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5. EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Exploring Foxfire and Other Approaches to Teaching

My assignment from the editors of this book was to explain experiential education and show its connection to the Foxfire approach to teaching and learning. At first I felt this was a daunting task and I wasn't sure how to begin. Why was I stumped as I prepared to write this chapter? Perhaps this was because of the complexities involved in the various educational philosophies, principles, and practices. Before I approached my computer, I read about experiential education from my personal library. The array of related books on my shelves displayed titles containing key words such as: theory and process of experiential education, learning through experience, outdoor leadership, challenge education, outdoor and adventure education, adventure programming, adventure therapy, and reflective teaching and facilitation. How would I untangle this jumble approaches to teaching and learning through experience? Then I read some articles from the last five years of the *Journal of Experiential Education*. As I read, the complexity expanded as the terminology multiplied. I found articles including topics such as: service-learning, equine assisted psychotherapy, community-based learning pedagogy, ecological metissage, wilderness therapy, impact of field trips, outdoor orientation programs, situated experiential learning, learning from reflection, outdoor education, place-based education, Outward Bound, challenge and ropes course experiences, humanistic, embodied, and interdisciplinary environmental education, and most surprising, tasting wine as a learning experience. How could I address this collection of topics and help the reader make sense of this field of study? I was becoming clearer about why I had trouble starting.

My first step was to find out how the Association of Experiential Education (AEE) defined the term:

> Experiential education is a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities. Experiential educators include teachers, camp counselors, corporate team builders, therapists, challenge course practitioners, environmental educators, guides, instructors, coaches, mental health professionals … and the list

H. Smith & J. C. McDermott (Eds.), The Foxfire Approach, 31–43.

> goes on. It is often utilized in many disciplines and settings: Non-formal education, Place-based education, Project-based education, Global education, Environmental education, Student-centered education, Informal education, Active learning, Service learning, Cooperative learning and Expeditionary learning. (AEE, n.d.)

In order to simplify this definition, the AEE boiled this down to: "Challenge and Experience followed by Reflection leading to Learning and Growth". I wasn't sure this had much meaning for those unfamiliar with experiential education. A list of 12 principles of experiential education practice followed.

On the National Society for Experiential Education's website I found a more concise definition along with a list of 8 principles of good practice for all experiential learning activities. This organization stated: "All parties are empowered to achieve the principles which follow. Yet, at the same time, the facilitator(s) of learning are expected to take the lead in ensuring both the quality of the learning experience and the work produced, and in supporting the learner to use the principles, which underlie the pedagogy of experiential education" (NSEE, 2013). The principles from both organizations are available on their websites, but I chose not to reprint them here. More useful, I thought, was to describe some of the events in my professional life that illustrated these principles and helped me develop my philosophy based on experiential learning. As an experiential educator for over 55 years, these principles emerged gradually. I will indicate some of what I learned from experience by italicizing these principles as they arise. This is how I became an experiential educator and an advocate for the Foxfire approach to teaching.

Like many young, middle class boys growing up in the 1940s and 1950s in the Northeast suburbs of the United States, my summer experiences revolved around recreation. I chose to play team sports like baseball and basketball, explore vacant lots, collect coins, raise earthworms, build forts, find box turtles and injured animals and create zoos, play war with lead cowboys and Indians, and build miniature golf courses, carnivals, and circuses. I also fished in a nearby creek and learned about nature by honing my awareness and observation skills. Television was just beginning and radio was usually an after supper activity. Family vacations were few, but included annual trips to the Atlantic seashore to swim, play on the beach, visit the boardwalk amusements, and catch crabs in the bay. As a teenager I took short trips to a farm where my uncle and aunt gave me free rein to fish in the river, drive a station wagon, and shoot sparrows in the barn with a 22 rifle. My uncle and aunt understood the importance of trusting me and giving me freedom to explore. My main goals during summers were having fun with friends and wiling away the long, hot days waiting for school to begin again in the fall. *I followed my needs and interests and exercised free choice in deciding most of what I did with my free time.* I wasn't focused on learning how the world worked, gaining more interpersonal skills, understanding who I was becoming, or growing in awe and wonder of nature. Despite not being aware of any intentions to learn, I was learning how to get along

with others and value the natural world. In those days my parents were not concerned with the possibility of me getting in trouble by being lost or encountering stranger danger. The only real boundary they placed on me was a rule to come home when the 7 o'clock siren blew. I was not aware of reflecting on my experiences, except deciding to repeat the following day what gave me the most fun.

I don't remember any teachers or my parents helping me reflect on my life experiences to enhance the meanings of what I was taught. I wonder if any reflection was happening in my mind without much adult guidance. Now when I read about the importance of guided reflection in the learning process, I'm puzzled how and if I did it. My sixth grade teacher wrote the following in my autograph book at the end of the year: "And still they gazed, and still their wonder grew that one small head could carry all he knew." She obviously saw me reflecting on many of my experiences and learning from them. Only years later I discovered that she had lifted these two lines from Oliver Goldsmith's poem, *The Deserted Village* published in 1770. Obviously, I was reflecting on my own, but without much help from my teachers and parents. *Guided reflection on experience can be helpful in making sense from and transferring what is learned to future situations. Reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis are the main elements that transform experience into a learning experience.*

Elementary and junior high schools provided structured times remembered mostly for the friends I made and lost. Being male, white, and athletic in a middle class town near New York City, I was privileged as a student. I can't recall much from my academic lessons, but I do remember sports, recess, acting in plays, dances, and getting A's and B's on my report cards. I remember playing dodge ball or softball on the school grounds, but that was the extent of my learning outside the classroom. In the fifth grade we planted trees in a nearby vacant lot, but that was my only field trip until the ninth grade. In the sixth grade I remember making a large poster of South America with a friend and gluing food and manufactured products in their proper places. Today I couldn't tell you what I learned from that project, but I remember cementing a friendship with my teammate. *Cooperative and project-based learning with a partner or in small groups provided memorable and lasting experiences*. In my last year of junior high school, my class went on a four-day trip to Washington D.C. I vaguely remember visiting some of the monuments and attending a formal dinner/dance, but the most vivid memory was walking up the steps of the Washington Monument, looking out the window, I asking my girlfriend to go steady. I remember very little about who was President (it was Dwight Eisenhower) or how the various branches of government worked to make a law. School was mainly my social training ground and athletic practice field and court for later activities at college. These were satisfying times as illustrated by a statement about me in the 1954 edition of *The Rocket*, our class publication, when I graduated from the 9th grade: "Happy am I, from all care I'm free. Why aren't you all contented like me?"

In high school I remember reading a boring book titled, *Silas Marner*, but I couldn't tell you today about the plot. I never "caught fire" as a reader, but I was

a compliant student who read what was assigned. By high school, I had read a handful of books and the only title I remember is *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale. Most of my teachers taught in a traditional "tell, read, and test" manner. Learning subject matter in school was rarely exciting and only a few times did I ever have choice in doing an activity, project, or experiment. *I learned best through challenging hands-on, minds-on activities and I wanted to understand how these activities related to my life outside of school.* Were all my teachers' efforts on the academic curriculum wasted? Perhaps not, because I was forming positive images of who teachers were and what schools offered as laboratories for learning about friendships, girl friends, and who I was. Very little of the formal curriculum related to the world I knew at home. Memories of my days playing varsity basketball, going to dances, running long distances, and pole vaulting dominate my high school experience. I knew there was a link, but I couldn't see how school was connected to my favorite music, foods, friends, fishing, and future.

My undergraduate years in college were more memorable than my K-12 years. I still recognize when the musical piece, The Moldau, is played. I know something about educators such as Dewey, Bruner, Kilpatrick, Rogers, Lewin, and Raths. I've had my values clarified about educational issues by a few master teachers. I launched a summer camp counseling job and my career as a teacher in outdoor education largely because of a course field trip to a school of conservation during my freshman year. I met my first wife in camp and we later birthed two daughters. I still have a copper ashtray made in a metal and enameling class. I remember shaking in my shoes while giving my first speech in a public speaking class. I remember many of the field trips with the field natural history and biology teachers. By then, I was turning on to the process of learning and retaining more of what I experienced because I saw how it could apply to what was taught. My vocational path to becoming a teacher enabled me to see a clear link of the curriculum to a real-life job. I was motivated to internalize the course content and I cared about the concepts, skills, and values of education, especially as they related to nature and science. *When I learned with a clear purpose in mind, I was motivated and engaged and I retained much of the content. I often walked with a friend on the wooded campus of my college and learned through my senses about what I saw, heard, smelled, touched, and tasted*. College was made up of much more than taking formal classes. I remember the beer keg parties, camaraderie of the fraternity, soccer and basketball practices and games, and the required trip to a camp to learn about outdoor education. I spent three summers working as a camp counselor and relating to youth outdoors. These camp experiences solidified my choice to become an outdoor educator and science teacher. My college life was filled with exciting experiences. I still keep in touch with two of my undergraduate professors who impressed me as role models and later friends. *I took more initiative for my learning while still following the requirements of the course syllabi.* Occasionally, I researched and wrote papers about topics I loved – science, conservation, group dynamics, poetry, values, and teaching. *I was actively engaged and many of my courses allowed me opportunities to pose*

questions, experiment with ideas, solve relevant problems, and be creative. Many of these course-related activities became useful knowledge. I was able to build on my earlier interests in nature and human nature and mold a rewarding teaching career.

After my first year of teaching, I decided to follow Dr. L. B. Sharp, a distinguished professor, to Southern Illinois University when he moved from Pennsylvania to join the faculty. I had met him earlier as a young camp counselor and was impressed by his reputation and personality. He studied under some of the progressive educators at Columbia University's Teachers College, including John Dewey, and was an established outdoor education leader. I clearly remember my first meeting with him. He led our group of camp counselors along a trail in the forest and was spinning tales about what we encountered. All of a sudden we heard a bird calling in the distance. My curiosity was aroused and I raised my hand and asked, "What is that bird, L. B.?" He paused for only a moment and then said, "I don't know. Why don't you go find out?" I was stunned with his response because I'm sure he knew the name of the bird. I replied, "Do you mean I should leave the group and go now?" He said, "Yes, that's the best way to find out." This was one of my first powerful lessons in experiential education. I did leave the group and discovered the bird later identified as a cuckoo. The name of the bird was not the important lesson for me. It was L. B.'s teaching method. *He believed strongly in learning based in the context of the situation and by becoming actively engaged in solving problems deemed important to the learner. He also believed that students should find the answers to questions themselves, rather than be told by teachers.* That incident in the woods of Pennsylvania long ago stuck with me and influenced my philosophy of education in ways that still guide my practice. In 1943 Sharp first stated, "that which can best be learned inside the classroom should be learned there. That which can best be learned in the out-of-doors through direct experience, dealing with native materials and life situations, should there be learned" (Sharp, quoted in Carlson, 2009, p. 4). *He believed that some knowledge was gained best through direct out-of-classroom experience and that sometimes other alternative teaching methods involving mediated learning materials should be used.*

My career had its ups and down from beginning to end because good teaching is hard work, but I never regretted my decision to become a teacher. I began by teaching science in high school in 1961 and retired 40 years later from a university where I taught teachers about outdoor education. In total I spent 9½ years in public and private elementary, junior high, and high schools and 29½ years at the university level. The first blow to my ego was receiving a B grade in student teaching. My rationalization for receiving that grade was that I was paired with a supervising teacher who had a different teaching style and philosophy and who knew much more science than I did. He stuck to the textbook and lectured a lot. This didn't fit well with my way of teaching and learning through indoor and outdoor activities. Later as a 7th grade junior high school science teacher, the principal gave me a mediocre evaluation one year because I didn't squelch all of the off-task behavior of my students. I suspect he also didn't agree with my decision to allow the students

to call me by my first name. I wrote a counter view of my teaching evaluation to file with his sub-par report. *I enjoyed creating out-of-classroom lessons in the surrounding community and taking my classes there to learn.* Inside the classroom I planned lessons using concrete materials for experimenting, observing, questioning, and other science skills. *I viewed the whole community as the classroom and my guest speakers and the context of the surrounding environment as my co-teachers. I wanted my students to delve deeper into the subject matter and examine their values about what was important and the role of science in their lives. My lessons were rigorous enough so they would learn the ways of doing science and at the same time, enjoy each other and what they were learning*.

John Dewey's philosophy of "learning by doing through hands-on activities" is based on students constructing meaningful knowledge from experience and applying it to life situations. Dewey opened his laboratory school at the University of Chicago in 1896. His purpose was "to discover …how a school could become a cooperative community while developing in individuals their own capacities and identifying their own needs" (quoted in Tanner, 1997, p. xii). His goal matched my purpose in teaching. *Key words describing his school were: curriculum beginning with children's natural interests and abilities; social significance of subject matter emphasized in instruction; children solving real problems, past and present; child's attention is self-impelled; and children develop habits of cooperation and service to the community* (Tanner, 1997, pp. 177–178).

In 1974 I co-founded a 3-week summer camp for children ages 11–14 in New York's Adirondack Mountains. I wanted a chance to test my expanding educational philosophy and to emulate Dewey's school in a wilderness setting. The camp, known as The Human Relations Youth Adventure Camp (HRYAC), was one way to experiment with teaching through experience (Knapp & Goodman, 1980, pp. 183–220). In 1978, after five years of operating our camp, I wrote: "*We are trying to find better ways of building a close, supportive community of people of all ages. We are striving to create a place for everyone to be somebody special. We want to create an atmosphere where people will have a sense of personal power to get what they need to live rewarding lives. Our goals include giving people permission to touch other humans in caring ways. We want people to like themselves more and to fill time with worthwhile things to do. We want them to express thoughts and feelings easier in ways that consider others*. *We want them to be able to listen to others by 'walking in their moccasins'*" (p. 213). The context for learning about human relations skills was the natural setting of the wilderness. I wanted our campers and staff to grow in their appreciation of nature while participating in adventure activities such as hiking, campfires, canoeing, swimming, and stream exploration to learn about human nature. *These camper experiences must be authentic, have a real world context, and be useful in other settinsgs. Many lasting relationships were developed among the campers, staff, and the natural world.* Each evening we held a community meeting to evaluate the day and plan the next one. *The campers took turns conducting the meetings to*

practice their emerging leadership skills. They took the initiative, made decisions, and were accountable for the results of their choices. Success, failure, adventure, and risk-taking were important parts of the camp's program.

In 1979 I accepted a teaching position at Northern Illinois University. I left the camp to my co-founder and many of the staff members. I was looking forward to becoming a teacher educator on a faculty dedicated to helping undergraduate and graduate majors teach outside the classroom. Educating teachers had been my goal for many years and I wanted to apply what I had learned about experiential education. Our faculty supervised a master's degree in Outdoor Teacher Education and taught Elementary and Physical Education majors for several days in a resident setting. Having a facility where the university students could spend three—five days at a time to learn about outdoor teaching and child development was an ideal laboratory. Here was another opportunity to apply some of Dewey's ideas. *Our primary roles as faculty members were to select suitable experiences, pose challenging problems, set reasonable boundaries, insure physical and emotional safety, and support the learning process*. The university students culminated their learning experiences by teaching elementary school students who visited for three days. *They had opportunities to implement their planned lessons and to respond to spontaneous and unplanned, teachable moments that frequently arose on a daily basis.*

The freedom to be innovative and creative in teaching was more available in my university position. That part of teaching was one of the aspects of the job I loved most. I enjoyed opportunities to experiment and take risks with new outdoor lessons and teach a variety of courses during that 21-year period. In a graduate course titled, Integrating Community Resources into Curriculum and Instruction, I used the Foxfire approach for the first time beginning in 1991. My plan was to guide the writing of a book designed to help teachers learn about local interdisciplinary field trip opportunities. I taught the course thirteen times over the next 11 years and came to appreciate the power of this method. Graduate students not only learned how to integrate community resources into their curricula, they learned to work cooperatively and improve their writing skills. *They chose a topic to investigate and write about based on their perceived needs and interests*. The research involved selecting a site and talking to the people there. They delved into the history and current operations of these places. My challenge was to orchestrate these students and join with them as we worked toward the production of a useful book. I usually wrote a preface or epilog and worked diligently as an editor and writing coach. When one of the students served as publication editor, I helped that person bring the publication to completion. *When I became aware that the students were having difficulty with a particular skill or concept, I planned an intervention to help them overcome that barrier. I worked hard as a facilitator, and the rewards were plentiful.* I described my struggles and successes of this Foxfire experience in more detail in an article in the *Journal of Experiential Education* (Knapp, 1992, pp. 36–39).

I was inspired by Eliot Wigginton's book, *Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience* (1986). I read and re-read it several times and used it as a

textbook. I knew that the Foxfire approach meshed perfectly with the principles and practices of experiential education. I wanted to learn more about Foxfire so I interviewed Eliot when he lectured at our university (Knapp, 1993, pp. 779–782). Meeting him helped me become a better experiential educator. In a chapter in one of my co-edited books, *Sourcebook of Experiential Education* (2011), the co-editors of this book (McDermott and Smith) explain Foxfire and show how "…the Foxfire approach is experiential education" and how the AEE's principles of experiential education "…are quite parallel to those stated in the Core Practices of the Foxfire approach" (2011, p. 269). The core practices capture many teaching and learning ideas already expressed in this chapter. For example, Foxfire teachers are advised to: *honor learner choice; collaborate with students when engaging in the subject matter and mandated curricula; make connections between the classroom work and the community; serve as a facilitator in following the curriculum and meeting students' developmental needs; lead activities characterized by active learning; draw upon imagination and creativity in the learning process; promote teamwork through peer teaching and small group work; allow lesson outcomes to benefit other audiences; include the students in rigorous assessment and evaluation; and engage in thoughtful reflection of what is experienced* (McDermott & Smith, 2011, pp. 267–268).

In 1993 at Northern Illinois University I taught a one-credit graduate course for one weekend. This course was rotated among faculty members and we were free to select the topic, find resource people, and promote it to attract an audience. I wanted to teach a course about Native Americans because I had a long-time interest in the topic. I titled it, "Native American Influences on Outdoor Environmental Programs: Issues and Trends." After the faculty approved my idea, I suddenly got cold feet. Did I know enough about the topic? Who would I find to help me? How could I learn more in a short time? How could I get more experience with Native wisdom? Why did I choose this topic anyway? To answer these questions, I began reading books and talking to people who might know how to help. Fortunately, the University employed an advisor for the Native American special interest group, Jim Gillihan. He proved to be my savior. He was taught by famous Sioux medicine people such as Fools Crow, Lame Deer, Joseph Rock Boy, and Henry Crow Dog. Jim was an appraiser of Native American art, storyteller, archaeologist, and the fourth keeper of Sitting Bull's prayer pipe. He helped me find native and non-native speakers and make the right contacts for building a staff. For the next eight years I taught this course and filled the resident facility to capacity with over 100 people each time. It was a great success and I learned so much about indigenous cultures from my new-found friends.

One of my resource leaders was Carlo Carlino. He too was taught by traditional Lakota elders and was an accomplished teacher and ceremony leader. In 2001 I wanted to learn more about the vision quest or Hanbleceya, as the Lakota call it – more than what I knew through reading books. Hanbleceya means "crying for a vision", and is a one to four-day outdoor experience spent alone in a circle bounded

by red, yellow, white, and black cloth prayer ties connected by string. I went to Carlo with a tobacco offering and asked him if he would lead me through this sacred Lakota ceremony. He agreed, but only if I would complete four separate vision quests, one each year. Momentarily surprised by this extended commitment, I agreed and asked him how to begin. "First, he said, you must have a prayer pipe." I asked him, "How do I get one?" He replied, "The best way is to make one and I'll help you." My experiences multiplied as I learned about this ceremony. During the next few weeks, I successfully carved a pipe and was ready for the next step. Each year I formed 405 pieces of multi-colored cloth into tobacco-filled prayer ties and connected them in a large circle. Each year at the end of the ceremony, Carlo burned them in order to send my prayers to the Creator. I fasted for 36 hours and spent 24 hours alone in the forest wearing only a bathing suit, accompanied by two blankets and my pipe. When I finished my four-year commitment, I had a much deeper understanding of what a vision quest was. In addition I gained a better understanding of ecology, namely how I was connected to the surrounding ecosystem. The terms, "web of life", "interdependence" and "biocentrism" mean more to me now from a lived-experience perspective. The Lakota term, "Mitakuye Oyasin", or "all my relations" now holds real meaning for me. In retrospect the knowledge gained through all my readings was shallow and incomplete compared with what I knew afterward. Over the years, I have participated in other Native American ceremonies such as conducting morning prayer with the pipe, doing a purification lodge, attending a traditional wedding and spirit naming, supporting a Sun Dance, and restoring the mourner. *Firsthand, direct experiences often bring deeper and more lasting meaning to the written word.* I describe my vision quests in more detail in a book chapter I co-edited with Thomas Smith (Knapp & Smith, 2005, pp. 264–272).

In 2009 the Association of Experiential Education invited me to deliver the Kurt Hahn Address in Montreal, Canada. This opportunity is offered each year to someone for making outstanding professional contributions to the field. Kurt Hahn was another influential person in the development of my experiential education philosophy. He founded schools in Germany and Scotland in the 1920s and 30s and eventually started Outward Bound, an organization dedicated to training youth for service and to follow their interests in a variety of outdoor pursuits (Flavin, 1996, p. 45). In that speech I quoted Hahn: "It is a sin of soul to force young people into opinions – indoctrination is of the devil – but is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences" (quoted in Knapp, 2010, p. 276). When he founded his school at Salem in southern Germany in 1920, he outlined "The Seven Laws of Salem" as the basis for impelling young people into experiences:

1. *Give the children the opportunities for self-discovery.*
2. *Make the children meet with triumph and defeat.*
3. *Give the children the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause.*
4. *Provide periods of silence.*

5. *Train the imagination.*
6. *Make games important but not predominant.*
7. *Free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege*.
   (Flavin, 1996, frontispiece)

Outward Bound later incorporated some of Hahn's laws in a list of ten learning design principles used in their Expeditionary Learning K-12 schools (Cousins, Mednick, & Campbell, 2000, pp. 320–322). These principles are considered as guides for developing experiential education programs. For example, one principle is "The Primacy of Self-Discovery" in which *"A primary job of the educator is to help students overcome their fear and discover they have more in them than they think"* (Mednick et al., 2000, p. 320). Another is "Intimacy and Caring" in which *"Learning is fostered best in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring, and mutual respect among all members of the learning community"* (Mednick et al., 2000, p. 321). A third is "Service and Compassion" in which *"One of a school's primary functions is to prepare its students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others"* (Mednick et al., 2000, p. 322).

In my speech I told personal stories of how I learned through direct experiences. I mentioned two types of knowledge described by Howard Gardner, author and psychologist – "know-that" and "know-how" knowledge (Knapp, 2010, pp. 277–278). Know-that knowledge is the type emphasized in most schools today. It consists largely of mastering conceptual knowledge such as: "Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level." This kind of knowledge is more easily evaluated on standardized and teacher-made tests. Know-how knowledge is more skill based, but still employs intelligence – for example, being able to start and maintain a fire to boil the water. This type of knowledge is harder to evaluate with typical standardized and teacher-made tests. Most schools over-emphasize know-that knowledge at the expense of know-how knowledge and separate much of the curriculum from applications in the larger community. That is where experiential education philosophy enters the picture because it serves to correct this imbalance. I remember what Albert Einstein said about placing value on something: "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts" (quoted in Knapp, 2010, p. 278). Just because know-how knowledge is harder to measure, it doesn't mean it is less important.

I continue to enjoy writing about experiential education. My writings are directed mainly at teachers, camp counselors, naturalists, and administrators of schools, camps, and nature centers. My first publications were in 1965 and included my master's research paper surveying selected resident outdoor education programs. I also wrote an article about constructing a simple device to test the compaction of soil. Since then I have authored or co-authored over 150 journal articles, 15 book chapters, assorted posters and activity cards, and 12 books. My most recent book, co-edited with Thomas E. Smith, is *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions* (2011). This project came to life because one of

Tom Smith's students asked, "If I want to understand the philosophy of experiential education, what should I be reading beyond Dewey and Hahn" (Smith & Knapp, 2011, p. ix)? Tom gave the students a list of other important people, such as Paulo Freire, Jean Piaget, Eleanor Duckworth, Maria Montessori, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and L. B. Sharp, but there were others who made contributions over the years. That student's question prompted Tom to invite me to join him in editing a book to help future students develop their philosophies of experiential education. We decided to invite 32 other experiential educators to write about the person or persons who had influenced them in their professional development and philosophy of experiential education. The result was a collection of biographical stories about 37 leading experiential educators. In the first chapter we outlined some of the issues facing experiential educators and defined the key terminology. Dewey and Hahn's contributions were briefly outlined and the remainder of the book described the lives of other educators deemed worthy of the label, "experiential educators". In the appendix Tom and I dialogued about some of the philosophical issues raised in the book to help the reader reflect on some of the key points. We discussed the importance of reflecting on experience, whether listening to a lecture or reading a book qualified as an experience, how we learn best, whether experiential education will become accepted practice in schools, compared experiential education with spirituality, whether experiential education could be considered a theory of instruction, the differences between teaching and learning, difficulties in organizing the book, and our own biases and values. Perhaps we raised more questions than we answered, but we believe the book is helpful to those interested in probing why they do what they do as a leader and learner.

Another topic of interest to me is helping teachers and other leaders develop skills in conducting individual and group reflection sessions to expand meaningful knowledge. I want them to consider the reflection phase of teaching as essential to experiential learning. Reflection is also known as active processing, reviewing, debriefing, bridging, critical thinking, and thinking about thinking (meta-cognition). Reflection results in many benefits to teachers and students. One benefit is providing more obvious feedback about the experience to both. Another is it often reveals valuable assessment and evaluation information. In 1984 I published an article about designing questions to guide reflection (Knapp, 1984, pp. 47–49). *That article stimulated my interest in using more questions and problem-based techniques to enhance teaching and learning.* Other articles and book chapters on reflection followed in 1985 and 1990. In 1992 I wrote a book on the topic. It was reprinted seven times and translated into Chinese (Knapp, 1992). I wrote other book chapters on reflection published in 1999, 2005, and 2016. In the 2005 chapter I focused on supportive cognitive and affective research findings and six factors contributing to successful facilitating and debriefing of the solo experience (Knapp, 2005, pp. 20–30). *Reflecting on experience should extend beyond just acquiring cognitive knowledge.* As Bert Horwood believes: "reflection should also include emotions. We cheat our students when reflection is confined to the levels of intellect and

cognition …I wonder if, in fact, we have reached a stage where the distinctions among the cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects of mental work have outlived their usefulness" (quoted in Knapp & Smith, 2005, p. 298). Perhaps some educators today have not fully accepted these ideas, but most experiential educators have.

As I live my life as a teacher, husband, parent, grandparent, and great grandparent, I attempt to enrich my journey by accumulating worthwhile experiences, reflecting upon them, and extracting as much knowledge as I can. I have always done this. I have not been as concerned about my IQ (Intelligence Quotient) as much as I have about my EQ (Experience Quotient). I first heard of an EQ from reading an article about an "experience method of learning" by my mentor, L. B. Sharp (1935, p. 8). My previous story about him sending me off into the woods to find a bird illustrates his belief in encouraging a variety of life experiences. One of Sharp's camp staff members was William Vinal, a renowned naturalist and professor. Vinal prepared a list of experiences he deemed essential for a person to earn bachelor's and master's degrees, in lieu of the courses one might take at a university. For example, he thought that finding a hummingbird's or a great horned owl's nest was worth 30 credits towards a bachelor's degree. He believed that collecting and identifying 75 minerals was worth 100 credits toward a master's degree (Vinal, n.d.). Since Vinal's long list of key experiences was constructed in the 1930s or 40s, the individual items might be changed today, but his idea of checking off worthwhile experiences as a way to achieve a quality education is still sound. School curricula should be examined to see if there is a reasonable balance between educative experiences leading to know-that and know-how knowledge.

I call myself an experiential educator because of my career involvement in this complex field of study and my compatible educational philosophy. I have learned many lessons from focusing on topics such as values and ethics education, place-based education, cooperative and problem-based learning, indigenous cultures, environmental heroes and heroines, community building, group dynamics and communication, children's nature literature, naturalists such as Lewis, Clark, Leopold, and Agassiz, and places I've traveled such as Ecuador, Australia, and Taiwan. Recently, I have concentrated upon learning as much as I can about the American bison. I have done this by using all the available resources I could find: readings, writings, lectures, videos, computers, artifacts, firsthand contacts with people and places, and discussions with experts. I have given bison lectures, presented hands-on workshops, and prepared museum exhibits and displays. Collectively, all of these experiences have provided me with a knowledge base that I have reflected upon and learned from. When I learn, I teach and when I teach I learn. This interplay between learning and teaching has given me a deep understanding of these topics. My accumulated knowledge base has been composed of a kaleidoscope of meaningful experiences spanning direct and mediated learning resources. These activities take time to do well, process, and transfer to other situations. Experiential education must be viewed as a seamless combination of worthwhile events woven

into a life blanket of wonder, joy, pain, hard work, play, and contemplation. All of these experiences have made me who I am.

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