

PIEDMONT PROJECT SUMMARY
ECOLOGY & HEALTH PROJECT
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The Piedmont Project Workshop (PPW) has helped improve the content and methods of my original proposal in several ways. In earlier drafts of this summary, I tried to identify various topics and individuals of PPW that most directly influenced the changes I have made in my own project. I gave up that approach. The mix of topics, relaxed environment, resources persons, and participants have all added in very subtle ways.

1. SCOPE. Most importantly, PPW has helped broaden and refocus the entire identity of my project. I had been calling it the "Sustainable Leadership Project." I now call it the "Ecology & Health Project." This seems like a simple change, but it more clearly reflects my deeper intent of identifying principles that link the two fields. Ironically, it's also the title suggested by a colleague at CDC about five years ago!

In the short month since PPW, I have discussed this change with many colleagues around the country, and have received unanimously positive feedback. They feel this simple change gives the project a larger "umbrella" than before. This makes it more "mainstream" to program directors who fund research and training programs, while allowing for a wider range of specific research and training programs. This is critical to funding my work.

I should mention here that my mere intent of attending PPW, and discussing it with colleagues, resulted in a very successful self-care skills workshop for Healthcare executives in the mountains of New Hampshire (NH) immediately before PPW. In addition to it receiving excellent evaluations, the NH workshop funded my work through the summer, and resulted in an invitation to do a much larger national workshop later in the year. So the benefits of PPW to my project are already very tangible. PPW has already resulted in unexpected funding!

2. UNIFICATION OF PROGRAMS. This simple name change enables the Ecology & Health Project to serve as an umbrella for several related programs that previously stood alone. (This is a tweak on the previous topic of FOCUS but important enough to list separately.) They now fit together.

These programs include:

(2.1) continued research into connections between ecological principles and the healing methods of indigenous cultures, especially Drepung Loseling Tibetan College/School of Traditional Medicine, with whom I have been working for over a decade. The change in name also makes the relation between my research goals and Emory's Environmental Studies (ENVS) Department more obvious.

(2.2) presenting research findings in pragmatic ways to interested western healthcare organizations & colleges, often as coop outreach programs through ENVS. Examples include a 10 year ongoing coop with Georgia Southern University, and a series of workshops for American Organization Of Nursing Executives. Since PPW, I have also developed a related healthcare program for Atlanta Senior Citizens.

(2.3) applying research findings to the important area of training in Sustainable Leadership, the original topic of my PPW project. An example is the New Hampshire workshop for nurse executives. (2.4) practical application of asian healing methods to wildlife conservation as outlined in my original PPW project.

3. ECOLOGY & HEALTH READER. This too is a simple but powerful change in the way I present programs and workshops. It is a direct "aha" insight of receiving the PPW "Reader" before the retreat. More than 20 theory-praxis "handouts" that I have developed over the past 10 years now have a more formal, yet still flexible, format. So, thank you bigtime for that very simple idea.

4. TAKING MY OWN MEDICINE. Our little fieldtrips into the woods behind the retreat center have given me a wonderful addition on how I go about my own Ecology & Health research. In Asian educational theory, memorization skills and insight are multiplied many-fold by doing so in a "blissful" environment. The spot downstream from the Houston Mill dam has become an important new "blissful" place for me to study and contemplate connections between Ecology & Health.