



# LEADERSHIP

This issue is the third in a series devoted to the leadership theory, *Reflective Human Action* (Andrews, et. al., 1995). The July 1995 issue focused on the basic ingredients and how to use them in the development of the notion of the web of relationships for a community of practice—whether it be family, neighborhood, organization, institution, or government. This issue will explore the process of dialogue and its role in leadership.

## Dialogue

Defined as an exchange of ideas and opinions between two or more persons, the concept of dialogue assumes that "the world can be changed, that society, systems, and policies are open to alteration and renewal" (Vella, 1995, p. 4). Dialogue could be defined also as "public talk"—real talk among people as problems or issues are posed and explored for the path to answers. Dialogue, then, would be the key to that path.

Leadership, as "meaning-making in a community of practice" (Drath & Palus, 1994), requires skill in dialogue for *making community and producing meaningful work*. Shaffer and Anundsen assert that "Community cannot exist without communication, and the way people communicate determines the quality of individual and group relationships" (1993, p. 252). The core principle of *reflective human action* (Andrews, et. al., 1995), *develop relationships*, gives further support to the relevance of communication. People and organizations literally grow and construct themselves through relationships.

Peck (1987) refers to community as an aggregate of people who have made a commitment to learn how to communicate with each other. However, groups seldom identify the necessity of *learning to communicate*; most people assume they have appropriate skill because they can talk. And because they belong to many groups, they also assume that they have group skills. Shaffer and Anundsen (1993), who have been extensively involved in creating communities, have proposed some basic ingredients for *community-friendly communication*. "Healthy interactions within a community require:

- That members have the same body posture, and actions;
- That they are willing and able to listen as well as to speak; and
- That diverse members feel included, empowered to function in both leadership and support roles, and able to pursue the group vision while honoring individual needs" (p. 254).

Dialogue is not an attempt by participants to win; everyone wins if it is being done right. To support the above ingredients of communication, Shaffer and Anundsen recommend the development of a communication agreement during the formation of community.

## Doing it Right

Responsibility for dialogue is distributed and participants are helped to develop and broaden communication skills by rotating the following key roles (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993):

- Facilitator—discussion guide responsible for introducing items for discussion, moving

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the agenda along, and closing with a summary of meeting content

- ◆ Notetaker—recorder of meeting progress and agreements, often done with a flip chart to enable a living record of meeting progress
- ◆ Process Observer—monitor for quality of meeting process
- ◆ Timekeeper—tracker of time for each agenda item to keep meeting on schedule

These roles can be separate or combined, and sometimes it is useful to use an outsider or a previous member of the group as the facilitator. One cautionary note—the facilitator needs to be fully immersed in the culture and issues in order to be effective.

In addition to these roles for managing communication, efforts are needed to use all of the available resources in the group. The following techniques are helpful in building inclusiveness:

- ◆ Circle Check - each participant, in turn around the circle, is offered an opportunity to speak for an uninterrupted period.
- ◆ Talking Stick - participants can speak without interruption when holding the stick.

These strategies are not trivial techniques; they are more potent than they appear in encouraging full exploration of discussion subjects and in emphasizing listening. Inclusive strategies contribute to *doing dialogue right*.

The concept of dialogue is further clarified by the comparison of debate and dialogue (see page 5).

## Beyond Dialogue

Lappe and DuBois (1994) differentiate between *bad meetings* and *meeting badly*. They contend that the process of meeting (in community) should be examined instead of focusing on the outcome. Because it has been said that “all living is meeting,” there is even greater relevance for mastering group processes.

Morse (1995), of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, defines *deliberative skills* as cutting-edge requirements for the new millennium. Broader than communication, they include skills of public talk, public judgment, and public thinking in order to facilitate other public processes such as conflict resolution and mediation, collaboration, and consensus-building. Offices, communities, and even families need these skills of *talking and thinking with others*. Effective leaders will need these deliberative skills if there is any hope that interpersonal, cross-jurisdictional, and cross-disciplinary issues will be resolved.

### Power of Participation

The choices or decisions made by a group, whether a small committee or a workplace team, constitute a system of governance. Although the participatory style of governance has gained credibility, it is not yet the norm. Most social institutions are hierarchical organizations, and the dynamics of that style are contrary to shared leadership and participative decision-making. The customs,

traditions, strategies, definitions of role, status, and established practices of the tradition-based bureaucratic organization have created a paradigm that is well entrenched. But if a *stronger sense of community (of connection), shared decision-making, and change* are goals, a participatory form of governance is more appropriate. Partial paradigm change isn't the answer; an attempt to replace the old bureaucratic structure with a smaller new one “will fail to provide the authentic and broad participation required for long-lasting change and true improvement” (Golarz & Golarz, 1995, p. 6).

Participatory governance requires risk takers; it is not a painless and orderly process. And it requires willingness for extensive involvement and ownership of the work of the group. It should be understood that a new paradigm is usually *uncomfortable at first*.

The philosophical foundation for participatory governance is *extension of ownership to all those who are affected by decisions made on their behalf*. Greater autonomy and involvement in the decision-making process are promoted for the purpose of change. Dispersed leadership (distributed to the outermost edges of the organization) unleashes the power of shared responsibility.

### Summary

Achievement of what the world ought to be will demand the best we have to offer in identifying issues needing change, in creating

## Call for Writers

The writing team of the *Leadership: Reflective Human Action Module* is pleased to announce opportunities for members or nonmembers interested in contributing to the module chapter of experiential activities on the topic of positional leadership. Contact Dorothy Mitstifer (517/351-8335) for further information and guidelines.

means of addressing those issues, and in joining with others to take action. Effective dialogue and deliberative skills are necessary not only for successful outcomes but for significant ones.

Lappe and DuBois (1994) identify six arts of democracy that enrich satisfaction in group endeavor:

1. Political Imagination - reimagining current reality to more nearly match our values and needs
2. Public Dialogue - public talk on matters that affect all of us; talk in which differences are valued
3. Public Judgment - discriminating reason, arrived at through talk and reflection
4. Celebration & Appreciation - celebration and appreciation integrated into the daily practices of public life
5. Evaluation & Reflection - public and private assessments of lessons learned through action
6. Mentoring - encouragement and guidance to motivate learning

These competencies will no doubt help to reshape organizations and institutions. Peck (1993) and his colleagues caution that if there is to be significant work from a group, community building has to come first—ah, yes, but that's a subject of another *Dialogue*.

### References:

- Andrews, F. E., Mitstifer, D. I., Rehm, M., & Vaughn, G. G. (1995). *Leadership: Reflective Human Action*. East Lansing, MI: Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society.
- Drath, W. H., & Palus, C. J. (1994). *Making common sense: Leadership as meaning-making in a community of practice*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Golarz, R. J., & Golarz, M. J. (1995). *The power of participation: Improving schools in a democratic society*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Lappe, F. M., & DuBois, P. M. (1994). *The quickening of America: Rebuilding our nation, remaking our lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

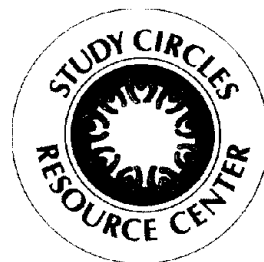
Morse, S. (1995). Thinking about the future: Leadership for organizations, communities, and nations in the 21st century. *Concepts & Connections: Leadership for Community Responsibility*, 4(1), 1, 3-4.

Peck, M. S. (1987). *The different drum: Community making and peace*. New York: Simon & Shuster.

Peck, M. S. (1993). *A world waiting to be born: Civility rediscovered*. New York: Bantam Books.

Shaffer, C. R., & Anundsen, K. (1993). *Creating community anywhere: Finding support and connection in a fragmented world*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Vella, J. (1995). *Training through dialogue: Promoting effective learning and change with adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



This article describes a practical model for encouraging dialogue. *Permission was granted for adaptation of materials from the Study Circles Resource Center.*

## Study Circles

A small-group, democratic, highly participatory discussion known as *study circles* has been promoted since 1990 by the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC), a project of the Topsfield Foundation. The forerunners of SCRC were the "home study circles" sponsored by the Lake Chautauqua Assembly founded in New York in the 1870s as well as the town meetings which date back to our country's origin. Jefferson called such deliberation, "the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of government."

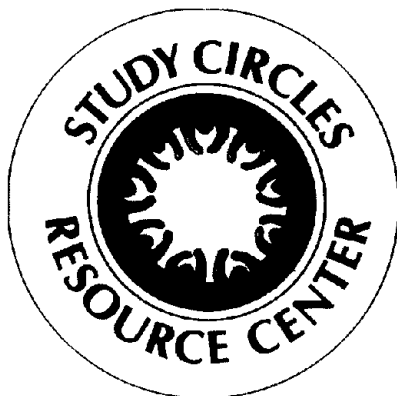
Used in small towns and cities across the country, most notably Los Angeles after the Simpson

verdict, study circles are growing in acceptance and achievement. Government entities, civic and community groups, business and industry, unions, neighborhoods, schools, churches, citizen interest or advocacy groups, boards—all kinds of groups have used the process to either deal with a real or anticipated problem or improve quality of life.

Study circles provide a setting for collaborative learning, for working through social and political issues, and for building organization and community. Especially when they take place over several sessions, they broaden perspectives, deepen understanding, and inspire participants to become more involved in public life.

A simple and powerful method for learning, the study circle builds on the experiences and knowledge of group members and expands horizons by ensuring that a variety of views is considered. Since a study circle is small-group democracy in action, it requires a leader who can help give focus and, at the same time, encourage group ownership. The organizer selects the reading material, recruits participants, arranges the logistics for the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader. The participants ultimately own the study circle.

The leader does not *teach* in the usual sense of the word. The leader doesn't have to be an expert in the subject being discussed but must have enough familiarity with it to be able to raise views that have not been considered by the group. The leader's main task is to create an atmosphere for collaborative learning, one in which each participant feels at ease in expressing ideas or responding to those of others.



A study circle is made up of 5-20 people who agree to meet together several times to learn about a social or political issue in a democratic and collaborative way. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth. Multiple sessions generate continuity and camaraderie within the group. Reading material serves to catalyze the discussion and provides a common reference point.

The goal of a study circle is not to impart enough facts to make the participants into experts, but rather to deepen their understanding and judgment by focusing on the values that underlie opinions. Group members work through difficult issues and grapple with the choices that society or their organization is facing. Study circles seek *common ground*, but consensus or compromise is not necessary.

Often study circles lead to social and political action, both by individual participants and by the group. In the final session, the participants may discuss action they might take after the study circle ends. And in some cases other groups are formed to follow through.

The typical study circle session consists of the following:

1. Introductions - participants briefly introduce themselves
2. Ground rules - the role of leader is to keep discussion focused and moving along; the role of the participants is to share concerns and beliefs and to listen to others.
3. Discussion of personal connection to or interest in the issue
4. Laying out a range of views - participants should understand that they can disagree without being hostile
5. Discussion and deliberation
6. Summary and common ground - while consensus is not an essential goal, participants should come to understand areas of common concern or agreement
7. Evaluation and next steps

Almost any organization can use a study circle to educate and empower its membership. The strength of the study circle is its flexibility. Every group's situation is unique, and study circle organizers are encouraged to adapt the basic format to their communities and organizations in whatever way is appropriate.

### References

- A guide to training study circle leaders.* (1993). Pomfret, CT: Topsfield Foundation.
- Niedergang, M., & McCoy, M. I. (1992). *Can't we all just get along?—A manual for discussion programs on racism and race relations.* Pomfret, CT: Topsfield Foundation

**For more information, contact:**

SCRC  
P.O. Box 203  
Pomfret, CT 06258  
Telephone: 1/800/928-2616

## Congratulations!

*The Board of Directors announces with pleasure*

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**Katrina R. Shaner**  
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**Charlotte Edwards**  
*Huntington, West Virginia*

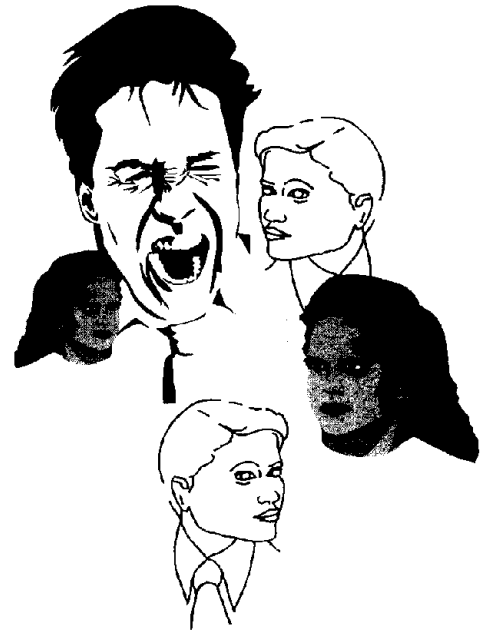
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**Diana D. Carroll**  
*Carson-Newman College*

**Karen J. Cummings**  
*Michigan State University*



## Comparison of Dialogue and Debate



- ◆ Dialogue is collaborative: Two or more sides work together toward common understanding.
- ◆ In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.
- ◆ In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.
- ◆ Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.
- ◆ Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.
- ◆ Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.
- ◆ Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.
- ◆ Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: An openness to being wrong and an openness to change.
- ◆ In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.
- ◆ Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.
- ◆ In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.
- ◆ In dialogue, one searches for strengths in other positions.
- ◆ Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks not to alienate or offend.
- ◆ Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.
- ◆ Dialogue remains open-ended.

*Debate is oppositional: Two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.*

*In debate, winning is the goal.*

*In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.*

*Debate affirms a participant's point of view.*

*Debate defends assumptions as truth.*

*Debate causes critique of the other position.*

*Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.*

*Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.*

*In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.*

*Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.*

*In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.*

*In debate, one searches for glaring differences.*

*Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationships and often belittles or deprecates the other person.*

*Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.*

*Debate implies a conclusion.*

Comparison of Dialogue and Debate, taken from *Leadership for a Culturally Diverse Society* by Frances E. Andrews, Gwendolyn T. Paschall, and Dorothy I. Mitisifer. (c) 1993, Kappa Omicron Nu, Inc.

*Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucille Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call (617)492-1764.*

# Call for Papers

for publishing in

## Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM

the journal of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society

### Topic: Legacies for the Future

Dr. Sharon Y. Nickols,  
Guest Editor

**Objectives** - This theme will

1. Record the accomplishments of leaders in family and consumer sciences and all of its specializations, including the following:
  - a. Leaders from various racial and ethnic groups;
  - b. Leaders in the fields of education at all levels, business and industry, and public service agencies, thus emphasizing the venues for applying the knowledge and practicing the philosophy of family and consumer sciences;
2. Draw implications about the legacy of past leaders for the future of the family and consumer sciences profession with emphasis on conditions and policy-shaping research, instruction, and service.
3. Inspire professionals to make contributions to the field.

**Overview** - *Legacies for the Future* focuses on the history of family and consumer sciences (domestic science and home economics) by "telling the stories" of leaders who responded to societal needs and intellectual challenges and who helped to shape the programs of study, the research, the policy initiatives, and the practice of their times. In other words, this theme hopes to capture the legacies of leaders in domestic science and those who shaped the field as it evolved in the United States through 1985. Without a written record of the contributions of past leaders, the history of a profession will be lost. Because the past often points the way for the future, the thinking and actions of past leaders can provide insights to those

currently in the field of family and consumer sciences. Understanding the context of events is more readily achieved when the work of leaders is documented with reference to the challenges they faced.

**Information and Deadline** - *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due October 1, 1996.

To assure breadth of biographical sketches, each author is asked to file a proposed name with the guest editor at (706) 542-4879 in advance of preparing the manuscript.

### Topic: Making Community

Dr. Young S. Gentzer,  
Guest Editor

**Objectives** - This theme will give attention to exemplary programs, models, and action plans which reinforce our understanding of community as an essential component of civilized life.

**Overview** - The gratifying response to the first call for papers on the topic *building community* has encouraged *FORUM* editors to invite additional discussion of this compelling issue. It is particularly important that authors read Volume 8, No. 2, *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* in order that papers extend and/or expand on the discussion.

**Discussion** - As summarized by Baldwin in the above publication, "The profound importance of interrelationship and interdependence is increasingly evident in today's world, and the need for community is apparent in both international and domestic spheres. Widespread participation in public dialogue and collective action is at the core of healthy community and strong democracy, and ideally the individual and family contribute to and benefit from such participation."

She argues that family and consumer scientists who are concerned about the human condition should (a) help people to understand the destructive consequences of individualism and social fragmentation; (b) promote and become involved in building community both within our own profession and in the wider society; and

(c) transform social conditions which have a negative impact on family life through the formation of a family rights movement, thereby involving the profession in the wider emancipative struggle toward human freedom.

Recognizing that involvement in public life can be difficult and demanding," Baldwin concludes her argument by claiming that "if we can promote the idea that private and public life are complementary in that they interact dialectically to help develop and sustain each other, we may overcome ambivalence and build community."

**Information and Deadline** - *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due July 30, 1996.

For further information or to obtain a copy of "Guidelines for Authors," contact:

Dr. Dorothy I. Mitstifer, Editor  
4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140  
East Lansing, MI 48823-5031  
Telephone: (517)351-8335  
Facsimile: (517) 351-8336

# WANTED

Stories about experiences with study circles or other citizen discussion groups such as National Issues Forum.

**Submit entries to:**  
Kappa Omicron Nu, Inc.  
4990 Northwind Drive  
Suite 140  
East Lansing, Michigan  
48823-5031  
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## New Release

### Leadership:

### Reflective Human Action

### A Professional Development Module

Frances E. Andrews - Dorothy I. Mitsufer

Carol B. Meeks - Marsha Rehm

Gladys Gary Vaughn

Published by Kappa Omicron Nu

Designed for students and professionals, this module features a theory section and experiential activities to practice **Reflective Human Action**.

Set I released October 1995

(Sets II & III in 1996 & 1997) - Set I includes the theoretical framework and experiential activities for comprehending the theory, framing leadership issues, and exploring personal leadership skills.

Set II will include experiential activities for team, positional, and political leadership. Set III will include experiential activities for visionary leadership and ethical leadership



## Order Form

Leadership: Reflective Human Action Module  
for Sets I, II, & III @ \$75.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Announcing

### The Concept of Theory in

### Home Economics

### A Philosophical Dialogue

by

Marjorie M. Brown

and

Edith E. Baldwin

and critiqued by

Scott D. Wright & Donald H. Herrin

Anne MacCleave

Joan I. Quilling

sponsored by

Kappa Omicron Nu

This monograph explores various concepts of theories and cites examples in the extant literature. Dialectic theory is presented as an alternate, and implications are discussed. Three papers critique the monograph, and Brown & Baldwin continue the dialogue through a reply to their critics.

## Order Form

Concept of Theory in Home Economics Monograph

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## Message from Carol Avery

Chair, Board of Directors

The first significant event I'd like to bring to your attention is the installation of Nu Delta, the newest chapter of Kappa Omicron Nu, at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. It was



a beautiful fall day to be on this charming campus in the foothills of the Ozarks. As part of Harding's Fall Fest 1995—a week-long celebration of lectures, programs, and social events—the installation received wide visibility. The initiation of 24 students and faculty was followed by a seminar on fostering excellence in scholarship, research, and leadership as well as a delightful family luncheon.

Completing the day was a training session for officers Shannon Holt, President; Lisa Fauth, Vice President; Barbara Wiebush, Secretary; Rachel Clark, Treasurer; and Angela Daugherty, Editor.

Beth Wilson, Chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, and Ellen Daniels, Adviser, are to be commended for following their vision and for establishing a chapter that gives every evidence of providing excellence to society. Congratulations to all, and many thanks for your warm hospitality!

The second outstanding event was the publication of the professional development module, *Leadership: Reflective Human Action*, by Frances Andrews, Dorothy Mitsifer, Marsha Rehm, and Gladys Gary Vaughn. The module clearly shows

that Kappa Omicron Nu is in the forefront of the profession by providing this model of excellence in scholarship, research, and leadership.

The first section of the module provides a theoretical framework for reflective human action which is based on the work of thinkers in many different fields of endeavor. The second section includes experiential activities, including dialogue and discussion that help the reader to experience, process, synergize, and comprehend the theory. Some of the topics, with more to come in the next two years, include the roles of chaos theory, information, relationships, and vision in leadership as well as authenticity, ethical sensibility, and spirituality. Other distinctive features is Robert Terry's diagnostic tool, the *Action Wheel* (1993) that guides the process of framing and dealing with group issues. Chapter Seven of Section II includes twelve experiential activities to focus on personal leadership skills such as identifying values, exploring learning styles, appreciating differences, and developing a personal mission statement and a self-managed mentoring plan. This is an outstanding piece of work from which we can all benefit. Again, our thanks to the authors for their vision and leadership in this major endeavor.

As I conclude my term on the Board of Directors of Kappa Omicron Nu, I would also like to thank those of you who elected me and with whom I have interacted. You have provided me both with inspiration and with the opportunity to learn and to serve. My retirement will be richer for this experience. I am most appreciative of your help and feel confident that Kappa Omicron Nu will continue to provide empowered leaders, with soul, for our profession, our families, and our society.

Kappa Omicron Nu Dialogue, Volume 6, No. 1. — Executive Director and Editor: Dorothy I. Mitsifer.  
 Assistant Editor: Lisa Wootton. Board of Directors: Janelle Walter, Anne M. Weiner,  
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