

## Editorial

With this 21st issue of the *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, we come to the end of yet another year and we have the opportunity to introduce the new editors, Drs. Allison L. Baer and Melissa A. Cain. In this editorial, we will both tell you a bit about ourselves and our vision for the future of JITP.

I (Allison) am an Associate Professor of Reading at The University of Findlay where I primarily teach courses in Reading to pre-service and graduate students. I also am the Director of the College of Education's Clubhouse Reading Center, which provides free tutoring to area children in grades 1 through 12. My research interests include social justice issues and how they can be addressed through relevant literature, struggling readers and how to best support their reading strengths and needs, and the work of university reading centers. I also have extensive experience editing professional, peer-reviewed journals as I was a co-editor of the *Ohio Journal of English Language Arts (OJELA)* for three years and was the sole editor of *Reading Horizons*, an international journal of reading research and practice. I have published multiple chapters in books and articles in regional, national, and international journals and won the prestigious Virginia Hamilton Award for Diversity in Literature for a co-authored article about the coming-of-age novels of young Muslim women.

I (Melissa) am a Professor of Education at The University of Findlay. I teach graduate-level courses primarily in the area of reading methods and children's literature. With the advent of our Ed.D. program, I now supervise dissertations and teach two core doctoral courses: *Influential Thinkers* and *Inviting Environments to Facilitate the Affective Domain*. Early in my career, I co-edited a children's book review journal called *Perspectives*. With a colleague from Kent State University, I continue to write a monthly column of children's book reviews for *The Toledo Blade*. My involvement with IAIE began when one of my graduate students invited me to the IAIE conference at which her school received an Inviting School Award. I was hooked and became an active member. I edited a newsletter for the ASCD/IAIE Professional Interest Community for several years. My IAIE committee work includes Advisory Council, the Coalition to Promote Positive School Climate, Higher Education Committee, Research Committee, and Fellowship Committee. . My research interests include school climate, socio-emotional learning, effective teaching of reading, online teaching and learning, and the benefits of incorporating children's literature across the curriculum. I am excited to be working with Allison co-editing the *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*.

Now that you've gotten to know a bit about us, here is our vision for JITP. To begin with, we strongly believe in the work of IAIE and its basic tenets as evidenced in our

daily course instruction and in the way we conduct our professional and personal lives. As such, we want the word and good works of invitational theory and practice to be researched and heard by multiple audiences. We know that the members of IAIE and readers of JITP agree with us but how are we to broaden our audience?

On Friday, October 23, 2015, Dr. Michael Keany of School Leadership 2.0 ([www.schoolleadership20.com](http://www.schoolleadership20.com)) addressed the 2015 IAIE Conference participants. The title of his presentation was “The Top Ten Things an Inviting School Leader Can Do” and it was filled with practical ideas for how we can implement invitational learning into our classroom practice. To set the stage for his presentation, Dr. Keany (2015) began his discussion by stating that, “Schools do a great job of teaching people what they can’t do! Only some people are artists. Only some people are good in math, etc.” This struck a real chord with us as he encouraged us to change our thinking from what we can’t do to what we can’t do YET. See the distinction? How would our self-confidence or sense of worth change if we just added that one little word — yet. It’s quite the powerful three-letter word that changes everything. I can’t play the guitar yet. He can’t do this math problem yet. This is truly one simple, yet powerful, change in our thinking as we continue our lives as invitational educators and humans. We hope to emulate Dr. Keany’s thinking through the content of this journal as we seek submissions from like-minded people. We’re not going to discuss all ten of Dr. Keany’s ideas in this Editorial, we do want to use some of his ideas to get you thinking about what you could do in your sphere of influence and how you might frame the ideas of invitational learning and practice through your research.

To begin with, Dr. Keany encouraged us to eliminate the “little murders” that occur on a daily basis in schools. What might this look like? Pointing out one student’s flaws or mistakes in front of the entire class or belittling a co-worker in a meeting are good examples. These “little murders” are direct attacks on a person’s confidence and sense of self-worth. They kill something inside a person that, over time, may become permanently dead. So our questions are, “What kinds of ‘little murders’ do you encounter and what could be done to change these behaviors? What kind of research needs to be done to convince others of the destructive nature of these attacks? What could YOU do or who do YOU talk to about this?”

Dr. Keany also recommends that we coach our students rather than constantly evaluate them. Coaching includes such things as giving quality, relevant written and verbal feedback designed to help our students learn and be better at something. In education, this is frequently done through progress monitoring, which is a method of collecting data daily to make sound instructional decisions. Teachers then take this information and give feedback to their students throughout the process of learning. Coaching is just that—it’s

about the process rather than the product. In contrast, evaluation is all about the product. One of this issue's authors, Dr. Mary Ann Jacobs, wasn't satisfied with just the end of semester evaluations so she used the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) (Brookfield, 2007) throughout two semesters and found that this more immediate feedback afforded more frequent opportunities to adjust her teaching according to student responses. This falls within Dr. Keany's idea of coaching as her research was focused on the process of learning rather than on the end product. What kinds of coaching do you do in your practice and how might you research it? Please note that this kind of coaching is done in many areas, not just education, so how is this seen in your workplace? We welcome articles that explore the practice of coaching.

According to Dr. Keany, the other six things that inviting leaders can do are:

- Open enrollment to advanced classes
- Eliminate class rank
- Eliminate homogeneous grouping (tracks)
- Eliminate grades – change to “certification”
- Use real world adjudication
- Treat students like people

We suspect that those reading this editorial and journal will find these ideas powerful and may, in fact, be implementing some of them. For the purpose of the JITP we ask you, “What questions do you have about these ideas that could lead to research and ultimate submission to the journal? Who could you share the journal with to get them thinking about these and other questions related to invitational theory and practice?”

This leads us to our vision for JITP.

1. We will be moving the publication date up a few months in the next two to three years to slowly change to a spring publication. For 2016, we hope to publish the journal in September/October and, for 2017, move it to an April/May publication. We will continue to have rolling submissions so we anticipate that this will not be a problem.

2. We encourage colleagues outside of education to consider submitting to JITP. There are many other professions that hold to the basic ideas of IAIE and we hope to include their voices in future issues. Think about your colleagues in counseling, physical and occupational therapy, pharmacy, business, or other related fields and how they live the life of invitational education. How does this look in their profession? We ask you to share the Guidelines for Authors with your colleagues and encourage them to consider JITP to disseminate their research or practice ideas.

3. We encourage you to take the name of our journal seriously and encourage manuscript submissions in both areas—theory and practice. In this vein, we hope you

will consider submitting a descriptive manuscript of some effective practice that has changed your thinking or has had a positive effect on your field. We believe the power of such articles lies in the fact that we can and do learn from others' experiences.

4. We are adding a book review section to the journal (see Dr. Melissa Cain's article). Reviews will include both trade book and professional books. They will be both invited and submitted manuscripts. If you would like to suggest a review in either of these areas, please contact one of us at either [baer@findlay.edu](mailto:baer@findlay.edu) or [cain@findlay.edu](mailto:cain@findlay.edu).

5. Please consider serving on our Editorial Review Board as a service opportunity. To do so, read and complete the application at the end of this issue. You can complete, scan, and return it or just email us the necessary information. We would love working with you!

6. Be sure to check out the Guidelines for Authors included in this issue. Please consider Dr. Keany's challenge to be an Inviting Leader in your field and write up your research and/or practical experiences to submit them for peer review.

Creating Optimal Learning Environments through Invitational Education:  
An Alternative to Control Oriented School Reform