. 44).

Departing from theories of pedagogy developed by Piaget and others, Knowles challenged the assumptions that adults learn in the same ways as children. He laid the groundwork for a learning theory that addressed the particular needs, talents, preoccupations and concerns of adult learners. Recognizing differences in adults' and children's learning needs, he proposed that they could therefore not be taught in the same ways. Specifically, he states that:

. . . as an individual matures, his (sic) need and capacity to be self-directing, to utilize his experience in learning, to identify his own readiness to learn, and to organize his learning around life problems increases steadily from infancy to pre-adolescence, and then increasingly rapidly during adolescence. (1973, p. 43).

He elaborates on these assumptions (1973), which constitute the pillars on which andragogy is founded, as follows:

1. **Changes in self-concept** -- as a person grows and matures his self-concept moves from one of total dependency (as is the reality of the infant) to one of increasing self-directedness.

The implication for learning situations is that when "he finds himself in a situation in which he is not allowed to be self-directing, he experiences a tension. . . His reaction is bound to be tainted with resentment and resistance." (ibid., p. 45).

2. The role of experience -- "To a child, experience is something that happens to him; to an adult, his experience is who he is." (ibid., p. 46).

Learning situations should then be characterized by techniques which tap the experiences of the learners and involve them in analyzing them. Learners become active participants in their own learning, rather than passive recipients of someone else's knowledge.

3. Readiness to learn -- In contrast to pedagogy, where children are assumed ready to learn those things they "ought" to by reason of their biological development or academic pressure, ". . . andragogy assumes that learners are ready to learn those things they 'need' to because of the developmental phases they are approaching in their roles as workers, spouses, parents, organizational members and leaders, leisure time users, and the like." (ibid., p. 47).

Implications for learning include the importance of timing the learning tasks to coincide with the learners' development tasks as dictated by their life (i.e., social and professional) situations, and respect for the learners' own ability to set goals and identify learning outcomes.

4. Orientation to learning

The assumption is that children have been conditioned to have a subject-centered orientation to most learning, whereas adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning." (ibid.).

Related to the third assumption, Knowles recognizes that adult learners generally enter into an educational activity because they experience some inadequacy in dealing with life situations. The thrust, then, of a curriculum and the approaches employed to "teach" it should emphasize immediacy of application. Adults lead lives of continuous problem-solving, and they expect learning experiences to be directly related to meeting the challenges that they perceive in day to day life.

Carl Rogers: Student-centered Teaching

Rogers developed a theory of personality and behavior by studying adults in therapy, and then applied his theory to education. The result was that he conceptualized "student-centered teaching as parallel to client-centered therapy." (1951, pp. 388-389). His theory is built upon two basic premises. The first is that learning is natural:

The organism has one basic tendency and striving -- to actualize, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism (ibid., p. 497)

and the second is that learning contributes to an individual's growth or "process of becoming:"

I should like to point out one final characteristic of these individuals as they strive to discover and become themselves. It is that the individual seems to become more content to be a process rather than a product. (1961, p. 122).

Rogers emphasized the experience of learning from the student's perspective, shifting attention away from what the teacher does and toward what happens in the student. He noted

that learning must be relevant to the learner, and he understands relevance as contributing to the maintenance or enhancement of the self.

He acknowledged also the importance of an accepting and supportive climate, given that the self tends to resist change, and conversely is more open to change when it perceives an atmosphere as free from threat. (1951). Additionally, he observed that students felt less threatened when they assumed more responsibility for their learning.

Finally, he described a problem-focused orientation to learning, in which abstractions and concepts are tested against the learner's perception of reality. (1951, p. 144).

Abraham Maslow: Self-Actualization

The "hierarchy of needs" has become a household phrase for all educators who recognize that a safe atmosphere is crucial in any learning enterprise. Maslow's point is that motivation stems from internal responses to universal human needs, and that these needs are ordered on a scale ranging from the most basic (e.g., survival -- food and shelter) to the more complex and intangible (e.g., self-esteem and self-actualization). He observed that people tend to progress from safety toward growth, moving from states of security and boredom to unknown and delight. In his words:

The healthily spontaneous person . . . reaches out to the environment in wonder and interest, and expresses whatever skills he (sic) has. . . To the extent that he . . . feels safe enough to dare. . . In this process, that which gives him the delight-experience is fortuitously encountered, or is offered to him by helpers. . . If he can choose these experiences which are validated by the experience of delight, then he can return to the experience, repeat it, savor it to the point of repletion, satiation, or boredom. . . At this point, he shows the tendency to go on to richer, more complex experiences and accomplishments in the same sector [if he feels safe enough to dare]. (1972, pp. 50-51).

Maslow continues in this vein by emphasizing that the individual must be free to make her/his own choices in this process, and that the criteria for freedom are "the subjective experiences of delight and boredom" (1972, p. 51). The implication for a learning environment is, again, that learners assume responsibility for the content and timing of their learning, and that a climate of safety is essential. Maslow concludes:

In this process the environment . . . is important in various ways, even though the ultimate choice must be made by the individual.

- a. it can gratify his basic needs for safety, belongingness, love and respect, so that he can feel unthreatened, autonomous, interested, and spontaneous and thus dare to choose the unknown;
- b. it can help by making the growth choice positively attractive and less dangerous, and by making regressive choice less attractive and more costly. (ibid., pp. 50-51).

Paulo Freire: Problem-posing Education

Working within a framework of consciousness-raising, revolution and liberation, Freire articulated concepts that help

to define the roles of student and teacher as equal partners in a learning enterprise. He differentiates between

'banking education' in which the teacher's role is to 'fill' the students by making deposits of information which the teacher considers to constitute true knowledge (1971, p. 63)

and

'problem-posing education' in which the object of knowledge is . . . a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students. . . Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. (ibid., p. 67).

Freire conceptualizes education as assisting in the emergence of consciousness. Through a pedagogy that promotes the discovery of the learners' own "generative themes" (1971) and the learners' subsequent evolution through a progression of stages of consciousness, Freire puts adult education to the task of transforming reality -- from a condition of oppression to one of liberation.

Belenky, et al and Carol Gilligan: Gender Analysis

Some theorists have recognized that the bulk of mainstream literature in the field of adult education a) was written by men and b) was either based on studies of primarily male subjects or c) that the data was interpreted according to "traditional" standards of academic analysis. They have, therefore, recently focused their energies on understanding the experience of, specifically, women -- and on broadening the framework for determining what constitutes learning and how it happens.

Among the most pressing items on the agenda for research on adult development is the need to delineate in women's own terms the experience of their adult life. . . The concept of identity expands to include the experience of interconnection. The moral domain is similarly enlarged by the inclusion of responsibility and care in relationships. And the underlying epistemology correspondingly shifts from the Greek ideal of knowledge as a correspondence between mind and form to the Biblical conception of knowing as a process of human relationship. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 173).

. . . educators can help women develop their own authentic voices if they emphasize connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate; if they accord respect to and allow time for the knowledge that emerges from firsthand experience; if instead of imposing their own expectations and arbitrary requirements, they encourage students to evolve their own patterns of work based on the problems they are pursuing. (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 229).

The scope of this paper does not permit a lengthy discussion of any of the theorists cited. Questions such as the extent to which a gender-based study commits the same errors as its predecessors in terms of generalizations (which women? which classes of women?) and verification certainly merit attention. In the interest of identifying contributions to the literature, I point to these key concepts: subjectivity, connection, and belief. The interviews discussed in Women's Ways of Knowing revealed that many women performed better in the presence of a "connected teacher" (1986, p. 223). This person promotes "connected teaching" (ibid., pp. 214 - 229) and creates a "connected class." (ibid., p. 219). This teacher is described as a "midwife" (ibid., p. 217), who assists in drawing out the student's thinking. Her/His concerns are to "preserve the

student's fragile newborn thoughts" and "support the evolution of the student's thinking," (ibid., p. 218). Also, these teachers "focus not on their own knowledge . . . but on the students' knowledge." (ibid., p. 218).

These theories of women's experience attempt to explain how women learn -- how they learn in ways that naturally correspond to the stages of their psychological and cognitive development. Asserting that relationships, subjective experience and nurturing are central to women's concepts of self and personal growth, the theorists transfer these notions to the sphere of education. The teaching approaches that correspond to these notions are characterized by:

a) connection with the learner -- "to enter into each student's perspective" (ibid., p. 227);

b) an appreciation of subjective experience -- "The personal became the professional; the professional became the personal" (ibid., p. 226);

and

c) a climate of belief and trust in the student -- "Connected teachers are believers. They trust their students' thinking and encourage them to expand it." (ibid., p. 227).

Experiential Learning

Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

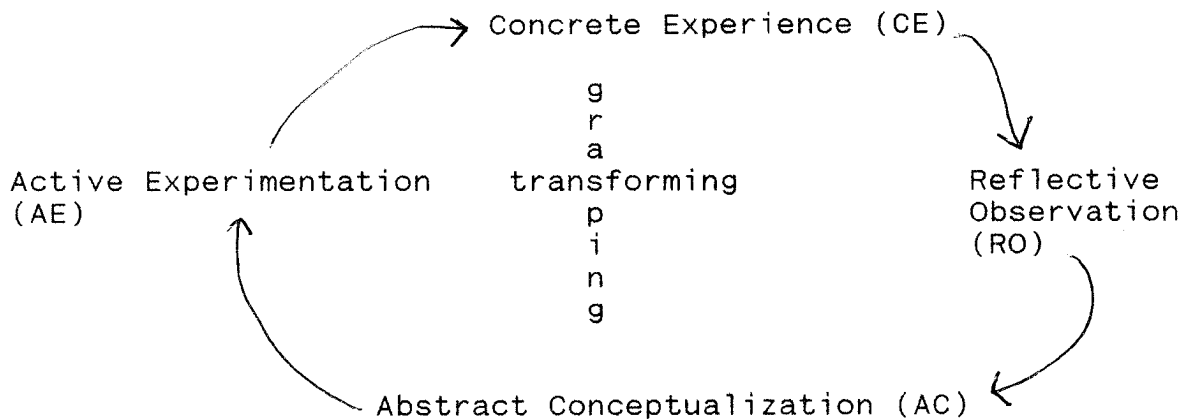
A significant portion of the literature on adult education concerns the role of experience in the learning process. The "EIAG" model ("experience, identify, analyze, generalize" -- see below) and variations on it have developed from a combination of theorists practicing in different disciplines. They include John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Malcolm Knowles, Ronald and Gordon Lippitt, Kenneth Benne, Leland Bradford, David Kolb, Peter Jarvis and others.

Lewin (1951) articulated three assumptions, not unlike those noted thus far, which underscore experiential learning models.

1. Personal involvement in the learning enterprise is key.
2. Self-discovery of knowledge is the best way to make a change in behavior.
3. Commitment to learning is highest when learners set their own goals and pursue them within a given framework.

A brief glance at two experiential models will give us a taste for the controversy in the field about the ways in which or degrees to which experience translates into knowledge.

I. Kolb's (1984, p. 42) model (building on Lewin and Dewey):



Atkinson et al (1988) understand "flexibility" (p. 376) to be the key to effective learning in this model, as the learner moves through the cycle, by having an immediate experience (CE) which becomes the basis for reflections and observations (RO). These in turn are "assimilated and distilled" (ibid.) into concepts or theories (AC), from which "implications for action can be generated (AE)." (ibid.).

Skillful processing is crucial to the success of this method. Some estimate that the time allotted to processing should be at least twice that of the actual experience. Also, the learning leader must command a complete repertoire of questions, which Eitington (1989), for example, divides into three categories: "convergent, divergent and evaluative." (p. 307).

Each stage in the cycle is designed to help further the learning process. In the RO stage, the goal is to for learners to

attitudes. . . No experience occurs in isolation, neither is any interpretation given in isolation. Experience and interpretation are social phenomena, so that social analyses of learning are as important as psychological. (1987b, pp. 165-66).

Another modification he brings to the Kolb experiential learning cycle is an emphasis on the importance of thought, reflection and interpretation. He finds that the Kolb model does not grant sufficient attention to these processes.

In order for (an) experience to become meaningful, people have to think about it, reflect upon it and, maybe, seek other opinions about it. (ibid., p. 168).

He sees the need for "stepping outside" (ibid.) the duration of the learning cycle in order to explore the experience, which, he said, "takes time and has considerable implications for both teaching and learning." (ibid.).

Jarvis also notes the possibility that the experience might lead to other routes besides learning, in that ". . . only when people give meaning to their experience in a situation does it actually have meaning . . . if people's stocks of knowledge are inadequate, maybe no meaning and little or no learning occurs." (ibid., p. 166). (Or, from a folk history attributing this comment to Miles Horton, "Just because somebody had an experience doesn't mean anybody learned anything.") Jarvis defines an optimal learning situation as one in which people find themselves asking themselves questions such as, "Why did this happen to me?" and "What's this world coming to?"

When there is disjunction between individuals' own biographies and the socio-cultural-temporal world of their experiences, then a potential learning experience has occurred. (ibid., p. 168).

Jarvis is similar to Belenky et al and other feminist scholars in emphasizing that interpreting an experience is a subjective process. He describes the reflective process as "personal, private and individual" (ibid., p. 169). Further, he recognizes that knowledge and meaning derive from people's cumulative range of subjective interpretations.

. . . the meaning that people give to their experience is quite subjective and knowledge is created out of experience by a synthesis of previous knowledge and perception of their present experience. Meaning is, therefore, a subjective interpretation of experience, giving special significance to past events. (ibid.)

Finally, Jarvis is similar to Freire and other educators concerned with social change in that he sets adult education within a broad social context. He identifies the field of adult and continuing education as a social science. In an interview with George Spear (1986), Jarvis describes one of the aims of education as follows:

. . . to help individuals to develop and mature, to create a critical awareness of society, so that they are able to both help create and recreate the social system and, therefore, exercise some control over it. (p. 14).

Group Development

An understanding of the stages a collection of individuals passes through in the process of becoming a group is crucial to an effective adult education experience. When both the learners

and the learning leader are aware of the complexities of group dynamics, and when they fulfill the corresponding task and maintenance roles, the chances that learning will happen are greater than when those needs go unheeded.

The literature is replete with theorists who have described group development and the issues that arise in each of the stages. The theories are notably similar in terms of the specific developmental stages identified. Some examples include:

- * Bruce Tuckman: forming, storming, norming, performing
- * Jack Gibb: TORI (trust, openness, realization, interdependence)
- * William Schutz: Inclusion, control, affection
- * R.B. La Coursiere: orientation, dissatisfaction, resolution, production, termination
- * Bennis and Shepard: dependence, counter-dependence, inter-dependence
- * Anthony Banet: "Yin Yang" (gathering together, standstill, biting through, the taming power of the great, return).

While this paper is not the forum for an elaborate discussion of the descriptive and prescriptive functions of group development theories, the issues that they raise and the implications for interventions are relevant to our purposes. In general, the challenge for the leader is to facilitate the group's process as it moves through all the stages. S/He helps the group manage its concerns about power, authority and

personal/interpersonal relations. S/He provides an appropriate structure, and makes process interventions that keep the members functioning as a group. Jane Moosbrucker (1987) offers a useful summary of the challenges that group leaders face in each of the developmental stages:

(The) dilemmas are how much structure to provide during the orientation stage, how much and how to open up conflict during the conflict stage, when to act as a member versus a group leader during the solidarity stage, and, finally, when to appreciate members and when to challenge them during the productivity stage. (p. 91).

The BANFES 1990 Study Tour
"Innovations in Primary Education"

Description:

The BANFES Project's U Mass staff had the opportunity to design and implement a four-week study tour for fourteen teachers from Lesotho. These individuals had recently graduated as the highest achievers in a two-year supplemental training program, the Evening College Program. They were all primary school teachers, with one exception, and they represented a wealth of professional experience (about 235 years, cumulatively). They were a group of thirteen women and one man, and they came from geographically dispersed regions of Lesotho. None had been to the States before. This study tour was intended as both a gesture of recognition of their excellent performance, as well as an opportunity to complement their professional training.

As the Trainer's Manual provides a day by day presentation of the content of the study tour, that information will not be reiterated here in great detail. Rather, Appendix I, the original concept paper, includes a brief summary of each of the curriculum units: School visits, Conference, Workshops, and Cultural Events. Additionally, Appendix II describes the "individual project" component, which evolved as a result of expressed concern on the part of USAID Mission personnel that participants return home with a practical, actionable product.

As the concept paper indicates, the program was grounded on two principles: a) it was oriented to practitioners and b) it was built upon the unique characteristics of U.S. educational systems. Our goal was to provide a steady balance of theory-based learning and hands-on, practical experiences, so that the participants could concentrate on applying their learning to their back home work situations (the "now what?" stage of the learning cycle). We wagered that "teachers talking to teachers about what they know and do best, teaching" would be an effective modus operandi. Hindsight shows, in fact, that "we are teachers" proved to be a powerful, unifying concept. Both Basotho and U.S. teachers involved in the program attest to having profited from the exchange of ideas, skills, knowledge and insights.

Process Comments:

In what ways were the concepts discussed throughout this paper useful in creating and "making sense" of the study tour experience? How did they "play out" in an actual setting, and what evidence do we have that learning occurs in the ways that we have come to understand? This section explores those concepts that "fit" with the experience, that were useful and appropriate and easily applied.

The learners' personal involvement, and the importance of setting their own goals:

As is typically the case with, especially, international programs, geographical distance and time pressures prevented an in-depth needs assessment process that would include personal contact with each of the participants. We did, however, rely on two forms (Appendices III and IV) to get a sense of background, interests and expectations. We attempted to match as closely as possible the professional areas of interest that the group identified with the resources available to us, while at the same time being clear and honest from the beginning about those needs that the program would not be able to address.

Also, the "individual project" component was intended as a channel through which learners could explore in greater depth those interest areas that would not be covered in the curriculum. The process was one of self-direction, in which resources were

made available, but the responsibility for delimiting a topic and designing a product was the learners'.

Additionally, we tried to introduce some "creative tension" or "cognitive dissonance" by, for example, encouraging learners to think about how they would tackle problems back in Lesotho or how they would teach their colleagues what they had learned in the States. These questions demonstrated also a problem-posing approach, a concern for timing the learning to fit with actual needs, and a focus on the transfer of learning (the "now what?" phase).

Finally, we wanted to encourage group members to assume responsibility for learning from and teaching one another. The de-briefing sessions at the end of each day were designed for this purpose. The individual projects also furthered this goal, in that group members presented their work to one another. They learned who shared similar goals and strategized about how they might act as resource people to one another on return to Lesotho.

Tone, climate, environment, norms:

Even before the group arrived, we attempted to convey friendliness, warmth and a sense of our own enthusiasm for the opportunity to get to know and work with such a talented group. The welcome letters (Appendices V, VI, and VII) we sent are examples of these efforts. Also, the group expressed appreciation

for seemingly obvious gestures such as waiting until the wee hours to receive everyone at the airport, providing food and drink for the long drive to Northampton, and preparing a welcome packet with each person's name on the cover.

Additionally, we devoted a significant portion of time to group building activities, right from the start. We tried to set a tone of safety, fun, and openness. Almost the entire first weekend was used as an orientation -- we did not even begin to look at the elementary education curriculum, the "content," until Sunday evening. Instead, our activities focused on: freeing our minds of "distractions" from home, in order to be able to participate fully in this study tour experience; getting to know one another; setting norms; establishing an internal committee to help with group functioning (see below); deciphering the money system; exploring the area; shopping; learning the postal system; resting, unpacking and settling in to the residence; browsing through a "scrapbook" of local articles, and celebrating with music, food, dance and invited guests. It was in these early stages that norms of respect, humor, fun, reciprocity and enjoyment quickly evolved. A telling comment on this process is that jokes that were introduced the first day, based on key words in Sesotho, endured throughout the whole program.

Group development and maintenance:

As described above, we devoted time and attention to group building activities, from the beginning. We also included mechanisms through which the group as a whole or individual members could be heard by the staff and by one another. We wanted to allow each voice to be heard as much as possible -- to attend to "membership" issues, helping each individual to feel that they "belonged." These mechanisms were:

- a coordinating committee, whose responsibilities included serving as a "buffer zone" in case of disagreements, note-taking, handling necessary arrangements such as evening plans, cultural activities, occasional shopping for communal meals, and laundry. Membership rotated weekly, and each person was expected to serve once.
- community meeting, where the group and staff reviewed progress, addressed concerns, shared ideas. The staff also used this opportunity to "take the pulse" of the group and structure some activity to meet its needs. Finally, group members offered one another "slogan," motivational phrases from their own cultures as a means to build morale and encourage group cohesion.
- suggestion box, where individuals could anonymously offer thoughts for improvement, particularly logistical and administrative, with the guarantee that the staff would respond within twenty-four hours
- accessibility of staff, in that one person stayed in residence with the group and others devoted free time to informal discussions, driving to shopping malls, taking meals with the group, partying and walking around town.

Also, another attempt to promote "ownership" of the process resulted in "cutting content," in that the group expressed a need for time at the end for personal errands, so we opted for reducing planned activities in order to allow for free time.

In the following section I discuss the group's progression through the stages that theorists have described, and my concerns about the western cultural constraints of those theories. I will simply note here that we faced some of the expected issues. The coordinating committee was particularly effective in the "conflict" stage, as it allowed the group enough privacy to work out their issues according to their own cultural norms and in their own language, while still expressing discontent to the staff in a way that we could understand. And, we were continually convinced that time and attention devoted to group and individual maintenance was well spent, even though it meant "less" time for content.

Also, the role of music in Basotho culture seemed to facilitate group cohesion. Impromptu singing and dancing always seemed to strengthen the group's urge and ability to work together. I suspect, too, from my outsider's position, that music provided a safe and acceptable channel for members to challenge the informal leadership. "Arguments" about how to sing a song or which choreographed movement to use usually centered around the most verbal and dominant members of the group.

Lastly, the group demonstrated heightened affect in the final stages (production and termination), and as predicted, issues of fairness and levels of intimacy arose, i.e., pressure

on the staff to invite certain group members to their homes or to introduce them to their friends.

Questions for Further Study

In reflecting on the study tour experience and the "fit" with the theories, prescriptions and conceptual guides aimed at making sense of that experience, I am left with some questions and concerns that I would hope to continue exploring in academic and professional settings. If, as I have come to understand:

Learning is a process, grounded in experience,
developing as the learner grasps and transforms
experience, in a continuous cycle of lifelong learning

then posing problems for future consideration seems completely a propos!

Cross-cultural considerations:

I am not sure that certain western emphases, such as the attention to individual participation and the conceptualization of the trainer's role as an equalizer, take into account the ways that group members operate in some non-western groups, where status and placement within traditional hierarchies are respected. In our particular case, for example, the one male participant, who was also the oldest, performed differently in the group than the others, and was accorded respect by the others. He was not expected to serve on the coordinating committee except as an "advisory member;" he always spoke last in large group discussions; he was the last person to present his project, and he was always offered the front seat in the van! It

would have been culturally inappropriate and offensive to insist that those norms be discarded in favor of western style "democracy" or gender "equality."

Also, I would argue for the inclusion of a formalized "cultural informant" role -- someone to communicate cultural values and to advise when and how situations should be handled that the staff does not understand or even notice. My suspicion is that in our case the coordinating committee and older women generally played this role, but identifying a specific, perhaps rotating, individual would have been clearer from my perspective. An example of the need to pay attention to ceremony and ritual arose when we received word that a relative of a member of the group had died. I would not have known how to relay that information to the individual or the group without some specific guidance that, fortunately, a few group members offered.

Another example of the importance of recognizing cultural values is that during the "school visits" unit, those people who attended a school where a host person welcomed them formally and escorted them as guests, adjusted much more quickly than visitors who felt unwelcome in their schools and who were left to fend for themselves.

As for the theories about group development, I question not only whether the stages depict how individuals become groups in

non-western settings, but also whether the interventions westerners prescribe would be appropriate. The nuances of status and power would certainly influence leadership styles. In cultures where conflict is avoided or is manifested differently I question whether encouraging it to surface would be an appropriate strategy. The view that conflict is normal and healthy and represents potential for growth seems fairly culturally limited. In our experience of conflict, for example, the western diagnosis and intervention would not have worked. The group managed their differences on their own terms and in their own way, even going so far as to argue about the degree to which the staff should be involved. I suspect that "pushing" from the staff to struggle openly would have been confusing, embarrassing and inappropriate.

I have some concerns, also, about the degree of sophistication implied in concepts of "culture," "relevance" of training, and "cultural appropriateness." I am trying to understand why, in the study tour group, some participants purchased books and materials, for example, that some would consider completely inappropriate (i.e., stories about animals that do not exist in Lesotho). I think that, for people who have not been exposed to cultures other than their own -- people who have not traveled much or interacted with people "different" from themselves -- stepping back from their own setting and articulating "this is how things are at home" is quite a leap. My

own experience has been that I have learned at least as much about myself and my own culture by traveling as I did about another culture. I would like, in another training setting, to try to help people identify their own cultural realities.

Needs assessment and measurement of learning:

While I recognize the importance of allowing learners to "buy into" the curriculum, and of matching learning goals to the challenges of their lives, I still question how to do that. Like evaluations, needs assessment instruments or processes catch people at particular moments, and probably reflect as much of what they would like to learn or wish they could learn as what they "need" in a given context. Similarly, the usefulness of behavioral objectives seems limited to me. According to Jarvis and Belenky and Gilligan, for example, determining when a learner has learned is a complex challenge, and calls for a more involved process than identifying a particular example of changed behavior.

Needs assessment and emergent design:

A school of thought within the training field encourages the emergent design approach to program planning -- to varying degrees, allowing the plan to develop, continuously, in response to learners' expressed needs. While I recognize the need to promote ownership and "teach the learners rather than the material" (F.M.), I am at the same time persuaded by the

arguments that a schedule and some evidence of pre-planning create a sense that someone else is responsible and taking charge. The effect is that these are reassuring and comforting observations. They counteract the high anxiety, tension and nervousness that adults often feel when embarking on a learning enterprise. As we have seen, the self resists change.

Valuing modes of learning:

We experienced a baffling contradiction during the study tour. The staff and trainers were committed to the theories and practices of experiential learning. The participants pleaded for hands-on activities and slept through lectures. They talked about having slept -- talked about it among themselves and with the staff. When, however, it came time to evaluate presenters and presentations, a large portion of the group valued more highly the learning they had gained during lectures and de-valued the more experiential sessions.

I wish we had asked people about this. We are left to construct hypotheses: having to do with the status of the presenters who lectured, their content, the timing of the lectures within the whole design, the processing used after the experiential activities, as well as the possibility that while the learners enjoyed and had fun making books and collecting leaves they only consider real learning to consist of sitting and being talked at.

Sociological and ethical concerns:

What are the ethics of teaching learners in isolation? How do we keep in mind their political, personal, social and professional contexts? How do we keep attuned to the power dynamics of their real life situations? How admirable is it to help people get "charged up" with new knowledge, skills, attitudes and aspirations, and to send them on their way to effect change -- when their actual rank in the hierarchy grants them very limited opportunity? Even in the case of teachers, who have instituted phenomenal innovations through a grassroots, classroom to classroom exchange, how do we handle questions of false expectations? To what extent does education, like so many disciplines, continue to focus on changing the learner instead of society?

THE EVENING COLLEGE STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

I. Introduction and Rationale

In the context of its short-term training activities, the BANFES Project proposes a four week study tour for the fourteen highest achievers in the recent Evening College program. This study tour is intended as both a gesture of recognition of the participants' excellent performance, and as a means to complement their professional training.

The University of Massachusetts, associated with the BANFES Project since 1985, will assume responsibility for designing and implementing the study tour, as delineated in the following pages. U Mass staff will draw on our access to the wide pool of education professionals living and working in the western Massachusetts region, and our familiarity with the realities of Lesotho's educational system, to ensure a high quality program appropriate to the participants' needs.

II. Conceptual Grounding

The Evening College Study Tour is guided by two fundamental principles: 1) It is practitioner oriented and; 2) It is built on the strengths of the U.S. educational system. In practice, these principles translate into teachers talking to teachers about what they know and do best, teaching. While the program will provide a balance of hands-on experiences and theory-based learning, the participants will emphasize applying their knowledge and skills gained to their actual school settings.

Also, while the advantages of visiting and learning about education across international borders include broadened perspectives and new insights, we acknowledge, too, important differences between the Lesotho and U.S. systems. The implication for this program is that U.S.-based resource people will not be equipped to address all the professional interests of Basotho educators, e.g., classroom management for high pupil-teacher ratios, ESL, etc. Rather, the program will stress those approaches, methods, and techniques which educators in the States currently employ -- the day to day thinking and strategies, "tricks of the trade," that they, as practitioners, find exciting and successful.

Through the vehicle of individual projects, (see below) the program will create the opportunity for participants to explore the extent to which these approaches might be transferable. We anticipate that as a result of stimulating discussions and inquiry, all involved, both visitors and hosts, will be challenged to integrate new insights into their professional repertoires.

III. Program Elements

A) Setting: The Study Tour will be housed on the campus of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, a small college town known for its bookstores, cinemas, and concerts. The participants will stay in a small house on the edge of town, within convenient walking distance of stores, pharmacies and boutiques. Dining facilities will be a 3 block walk from the house, and the group will have the chance to meet participants in Smith's School of Social Work program, who will be joining us for meals.

B) Design: The program design reflects a match between the needs and interests which participants identified in assessment forms generated over the last two months, and resources available in the New England locale. The program components are: 1) school visits, 2) professional conference, 3) workshops, and 4) cultural activities. Additionally, the individual project option will allow each participant to explore a theme of particular interest and incorporate learning from all program elements.

1) School Visits Participants will spend four days in the schools. The group will be divided among 2 elementary schools in nearby Amherst, 1 elementary school in Northampton, and 1 secondary vocational school in Northampton. There they will observe classrooms and do some guest teaching; they will also meet with teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, special education experts, librarians and others. Prior to the school visits, there will be a one day orientation in which participants will be introduced to U.S. educational systems and develop their own observation strategies. After-school debriefing sessions will be held to share observations, address questions, and prepare for the next days' activities.

2) Conference Participants will attend the 36th Annual Creative Problem-Solving Institute, to be held in Buffalo, New York. As the attached brochure indicates, the Institute is sponsored by the Creative Education Foundation, and its theme this year is "Moving from Challenge to Action." The Institute is expected to draw approximately 500 - 700 people from around the world. In order to address the interests of the Study Tour participants most directly, they will meet as a separate group during the Conference, and will hear presentations, participate in experiential learning exercises and work with mentors assigned expressly to them. The Conference officials have designed this special program, from June 17 to 20, to exploit the creative potential of educators working with limited resources, and promise that participants will collect numerous materials they can use on returning home to Lesotho.

3. Workshops Tailor made 1-3 days workshops on specific topics of elementary education will be designed and conducted by area practitioners and professionals including University faculty. Innovative instructional methods is the common theme that runs across the content of the workshops. The design of each workshop will be based on experiential methods and will balance theory and practice. An important process that runs across the program elements is: at the end of each workshop participants will have the opportunity to reflect the relevancy and applicability of what they have learned into their home work environment.

Topics that workshops will address include:

* One day workshop on teaching discovery science and practical agriculture, emphasizing observation, and classification skills. *Debbie Hubis + Lisa Yaffee*
By Ms. *Nicky McKinley*, elementary science educator associated with the Hitchcock Center for Environmental Studies.

* Two days workshop on teaching cooperative learning and integrating curricula.
By Ms. Joanne Pach and Ms. Irene Taafaki, Intern Supervisors and doctoral students at the University of Massachusetts School of Education, specialising in elementary education.

* Three days workshop on teaching whole language approach and writing process-writing across the curriculum.
By Ms. Marna Bunce, writing resource teacher for the Amherst/Pelham and Amherst Regional School Districts.

* One day workshop on teaching math concepts through manipulables, and mental arithmetic.
By Prof. William Masalski, Elementary Math Education, Faculty at the Univ. of Mass., Amherst.

* One day workshop on Supervision and school management.
By Mr. Ken Chapman, Principal at Wildwood Elementary School, Amherst, Adjunct Faculty at West Field State Teachers College and trainer in Statewide Supervision for elementary principals.

4. Cultural Events Throughout the program, participants will learn about America through an exploration of historical New England. Activities will be arranged in order to give participants an opportunity to attend special events. Cultural events could include: 1) a bus tour of the local Pioneer Valley area 2) a visit to Old Sturbridge Village - a replica of a nineteenth century New England town 3) Contra dancing - an old New England tradition still alive

today 4) tour of Boston 5) picnics at local scenic areas 6) museum tours 7) outdoor concerts and theatrical events 8) shopping 9) a side trip to Niagra Falls following the Buffalo Conference 10) Contra dancing-Saturday night New England tradition at the Greenfield Grange.

IV. Staffing Pattern

In addition to presenters listed above who will bring specific content area expertise the Evening College Study Tour will have the following staffing pattern:

1. A) Program Coordinator, B) and Curriculum Coordinator; Greta and Hassan respectively who will work full time under the supervision of the Banfes Project Coordinator, Fredi Munger, and the Co-Principal Investigator, Bob Miltz, to plan, administer, and coordinate all the Study Tour activities

2. Group Process Trainer

A part time trainer who will lead group discussions after school visits and at the end of each workshops. Also, he/she will help participants develop individual projects to present upon their return to Lesotho.

3. Cultural Guide

A part time cultural guides will be hired to plan and organize cultural activities for participants.

V. Schedule

Arrival June 8
Check-in at Smith College

June 9-10: Orientation
Needs Assessment & Expectations
Reception

Week I, June 11-17. SCHOOL VISITS

June 11 * School Visit Preparation. (Joanne Pach)
 June 12-15 * School Visits
 * De-briefing (Group Process Trainer)
 June 16 * Travel to Buffalo.
 June 17 * Conference: Creativity problem solving Institute

Week II. June 18-24 CONFERENCE

June 18-19 * Conference: Creative Problem Solving
 Institute in Buffalo
 June 20. * Travel back to Amherst
 June 21 * Individual projects (Group Process Trainer)
 June 22 * Workshop: Discovery Science (~~Mickey McKinley~~ + Debbie Habib
 + Lisa Yaffee)
 June 23-24 Weekend-cultural activities

Week III. June 25-July 1. WORKSHOPS

June 25-26. * Cooperative learning and integrating
 curricula (Joanne Pach & Irene Taafaki)
 June 27-29. * Whole language approach and writing
 process (Marna Bunce)
 June 30-July 1. Weekend- Visit to Boston

Week IV. July 2-7. WORKSHOPS

July 2: * teaching math concepts (Prof. William Masalski)
 July 3: * Supervision and school management (Mr. Ken
 Chapman)
 July 4: * Holiday- cultural activities
 July 5: * Emergent day
 July 6: * Presentation: Individual projects:
 July 7: * Presentations continue
 - Closing/pre-departure

July 8. D E P A R T U R E

Evening College Study Tour

Individual Projects:

Rationale: Participants will concretize their learnings gained in the course of the study tour in the form of a practical, usable product.

Description of Anticipated Outcome: The Evening College Study Tour program expects that each participant will design an individual project which addresses an area of particular professional interest. Each project will include an implementable, actionable component -- a product that the participants will use in the classroom or in peer teaching situations. Anticipated examples are: an outline of a training plan, a training module, lesson plans, original instructional materials or a workshop design.

Process:

- 1) Pre-departure: Even before they depart from Lesotho, participants should begin thinking about appropriate products they would hope to bring back from the States.
- 2) Needs Assessment:
 - a) On arrival in Northampton, the program coordinators will conduct a needs assessment to help participants clarify their goals for the individual projects.
 - b) The coordinators will also present an overview of the resources, such as professional resource people, library facilities, and teachers' publications, which will be made available.
- 3) Program Units: Participants will develop their projects during each of the program's curriculum units.
 - a) In the course of the school visits, for example, they may observe instructional methods that would be potentially useful at home. A component of their project might be a plan

to adapt those methods to meet their school's needs.

b) At the Conference in Buffalo, where participants will be exposed to creative problem solving approaches, they might choose to develop a workshop outline for presenting this information to their colleagues at home.

c) During the series of workshops on primary education topics, participants might design lesson plans for use in their own classroom that reflect an integrated curriculum approach to teaching.

d) Additionally, the daily de-briefing sessions will serve as a forum for participants to share with one another the status of their projects, and to address any problems encountered along the way.

e) The program also devotes an entire day, Thursday 21 June, to the projects, when participants will work individually or with resource people to elaborate their plans.

4) Final Presentations: Participants present their individual projects to their colleagues for review during the final two days of the program.

Introductions: Evening College Study Tour

Name:

Male or Female:

Age:

Are you a teacher? If not, what is your current professional position?

What grade are you currently teaching?

Please describe briefly your school and classroom (number of pupils, subjects you study):

When you return home after the study tour, what will be the most important responsibilities of your job?

What are your expectations for the study tour?

What personal hobbies or interests would you like to explore while you are here? Do you have any individual needs we should be aware of?

SAMPLE

EVENING COLLEGE STUDY TOUR

1. NAMES: Mr./Mrs./Miss _____

2. ADDRESS: _____

3. TELEPHONE: _____

4. NAME & ADDRESS OF SCHOOL: NATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Box 1126
MASERU
LESOTHO

5. TEACHING EXPERIENCE: 20 YEARS

(a) Present Title: SENIOR RESEARCH ASSISTANT

(b) ^{AREA OF SUPERVISION} Subjects & level taught: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(c) No. of years teaching experience: 20 YEARS

6. TRAINING:

(a) Highest level of training & when: ASSOCIATE OF COLLEGE OF PRECEPTORS
1989

(b) Additional training e.g. workshops: - FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION
- PRE SCHOOL TEACHING
- BREAKTHROUGH SUPERVISION
- PROJECT METHODS SUPERVISION
- PUPILS' BOOKS WRITERS

JOB DESCRIPTION :

- To assist the National Curriculum Development Centre and the BANFES BASIC EDUCATION SPECIALIST identify and solve problems or difficulties that teachers have in teaching.
- To help prepare plans, materials and to offer inservice teacher training.

I. What curriculum areas would be of most interest to you:
(tick)

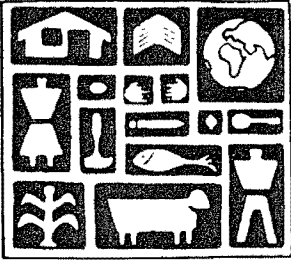
- 1 English and Language Arts. [✓]
- Maths. []
- Science. []
- 2 Social Studies. [✓]
- 3 Practical Subjects. e.g. Agriculture. [✓]
- Other. []

II. What activities would be of greatest interest to you:

- 3 School visit to see innovations teaching practices.
- 5 School visits to review instructional materials.
- 2 Workshops on teaching techniques.
- 4 Workshops on instructional materials.
- 1 Workshops on classroom management.
- Other.

III. What would you wish to gain from the study tour?

- ① Exposure to a variety of schools
i.e. - LARGE SCHOOLS
- SMALL SCHOOLS
- PRE SCHOOLS
- ② Ability to share experiences to teachers in order to make them more innovative and competent in their teaching.



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**Hills House South
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass. 01003—U.S.A**

Tel: 413-545-0465

Telex: 955355

Fax: 413-545-1263

April 10, 1990


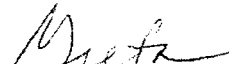
Dear Colleagues:

Greetings and congratulations on being nominated as participants in the Evening College Summer Study Tour! We at the BANFES Project at the University of Massachusetts would like to offer you an initial "Welcome!" We are anxious to meet each of you, and are looking forward to your visit. We hope that your stay here will be both professionally enriching and enjoyable.

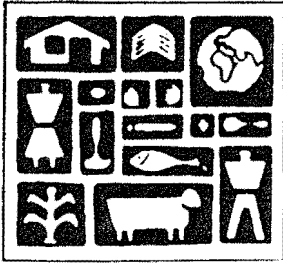
In designing your study tour, we would like to know a little about you. We'll attempt to address your needs and interests to the greatest extent possible, and this is where we need your help! Please take a few minutes to respond to the items on the attached page; it will serve at least as a brief introduction, until we can meet in person!

Thank you. We're looking forward to welcoming each of you to Massachusetts!

Sincerely,



Hassan Mohamed and Greta Shultz
Summer Study Tour Coordinators

Encl.



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**Hills House South
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass. 01003—U.S.A.**

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May 22, 1990

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Greetings to each and every one of you! We hope you are as eager to arrive in the States as we are to receive you. We have been working hard to plan and organize a program that aims to be interesting, enjoyable and educational. It will be a full agenda, with so much to do and see, so let's all look forward to lots of activity and, hopefully, learning!

Program

In reviewing your introductory forms we were impressed by the wealth of professional experience you bring to the program, as well as the range of interests you represent. We were also challenged by the differences in Lesotho's and the U.S.'s educational systems. As we've mentioned previously, certain areas included in Lesotho's curriculum are not covered in the States, and some of the professional interests noted in your responses will not be addressed in the program. For example, our U.S. resource people will not be equipped to address English as a Foreign Language, classroom management for a high pupil-teacher ratio, practical studies and radio as instructional medium.

Rather, moving to the positive (!), we base the program on those strengths of the U.S. system that correspond to your interests. Practitioners will be working with you throughout the study tour to combine theory-based learning and practical experiences in ways that all -- you and they -- might leave the program with expanded and enriched professional repertoires.

The four study tour units are:

- 1) School visits: You will each spend 4 days in a school, observing classrooms, presenting a guest lesson, meeting with guidance counselors, special education experts, librarians, administrators and more.
- 2) Creative Problem-Solving Institute: We will fly to Buffalo, New York for this highly acclaimed professional conference. Well-known resource people will present provocative sessions on creativity and education. Also, a side trip to beautiful Niagara Falls is on the agenda.
- 3) Workshops: Education professionals from the Five College Area will present a series of workshops on innovative teaching approaches and methods that they find exciting and successful.

4) Individual projects: Each person will identify an area of particular interest, and develop and present a practical, actionable product to take back home, and use!

Also, we expect that you will be curious about the sights and sounds of the beautiful New England area. There will be plenty of opportunity to visit scenic spots and enjoy music and dance and other relaxing events.

What to bring

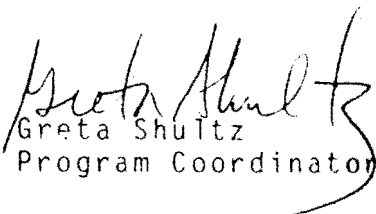
The teachers you will be visiting are anxious to have you present a lesson on Lesotho and its culture. Some teachers have expressed an interest in establishing a pen-pal relationship with a class in Lesotho. Please bring any materials you might need for these purposes. You may wish, also, to bring a small gift from home for a U.S. teacher.

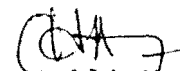
Cultural night: Our festive get-togethers will be attended by a wide range of international students and professionals residing in the area. An idea is to ask each country or culture to present -- what?? -- a song or dance or other art form representative of that culture. Bring your voices (!) and any item of traditional Basotho clothing you may want to show to the crowd.

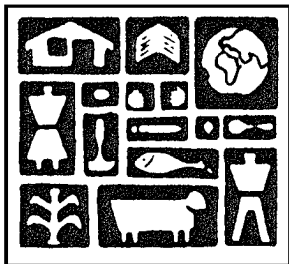
So, we will be eagerly waiting as you land in Boston's Logan Airport and file through the customs gate at the TWA terminal. We'll help you settle in to our own Parson's Annex at Smith College in Northampton. You'll have a good rest and a chance to do some local exploring and by then we'll have launched into our interesting and eventful month together.

We'll look forward to seeing you soon!

Khotso Pula Nala,


Greta Shultz
Program Coordinator


Hassan Ali Mohamed
Curriculum Coordinator



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EVENING COLLEGE STUDY TOUR

June 8, 1990

Lumelang !!!

Welcome to the United States and the Smith College Campus. We hope your trip from Lesotho was pleasant.

We all have been looking forward to your visit, and we are glad to work with you on this study tour. Please make yourselves comfortable and at home. We will try our best to make your stay here a pleasant and memorable experience. Hopefully, you will have a chance to engage in challenging and stimulating professional experiences, as well as relax, chat, and enjoy the scenery.

We're looking forward to your enthusiasm and lively participation. All our cooperation and team work will ensure a successful program.

Again welcome, relax, enjoy, teach and learn !

Khotso, Pula, Nala

David R. Evans
Principal Investigator

Robert J. Miltz
Principal Investigator

Fredi Munger
Project Coordinator

Barbara Gravin-Wilbur
Financial Administrator

Jeetendra Joshee
Group Process Trainer

Josette H. Ludwig
Cultural Guide

Greta Shultz
Program Coordinator

Hassan A. Mohamed
Curriculum Coordinator

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