

Program Synthesis

In 2004, I climbed the stairs to Professor Hughes' office to be interviewed for possible acceptance to St. John's Doctoral Educational Leadership and Accountability Program. By far it was one of the biggest steps I had ever decided to take. Just as every step made prior to this, I was not taking these steps alone. These steps were being made with all the Giants in my life. My family in North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, and all the ones who migrated to the west coast were all with me. This incredible journey was being made with so many others, only the almighty knew for sure how many. My thoughts traveled to the original seven astronauts and the unknown they certainly faced as they readied themselves to transverse into space. I imagined that my deed on this day was a mirror image of what went through their minds at the inception of their program. It was ironic that I had to climb up in order to conquer the first stage of the journey. As I climbed these steps I couldn't imagine the dramatic turn of events my life was about to take. Paramount in my thinking was the work of Dr. William J. Cook and his strategic planning. Dr. Cook's theory on the urgency of change in America's schools paralleled the philosophy expounded by Dr. Hughes on this very day.

"This program is about you learning what you don't even know, you don't know." After putting me at ease and going over a few requirements, these were the next words Dr. Hughes uttered. At the time, there was no way for me to fully conceptualize what was meant. Over the past three years, these words have come back to me again and again. I now feel that he had combined Leedy with his step by step process to this program with a little Edmonds and his effective schools approach. Along the way He incorporated Bennis by leading by example and proved that Gardner's multiple intelligence was more

than just a theory. The exercise of multiple intelligence is a prerequisite for this program. With all the new knowledge and ways of thinking that have been bestowed unto us, Dr. Hughes' original statement sums everything up. The genesis of the space program faced the same situation.

From day one, the endless challenge of education faced us. Meier and her habits of mind come into play as we acquired new skills and ways of thinking. Just as Popkewitz analyzed IGE and discovered that the model was not being systematically utilized we also had to evaluate some of our practices and either refine them or throw them away. This caused data to become our friend and the way to communicate with all stakeholders in any program. Senge and his systems thinking speaks to this wonderful revelation.

Dr. Smith and his cohort concept help propel us ever onward and upward. People, previously, unknown became lifelong friends. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. This model allowed us all become stronger.

It is because of this experience that life will never be the same. The sky, the moon, the sun, the stars, and the universe are all within our reach. We must just decide that they are our goals and we will indeed persevere. A safe landing is on the horizon.