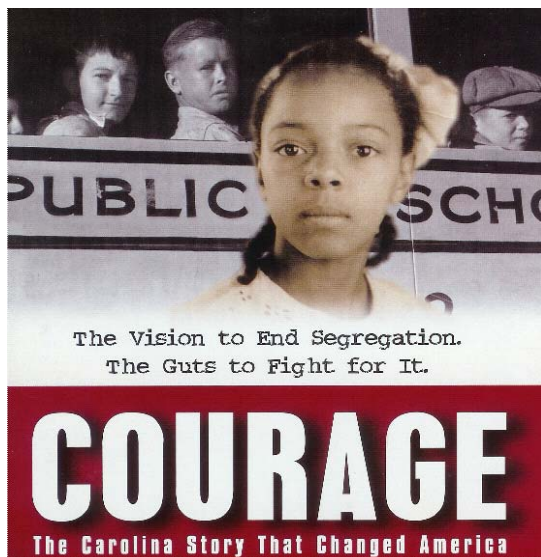


Evaluation Study

Conversations On Courage



Executive Summary

From January 31 through August 15, 2004, Levine Museum of the New South presented *COURAGE: The Carolina Story That Changed America*. This groundbreaking exhibit told the story of the brave citizens of Clarendon County, SC and how they worked together to begin the process that ended legal segregation of the races in America's schools.

An exhibition of national importance, *COURAGE* commemorated the 50th anniversary of the *Brown* decision. The exhibit was created by Darcie Fohrman and Museum historian Dr. Tom Hanchett working with the children of Rev. J. A. De Laine.

Creators of the exhibit believed that bringing community leaders together in intact workgroups to share the power of the exhibit and spend time in facilitated dialogue could move conversations about race, courage and contemporary issues forward in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The dialogue portion of the Courage Experience was called *Conversations on Courage* and targeted intact management teams from key local organizations. *Conversations on Courage* was made possible by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to the Levine Museum of the New South. The museum partnered with Community Building Initiative (CBI) to develop and implement the dialogue component of the Courage Experience.

Conversations on Courage was a unique community collaboration. The Levine Museum of the New South curated the *COURAGE* exhibit and its talented staff provided the welcoming environment in which people gathered for *Conversations*. Community Building Initiative engaged Octavia Seawell to design the dialogue model and recruited, trained and compensated a committed group of 20 facilitators who were key to the success of each dialogue experience. CBI's Christi Lee served as project coordinator. *Conversations* Project Manager, Stephanie Counts, guided the overall effort and was instrumental in securing broad-based involvement from Charlotte's corporate, community and civic leadership. Linda Ketner of KSI Corporation provided the evaluation of *Conversations* including the enclosed statistical analysis and final report.

This study is a collection of the knowledge, reflections and attitudes of all 792 participants from 62 groups representing 38 organizations who participated between February 1 and May 31, 2004. These organizations represented the leadership tier of Corporate, Civic and Government sectors in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

When the grant-funded portion of the project was complete at the end of May, *Conversations* was extended to August 15th due to the overwhelming number of requests from area groups. When the exhibit closed on August 15th, 1,741 business and community leaders (111 groups) had participated in a *Conversation*.

Significant Findings

- **The sample of community leaders participating in *Conversations on Courage* were:**
 - 44% Corporate.
 - 41% Civic.
 - 15% Government.
- **When compared to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg 2000 census data, the sample of community leaders were:**
 - More Caucasian.
 - Older.
 - Slightly Better Educated.
 - Significantly Higher Incomes.
- **The Courage sample, if representative, suggests that Charlotte-Mecklenburg still has work to do to be more inclusive in the upper levels of leadership.**
 - According to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg 2000 census, Caucasians make up 61% of the population, African Americans 28%.
 - In the Courage sample, Caucasians hold 68% of the Corporate leadership positions, African Americans 20%.
 - In the Courage sample, Caucasians hold 71% of the leadership positions in Government, African Americans 25%.
 - According to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg 2000 census, 29% of the population earns less than \$30,000 and 27% more than \$75,000.
 - In the Courage sample, only 10% earned less than \$30,000.
 - In the Courage sample, 63% earned more than \$75,000.
 - Caucasians in our sample make up 70% of those earning more than \$75,000 while African Americans comprise 65% of those making less than \$30,000.
 - Although Caucasians and African Americans in our sample have attained about the same level of education (89% vs. 87%), as noted above there is a significant difference in the percentage of leadership positions held and earnings of African Americans.
- **Blacks and Whites see racial progress differently**
 - 46% of Caucasians in the Courage sample felt that race relations since *Brown* were better while 23% of African Americans thought the same.
 - 70% of African Americans in the Courage sample felt that race relations since *Brown* were in some ways better and in some ways worse while 53% of Caucasians had similar thoughts.
 - 100 of the 792 participants mentioned their concern that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools may be re-segregating by implementing neighborhood school concepts.
 - Many participants of both races indicate that the rise of the “Black Middle Class” has led to less activism among African Americans. Their perspective was that as Blacks get more, they have more to lose and are willing to take fewer risks.
- **Blacks and Whites had different emotional responses to the Courage exhibit.**
 - 30% of the African Americans in the Courage sample expressed Anger at the events shown in the exhibit with their second choice (20%) being Pride.
 - 26% of the Caucasians in the sample expressed Sadness as their number one response to the exhibit with Appreciation at 15% being second.
 - Of particular interest is the difference between African Americans (22%) and others (12%) at being surprised by the candor expressed during *Conversations* dialogue.
 - Many Whites (15%) expressed outrage that they had grown up in areas surrounding where it had all happened and knew nothing about the particulars.

- **Charlotte-Mecklenburg leaders are ready and willing but will need direction in order to be active players in improving race relations**
 - 80% of the participants prefer a personal approach toward effecting change vs. a more societal approach. This may mean from a Social Scientist point of view that they are not willing to take responsibility outside their own lives.
 - The Pre/Post Test Sample was asked, “*The people involved in Brown showed courage and a willingness to ‘rock the boat’.* Is there anything in our world today for which you would be willing to ‘rock the boat’? If so, what?” Sixteen percent said they would “Rock the Boat” for race, 10% on War or National Security and 8% other social issues (i.e. education, injustice, sexual preference and gender).
 - 38% gave no answer in the Pre-Test. However, in the Post-Test, 85% of the 38% had changed their minds and had something for which they would “Rock the Boat.”
- **Charlotte-Mecklenburg leadership asks, “Where do we go from here?”**
 - Participants find the Courage Experience extremely valuable in educating on the importance of our past and alerting us to contemporary issues.
 - After viewing 792 responses, the evaluator believes that a large majority of participants have the heart for change but not the vision, framework or tools for the job. Change will require visionary leadership to provide direction.
- **How valuable was the “Courage Experience?”**
 - Exhibit
 - 94% of the sample participants thought COURAGE was Extremely to Very Valuable, 5% found it Moderately valuable, 1% found it Somewhat Valuable.
 - Many suggested making the Exhibit permanent and suggested that all school children, public and private, see the exhibit.
 - Dialogues
 - 87% of the sample participants found the facilitated dialogues extremely valuable and appreciated being able to sit and talk about these issues with people they knew and with whom they worked.
 - They were surprised by the level of openness and honesty in the group dialogue sessions, as well as by coworker’s emotional responses to this tragic part of our shared history.
 - Many were made aware by the exhibit of what remains to be done in terms of race relations.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

A variety of data sources were used to assess a variety of demographic, knowledge-based and attitudinal differences and similarities including 1) two surveys given to 792 participants from 62 intact management groups, 2) feedback from facilitators on observations of all 62 groups, 3) forty-five respondents were given Pre and Post Tests, 34 were returned and tabulated to add depth to the report and 4) direct observation was employed with five groups by the Evaluator and Project Manager.

Our sample included significantly more Caucasians and fewer People of Color than would be expected in the general Charlotte area population. Unfortunately, our sample contained too few people of some minorities to make meaningful generalizations from their responses.