

A Study of the Impact of a Civil Rights Tour of Mississippi and Tennessee on the Acquisition of Civil Rights Knowledge and Knowledge of Self

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Abstract

This mixed methods study was designed to survey Civil Rights knowledge and Self Knowledge of undergraduate students before and after a week-long civil rights tour of Tennessee and Mississippi. The students were enrolled in an undergraduate counseling course at a University in north Texas. Course assignments included the reading of *What Truth Sounds Like* by Michael Eric Dyson, the writing of a reflection paper, and attending a debriefing session following the tour. Before the tour, students reported that they had superficial knowledge of the civil rights movement and that they knew they would learn a great deal during the tour. Following the tour, the students reflected that they never thought they would “feel” so much during the tour. The students’ Post Tour responses revealed depth of Civil Rights knowledge and evidence that the tour participants benefitted from the first-hand experiences of the Foot Soldiers with whom they interacted during the tour.

1.0. Introduction

Research and writings support the educational benefits of travel as an out of classroom experience which can enhance civil rights knowledge, knowledge of self, social and cultural awareness, and transformative behavior (Crompton, 1979; Morgan, 2010). In a literature review of the educative benefits of travel, Stone and Petrick (2013) reported that “educational travel provides a formal framework through which learning can occur” and that travel facilitates learning in varied contexts. (p. 731). Travel abroad, however, is the focus of much of the research with a paucity of writings addressing domestic travel (Falk, Ballantyle & Benckendorff, 2012). This study adds to the literature addressing the value of domestic educative travel.

The history of travel for educational purposes is a global phenomenon. Chinese and Western philosophers wrote about the value of learning through travel (Brodsky-Porges, 1981). During the 17th to 19th centuries, British men who could afford the travel would travel across continental Europe for an enhanced education (Ritchie, 2003). According to Sell (1983), young American men and women traveled to Europe for a more refined education during the early colonial period to the 19th century. For several years, commercial companies, schools, colleges, and other organizations have offered national and international educational tours for all ages.

Research has explored how education can be a motivator for travel and an outcome of travel. In a qualitative study involving interviews of thirty-nine (39) travelers, Crompton (1979), made a connection between travel and knowledge and knowledge of self. Crompton found that travel provides a time of reflection, exploration and evaluation of self. Crompton explained that “Self discovery emerged as a result of transposition to a new situation.” (p. 416). Being in a new environment and social situation causes one to relax and focus on self enhancement through introspection. The participants in Crompton’s study were more open to new learnings and purposefully sought out new sites and experiences while traveling. This desire for new places and the desire to do things in a different place was termed cultural disequilibrium which led to new knowledge and learning for travelers (Crompton, 1979).

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Transformative travel has the most potential for bringing about a change in the traveler as well as those with whom the traveler interacts. The most powerful educative travel has an impact on the traveler, what the traveler learns and does as a result of the travel. Morgan (2010) goes in to great detail to analyze the “Transformative Traveler” who intentionally strives to enlarge their perspective. Growth is internal and external involving enhancement of the self esteem and self efficacy while experiencing disorientation or cognitive dissonance. The result is a broadening of the mind which may be psychological, emotional, or cognitive resulting in an environmental, sociocultural, or biophysical phenomenon (Morgan, 2010).

Research (Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus, 2011; Werry, 2008) has focused on transformational experiences as a framework for determining the effectiveness of travel experiences. Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus (2011) evaluated short-term study abroad experiences for the application of the transformative learning framework. The researchers used a case study approach and interviewed eight (8) trip members to determine how the students were remembering their study abroad experience and integrating the results of that experience into their lives one week after the experience. The researchers found that some of the students were still remembering the experience whereas others remembered little about the experience.

Davies and Lowe’s (n.d.) created an adaptation of Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning model which provides an explanation for the differences Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus observed in their research. Davies and Lowe’s four (4) stage adaptation is a cyclical paradigm beginning with Concrete Experiences characterized by having an experience, Reflective Observation, reflecting on the experience, Abstract Conceptualization, learning from the experience and Active Experimentation, trying out what has been learned. Students who are integrating the experiences into their lives are at the level of Active Experimentation and perhaps experienced more of the previous levels than those students who had problems even remembering the study abroad experience.

Research reports that college students return from study abroad experiences more focused on academic factors (Bates, 1997; Drews, Meyer, 1996). Benjamin Hadis (2005) involved 95 students in the completion of an online questionnaire about studying abroad. Students reported being more academically focused, more global minded, open minded, independent, more intrinsically motivated, and more interested in international mobility.

2.0 Related Literature Review

Traveling throughout the world, being exposed to new cultures and learning the norms in new environments provide experiences that can elevate one to a better understanding of oneself (Falk et al., 2012; Morgan, 2010; Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011). Years ago, age was considered to have a positive relationship with age. As one grew older, the maturity level continued to rise. Since then, it has been found that there is a characteristic that plays a pivotal role in the maturation process: experience. This maturation process reigns true as there are twenty-five-year old young adults with more life experience and maturity than that of someone twice their age. Universities across the nation have bridged cultural pathways for students consistently for decades (Stone & Petrick, 2013). Whether it be international students, cultural enrichment trips or semesters abroad, colleges have implemented programs to enable students to engage in educative travel as a part of their academic journey (Stone & Petrick, 2013). The length of the travel can range from four years, four months or two weeks or longer. This flexibility allows students, with any schedule, the opportunity to experience a new culture. With multiple educative travel opportunities a year, varying by travel time commitment and scholarship funding available, more students have been able to become immersed in areas throughout the world. It has become so common that some higher education campuses are requiring students to study abroad one semester to graduate from specific programs (Loveland, 2006).

College student travel is usually connected with course requirements which may involve varied projects and assignments. Typically, students are given certain assignments that align with educational travel and require reflection on the experiences. Whether it be a ten-page paper summarizing the travel experiences or research reporting the norms and culture the student encountered during the excursion (Cultural Enrichment, 2017), culminating assignments are expected dimensions of educative travel. Students conduct research on water cleanliness in a remote area or provide medical attention as a pre-med student to those who do not have access to physicians (Loveland, 2006).

The benefits of educative travel surface as increased opportunities for travel become available to college students. In 2001 when 9/11 took place, travel continued as the surge for international learning grew (Loveland, 2006). Travellers wanted to determine that the world was not as bad as it was believed to be while demonstrating that the world was full of good people and patriotism. Student travelers strengthened their ability to speak another language, which improves self-confidence (Shulsinger, 2017). The ability to speak another language can be utilized when students return from travel and interact with diverse populations.

It is an easy observation that education is prioritized differently from region to region. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the instruction methods of professors fluctuate. This can expose students to new ways of learning that may be different than what their home country provided (Shulsinger, 2017). When the journey is over, students usually add proof of their newfound experiences to resumes. When examining a resume, employers like to see that the prospect has been exposed to other cultures which is a supplemental benefit (Shulsinger, 2017).

Of course, another benefit of educative travel that has been identified is the simple networking, increased self-efficacy and enhanced social and emotional skills that results when living in an unfamiliar environment and interrelating with new people. Educational and professional opportunities later in life can be broadened when a student has skills in socializing with diverse populations (Shulsinger, 2017). Increased confidence, independence, autonomy, resiliency are easily the most beneficial aspects of college travel. Self-knowledge can be defined as the grasp of one's own character, capabilities or feelings (Merriam-Webster). Often in life people search for self-knowledge as it can lead the way to happiness (Hussey, 2017). Understanding yourself can clear the way for opportunities in life. Having a clear understanding of who you are, your strengths and weaknesses are characteristics of self-knowledge and indicative of the quality of life as one grows in knowledge of self.

The journey for self-knowledge can be a difficult one, and it may become one's life quest as the demands of life make spending time focusing on yourself more challenging. When life gets busy, our brains go on auto pilot as routine takes over (Alexander, et al., 2010; Gmelch, 1997; Hussey, 2017). Without the brain being aware of each thought and emotion, there is no memory to recollect and search for knowledge of self. In addition, comfort also can be deemed a burden for self-knowledge education (Hussey, 2017). It is human nature to gravitate toward a life that provides security and pleasure. It is inarguable that the human race prefers to avoid anything that may be unappealing about itself. However, this is an important piece in the puzzle of understanding. In present day it is the norm to be hyperaware of one's thoughts or feelings (Hussey, 2017). This can hinder the self-knowledge as it is an unhealthy obsession with behavior. Understanding of feelings is necessary, but in a rational manner. Conscientiousness must be present in order to be able to realistically measure one's emotions. It is important to be able to assess the behaviors of one's self to grow as an individual, however, it must be done in a practical way. Unfortunately, the over-sensitivity to awareness can become an obstacle rather than a tool. While each of these problems are real in the lives of human beings, college travel expeditions offer reasonable solutions. Being in a new environment requires the brain to be removed from auto pilot and invites reflection and introspection (Combs & Kelley, 2012).

It is common for people to spend a good portion of their life exploring knowledge of themselves (Morgan, 2010). Educative travel while in college can play a pivotal role in expanding the process of understanding one's self. With exposure to new cultures and heightened independence, young adults can learn about themselves at a deeper level. Educative travel allows students to go on a pursuit for happiness by helping them discover who they are. Of course, each of the road blocks to self-understanding dissipate as inner growth occurs. Cultural enrichment travel undertaken while students are in college gives students a head start toward self-knowledge as new experiences make a lasting impression on one's thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Hussey, 2017).

Traveling in college can serve as a way to affirm independence, solidify interdependence and reveal feelings hidden within your soul. A plethora of literature (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011; Sell, 1983; Stone & Petrick, 2013) supports the value of study abroad and cultural enrichment travel as avenues to better understand one's self. While educative travel is not the only road that leads to knowledge of self, it is certainly helpful in the self-identification process young adults go through as they develop perceptions which determine their behavior and define what they become (Combs & Kelley, 2012).

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine the impact of a civil rights tour of Mississippi and Tennessee on knowledge of the civil rights movement and knowledge of self. The twenty-five (25) student participants in this study were enrolled in Counseling 497 Civil Rights Tour of Mississippi & Tennessee, an online elective course offered at a regional university located in Northeast Texas, Spring, 2019. Flyers were displayed throughout the university to inform and recruit students for the course. The course had been offered previously, so students had knowledge of the opportunity. Students completed an online survey prior to and following the one week tour.

3.1. Study Participants

The twenty-five (25) participants in this study were all undergraduate students. Forty-eight percent (48%) or twelve (12) of the students were enrolled in the college of education; thirty-six percent (36%) or nine (9) of the students were from the college of Humanities, Social Science and Art;

The remaining 4 students (16%) were students in the colleges of Business and Science and Engineering. The majority (80%) of the students were working toward the Bachelor of Science degree. Ten (10) of the students, forty percent (40%), were in their senior year of study; twenty-four percent (24%) or six (6) of the students were in their Junior year at the university; Nine (9), thirty-six percent (36%) of the students were Sophomores. The students were pursuing majors in a wide variety of fields with the largest number of students, seven (7) pursuing majors in Psychology.

3.2. The Civil Rights Tour Survey

Pre-Tour and Post-Tour surveys were completed anonymously by the tour participants. The emailed Google Form surveys each consisted of four (4) items which were designed to determine what the participants knew prior to and after the tour. The first item of the surveys asked the participants to list what they knew about the civil rights movement. The second item from the Pre-Tour survey asked the participants to list what they anticipated learning. The second item from the Post-Tour survey asked the participants to describe how their anticipated tour experiences matched their actual experiences. The third Pre- and Post-Tour survey item asked the tour participants to rate their civil rights knowledge as High Level of Knowledge, Low Level of Knowledge, Growing and Wanting to Know More, Satiated and at a Point of Cognitive Overload or Other. The final question of the Pre and Post Tour Survey was an open-ended item which asked participants to indicate how they will share what they have learned and experienced following the civil rights tour. The three open-ended survey items yielded narrative data and were treated as qualitative data and analyzed using a coding process with results reported as themes supported by the preponderance of responses. A Google Form link to the survey was emailed to the participants before and after the tour.

3.3. The Course and Civil Rights Tour

The course, Counseling 497, was described as a study of the American Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s to the present. By the end of the course, students were expected to be able to discuss the American civil rights movement as background to contemporary events and as a major force in the development of American culture; to discuss the historical context of the African American struggle for civil rights and the expansion of rights for other Americans; to discuss the interplay of politics, economics and cultural changes and how alterations in one impacts others; and to critically examine and evaluate conflicting testimony in assessing historical fact (Counseling 497 Course Syllabus).

The Civil Rights Tour occurred over a five-day period, commencing on Monday, February 19, 2019 and ending on Friday, February 23, 2019. Highlights of the experience included a tour of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, a tour of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), the Civil Rights Education Center where the Foot Soldiers addressed the Free Schools, the Local People & the Mississippi Movement; tour of the home of Medgar Evers; meeting with Charles McLaurin, veteran of the Mississippi civil rights movement; Toogaloo College, a private Historically Black College and met the College President; a meeting with Jerry Mitchell, an investigative reporter whose work led to the reopening of several cold case civil rights cases; James Chaney's gravesite; visit to the Sunflower County Courthouse where Fannie Lou Hamer and 18 Black citizens traveled from Ruleville, Mississippi to the courthouse to register to vote; toured Money, Mississippi and the site of the store where Emmitt Till was accused of insulting the store owner's White wife; toured the Hamer Garden, the gravesite of Fannie Lou Hamer and her husband; toured the Hamer Museum, the historic William Chapel Church and the Hamer Post Office; visited the site of the home of Amzie Moore, a World War II Veteran, a black entrepreneur, and a NAACP leader who led voter registration efforts; tour of the National Civil Rights Museum. As the students visited all of these locations, key speakers shared the history and in many cases first accounts presented by those who lived the history. Students were expected to read Michael Eric Dyson's book, *What Truth Sounds Like*, write a reflections paper and attend a debriefing session facilitated by faculty and two former presidents of the university.

4.0 Data Analysis

Pre-Tour Survey data and the Post-Tour Survey data for survey items #1, #2, and #4 were compiled separately for analysis. Pre and Post survey item #3 asked participants to rate their knowledge of the civil rights movement; for this item, data were reported numerically. Using a coding process, compiled Pre-Tour data for each of the four survey items were read and reread for the presence of thematic responses, reflecting the preponderance of response. This procedure also was used for the compiled Post-Tour data. Responses which occurred most frequently reflected the most representative responses from the respondents. Frequency of responses to survey item #3 was reported as percentages. Data analyzed addressed the research questions selected for this study:

What is the preponderance of civil rights knowledge held by participants prior to and following the tour? What is the preponderance of responses representing anticipations of participants prior to and following the tour? What is the rating of civil rights knowledge by the participants prior to and following the tour? What is the preponderance of responses reflecting how the participants will share their learnings prior to the tour and following the tour?

5.0 Findings

Research Question #1 What is the preponderance of civil rights knowledge evidenced by participants? An open-ended question provided the participants an opportunity to brainstorm their thoughts regarding their civil rights knowledge prior to the beginning of the tour. Common Civil Rights Understandings, an identified emerging theme, was a varied set of names of historical figures and actions. Historical figures such as Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks are examples of the historical figures mentioned. White supremacy, gaining admissions to higher education, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Brown vs. Board of Education, Segregation in the Armed forces, peaceful protesting, sit-ins, civil rights, marches, executive orders are examples of the responses labeled as responses which were listed. Uncommon Civil Rights Understandings emerged as the theme which characterized the responses to the question regarding civil rights knowledge held by the participants following the tour. Responses included names of historical figures such as Roscoe Jones, Emmett Till, Fannie Lou Hamer, James Earl Chaney, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and Amzie Moore. Additional names and terms not mentioned on the participants' pre-tour list included Tougaloo College, Jackson State, Foot Soldiers, Freedom Schools and Freedom Riders. Responses were characterized by more in-depth descriptions and longer narrative statements. One participant commented on the Jackson State and Tougaloo College connection.

I learned about Tougaloo College's unique experience as a private HBCU and the consequences Jackson State students had to deal with when attempting to mimic their protests while being a school of the state.

Another participant wrote:

In Mississippi during the movement there was a constant battle between people fighting for our freedom and other Whites working hard toward our downfall. People like Roscoe Jones who showed us a church where many leaders in the movement spoke and came to listen, where James Chaney's funeral was held. We visited a church in Philadelphia that was burned down by the KKK after a church meeting. Members surrounded the church and terrorized the leaving members, beat them, scared them, and questioned them about the whereabouts of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner.

Research Question #2 What is the preponderance of responses representing anticipations of participants prior to and following the tour? The theme, Clarified and Expanded Knowledge characterized the responses to the open-ended question, what are your anticipations for the civil rights tour of Mississippi and Tennessee? Representative responses were "gain more knowledge," "learn a lot," "...learn about the civil rights movement," and "learn more about MLK." Two other tour participants responded.

Honestly, I am not sure what to expect, but I do know I'll learn a lot and hopefully it will give me a better understanding of how things were. I hope to learn about everything I've ever wanted to know or simply didn't know I need to know because it wasn't taught in high school.

The theme, Unexpected Feelings, emerged from Post-Tour responses to the question, Did your anticipations match with what you actually experienced? Tour participants responded with descriptions of their emotions, awareness of the pain experienced by other human beings, and the feelings they had as they learned from the Foot Soldiers and toured the actual offices, homes and walked the path of those involved in the civil rights movement.

Participant #1 Everywhere we went I could feel something. I could understand what my ancestors felt and went through. I learned more about what I thought I knew. It was just amazing. I cried; I laughed; I felt joy and I was also saddened by what happened.

Participant #1 I was simply expecting to learn, but I was not expecting to feel as much as I did.

Research Question #3 What is the rating of civil rights knowledge by the participants prior to and following the tour? Prior to the tour participants were asked to rate their level of civil rights

Knowledge: High Level of Knowledge, Medium Level of Knowledge, Low Level of Knowledge, Growing and Wanting to Know More, Satiated and at a point of Cognitive Overload, and Other. Ten (10) or fifty percent (50%) of the participants rated their knowledge as Growing and Wanting to Know More; seven (7) participants or thirty-five percent (35%) of the participants rated their level of civil rights knowledge as Medium. Ten percent (10%) of the participants rated their level of civil rights knowledge as Low while five percent (5%) chose Other.

Following the tour, seventy-seven percent (77%) or 10 of the participants rated their level of civil rights knowledge as High or Medium. Three (3) or 23.1% of the participants rated their level of civil rights knowledge as Growing and Wanting to Know More.

Research Question #4 What is the preponderance of responses reflecting how the participants will share their learnings prior to the tour and following the tour? The theme emerging from the Pre-Tour responses was Inner Circle of Family and Friends. One participant responded, "I will inform all my friends and family and as many as I can to show them how hard the movement was and how it is still going on today." Another participant said, "I will first share my experience with my family and then my friends and others who want to know more about what I learned."

Following the tour, responses reflecting how the participants planned to share what they had experienced were characterized by the emerging theme, Community-Wide to Global. Participants described how they planned to work on a "series of events to promote education of Black history." Another participant noted that experiences would be shared by encouraging others to vote while another mentioned using "social media" to share. Respondents describe to whom they would share as well as how and why. One student responded, "I will talk to classmates in my face to face classes about outside the classroom learning" and the importance of becoming a "life-long learner."

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Following a review of literature on the educational benefits of travel, Stone and Petrick (2013) concluded that there is a need for research studies addressing the educative benefits of domestic travel. This study sought to focus on educational outcomes of a week-long civil rights tour by comparing and contrasting the perceptions of students before and after a tour of Tennessee and Mississippi. An online survey was used to capture student civil rights knowledge before and after the tour. The students were asked to consider how their anticipations before the tour compared with their actual experiences. Findings from the study support the following conclusions which emerged as themes: Common Civil Rights Knowledge characterized the civil rights knowledge held by study participants prior to the tour; Uncommon Civil Rights Understandings characterized the civil rights knowledge of the participants following the tour; Clarified and Expanded Knowledge characterized the civil rights experiences anticipated by study participants prior to the tour and Unexpected Feelings characterized the experiences of the civil rights participants following the tour.

Prior to the onset of the tour, participants shared, in response to the Pre-Tour Survey, a set of civil rights facts characterized as Common Civil Rights Knowledge. The college students reported having read about or recalled much of their civil rights knowledge from textbooks and media accounts. Facts were cited without making any personal connections to the people, places and events named. Participants rated their civil rights knowledge as a Low level of Knowledge, a Medium Level of Knowledge and Growing and Wanting to Know More. Responses were more spread out indicating a lack of confidence in their ratings of civil rights knowledge.

Following the tour, the participants provided little known civil rights facts, Uncommon Civil Rights Understandings, which were surrounded by depth of narrative context. After encountering and interacting with the Foot Soldiers from the 1960s who shared first-hand accounts of civil rights history, visiting the room where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr resided at the Lorraine Hotel just before his death, walking across the Pettis Norman bridge where John Lewis was beaten, and visiting the home of Medgar Evers and seeing the driveway where he was murdered, the post tour list was a rich cornucopia of realities for the participants. Paul and Mukhopadhyay (2003) found similar results. The researchers reported that travel participants experienced significant growth in cognitive learning and more effective and efficient learning in responses to a qualitative pre-post survey.

Anticipations prior to the tour by the college students focused on what the students hoped to learn, new knowledge that they hoped to gain, learning more about Martin Luther King, Jr., becoming more enlightened, learning more about the civil rights movement, black history and becoming more educated.

Students were relatively unaware, unsure, but hoped that they would come away with a better understanding of “how things were in the past.” Participants anticipated Clarified and Expanded Knowledge prior to the civil rights tour. Following the tour, the participants, in comparing their Pre-Tour anticipations with Post-Tour realities, found no comparisons. Unexpected Feelings reflected how the students felt as they reflected on their perceptions of how their ancestors may have felt. The student tour participants cried, laughed, felt joy, and were saddened by descriptions of what happened. Emotions were combined with descriptions of what the participants learned and how their eyes and mind were opened by the experience. In addition to listing what they hoped to learn, the student tour participants wrote sentences filled with specific details interweaving what they had experienced, learned and felt. In a mixed methods study by Alexander et al. (2010), fifty-three percent (53%) of the participants reported that they were impacted by the travel experience. Twenty-six percent (26%) indicated that they came away with increased confidence and attitude changes. Travel participants in a study by Laubscher (1994) indicated experiencing renewed cross-cultural understandings.

Post tour ratings of civil right knowledge were more concentrated than ratings before the tour with ratings ranging from Growing and Wanting to Know More to Medium and a High Level of Knowledge. Prior to the tour, the students felt that they did not know much about the civil rights era and specifically about civil rights in Tennessee and Mississippi. Knowledge described represented surface-level knowledge and knowledge which they questioned as perhaps inaccurate. Post-tour responses supported depth of knowledge and more confidence regarding that knowledge. The students were able to name people, places and events about which they were unaware prior to the tour. The clustering and concentration of the ratings indicated that they were sure about the knowledge acquired and the ratings assigned. Similar findings were evidenced in a study by Pearce and Foster (2007) where participants reported skills and personal attributes were developed or improved as a result of travel. Participants completed a survey with open ended questions in this qualitative study.

Following most impactful experiences, the question is how will you share what you have learned with others. Researchers (Davies and Lowe 1984; Fordham 2006; Morgan 2010) have found travel experiences to be transformative in that not only has the traveler been impacted by the travel experience, there is a commitment to share their experiences with others, spreading the knowledge and in some cases changing the lives of others. In this study, the civil rights tour participants’ responses to how they planned to share their learnings and experiences with others ranged from sharing with close friends and family to sharing with the world. Prior to the tour, Circle of Family and Friends emerged as the theme from responses; after the tour, Community-wide and Global characterized responses. Descriptions of how the information and experiences could be shared with on-campus organizations and ideas of working on a series of events to promote Black History to sharing on social media reflected post tour sharing ideas. Morgan (2010) referred to this type of traveler as the “transformed home comer” (p. 252) and Davies and Lowe (1984) labeled this aspect of their experiential learning model as Active Experimentation involving planning and trying out what has been learned.

7.0 Post Civil Rights Tour Reflections and Debriefing

Following the civil rights tour, participating students wrote papers reflecting on the experience. The students read Michael Dyson’s book, *What Truth Sounds Like*, and they attended a debriefing session facilitated by former University presidents and other faculty. An analysis of this qualitative Post-Tour data for emerging themes and strands revealed five major strands of thought: Personal Responsibility, What I Feel/How I Felt They Felt, Future Direction, Past Connections with Civil Rights and Learnings.

The majority of the reflections addressed Knowledge of Self and what I can do for others, what I felt and how I feel my ancestors felt, and now that I have learned and experienced the civil rights era, what have I learned about myself. Responses were personal and “I” focused. Students felt a Personal Responsibility to vote and to teach others.

Before the trip, I had never voted, but now I am going to make it a point to go Vote every election from here on out.

Another student tour participant realized why it was important to vote.

The answer was simple. We are just lazy, complacent and think our vote doesn’t Matter. What I realized is that people died, went to jail and were abused so we could even have the option to be lazy.... We have to vote and not because we care but because our elders fought for us to be able to....

Civil Rights Tour participants realized that it is their responsibility to educate themselves.

Participant # 3 It is our job to teach the next generation. If we do not teach them about our History, then we are the ones to blame.

Participant #4 This trip made me realize that I need to do more and that I should teach others about what happened so they can understand why I think all of us should do more as a community.

Feelings and personal emotions were reflected in the student writings of how they felt and how they felt their ancestors felt. The following quotes from the student reflections gave impetus to the theme, What I Feel/How I Felt They Felt.

Participant #5 I was shocked at how much pain and empathy that you could feel for the protesters by studying the different statues throughout the park

Participant #6 Rich stories that Tougaloo College was built on made me FEEL so proud of my heritage. To take something full of so much pain and turn it into a place of betterment is amazing.

Participant #7 It was significant to walk in the same steps of Foot Soldiers and walking in the path where history had been made. I really felt as if their spirits were with me. I felt emotional walking across that bridge because I knew those wanting their freedom had walked across that bridge.

Another student looked at how the past give impetus to their Future Direction:

The Foot Soldiers ...taught me that the fight is not over and that we have to continue to fight. It stood out to me when the lady said that she won't live to see it, but the change will happen. That made me realize that I have a responsibility To continue to fight that they started and to continue the progress that has been made.

Tour participants realized how knowledge of the past informed their Future Direction. One participant wrote:

I don't know how I'm going to get it done, but I have to start changing myself so that I can help the future generations move towards a better way of life.

Students felt appreciative of the past that they could draw on and use to determine their future.

The Civil Rights Museum was so immersive. It felt at times like you were taken back in time. The one thing I will never forget is being in a room with 12 people who marched for MY rights.

The Civil Rights Tour participants realized how the civil rights experience caused them to reflect on family members and others who had shared Black History experiences with them.

Participant #8 My Mother told me about the all-black school in the Texas county where she grew up and how she was bussed over to the next town to go to an all white school.

Participant #9 I thank God that I was raised by my Great Aunt who taught school from 1923-1966.

Family members, and in particular, Mothers, had shared past Connections to Civil Rights.

Participant #7 My Mother is from the Delta; I recall things taught to me by my Mother.

Participant #6 My Mother graduated with a class of 18 students from...in 1959. All of them were White. Now, I understand what my Mother had to deal with during the 50s and 60s.

As the students viewed the homes of civil rights leaders, they recalled how they were raised and saw parallels between their family lives of the family lives of the civil rights leaders.

I can tell by this setup that they were a close knit family. I can relate to this type of upbringing.

It looked like we time traveled to the 1950s. I remember having the exact same look growing up at my great aunt's house.

The sentiments of one student was reflected by many when she stated, "I feel that our grandparents can keep our heritage going if more kids would listen." The students shared lessons learned, how the past taught so much and how history is much more special now.

Participant #1 I also learned about the groundwork Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. laid while in Montgomery, Alabama at the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church

Participant #5 I had no prior knowledge of the bombings or deaths of the girls at 16th Street Baptist Church—another part of history of which I was unaware.

Personal applications addressed "I can make a difference," "how it moved me spiritually," "How much I did not know," the conclusion that "If they made it, I can too," "I'm not from America...I made connections to my country," "to "Segregation is still here," "The fight remains," "continue to read; continue to vote."

8.0 Research Limitations

This study has research limitations which impact generalizability to other university settings and populations and trustworthiness of the findings. A small number of participants Twenty-five (25) students were enrolled in the undergraduate course, Counseling 497 Civil Rights Tour of Mississippi & Tennessee, and all were a part of the civil rights tour. Twenty (20) students responded to the Pre Tour Survey and thirteen (13) responded to the Post Tour Survey.

All students submitted the Post Reflection paper, however. In addition, the study was delimited to the self-report of students enrolled in an undergraduate course at a university in North Texas. There was no effort to quantitatively measure factual knowledge and attitude change.

9.0 Recommendations

Opportunities for college and university students to acquire direct domestic travel experiences and encounters with the civil rights era should be increased. Experiences such as the one described in this study provide students and faculty opportunities to correct historically inaccurate information and to positively impact the cultural environment of the University, the surrounding community and the world. Planned travel experiences which provide opportunities for college students to experience real-world encounters with academic content and to interact with their peers, college instructors and administrators are invaluable. The broader implications of out-of-classroom experiences and the measured association with academic and personal development of students in a University environment need further study.

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