

Horton, Highlander, and Leadership Education: Lessons for Preparing Educational Leaders for Social Justice

ABSTRACT: Influenced by Myles Horton's vision and leadership, the Highlander Folk School became an adult education program centered on social change via the labor and civil rights movements. In this article, I examine the pedagogy and practice of Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School and identify the key themes that guided their educational approach to social justice leadership training. I then explore the ways in which educational leadership preparation may exemplify these key themes in its pedagogy and practice with the aim of moving the field and schooling closer to social justice and democratic ideals.

Recent scholarship reveals renewed interest in and focus on educational leadership oriented toward social justice and democracy (Brown, 2004, 2006; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Marshall, 2004; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shields, 2004). Generally, this scholarship supports the notion that educational leaders have a social and moral obligation to foster equitable school practices, processes, and outcomes for learners of different racial, socioeconomic, gender, cultural, disability, and sexual orientation backgrounds. Specifically, Bredeson (2004) calls for democratic school leaders who act intentionally to create equitable schooling and who serve as “dismantlers who need to challenge inequities and disrupt the sources and systems that contribute to those injustices” (p. 712). These scholars argue that school leaders' moral and social responsibility must manifest itself in the exercise of professional agency and become evident in actions, behaviors, and decisions that result in equitable schooling for chil-

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dren. Positioned as such, school leaders are in fact “cultural workers” (Giroux, 1992, p. 13) who, Dantley (1990) contends, “must be wedded to the notion of schools as vehicles for social and political reconstruction” (p. 594).

This notion of leadership for social and political reconstruction can be found in the popular social movements of the 1930s through 1970s. Within these broader social movements, we see poignant illustrations of leadership and leadership training that enhanced individuals’ consciousness about the sources of inequality and injustice and that proposed progressive action as a means to transform society into a new social order. One example of such leadership training can be seen in Myles Horton’s Highlander Folk School. Often mentioned as the educational center for the civil rights movement, the Highlander Folk School actually dates back to 1932 in the mountainous regions of Monteagle, Tennessee (Glen, 1996). Influenced by Horton’s vision and leadership, the Highlander School became an adult education program centered on social change via the labor and civil rights movements. As a model of leadership education, Horton and Highlander embody what it means to educate leaders to work toward broader goals of democracy and social justice (Kennedy, 1981; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). Using biographical, autobiographical, and scholarly literature, I examine the pedagogy and practice of Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School and identify the key themes that guided their educational approach to social justice leadership training. I then explore the ways in which educational leadership preparation may exemplify these key themes in its pedagogy and practice with the aim of moving the field and schooling closer to social justice and democratic aims.

Paramount to Horton’s approach was the need to ensure that Highlander students, often union leaders and civil rights leaders, first understood the complexity of the world and its social problems (Kennedy, 1981). By situating local problems within broader sociopolitical and economic contexts, leaders could learn the complexity and embedded nature of the injustice and inequality that they and other marginalized people faced. Moreover, leadership education became the means through which the masses would receive education about social injustice and inequality. We saw Horton teach leaders to empower others to act on their own behalf to address their local social, political, and economic problems. Only then would Highlander students engage in any type of strategy building to face injustice and inequality. Finally, the Highlander School constantly evolved and changed its programs to meet students’ needs and respond to emerging situations that called for the transformation of existing political, economic, and social structures.

This examination of Myles Horton and the Highlander School offers insight into the philosophy, pedagogy, and praxis of an adult education

program centered on leadership for democracy and social justice. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of Horton and the Highlander Folk School, how they developed social justice leaders, and the impact that they made in doing so. Next, I take a look at some of the current efforts to translate a social justice orientation into educational leadership preparation and the ways that they relate to the Horton and Highlander model. Finally, I offer some reflection, analysis, and a look toward the future in educational leadership preparation oriented for democracy and social justice. First, though, I begin with a discussion of the social responsibility of educational leadership preparation.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

The history of adult education offers an important basis upon which to consider the social responsibility of educational leadership preparation. The connection between the two is clear: Typically found in educational leadership programs are untraditional students (adults), usually mid-career, who are seeking to obtain training for professional positions—a characterization consistent with what some believe adult education has become (Beder, 1987; Clark, 1978; Heaney, 1996). Eduard Lindeman, one of the early 20th-century thinkers on adult education, championed the idea of school-based education for democratic participation, as well as the notion of lifelong learning, similar to that of Dewey (Brookfield, 1984; Simpson, 1994). His main premise was that adults' lived experiences should foster the desire for self-improvement but should also heighten awareness of one's role in enhancing society and improving the lives of others (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989). So although Lindeman valued adult education for personal improvement, this self-interest needed to be coupled with "the desire and knowledge needed to change society" (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989, p. 347). Moreover, Lindeman held that the role of the adult educator was to encourage students' awareness of current and contemporary situations, support the understanding of the historical antecedents for contemporary conditions, and affirm possibilities for individuals to change those conditions (Brookfield, 1984; Heaney, 1996).

Although early adult education mirrored Lindeman's philosophy, cultural and political change precipitated a shift in adult education and its goals and practice (Courtney, 1994; Fisher & Podeschi, 1989). Many explanations for the shift are offered, including the rise in American individualism, growth in the behavioral philosophies in American education,

and the expansion of the organization and knowledge base of the youthful field of adult education (Beder, 1987; Fisher & Podeschi, 1989; Heaney, 1996). During the latter part of the 20th century, Malcolm Knowles epitomized the new thinking about adult education. Knowles emphasized self-actualization and espoused that “the core reality is the self which uses freedom for fulfillment through career and lifestyle” (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989, p. 352). For Knowles, adult education was not to lead participants to goals larger than themselves, unless individuals chose them. Public and private interests were seen as being separate, leading to a heightened focus on technical means rather than the moral ends, in contrast to Lindeman (Fisher & Podeschi, 1989). These cultural and political shifts resulted in an ideology of adult education that privileged technique in job-related competencies and vertical movement for professional career and status over “the concern for social context” (Heaney, 1996, p. 14).

Similarly, these cultural and political shifts manifested in the changing ideologies in educational leadership preparation (Cooper & Boyd, 1987; Murphy, 2006; Murphy & Hallinger, 1987). Between the 1930s and 1950s (coincidentally corresponding with broader social movements), educational leadership preparation experienced its “era of the social conscience” (Cooper & Boyd, 1987, p. 11); during this period, school administrators received the typical training in management, scheduling, and budgeting but also were offered courses on schools and the social order. As leadership and organizational behavior became primary topics in educational leadership programs, the focus switched from “concerns with the social order, the teacher, or the program” to “the administrator” (p. 11). This new focus coincided with the theory movement and the behavioral science movement in educational leadership preparation of the 1950s through 1980s (Cooper & Boyd, 1987; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Since the 1990s, education reform efforts prompted the creation of a new framework for leadership preparation programs, one shaped by a common set of knowledge and performance criteria dictated by standards.

Some scholars argue that prescriptive performance standards and certification requirements have weakened at best and dissolved at worst school leaders’ responsibility and ability to respond to the social needs of students and families and broader democratic aims of society (Giroux, 1992; Murphy, 2006). To recast the social responsibility of educational leaders, Giroux (1992), like Myles Horton, situates the work of educational leadership with that of cultural workers. He argues that the two

share a similar sense of vocation in combining intellectual work with social responsibility. . . . This is a form of leadership that links schools to the wider

society, one that positions administrators, teachers, students, and others as border intellectuals who constantly move between and across disciplinary, cultural, and social spheres to broaden possibilities for dialogue, public conversation, and collective struggle. (p. 15)

Moreover, Giroux affirms the role of schools of education and leadership programs to prepare future educational leaders to “undertake social criticism as public and concerned educators who address the most pressing social and political issues of their neighborhood, community, and society” (p. 14).

THE CONTESTED SPACE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Critical theorists support the notion that education as a field is a contested space ultimately formed by value systems that privilege certain knowledge and voices over others (Giroux, 1992; McLaren, 2003). Thus, it seems reasonable that these scholars would contend that when educational leadership preparation privileges technical and practical knowledge, particularly in the form of standards, it is inherently political. Moreover, the resulting attention to such knowledge supports, if not drives, the marketization of education (F. W. English, 2006). F. W. English (2006) asserts that such marketization deprofessionalizes educational leadership rather than advances the field of educational leadership. Further, he suggests that the nature of standards “requires a fixed society, and within it, fixed schools” (p. 465), thus disabling the flexibility and fluidity needed to address social injustice for oppressed groups. He warns,

Instead of the standards enabling practitioners to confront changing circumstances, the veracity and utility of them remain only as long as situations do not change. They are thus antichange (English, 2003). The consequences of this circumstance work against groups who have been marginalized because they are also fixed in place. Thus the standards are also antidemocratic, a criticism of fixed educational outcomes rooted in static notions of socioeconomic relationships identified nearly 70 years ago by Boyd Bode (1930). (p. 463)

In other words, the focus on technical and practical knowledge may prevent critical reflection of educational leadership preparation, hindering the “problem posing” (Anderson, 2006, p. 83) required to be reflective of educational practice and its embedded assumptions. In response to this circumstance, Giroux (1992) calls for the need for emancipatory knowledge in educational leadership preparation:

Administrators and teachers in schools of education and leadership programs need a new language capable of asking new questions and generat-

ing more critical spaces open to the process of negotiation, translation, and experimentation. At the very least, educators need a language that is interdisciplinary, that moves skillfully between theory, practice, and politics. This is a language that makes the issues of culture, power, and ethics primary to understanding how schools construct knowledge, identities, ways of life that promote nurturing and empowering relations. We need a language in our leadership programs that defends schools as democratic public spheres responsible for providing an indispensable public service to the nation: a language that is capable of awakening the moral, political, and civic responsibilities of our youth. Public schools need to be justified as places in which students are educated in the principles and practices of democracy, not in a version of democracy cleansed of vision, possibility, or struggle. (p. 15)

Coupled with this call for emancipatory knowledge, some scholars in adult education continue to support a framework for graduate education focused on “a social change mandate” (L. M. English, 2005, p. 1171). Horton and the Highlander Folk School espoused a similar belief, that “learning cannot be separate from doing; education is a process which includes both reflection and action” (Heaney, 1992, p. 55).

These principles, the advancement of emancipatory knowledge and education as reflection and action, when applied to educational leadership preparation, implicate programs to develop adult leaders with a keen knowledge and understanding of the society’s emerging issues and their relationship to larger social, economic, and political forces and the real impact that they have on local people, communities, and schools. More important, leadership preparation should arguably promote school leaders’ role in transforming schools and communities in the interest of underserved, underprivileged, and marginalized people and toward a more equitable system and society. In what follows, I consider the example of Myles Horton and Highlander Folk School, their pedagogy and praxis, in the preparation of leaders who would work for social change and their impact on local communities and the broader society. Afterward, I discuss how Horton and Highlander’s efforts relate to current conceptions of educational leadership preparation for social justice.

MYLES HORTON AND THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOLS

While a college student in 1927, Myles Horton began his career as an educator. The son of teachers, he organized and taught in a vacation Bible school in the poor mountainous regions of Ozone, Tennessee. Nearby

were remnants of the mining and lumber industries that had been relocated further into the mountains and out of reach of many of the local people. Without jobs and money, many families suffered from hunger, cold, and poor education. Regarding poor education, Bible schools were supposed to fill the void; yet it was here that Horton realized that the schools did not meet the needs of the local people (Adams & Horton, 1975; Glen, 1996). With such depressing circumstances, Horton thought that these schools should allow adults to share their real-life problems, consider the broader social and economic circumstances that contributed to such problems, and collectively think about ways to address them. Attendance grew at his school, or “community meetings” (Adams & Horton, 1975, p. 3) as he later called them, and over the next year, he expanded his program to include more Bible schools in more communities in the region.

After his college graduation, a variety of work experiences, and time in the Union Seminary in New York, Horton enrolled at the University of Chicago in 1930 in the prestigious Graduate School of Sociology. Never intending to become a sociologist, he nevertheless became intrigued by the theories put forth by Robert Park and other sociologists. Specifically, Horton came to study and understand theories related to issues of crisis, conflict, and mass movement for social change. He wondered how he could include such theories in his Bible schools, and he dreamt of creating a school focused on these principles (Glen, 1996; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). Furthermore, he sought to expand his knowledge outside the classroom, using everything from his encounters with Black people at the YMCA, to his visit with Jane Addams and the Hull House (Glen, 1996). However, the most influential aspect of his education came as a result of his acquaintance with a minister at the University of Chicago. Upon hearing of Horton’s ideas and desires to begin a school, the minister suggested that Horton travel to Denmark to witness firsthand the Danish folk schools (Adams & Horton, 1975; Glen, 1996).

The aim of the early Danish folk schools was to “awaken and develop patriotism and civic responsibility among the nation’s long-oppressed rural peasantry” (Glen, 1996, p. 16). Through the “spoken word,” music, and lessons in history, religion, and language, these schools sought to instill in students an awareness of cultural heritage, language, and useful technology. Also, each folk school represented one side of a contested social issue, which it proudly claimed and took up as its cause. For example, early Danish folk schools formed to champion “the cause of the people in their struggles against the landlords and nobility” (p. 16). Increased political participation, intellectual activity, and cooperation of and among the rural

population of Denmark were seen as the successful result of these folk schools (Toiviainen, 1995).

Myles Horton aspired to create an adult education program for workers in the southern Appalachian mountain region. He developed an affinity for this area for two reasons. First, he believed that the people of the southern Appalachian region suffered considerable economic exploitation at the hands of the coal and lumber industries. Second and more important, the history of labor protests by coal miners suggested to Horton that people in this region would likely be responsive to a school of the type that he envisioned (Horton, 1936). Modeled after the Danish folk schools that Horton visited, Highlander Folk Schools initially instituted residential and community education programs to help mountain people realize more about their condition, as well as the economic and social developments that could enrich their lives (Glen, 1996; Kennedy, 1981). Horton and his colleagues believed that the way for industrial and agricultural laborers to exert more control over their lives rested in their own education.

HIGHLANDER'S LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

Several features characterized Horton and Highlander's approach to leadership education. First, Horton believed that leaders must emerge from the local communities because of their knowledge of local problems and their proven ability to rally others around an issue. Further, participants involved in Highlander leadership training programs needed to exhibit a willingness and ability to agitate and stir up community interest in social justice issues (Glen, 1996). Second, using the Danish folk school model, Horton reconciled that the goals and structure of Highlander would reflect the students' experiences and situations. As a demonstration of democratic participation, this structure gave voice to the students and redistributed power from trainers (or teachers) to students. At the same time, students' voices and perspectives highlighted the issues that most concerned them, which served as the curriculum content for the training programs. The use of personal experiences energized students, giving them issues and concerns around which to rally and work together to solve (Kennedy, 1981; Thayer-Bacon, 2004).

Another feature of Highlander leadership training was to draw an association between the local issues as people experienced them and the broader sociopolitical and cultural phenomena that created injustice and inequality (Horton, 1936; Kennedy, 1981). Horton used crisis situations and other critical and defining topics to develop consciousness and action around local issues (Glen, 1996). The training programs involved the deconstruction of

social problems into the economic, ideological, and power and political dimensions that affected the experiences of local disenfranchised people. Subsequently, the trainer collaborated with the students to identify a problem and design a strategy to address it. According to Horton's close friend and Highlander trainer Frank Adams (1980), Horton sought to help the poor "to learn to act and speak for themselves, help them gain greater control over the decisions affecting their daily lives" (p. 217).

In addition, the poor and minority people taught the trainers how to communicate with them to develop trusting, respectful interpersonal relationships among them (Kennedy, 1981; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). Said of Horton,

Myles had to be in a place, to be with people and get a feel for how they looked and sounded and moved, in order to be confident he understood their needs and struggle. And when he felt a direct personal contact with poor or working people he seemed to take on their battles as his own. (Kohl, 1991, p. 5)

Also, the trainers provided the "spin" on situations; that is, they cast them in such a manner that caused people to react. Horton and colleagues advanced the notion that the problems experienced by one were indeed experienced by many in the community and, thus, the solutions should be shared by many.

Finally, the dynamic nature of social conditions precipitated the need to evaluate and reevaluate program curriculum and instructional approaches to ensure that they remained consistent and committed to social justice (Glen, 1996; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). Horton espoused the significance of building alliances with social, political, and bureaucratic leaders who influenced and controlled the issues that affected the community (Horton, 1936). He believed that such efforts reduced the hostility that might exist between these varied entities. Last, Horton maintained ongoing relationships and provided support for those leaders who emerged from Highlander programs.

In 1932, Highlander School featured classes on psychology, cultural geography, and revolutionary literature, as well as a course on the study of present social and economic problems. In addition, Highlander provided instruction on how to bring about social change. Many coal miners, other union workers, and community leaders attended sessions on local labor situations and how to build strong unions (Adams & Horton, 1975; Glen, 1996). In addition, some well-recognized local leaders attended the 6-week residential program where they gained information on parliamentary process, labor history and tactics, public speaking, and community relations (Adams & Horton, 1975; Horton, 1936). Horton selected the folk school model of education, particularly the residential aspect, because it

reduced individualism and isolation and promoted intellectual activity, political participation, and cooperation among participants (Glen, 1996; Kennedy, 1981). Students learned to live together; they cooked and cleaned together, wrote and sang songs together—all of which was done to promote the spirit of community, common struggle, and the need for common solutions to their collective problems (Toiviainen, 1995). Horton deemed that the local leaders needed to learn how to “live a new social and economic order before they could teach it” (Adams & Horton, 1975, p. 14).

HIGHLANDER'S IMPACT

Highlander Folk School has been described as the “most remarkable adult education institution of the century” (Heaney, 1992, p. 52). Myles Horton via the Highlander Schools energized thousands of people in a progressive social movement for justice and equality. His impact and the school's span many states and many decades. As a result of Highlander's early educational programs, the Appalachian region, the South, and the nation in general saw a significant increase and stabilization of union membership, more power and voice for disenfranchised people, and significant increases in wages (Adams, 1980; Adams & Horton, 1975). Also, by illustrating their interest convergence, Horton insisted on the integration of Black and White unions in the South. At Highlander, Black and White union members learned together the ways in which company bosses tried to divide and conquer using race. The growing presence of Blacks in unions and their presence at Highlander contributed to their increased collective action (Adams & Horton, 1975). Although not directly attributed to Horton and Highlander, the Sleeping Car Porters Union and A. Philip Randolph in 1941 demonstrated collective Black action against private and federal industry.

However, with World War II came a change in the union movement. More unions agreed to no-strike clauses, and union leaders gradually began to divest from training at Highlander. At the same time, Horton began to see the changes taking place in the South in regard to race relations. In response, Highlander shifted its focus from union participation to the movement for civil rights for Blacks (Glen, 1996; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). In the early 1950s, Highlander's adaptability became evident with the rise in racial tension that accompanied the rumored desegregation ruling by the courts. Anticipating the need for local leadership to help with the desegregation process, Horton and Highlander School trained leaders a full year before the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (Glen, 1996). Highlander also offered summer

workshops on Supreme Court decisions and the public schools (Adams & Horton, 1975). Although these workshops attracted Blacks and Whites from all walks of life, Horton's conclusion, based on what he learned from A. Philip Randolph and the Sleeping Car Porters Union, was that the call for civil rights was a Black movement and that Whites should work in the background (Adams & Horton, 1975). This was consistent with his broader philosophy that local people should identify and work to solve the problems that they faced.

After the *Brown* decision, Highlander created new programs called *citizenship schools*, often run by Highlander-trained Black community leaders. The citizenship schools bridged education, political action, and integration (Glen, 1996). For example, some citizenship schools brought Blacks and Whites together for lessons in reading and writing that would enable them to exercise their right to vote. Later, in the civil rights movement, citizenship schools incorporated new educational programs to train community leaders on how to conduct sit-ins and demonstrations. (Some of the Highlander participants who rose to prominence include Septima Clark, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Andrew Young, Stokely Carmichael, and Julian Bond.) According to estimates from the early 1960s, Highlander Schools provided education that taught 26,000 Blacks to read in order to vote, and they also trained over 400 people to run the citizenship schools for 6,500 adults. By 1965, approximately 50,000 Blacks had registered to vote, and estimates in 1963 and 1970 claim that some 100,000 people learned to read and write through the citizenship schools (Adams, 1980; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). Finally, the popular civil rights era song "We Shall Overcome" was adapted and arranged at Highlander School by Horton's wife, Aimee Horton.

Beyond these numbers, Horton and Highlander created leaders with a better understanding of the social, political, and economic causes of the problems that people faced. Moreover, students learned their role in demanding a new social order and developed the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to do so. These new leaders and the people who trained them developed a greater understanding of the people—poor, Black, and working class—which fostered better attitudes and approaches to dealing with them (Adams & Horton, 1975). The idea was to encourage interrelationships and participation from disenfranchised people—"teachers must learn to work inside the experiences of those being taught" (Adams & Horton, 1975, p. 45). Students' experiences at Highlander enhanced their own awareness and consciousness, which enabled them to empower disenfranchised people to step forward to represent and speak up for themselves and act on their own behalf.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Much can be learned from Horton and Highlander's model of leadership education—specifically, the ways that they promoted social welfare, fostered democratic participation, and engaged underserved populations. Like Horton, school leaders must necessarily be disturbed by academic and social inequity and inequality and enact the social change needed for marginalized people to access the necessary political, social, and economic mechanisms to reverse their circumstances. In this section, I review some of the current conceptions of educational leadership preparation that relate to apparent social justice themes and pedagogical approaches used by Horton and the Highlander School. In addition, I discuss how educational leadership programs may incorporate these ideas and strategies into their philosophy and approach to leadership preparation, as well as some possible implications for school leadership practice. The final section provides reflection and analysis on the current and future problems, barriers, and possibilities in educational leadership preparation oriented for social justice and democracy.

THEME 1: DECONSTRUCTION–RECONSTRUCTION

Key to Horton's philosophy and exemplified at Highlander was the articulation of current social and economic conditions and their impact on certain individuals, as well as a vision of what a more democratic, socially just society would look like. The approach seems congruous with a body of scholarship on educational leadership for social justice that centralizes the theory and practice of deconstruction and reconstruction (Brown, 2004; Hafner, 2006; Larson & Murtadha, 2002). This theme underscores the tenets of critical theory, which attempts to reveal how society marginalizes race, class, gender, and sexuality. As a pedagogical tool, deconstruction and reconstruction expose the underpinnings of school practice, help determine the "whys" of school practice, and uncover "who gains and who loses" (Hafner, 2006, p. 186) from existing school practice. During deconstruction, students unpack the sources and causes of inequity inherent in school programs, policies, and practices. Next, students reflect on and critique school practice, then reconstruct programs, policies, and practices in ways that remedy the inequity that the deconstruction process uncovered.

From certain courses, instructional approaches, and program models, we can infer that some leadership preparation programs utilize deconstruction–reconstruction as a pedagogical tool. For example, we might assume add-on courses on race and/or gender and education, social

justice and social foundations, and antiracist education exercise similar strategies and similar goals (Young & Laible, 2000). In addition, multicultural education and critical theory, considered deconstruction theories, may exist as stand-alone courses and may be introduced into other program courses. Several instructional approaches, such as prejudice reduction workshops, reflective journals, case analyses, and activist action plans, may directly and indirectly unpack and reconstruct student knowledge about race, poverty, and other areas of difference (Brown, 2004). Finally, promoted as a practical tool that discovers inequities in school programs, policies, and practices, equity audits may be taught to preservice and in-service educational leaders (Sklra, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004).

From a practical perspective, it seems reasonable to suggest that school leaders who have experienced the process of deconstruction–reconstruction may reflect on and eliminate their own deficit thinking and disallow others' deficit thinking, which so often places blame for educational inequities and outcomes on children and their families, without adequate affirmation of the problems of inequity and inequality within educational systems (Valencia, 1997). Presumably, educators who employ a sociohistorical foundational lens in their assessment of schools may be better able to create a vision and mission that redefine the image of children, communities, schools, and society and their relation to the process of education and schooling. The implication for the educational leader who is oriented toward democracy and social justice may then involve the ability to reframe or recharacterize day-to-day educational problems in ways that concentrate on what schools can and must do to affect the education of traditionally underserved populations. In the end, future educational leaders may then recommit themselves to building school practices that serve all students well (Hafner, 2006).

THEME 2: CONSTRUCTIVISM

Life experience became the basis upon which Horton and Highlander teachers built their educational programs. Individual experiences shared between poor persons, laborers, minority groups, and trainers served as a primary source of knowledge and education for all participants. The idea of constructivism appears to capture this theme and approach to leadership education. The main tenet of constructivism is that the learner constructs and builds knowledge from within using prior knowledge along with new, often experiential, information (Pounder, Reitzug, & Young, 2002). In the classroom and in clinical field experiences, students may engage in conversation with others, bring their own experiences to bear, and construct knowledge that is unique to each student. Giroux (1992) sug-

gests that constructivism promotes consciousness of one's own theories and methods of inquiry and the partiality that exists within them. Further, Pounder and colleagues (2002) propose that authentic pedagogy arises from constructivism. Authentic pedagogy situates individual experiences and the experiences of others within a larger context so that the knowledge gained has wider value and implications.

Young and Laible (2000) outline instructional strategies that promote constructivist learning. Three strategies encourage the exercise of building and sharing knowledge—specifically, they call for professors to know their students, facilitate students' self-reflection, and provide opportunities for students to dialogue with peers. Instructors may also use a case-based approach to raise critical issues pertaining to matters of equity, equality, and justice for students to engage in constructivist learning. Clinical and field experiences—particularly, those in cultural settings unfamiliar to students—also provide opportunities for critical reflection and inquiry necessary to create new knowledge (Pounder et al., 2002). Richardson (2003) suggests that in addition to creating such opportunities, professors must structure group dialogue and tasks in ways that lead to shared understanding and compel students to “determine, challenge, change or add to existing beliefs and understandings” (p. 1626). Vital to instructors' ability to engage the themes of democracy and social justice via constructivist pedagogy is their own critical consciousness around issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and other areas of difference and, as Richardson states, “his or her understanding of how students are taking [the subject matter] up” (p. 1631).

According to Pounder and colleagues (2002), the authentic pedagogy that can give rise to constructivist learning may help future educational leaders contextualize school-related problems with societal problems and design the appropriate strategies to remedy them. In addition, these educational leaders may better understand and acknowledge the limitations of their single perspective and utilize situations, experiences, and others' perspectives to learn from and guide their decision making. Essentially, the experiences of marginalized groups may serve as professional development for educational leaders. In this way, leaders may constantly engage in the experiential learning that encourages adaptability and responsiveness to the changing culture and changing environments of schools and diverse needs of a diverse student body.

THEME 3: DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Horton held the belief that social change could occur only via the community and its resources. He modeled this idea in a couple of ways. Both

the residential school and the workshops at Highlander created opportunities to reduce isolation so that community people could interact and learn from one another. He also provided the space for students' voices to be heard and believed that they needed to provide solutions to their own problems (Clark, 1978; Thayer-Bacon, 2004). The discourse on democratic communities in schools reflects two ideas similar to Horton's—namely, the significance of participation and community responsibility for school and community renewal. In a poignant analysis of democracy and community, Furman and Starratt (2002) contend that to build a democratic community, structures and procedures must facilitate community members' participation in the decision-making process. Collaborative school cultures, participatory decision making, site-based management, transformational leadership, and professional learning communities each connote the notion of democratic participation, which include various constituents inside and outside the school. These descriptions of work structures and interpersonal processes may emerge as subject matter in, or as key frameworks of, leadership preparation for educators. Courses in organization and management, courses in supervision and administration, and those specific to the principalship or the superintendency may reflect the theme of democratic participation through structures and processes.

However, Anderson (1998) warns of the diverse agendas associated with participatory reform efforts. He argues that participation is mediated through the operation of power, politics, micropolitics (the subtle ways in which power and politics can oppress certain voices), and the management of meaning by school leaders and others. Through these mechanisms, participation can act as a source of control that empowers certain constituencies over others. Furthermore, participation may force collusion between groups, which can act to maintain the status quo. Implicit here is that participation in and of itself may not be inclusive of marginalized groups, may discourage disparate voices and perspectives, and may deny participation in decision making. In addition, critical analysis of school policies and practices may reveal inequities in power and dominance (Marshall & McCarthy, 2002).

Though educational leadership programs may include content on politics in educational administration and education policy, it is difficult to discern whether and to what degree these programs reflect politics as the struggle over resources, ideologies, voice, and power at the school, district, community, and other levels. Indeed, leadership for social justice would facilitate a type of participation that is inclusive of diverse voices, particularly from traditionally marginalized groups that may lack the necessary power to influence school decision making (Anderson, 1998; Gold-

farb & Grinberg, 2002). To accomplish this goal, school leaders must understand the distribution and manifestation of power onto the politics in their school communities but also recognize the need to create new work structures and interpersonal relationships in ways that redistribute or balance the power across various stakeholders.

THEME 4: DIALOGUE AND RELATIONSHIPS

As previously mentioned, Myles Horton selected the Danish folk school model, at least in part, because it reduced individualism and promoted cooperation and intellectual activity among participants. Although efficiency of program delivery is often cited as the primary purpose, the cohort delivery model, common in about half of educational leadership preparation programs (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000), is said to encourage dialogue and relationship building. In a brief review of the literature on the effects of cohorts, Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2003) found that students report, as the key benefits to cohort participation, stronger interpersonal relationships with other students and faculty, social bonding, and a shared sense of belonging, as well as new collaboration and networking opportunities. Moreover, this review suggests that cohorts may encourage school–university partnerships, thereby linking classroom learning to professional practice. Faculty in cohort programs tend to see themselves as facilitators who help shape a socially constructed learning environment where students feel safe to discuss and create meaning, even on difficult topics.

Important to any delivery model, the idea of rational discourse is a central factor in preparing leadership for social justice (Brown, 2004). Rational discourse fosters a commitment to conversations with colleagues that provide space for new perspectives but that also deepen and enrich understanding of one's own biases, as well as how and why others construct their various understandings. Brown (2004) contends that through rational discourse, "awareness is validated, refined, and focused and motives leading to social action are cultivated" (p. 94). Moreover, Shields (2004) speaks of the importance of dialogue to help overcome "our pathologies of silence" (p. 130) that exist in communities around difference. Further, she asserts that dialogue is necessary both to hear the diverse voices that make up schools and to build strong relationships within the educational communities.

Brown (2004) suggests several ways leadership education can promote occasions to build dialogue and relationships. Cross-cultural interviews may encourage engagement between individuals from different back-

grounds. Important here is that parties value and legitimate the perspectives of those of multiple backgrounds (ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, religious, etc.). Cultural exchange, a strategy suggested by Young and Laible (2000), requires educational leadership students to share information about their ethnicity and background. This exercise prompts students, particularly White students, to think of themselves in terms of having a culture, ethnicity, and race and to recognize the ways that these traits have shaped their lives. Another approach, educational plunge, requires students to go outside their usual environment and to another environment and participate in the culture through cultural centers, restaurants, schools, and other institutions. In this way, future educational leaders may reflect on their own social environment and the ways in which it has shaped their belief systems. Last, diversity panels promote the unveiling of stereotypes and prejudice by engaging in constructive discourse with people of diverse backgrounds.

Horton and Highlander teachers exhibited confidence in their ability to converse with racially diverse and impoverished communities, an important skill to building relationships. They also recognized the possibility that privileged people and voices can override others. However, some scholars contend that educators lack such confidence, which may result from general discomfort with difference (Shields, 2004). Yet Larson and Murtafda (2002) assert that dialogue builds trust and cooperation so that students do not perpetuate oppression. Moreover, Foster (2004) maintains that "leadership is language and language is how leadership is exerted" (p. 178). For school leaders to prepare to lead oppressed, underserved, and ignored populations and release the power for social justice, they may need the language and interpersonal skills to communicate the problems and possibilities in ways that help people make sense of their circumstances and the ways that problems and concerns might be addressed.

THEME 5: WHO SHOULD LEAD? THE NOTION OF LEADERSHIP DISPOSITION

Horton's mandate to develop leadership from within local communities empowered leaders and the masses to act on their own behalf. Further, individuals selected to participate in Highlander programs already held leadership positions in the community and in organizations. Their preexisting leadership status demonstrated others' trust in them, which was necessary to facilitate social change efforts. Moreover, these established leaders articulated the problems as the people experienced them. Finally, these individuals needed to accept their role in transforming society and exhibit a

willingness to stir up interest in social justice issues and agitate the status quo in economic, political, and social structures.

In the current highly polarized environment, *disposition* stands as a dirty word when associated with the political ideology of educators. Yet it seems reasonable that because of this highly polarized political environment, future educational leaders understand their charge to foster school environments inclusive of all students and capable of meeting the needs of all students. This creates a quandary for educational leadership programs. On one hand, it seems necessary to select individuals who understand the moral and ethical responsibility of educators and educational leadership and who are prepared to reflect these principles in every action and decision. Yet admissions requirements to educational leadership programs and other bureaucratic and ideological structures make it highly unlikely that colleges of education exercise this type of selectivity in admissions. Thus, it may mean that leadership preparation programs support and promote the development of certain types of leaders—in particular, “individuals who engage in critical analysis of conditions that have perpetuated historical inequities in schools and who work to change institutional structures and culture” (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005, p. 202).

That said, Marshall (2004) warns that educational leaders typically “lack the values stance and critical reasoning to blow the whistle when policies and programs cause harm” (p. 7). This proposition highlights possibilities for educational leadership preparation. Pounder and colleagues (2002) suggest that educational leaders require new analytic skills, knowledge, and dispositions to promote social justice. They support, as an instructional approach in leadership preparation, field-based inquiry focused on oppression and discrimination and the analysis of empirical data as possible methods to reveal the ways that schools may perpetuate inequalities. Other scholars suggest programmatic and instructional frameworks centered on the characteristics and dispositions of leaders. For example, Starratt’s (1994) ethical framework aims to develop leaders with the disposition and practice of the ethics of care, justice, and critique. Furthermore, the central tenets of moral leadership and transformative leadership may be used in leadership education that require students to question and reflect on social inequalities and their perspectives on these issues, as well as the ways in which they as future school leaders bear moral and ethical responsibility for dislodging sources of inequalities in schools (Dantley & Tillman, 2006). Others, such as Dantley (2003, 2005) and Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, and Capper (1999), discuss the spirituality of school leaders as a possible means to engage their moral compasses in the act of leading schools.

REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

Considering the depth and magnitude of the social and political battles that they faced, Myles Horton and Highlander teachers understood the need for the appropriate pedagogy and the appropriate people suited to the task of dismantling inequality and injustice and creating a new social order. Perhaps just as important, they championed the community or local leader as the primary means and mechanism through which to channel these social change endeavors. Similarly, the case can be made for the school leader as an agent of social change with direct influence on equitable school processes, practices, and outcomes. This thematic overview provides important indicators on the ways in which educational leadership and leadership preparation may be oriented toward social justice. These instructional conceptions and approaches challenge students to witness and place themselves in position to see the social importance of their work and in some cases to live out the realities that exist (Heaney, 1992). Although it is difficult to discern the breadth and depth of social justice themes that currently exist within educational leadership preparation, research and practice reveal several general patterns in the training of school leaders. In the next section, I examine these patterns and, through them, the potential problems and possibilities for educational leadership preparation oriented toward social justice.

Although the Highlander Schools centralized deconstruction–reconstruction strategies in their leadership training, the degree to which these themes exist within educational leadership preparation and their professional development programs span from prominent to not at all (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Marshall & Ward, 2004). Some argue that a likely factor may be a disinterest and a lack of knowledge on the part of educational leadership professors, which may minimize the attention given to issues of race, class, gender, and difference in the classroom and in educational leadership departments (Marshall & Ward, 2004; Rusch, 2004). Another potential barrier is that such strategies require a certain level of flexibility in curriculum, content, and pedagogy. However, flexibility in educational leadership preparation generally does not exist. This is not surprising given that professional leader standards as developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council and used for accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education drive the structure, function, and licensure of many educational leadership programs (Murphy, 2006).

Besides noting the inflexibility, critics suggest that these standards give superficial attention to issues of social justice (F. W. English, 2006; Giroux, 1992; Marshall & Ward, 2004). As mentioned earlier, some scholars assert that standards-based licensure may actually prevent the “problem-posing” needed to critically reflect and act upon inequitable school practices. In their study of two states’ administrative licensure policies, Marshall and McCarthy (2002) found that social justice issues tended to be “managed through” other frameworks like the achievement gap or accountability mandates, and resulted in an emphasis on the “talk” of social justice rather than on the deeper issues of the causes of and possible solutions for inequity and inequality (Marshall & McCarthy, 2002). In his discourse analysis, Anderson (2001) argues that the language in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium national examination articulates a deficit view of children and poor communities and supports a “glibness” surrounding future leaders’ commitment to democratic values.

Rusch’s (2004) study on gender and race in educational leadership reflects another concern, namely, that students in educational leadership programs may ask for but not receive discussion and direction on leading diverse schools and student populations. Moreover, Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) point out that leadership education programs do little to provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate behaviors such as tolerance, vision, and commitment to social justice. Moreover, leadership education seeks little, if any, input from practicing school leaders and teachers about the social justice issues and concerns that might inform program content (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005). Even if programs reflect a social justice orientation, there seems to be a gap in the literature on the transfer of training in educational leadership preparation that tells how and what students learn in programs and whether and how what they learn translates to their professional practice. Typically, these programs “take as an act of faith that participants will use newfound skills to improve schools” (Leithwood, Riedlinger, Bauer, & Jantzi, 2004, p. 710).

Whereas Horton set out to identify a diverse pool of potential leaders from the local communities, the field of educational leadership has not seriously considered the significance of a diverse educational leadership pool. Few efforts exist to recruit and retain leaders of color, women, and specific ethnicities, nor are there attempts to build leadership from within diverse communities who can provide important perspectives on the academic achievement of these groups (Dantley, 2005; Grogan, 1999; Tillman, 2004). Because of their limited presence in these programs, perspectives, or voice, of women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and the poor may be marginalized, silenced, or effectively made nonexistent. Some

scholars indicate that women and people of color in particular play a vital role in unleashing power for social justice (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Rusch, 2004). Their potential value exists in their ability to build bridges across communities via communication, language, and relationships but also in their capability to add voice and perspective to the process of deconstruction, reconstruction, and constructivism. These scholars contend that marginalized groups need to be part of educational leadership programs to lend viewpoints that may not be heard otherwise (Dantley, 2005; Rusch, 2004; Tillman, 2004).

Finally, in this reflection of leadership preparation oriented toward social justice, it is difficult to ignore the historical disengagement of certain racial and ethnic groups and communities from the educational process. Years of distrust in the school, its teachers, and its administrators may impede current and future efforts to build relationships and trust. Often, schools and their officials are seen as the problem in the community or as the source of injustice. The difficulty for school leaders lies in their ability to inform and include the community in the school's efforts toward social justice goals. Another observation is that the theories, methods, and approaches presented here do not address the significance of the local community context, including school culture and school and community history, nor do they address how leadership preparation programs should educate potential school leaders on ways to incorporate the community-builder concept into their day-to-day work. Not only do school leaders require critical consciousness on matters of social justice and democracy, but they also need a certain social and political savvy that will enable them to navigate and change a system that may resist their change efforts.

A LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

If the early 21st century proves to be any indication of the future, many social, political, and economic challenges lie ahead. We are currently witnessing the manifestation of the growing social and economic divide between the wealthy and the poor. Perpetual neglect of communities and schools results in the unequal playing field and persistent opportunity, performance, and achievement gaps between races and classes. College tuition increases have outpaced inflation and leave many students at the outer margins of society or completely left behind. Until recently, there was a 10-year freeze on the minimum wage earnings while corporate prof-

its and salaries reached astounding heights. Hurricane Katrina and the fiasco that was the election of 2000 highlight the ways in which the poor and people of color may be and have been left outside the political process; these circumstances threaten the essence of a democracy. Numerous corporate and political scandals point to the self-interest over the public good. As more jobs relocate overseas, we see more children living in poverty and more working people without health care. Mounting evidence exists of the social, economic, and political injustices that threaten the well-being of this nation and its inhabitants. Schools inevitably play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of the real world.

Although this overview of Myles Horton and Highlander's leadership programs offers examples of the possibilities of leadership education, a stark reality emerges when considering educational leadership—that is, most students in educational leadership preparation programs may not understand, acknowledge, and accept their roles as social change agents, which is essentially what leadership for social justice and democracy asks that they do (Marshall & Ward, 2004). Moreover, in the current climate of accountability and the need for instructional leaders, this social justice orientation may be seen as something “extra” to do (Marshall & Ward, 2004). In fact, being an educational leader who works toward social justice and democratic goals means being a social change agent via the day-to-day operations of the school. To be a school leader with a social justice orientation means giving voice to those underserved and disenfranchised, supporting critical reflection of school programs and practices, and enabling critical questioning of school and societal processes in an effort to disrupt the harmful status quo in structures in order to promote equity and democratic participation. Educational leadership for social justice promotes educators' civic responsibility on behalf of the public good.

The commitment to resolve social and educational inequities must move forward. To this end, a number of scholars support a reculturing of educational leadership preparation programs (Brown, 2006; Giroux, 1992; Marshall & Ward, 2004; Pounder et al., 2002); at issue is the need to de-emphasize careerism and certification and heighten awareness and acceptance of the social responsibility of educational leadership and leadership preparation. This is not to say that reform efforts have not occurred in some places. The programs at California State University at Los Angeles, California State University–East Bay, and Miami University of Ohio have committed to leadership for social justice, equity, and democracy. From these examples and from Myles Horton and the Highlander School, it seems that the responsibility rests with the trainers, or faculty in leadership preparation programs, to make the commitment to develop

leaders who recognize social problems and conditions and who act accordingly to change them for the good of the social order.

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