JITP

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The Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice (JITP) promotes the study, application, and research of invitational theory. It is an online peer reviewed scholarly publication presenting articles to advance invitational learning and living and the foundations that support this theory of practice, particularly self-concept theory and perceptual psychology.

The International Alliance for Invitational Education® (IAIE) is chartered by the State of North Carolina. The IAIE is a not-for-profit group of educators and allied professionals throughout the world, dedicated to the development of positive school, work, and home environments as well as opposed to those forces that demean and defeat human potential. Come learn how to create climates intentionally based on trust, respect, optimism, and care while networking with IAIE members around the world.

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THE JOURNAL OF INVITATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Editorial

This year has certainly had its share of controversies. Ideologies and perspectives seem more dichotomous than ever. Yet, as the result of editing the 2017 Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice, my "Whispering Self" (Purkey, 2002) clearly revealed a beacon of hope: "those who apply Invitational Education look for ways to successfully summon people to see themselves as able, valuable, and responsible and then to behave accordingly" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p 10).

The JITP advances the tenets of Invitational Education (IE) theory and practices to optimize educational equity in quality. While education is the endeavor that strengthens a mind, frees a spirit, and enriches a society, the JITP will not be limited to educational stakeholders. Rather, the JITP editor welcomes all opportunities to promote the study, application, and research of Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP).

The research and documented practices within the 2017 Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice reinforce how the Five Assumptions of Invitational Education "provide direction and purpose for all Invitational thought and action" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p 11), addressing human nature and the opportunity for full potential. To nurture our Invitational mindset, we seek to exhibit an intentionally inviting stance. The researchers and authors of the following pages reinforce how an intentionally inviting stance relies upon the Five Basic Elements of Invitational Theory and Practice: intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT).

Heretofore, I intentionally invite you to nurture your Invitational mindset through exploration of the 2017 Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice. As the alignment between I-CORT and an intentionally inviting stance becomes clear, you are further encouraged to consider how to generalize the documented findings and tenets of Invitational Education to your institution's people, place, policies, programs, and processes. As practitioners of Invitational Theory and Practice, we seek to identify the competencies that increase the explicit delivery and receipt of personal and professional development opportunities that optimize institutional climate for all stakeholders.

As an interdependent framework, the Five P's: people, places, policies, programs, and processes, "address the total culture or ecosystem of almost any organization" (Purkey and Siegel, 2013, p. 104). Therefore, the framework offers an almost limitless number of opportunities for the organizational leader to invite reform or sustain success. As a forum for advancing the mission of ITP, the journal will endeavor to exhibit the "beneficial impact/outcomes of ITP in all the multidimensional areas of worthwhile human endeavors" (Shaw, 2013, p. 3).

The JITP editor invites submission of scholarly papers that identify how ITP guides reform, sustains success, or reinforces best practices through research. To promote Invitational Theory and Practice, scholarly articles within the JITP will come from international sources, educational practitioners, organizational leaders, and multidisciplinary researchers. Authors must follow specific guidelines (p.101) when submitting manuscripts for publication consideration. Authors may submit manuscripts as email attachments to: JITPeditor@invitationaleducation.net

Sincerely,

Chris James Anderson, Ed.D.
Editor of the 2017 Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice

Cultural Care and Inviting Practices: Teacher perspectives on the influence of care and equity in an urban elementary school

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Abstract

The study investigates the perspectives of five educators on the influence of cultural care and invitational education (IE) through qualitative participatory action research (PAR). Invitational education is a theoretical framework that facilitates a positive learning environment and encourages individuals to reach their unlimited potential. Like IE, cultural care is a theory of practice that uses a social-emotional approach for school improvement. However, cultural care considers race and culture as fundamental to promoting outcomes for all students. In connection to IE, cultural care is a strengths-based approach to encourage and produce positive outcomes and promotes a strong consideration to race and culture. The study examined teacher practices and perceptions to evaluate the influence of invitational practices and cultural care. Data were analyzed through two theoretical frameworks, invitational education and culturally responsive pedagogy. Themes were derived from analyses of data collected through interviews pre- and post-intervention implementation, recorded observation notes, and artifacts. Findings indicated that inviting practices and cultural care positively influenced the climate of the learning environment, affirmed the importance of teachers listening to students with intentionality, and highlighted the need for educators to recognize students' basic and academic needs. These needs acknowledged student presence, behavior, and growth from a strengths-based approach. The participant educators reported a shift towards a positive learning environment. Recommendations for practice include establishing site-based equity teams and implementing professional learning communities to enhance teachers' professional development.

Keywords: invitational education, culturally responsive pedagogy, cultural care, school climate

Introduction

The School Climate

The 2016 United States (U.S.) Presidential Election exposed a deeply divided nation. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is a nonpartisan civil rights organization dedicated to fighting for social justice and against hate and bigotry (Costello, 2016a). In 2016, SPLC conducted a convenience survey of approximately 2,000 K–12 teachers in the United States regarding the effects of the election in the nation's classrooms. The results of the survey illustrated how the current hostile sociopolitical tone of the U.S. has spilled over into classrooms.

The SPLC's report indicated that 67% of students, mainly immigrants and American-born students of color, expressed uncertainty and distress concerning the results of the election, fearing what might happen to their families (Costello, 2016a, 2016b). More than half of the teacher

respondents reported seeing an increase in hostility and "uncivil political discourse" (Costello, 2016a, p. 4) among students, which adversely effected teacher practice. This study considered how these negative effects influence student success and the social-emotional condition within the learning environment.

School climate has a powerful influence on the lives of teachers, staff, students, and families (National School Climate Center, 2012). Research correlated the social-emotional conditions of the learning environment with levels in teacher capacity, attrition rates, social-emotional health, student engagement, success and achievement, graduation rates, and risk-prevention (Cohen, 2010; Cohen & Geier, 2010; Kozol, 1991; Noguera, 2003). School climate impacts social, emotional, and academic successes or failures (A+ Schools, 2014, 2015, 2016; Cohen, 2006, 2010; Cohen & Geier, 2010; Kane & Cantrell, 2010; Markow et al., 2013; National School Climate Center, 2012). Thus, addressing school climate is an important factor in successful school reform.

A Matter of Social Justice

In the context of education, extensive inequities remain among African American, Latino, and White students, despite laws and policies created to address and eradicate imbalances. The historic U.S. Supreme Court landmark decision, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954),* began the process of providing equality in educational institutions for all students regardless of ethnicity or culture. Critical race theorists frequently refer to the Supreme Court's decision on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* as a prime example of interest convergence (Bell, 1980), whereby the anti-segregation laws in education were created to improve foreign policy relationships in the U.S., benefiting the White majority and only secondarily appeasing Black interests (Ladson-Billings, 1998). While subsequent de-segregation laws were implemented 6 decades ago, inequities in resources, access, and opportunities, remain prevalent (Gorski, 2013; Kozol, 1991), creating a ripple-effect of injustices throughout numerous social contexts.

The effects of these inequities continue to be evident in the disproportionate levels of poverty, incarceration, and graduation rates, standardized assessment data, and enrollment in accelerated learning programs or secondary education for African Americans and Latinos compared to the White majority (Gorski, 2013; Levin, Belfield, Muennig, & Rouse, 2006; Lewis et al., 2012; Milner, 2016; Noguera, 2003). These imbalances result in inequities that impact adult outcomes and the ability to contribute to society.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the influence of inviting practices and cultural care upon educators' practices and perceptions within an urban elementary school. The study was based on the premise that teachers implementing interventions based on IE theory would create a caring learning environment based on culturally responsive practices. The 5 educators contributing to this study participated in a professional learning community (PLC) that focused on equity and incorporated the elements of Invitational Education (IE) into their practices. The commitment of the participants in this study included building authentic relationships, enhancing practice, and encouraging a positive school climate based on the intentional elements of care, optimism, respect, and trust: I-CORT (Purkey & Novak, 2016). IE can be described as a collection of assumptions based on social cognitive theory and a democratic ethos (Purkey, 1992). IE provided a means to invite people purposefully by intentionally encouraging them to realize their

unlimited potential in all aspects in life (Purkey & Novak, 2016). Culturally responsive pedagogy is a theory of practice that argues for teachers to take into account how student culture and ethnicity vary and to plan learning experiences that will draw upon students' diverse knowledge and strengths. The professional learning community (PLC) synthesized complementary elements of these theories to create a conceptual framework. To do this, the PLC developed a theory of practice that included acknowledging one's own identity as an educator and respecting, valuing, and embracing the culture of the student from a strengths-based perspective. The framework acknowledged the centrality of race as an integral part of culture and identity. Therefore, this study's primary research question asked, "How do teachers perceive the influences of cultural care and inviting practices on their relationships with students of color?" The researchers' believed educators who intentionally used interventions based on IE practices and cultural care facilitated positive teacher-student relationships and built teacher capacity, which expanded benefits to multiple areas of the learning environment.

Conceptual Frameworks

Teachers are the greatest contributors to student academic success (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Hattie, 2012; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Mounting evidence demonstrated that culturally responsive pedagogies correlate with more positive student academic achievement, motivation, social-emotional disposition, and effort (Delpit, 2006; Esposito & Swain, 2009; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 2000, 2006a, 2006; Milner, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Milner & Tenore, 2010). A growing body of research further describes increased self-efficacy, intelligence beliefs and performance; creating, sustaining, and enhancing positive environments in relation to implementation of IE practices (Hossein et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Pajares, 1994; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Aspy, 2003; Purkey & Novak, 2015, 2016; Schmidt, 2007). Despite a connection between culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and IE practices, few studies have examined the utilization of both frameworks. This paper acknowledges that IE theory does not sufficiently consider the race of students or teachers, while CRP considers race and culture as a core of its ideology.

As Milner (2015) noted, despite the efforts to deliver instruction in a safe space during professional development and in educational preparation, discussions about race and culture often resulted in silenced dialogue. Researchers were encouraged to engage in self-reflection to gain deeper awareness of critical consciousness and extended a call to action for teachers to explore and learn together in cohorts to transform practice (Milner, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Furthermore, Duncan-Andrade (2007) believed, "Measuring an equitable education requires greater attention to qualitative evaluation" (p. 618). This research addressed gaps in current knowledge, thereby contributing to the body of research that specifically connects IE and CRP. Specifically, this research responded to Milner's (2015) suggestions to transform practice, and responded to the call for teacher voice and collaborative learning networks as an integral component of qualitative research for school improvement.

The Interconnectedness of IE and Cultural Responsiveness

In part, the strategic project utilized elements of the theoretical frameworks of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and Invitational Education (IE). IE offered a framework to begin the

process of creating or enhancing a positive, inviting learning environment while fostering educational resilience and achievement. This was particularly significant in urban settings that often face obstacles such as inequities in funds and resources, poverty, lack of resources, and high teacher attrition rates (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Gomez et. al, 2004; Gorski, 2013; Karpinski, 2012; Kozol, 1991; Markow et al., 2013). IE recognizes 5 Domains: People, places, policies, programs, and processes, that comprise "everyone and everything in an organization" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. vii).

In culturally responsive teaching, social interactions in the learning environment foster positive teacher-student relationships and promote self-worth through a sense of psychological safety where students feel comfortable and supported (Ladson-Billings, 2009), while being held to high standards of excellence (Duncan-Andrade, 2006, 2007, 2009; Gay, 2010; Milner, 2010a, 2010b). These characteristics of CRP parallel the ideology of IE.

Initial discussions about race in the classroom considered the influential work of Delpit (2006) and seminal work by Ladson-Billings (1995a, 2009), which examined the practices of successful teachers of African American children and helped embed the term, culturally relevant practices within educational discourse. Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b) theorized and identified three tenets of culturally relevant practices: (a) academic achievement, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical critique (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2009). Teachers who implemented culturally relevant practices successfully created an environment of warmth whereby students thrived on positive attention, ultimately "choosing academic excellence" (p. 161). Teachers who use culturally responsive practices (CRP) recognize, respect, and value students as individuals and validate their importance with genuine appreciation (Gay, 2010). Again, all key characteristics of CRP: care, respect, and trust, align with the I-CORT elements Invitational Education theory and practice.

Cultural Care as a Theoretical Framework

Noddings (2012) defined *care* as based on a bilateral relationship between the cared and the care-giver, but did not address race or culture as part of the definition. Valenzuela (1999) conducted a 3-year ethnographic investigation of academic achievement and schooling orientations of Mexican-American students and Mexican immigrants at a high school in Houston, Texas. Through examination of field notes, a reoccurring theme of care emerged, leading to deeper examination of the use and definitions of *caring* or *cariño* as part of effective teacher practice. In connection with efficacy, a study by Lewis et al. (2012) examined the relationship of care on Latino student self-efficacy in mathematics. *Care* was defined as "the ability to listen to, empathize with, and be moved by the plight or feelings of the other person" (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 3).

From the definitions described in previous research on care (Duncan-Andrade, 2006, 2007, 2009; Lewis et al, 2012; Noddings, 2012; Valenzuela, 1999) the theory of *cultural care* developed. This study utilized cultural care as a theory of practice, defined as verbal or nonverbal gestures that display a person's genuine interest in another person's social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being; while simultaneously recognizing and acknowledging race and culture as a significant part of a person's identity. As noted in Figure 1 below, I-CORT elements emphasized by IE theory drive a cultural care perspective that includes respecting, valuing, and embracing culture based on values and strengths.

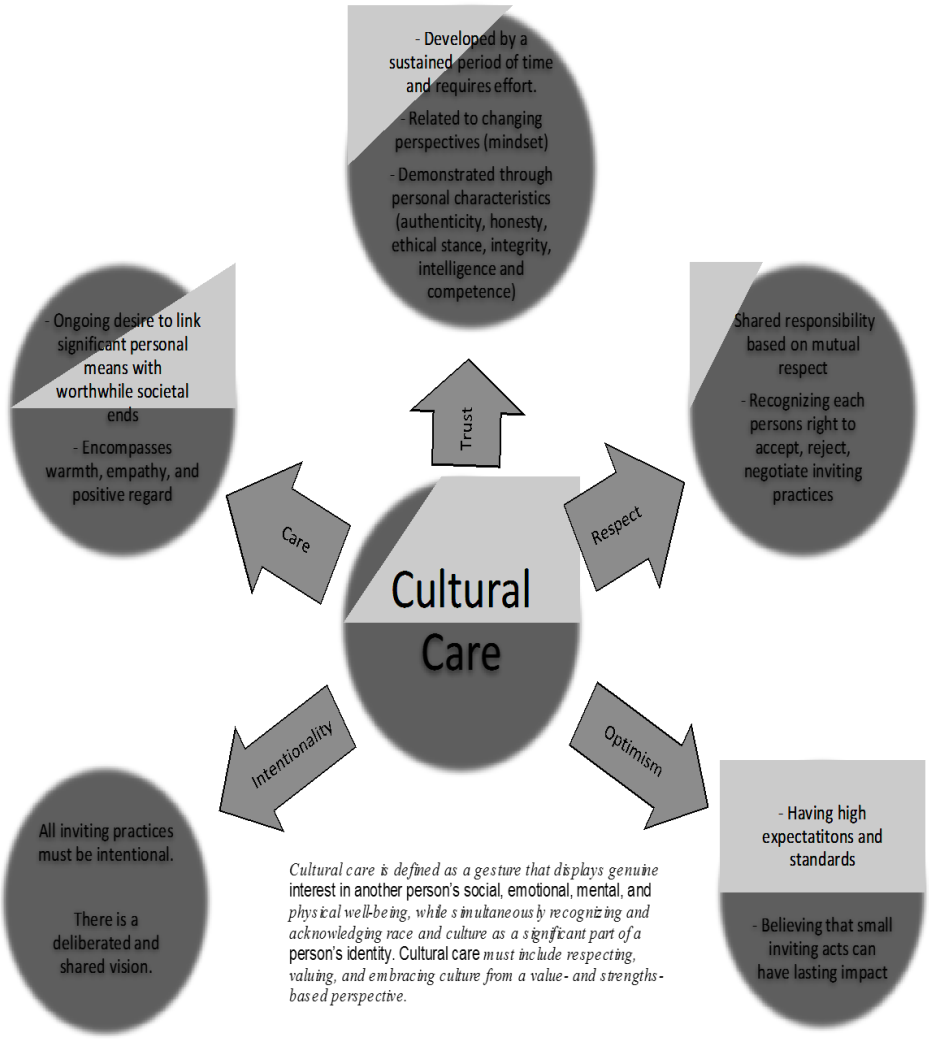

Figure 1. Elements of invitational education (I-CORT) with cultural care as a driver. Adapted from Fundamentals of Invitational Education (2nd ed.), by W.W. Purkey & J.M. Novak, 2016, Greensboro, NC: International Alliance for Invitational Education.

Using IE and Cultural Care to Address Matters of Inequity, Race, and Culture in Educational Research

Invitational Education (IE) theory and practices positively contributed to educational research during the last 25 years. However, few studies specifically examined the synthesis between IE and culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy (CRP). Reed (1996) suggested using IE to address prejudices but her consideration was not specific to culturally responsive pedagogy. Reed (1996) further proposed using IE theory with Haberman's (1994) five-step approach to engage educators in recognition of and reflection upon their prejudices and biases. Although race and culture are evident in Reed's (1996) study, the topic differed from race and culture of the student as outlined by Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b) and subsequent researchers.

In one of few studies that indirectly connected culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy to IE theory and practices, Usher and Pajares (2006) drew attention to the relationship of self-efficacy and culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). Usher and Pajares (2006) commented on undertones of CRP in their results, when referring to the variables of race and social persuasions. Of importance to this study, one of their results revealed that African American students responded more strongly to positive verbal persuasions than did White students (Usher & Pajares, 2006). The data strongly supported the argument for researchers and educators in highly diverse settings to consider the influence of IE theory as a part of practice. The findings in the cited scholarly works have important consequences for conducting research on inviting practices that promote student growth in achievement, provided those practices are conducted through a lens of cultural care.

Dr. John Schmidt, a former Executive Director for the International Alliance for Invitational Education (IAIE), issued a call to action for educational research to address the void in research surrounding invitational education viewed through a culturally responsive lens (2007). Schmidt reiterated Pajares's argument (1994, 2001) for examining diverse population in studies involving IE to assist in building connections and relationships and further suggested shifting focus from a defensive deficit lens to one that embraces the richness of positive relationships that provide fulfillment, empowerment, and encouragement. Additionally, scholars (Duncan-Andrade, 2006, 2007, Ladson-Billings, 2014; Milner, 2016; Noguera, 2003) appealed to educational researchers to consider further examination of CRP topics such as race, diversity, and culture, through empirical research. Cultural care provides a framework to examine CRP topics using an inviting and strengths-based approach.

Methods

Participants

Researchers obtained informed consent from five educator-participants. These educators agreed to participate in the research project based on their interest and commitment to the Professional Learning Community (PLC) that focused upon care and equity. The researchers assigned pseudonyms to each participant. The researchers maintained the participants' confidentiality by using these pseudonyms to label electronic files and data. According to the district's educator evaluation system, the participants were highly qualified in their teaching practices. The participants included,

- A female social worker/developmental advisor of African-American descent given the pseudonym: Mrs. Washington.
- A male learning-support teacher of African-American descent: Mr. Wolfe.
- A female fifth-grade mathematics teacher of European descent with four biracial sons: Mrs. Anderson.
- An untenured learning-support teacher with less than 3 years of teaching experience who identifies as White: Ms. Paul.
- A female second-grade teacher who identifies as White with three biracial sons: The researcher, serving as a participant observer.

Role of the Researcher Participant and PLC Convener

As a participant observer, the researcher invited and engaged educators to take action, utilizing inviting practices and cultural care to:

(a) better understand perspectives of effective teachers;
(b) build teacher capacity involving equitable practices;
(c) assist in the formation of positive relationships;
(d) develop a greater cultural competence; and
(e) encourage reflective practices involving matters of social justice related to racism, culture, perceptions, beliefs, and equity.

In developing an intervention for school improvement, the PLC utilized a PDSA cycle as outlined in improvement inquiry (Bryk et al., 2015). Activities conducted in the PLC concentrated on promoting a positive learning environment based on cultural care, driven by the elements of IE theory: Intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT). The research supported the ideals of IE theory in concert with key characteristics of CRP to promote a positive school climate and student learning.

The educators participated in the PLC that functioned in ways consistent with the principles underlying the Carnegie Foundation's model for networked improvement communities or NICs (Bryk et al., 2015; LeMahieu et al., 2017; Mintrop, 2016). To develop the educators' cultural competence and reflective social justice practices related to racism, equity, perceptions, and beliefs, the participants were intentionally invited to engage in professional development and participation by choice (Milner, 2007, 2015). In combination with the theoretical frameworks that allow for building collective capacity and addressing school climate, action research (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016) proved an apt methodology for introducing cultural care as a means for school improvement. The educator participants freely consented to be a part of the collaborative action for school improvement.

Context

At the time of the study, a K–5 urban elementary school called Freedom Elementary School (pseudonym, hereinafter Freedom), was part of the Lower Western Pennsylvania School District (pseudonym, LWPSD). Freedom, a Spanish magnet school, served 432 students. The students came from neighborhoods in a city within Pennsylvania. Students were selected for enrollment in Freedom through an application and lottery system. The district provided transportation for students outside of a one-mile radius. Student demographics were 71% African-American, 15% Caucasian, 33% multiracial, 3% Asian, and 3% Hispanic (LWPSD, 2016). Teacher demographics were 83% female and 17% male. Of the female teachers, 80% identified as White, 10% as African-American, and 10% as Hispanic/Latino. Half of the male teachers at Freedom identified as White or of European descent, and half were African-American.

Background

As evidenced by results of existing survey data, the work of the PLC took place in a work environment considered less than positive. In the context of this study, the school staff and PLC participants later discussed the results from a district survey and the inviting school survey (Smith, 2015). The results of these school climate surveys follow.

Teaching and Learning Conditions (TLC) survey. Considering the implications of school culture and climate on the learning environment, the LWPSD developed a survey to assess teaching and learning conditions and to provide data for district and school-wide improvement

(LWPSD, 2013). Results of Freedom's TLC Survey showed a stark and continuous decline from 2014 to 2016 in the overall conditions of the learning environment. During the 2014-2015 academic year, 140 of the 149 items (94%) under the eight constructs showed a decline in favorability. The two constructs that showed the greatest decline in satisfaction were managing student behavior and school leadership. Data from 2015-2016 TLC Survey revealed an inhospitable learning environment. Less than half (49%) of the teachers and staff agreed that Freedom was a good place to work. In addition, data from the state's standardized test ranked Freedom fourth highest in disproportionality in overall achievement in the LWPSD at the elementary level (LWPSD, 2016). Data reflected a decline in student performance levels, an increase in absenteeism, and declines in teacher, parent, and staff satisfaction over 3 consecutive years at Freedom (A+ Schools, 2014, 2015, 2016).

Inviting School Survey-Revised. Under suggestion by the leadership and administrative team as part of normal data-driven practice, the Inviting School Survey-Revised (ISS-R) (Smith, 2015) was administered to conduct quantitative analysis of the school climate. The ISS-R provides school communities with a user-friendly, theoretically grounded, empirically-based instrument to evaluate schools for future development as it identifies areas of strength and weakness in a school's climate (Smith, 2015). The survey was administered at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 academic year. Twenty-six out of a potential 35 participants (74%) responded to the survey. Of the 26 respondents, 23 satisfactorily completed the ISS-R, including 17 teachers and 6 support staff. According to the ISS-R, Freedom's overall climate favorability score was 64 percent. Subscales ranged from 57% (Program) to 74% (Policy). The ISS-R results were shared with Freedom staff and faculty during the first 2016-2017 PLC meeting. Typically, the initial PLC meeting provides context to the current year's work.

Design of the Study

This participatory action research study framed the problem of practice as a matter of social justice and, in part, utilized elements of the interrelated theoretical frameworks of IE (Pajares, 1994; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 2016), CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Milner, 2010a) and elements of improvement inquiry and intervention design (Bryk et al., 2015; Mintrop, 2016). The current study utilized a "method of inquiry . . . [guiding] rapid learning" (Mintrop, 2016, p. 14). The success of the "Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle" for sustaining school reform initiatives (Davenport & Anderson, 2002, p. 34) inspired subsequent reform studies seeking to build upon prior knowledge and understanding (Bryk et al., 2015). Action research models that build upon the PDSA cycle include the Invitational Education Helix that uses 12 steps. Helix steps "are divided into three phases of commitment from occasional interest to systemic interest, to pervasive interest. Within each phase are four repeating knowledge points: awareness, understanding, application, and adoption" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 39).

Data Sources

Data collected from the participants included pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and artifact examination. Artifacts included notes from school-related events: PTO, PSCC, and committee meetings as well as items generated for professional development and training workshops. Materials such as PowerPoint presentations, video presentations, and handouts, were archived as digital or hard copy files. Additional

qualitative evidence was collected by the PLC through a deliberate democratic approach guided by cultural care and the I-CORT elements of IE theory and practices (Purkey & Novak, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews elicited data from the study's participants and offered flexibility with questions and opportunities for clarification and understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each teacher participant was interviewed prior to and following the intervention to provide a baseline for reflection on changes in practice and to engage participants as part of the planning in the intervention process. Post-intervention interviews were conducted to gain participant perspectives on the influence of the 7-week intervention and a semester of participation in the PLC. Based on the work of the PLC, participants decided to implement a Kindness Campaign with students. Each participant committed to recognizing students' positive behavior verbally and in writing and then acknowledging students' behaviors publically by displaying compliments and kind words in three designated areas in the school. At the same time, participants continued to learn professionally by engaging in weekly discussions and reflections, not only on the intervention, but also on topics involving race, culture, and equity. See appendix A for a full description of weekly PLC topics of discussion and activities. The interview questions underwent peer review. Following review of the questions, pilot interviews were conducted with two scholarly practitioners. The questions were designed to assess the impact of participation in six key areas:

(a) teacher practice;
(b) interactions;
(c) climate of the learning environment;
(d) teacher-student relationships;
(e) student behaviors; and
(f) student academics.

The interviews began with participants describing their personal background and experience in education, familiarity with and knowledge of CRP, and perspectives on care as part of their practice. The article was specific to data on the influence of inviting practices, cultural care, and equitable impact upon school climate and the learning environment.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed for common themes using a constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) to collect and examine data involving inductive and comparative procedures to gain conceptual characteristics of theory and to generate findings (Glaser, 2008; Glasser & Strauss, 1967, Merriam, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first researcher transcribed interviews. An open coding system was used to analyze and identify common themes (Merriam, 1998, 2002; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). Data were coded using a combination of *a priori* codes derived from the theoretical frameworks and emergent themes. A codebook was created of *a priori* analytical codes that were "compatible with the study's purpose and theoretical frameworks" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 212). Peer review encouraged suggestions for additional codes or removal of codes.

Limitations

The study took place in a Pennsylvania public-school district where the first researcher worked for more than 18 years, possibly creating bias by favoring one district school compared to

another. Furthermore, the principal investigator and participant researcher was the only person to conduct the voice-recorded interviews, opening the door to subjective interpretation in the field notes. Another limitation of the study relates to interpretation of the outcomes, due to the principal investigator's active participation as the lead facilitator in the PLC. Finally, the research study was modest and therefore cannot be generalizable to other populations.

Validity and Reliability

Third-party peer review of emergent themes from coded interviews, with a minimum of 85% code agreement, was conducted to reach inter-relator reliability. Further, to support reliability, the principal investigator created an audit trail. To adjust for limitations and to optimize transferability, reliability, credibility, and validity, member checks were conducted for clarification, elaboration, and respondent validation. Member checks were conducted with all teacher participants on the interview data and observation notes. Participants were provided an electronic copy of their individual responses and researcher's notes in a chart format. Participants were offered an opportunity to review significant findings during a 10-day timeframe for any potential misinterpretation. All 5 participants communicated and verified the information as accurate.

Findings

This study's primary research question asked, "How do teachers perceive the influences of cultural care and inviting practices on their relationships with students of color?" Analysis of post-intervention data revealed three key findings. First, participants discussed the importance of race when demonstrating care and showing concern for student needs and well-being. Second, teachers reported that recognizing student race and culture when expressing care influenced the educators' behavior management approaches and student behaviors. Specifically, participants reported an improvement in student behaviors, both academically and socially. Third, educators perceived that the first two findings contributed to an overall improvement in the learning environment and school climate.

Finding 1: The Importance of Race in Demonstrating Care and Concern

All 5 participants stated that they considered race and culture when demonstrating care toward students. From this finding, two sub-themes emerged. First, by acknowledging students' race and culture, teachers perceived that they connected more effectively with individual students *and* created a more inclusive and welcoming classroom community. Second, when participants recognized students' culture and race, they acknowledged an increase in their own self-awareness of how they engaged with students, especially students of color.

Acknowledging students' race and culture as a vehicle to build connections. Two participant responses (Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Anderson) indicated their interest in their students' cultural perspectives and backgrounds to offer enrichment and an opportunity to connect personally and provide a student-centered learning experience.

Mrs. Washington expressed the importance of acknowledging variance in races and cultures from a strengths-based approach, and she viewed the differences in race or culture as an opportunity to gain understanding and teacher growth. "I just felt like they can teach us about who they are and about their backgrounds."

Ms. Paul's perspective also included the position of a student-centered approach for mutual benefit of student and child. She recounted how one of her students taught the other children about

his experiences in going back to visit the country where he was born. This student helped his peers recognize cultural differences and similarities. In turn, Ms. Paul recognized how the student's behavior improved, how his time on task improved, and how his academic results began to improve as a result. Post-intervention, PLC participants continued to discuss student learning and academics in greater depth and to note improved academic performance.

Teacher self-awareness. Two participants, Mr. Wolfe and Ms. Paul, indicated an increased level of self-awareness related to race. Both reported that they considered how students could potentially perceive their approaches. Mr. Wolfe explained that he considered how well he knew the students prior to deciding how to engage with them. He took into account the depth and quality of the existing relationship between him and the student, as well as the race of the student, before deciding upon how he would interact with the student and demonstrate care. Mr. Wolfe also described presenting himself as a whole person, rather than as simply a teacher who enforced rules.

When asked whether she considered race and culture when showing her students that she cared about them, Ms. Paul confirmed that she reflected on race and culture and did so with an awareness of potential bias. She shared her prior experiences in professional work settings and her perception that young children who attend day care are exposed to racial stereotyping and bias even before entering a formal school setting.

Overall, participants agreed that their participation in the PLC had benefitted them as educators in developing a greater sense of social interactions, increased self-awareness, and engaging in reflective practices that are typically associated with promoting student growth and achievement.

Finding 2: Teacher Behavior Management Approaches and Student Behaviors

Participants reported that recognizing student race and culture influenced the educator behavior management approaches and student behaviors. Ms. Paul recounted an instance in which a student who was exhibiting many off-task and disruptive behaviors demonstrated improvement in time-on-task, a lessening of disruptive behaviors, and an increase in academic growth when given an opportunity to share aspects of his culture. Additionally, Mr. Wolfe noted it was important to have established a positive relationship. He maintained that his being a teacher of color was a strength when managing student behaviors. Based on an established relationship, Mr. Wolfe recalled his approach and responses to an interaction between a Caucasian teacher and a student of color who was visibly upset. Because Mr. Wolfe had developed a trusting relationship with the student, he was able to address, redirect, and diffuse a situation while comforting a child who was visibly upset.

Finding 3: Improved Learning Environment and School Climate

Two participants described a calmer tone in the building and linked the change to the interactions prior to the start of the day. Mr. Wolfe perceived that the beginning of the day and transition times throughout the day were calmer. He attributed this improvement to inviting practices. Mrs. Anderson perceived a greater self-awareness of her tone and increased verbal engagement with students at the beginning of the school day. She saw a positive effect on student dispositions and perceived that caring practices improved her students' learning environment. Ms. Paul reported a noticeable change in the tone of her classroom during lessons where she conducted small group instruction. She attributed the shifts to her more intentional and positive mindset, which in turn resulted in a more positive learning environment for the students.

By specifically filtering their verbal engagement through a mindset based on cultural care and intentional invitations, Ms. Paul and Mrs. Anderson saw improvement in school climate. Researcher's notes also recorded the expansion of inviting practices and cultural care with the inclusion of parental involvement. These displayed the improved collaborative approaches to school improvement and inviting practices exhibited by multiple stakeholders.

In summary, findings revealed the importance of teachers' recognizing the race of students when demonstrating care. In turn, this recognition influenced the educators' behavior management approaches as participants reported improved academic and social behavior in students. Third, educators perceived an overall improvement in student learning environment and school climate. Readers interested in transcribed interviews should directly contact the authors.

Discussion of Findings

This study's significant findings related to school climate provided evidence of the positive influence of inviting practices and cultural care. IE offered a framework to begin the process of creating or enhancing a positive, intentionally inviting learning environment, while fostering educational resilience and achievement (Purkey & Novak, 2015, 2016). All participants reported an increase in mindfulness regarding how to empower a positive tone for the day through interactions with students. Most participants perceived classroom and hallway transitions that could be disruptive were now smoother. After engaging in the PLC, based on equity and care, participants reported a shift toward a more positive learning environment. Following implementation of the intervention, two participants specifically used the term "calmer" in their descriptions.

These finding are important for several reasons. First, the literature indicated educational climates optimal for learning must be inviting and generate an atmosphere of care and trust (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2012; Pajares, 1994; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 2016). Second, teachers that invite students into learning through intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2012; Lee, 2012; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Aspy, 2003; Purkey & Novak, 2015, 2016; Schmidt, 2007) promote realization of personal potential (Purkey & Novak, 2016). These findings could also reinforce the substantial body of educational research associated with CRP whereby a family-like atmosphere will allow students to thrive based on positive attention and opportunities for academic success (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2010a, 2010b).

Significance of Recognizing Race and Culture

Important to the researcher's own theory of cultural care, the findings showed that participants indicated a shift in mindset that was genuine, intentional, positive, and reflective of their own race, along with the students' diverse races and cultures. Interventions based on cultural care were driven by the IE elements: Intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) as an intervention for school improvement, while utilizing a PDSA cycle outlined in improvement inquiry (Bryk et al., 2015). These interventions included attention to deliberate verbal interactions (greetings, compliments, encouragement, exchanges of nonacademic information, social conversations) between themselves and students that intentionally invited positive relationships.

Positive verbal messages, also referred to as inviting messages (Edwards, 2010) that acknowledged, recognized, and valued a student's presence, feelings, and behaviors, created an environment based on mutual respect and ultimately influenced behavior management and

academics. This was consistent with the literature that showed the ideals of invitational education, along with key characteristics of CRP, resulted in a positive school climate and student learning.

Considering Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, teachers must meet a child's physiological safety, love, and esteem needs as a prerequisite to addressing academic achievement. Attention to student needs were evident in the teacher-educator approach to developing positive teacher-student relationships and demonstrating genuine care, leading to student successes, as seen in this study.

Educators in this study reported that they modeled intentional and thoughtful gestures of care toward students, which students replicated in return. The teachers who demonstrated care and concern for their students provided a sense of psychological safety and acknowledged a genuine interest in the student physical and emotional well-being. These social exchanges reinforced development of an atmosphere grounded in trust and respect, which were optimal for student learning.

CRP practices utilized social interactions in learning environments to foster positive relationships. Relationships based on social awareness and positive social interactions were positively correlated in research studies and the literature on cultural relevance (Duncan-Andrade, 2007, 2009; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2010a). The positive relationships facilitated after this study's interventions promoted student growth and achievement for students of color impacted by this study.

Influence on Student Social and Academic Behaviors.

Intentional invitations that others send to students about their behaviors played an important role in the optimal climate, student motivation, confidence, and beliefs in their capabilities (Usher & Pajares, 2006). As in the earlier study, teachers participating in this study agreed that invitations that others send to students about their behavior played an important role in improved student motivation, confidence, and beliefs in their capabilities. The educator assessments of recognizing race and culture from a strengths-based approach positively influenced student social and academic behaviors. The finding also supported existing literature that correlated perceived self-efficacy with student behavior and academics. Teachers reported that when they employed culturally caring practices, students demonstrated an increase in effort, motivation, and positive disposition in subjects or tasks that were often difficult.

One participant recounted an increase in the letter grade of one student. The participant researcher reported an increase in proficiency levels for oral reading fluency. Mr. Wolfe reported a decrease in avoidance behaviors such as playing with objects, asking to leave the room, putting one's head down, intentional delaying completion of a task, etc… These were observable changes in student self-efficacy in larger mainstream classrooms and even more evident during small group lessons. Mr. Wolf observed students being recognized more often for positive effort and quality of work by teachers who were not part of the PLC or the study.

Self-awareness of One's Own Race

Teachers in this study indicated that they had become more aware of their own race. They had developed a deeper understanding of how to interact with students, especially prior to an established relationship and advocated a strengths-based perspective regarding differences in culture. They agreed that positively recognizing student race and culture encouraged relationships, influenced teacher practice, provided opportunities to develop connections, and influenced future

interactions with students. Two participants said that acknowledging similarities and differences in race and culture as part of regular practice, improved student-centered learning, resulting in an increase in student effort and interest, and greater time on task. Three participants reported that they put themselves in the student's place to respect perspectives from multiple contexts.

Influence on Teacher Practice

All study participants reported a shift to a more positive mindset and a more cognizant perspective of student perceptions, lessons, curriculum, and behavior management approaches. All participants indicated a greater awareness across multiple settings and contexts. Data analysis revealed that all educators revealed a heightened consciousness of their initial interactions between themselves and students. They also had greater levels of intentionality in seeking positive student behaviors and character traits, as well as recognizing and acknowledging students, both socially and academically.

In addition to experiencing a shift to a more positive mindset, the members of the PLC reported an intentional and increased focus on student needs. There was an increase in overall self-awareness and social awareness of race, equity, and relationships outside the work environment. Significant findings specified an increase in self-awareness about word choice, intentional approach, and engagement. These were identified as benefits of member involvement in the PLC. These findings concurred with previous research on the positive impact of social-emotional learning programs for improving social-emotional skills, attitudes, and outcomes (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, &Schellinger, 2011).

The significant findings of this study showed the impact of IE (Purkey & Novak, 2016) and cultural care as an intervention under the umbrella of social-emotional learning programs (Durlak et al., 2011). This study's findings were associated with increased student academic performance, reduced aggression and emotional distress, increased helping behaviors in school, and improved attitudes toward self and others reported in previous studies (Durlak et al., 2011; Lewis et al., 2012; Schmidt, 2007; Usher & Pajares, 2006). The current findings were especially notable when considering equity, disproportionality in discipline, and reported gaps in achievement.

Implications

The significant findings from this study had implications for district policy on professional development and teacher practices. The findings from this study supported the 2015 national policy, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The policy includes action to build on assets and indicators of successes in existing programs. Interventions that have been demonstrated to be successful are emerging on multiple levels of governance (local, state, and district) as part of ESSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The significant findings also supported the ESSA by addressing school climate as a matter of social justice and a strategic priority for school improvement at district, state, and national levels (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2015). It was critical to note, that it was necessary for administration and leadership to have a transparent, shared vision alongside teachers and staff. Without the presence of invested and effective leadership that promotes a positive school climate, models professional respect, and acknowledges, values, and respects all stakeholders, any school improvement efforts will fall short of success.

The PLC focused on shared and collaborative decision-making, engaging teachers in reflective practices, and promoting positive relationships through inviting practices and cultural care that intentionally promoted positive mindsets framed by I-CORT elements. The small-group

collaborative and shared decision-making aspects of PD were supported robustly by educational research on PLCs (Cooter, 2003a, 2003b; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Hynds et al., 2016; Owen, 2014, 2015; Rivkin et al., 2005). The benefits for teacher growth and student learning were clear.

Recommendations

The significant findings indicated that inviting practices and cultural care: positively influenced the climate of the learning environment; affirmed the importance of teachers listening to students with intentionality; and highlighted the need for educators to recognize student basic and academic needs, and acknowledge student presence, behavior, and growth from a strengths-based approach. The findings of this study supported existing research about the importance of the role of the teacher in establishing a positive learning environment and implementing inviting practices (Purkey & Novak, 2016) where open dialogue and discussions occur, while simultaneously recognizing, acknowledging, and valuing race and culture.

Recommendations from this study included implementing and supporting small PLCs for race- and equity-related PD at the earliest point of entry. The findings presented an opportunity to conduct PD through PLCs, allowing teachers to develop a greater self-awareness of their own race and the race of their students in an inviting safe space from a strengths-based perspective. Small, safe settings would include opportunities to:

(a) enhance or improve practice;
(b) provide educators with skills, knowledge, and a foundation to engage in productive dialogue with students and other educators on difficult topics;
(c) develop awareness of biases, stereotyping, and systematic and existential racism to address disproportionate data and racial disparities;
(d) promote student awareness and cultural competence, and
(e) provide a platform to promote positive educator-student relationships.

Additionally establishing site-based equity teams would utilize skilled experts for comprehensive, whole-staff PD and individual support as needed. The specialist, who must also possess strong leadership skills and a broad knowledge base on race- and equity-related topics, can assist in facilitation of staff development and school wide improvement, and provide resources for building cultural competence. Strong evidence in research on the positive impact of building teacher capacity in urban settings (Cooter, 2003a, 2003b) supports this recommendation. Lastly, developing leadership capacity via school partnerships (Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2008, 2012) would positively impact student growth and achievement.

Conclusions

The conducted study was an endeavor to improve the learning environment and student outcomes in an urban elementary school. The purpose of the research was to improve and enhance collaborative practices by encouraging a positive school climate based on intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT). The participants in this study engaged in robust conversations concerning equity and incorporated reflective strategies to build cultural competence for improving practice. This required dedication and commitment.

The theory of cultural care provided educators a practical framework that promoted self-awareness of the significance of our actions that embody genuine care for educational success. It can be nearly impossible to teach someone *how* to care, but as transformative leaders, educators

have the responsibility to reflect on, demonstrate, and model care. Educators must establish meaningful relationships through intentionally inviting practices and cultural care that facilitate positive outcomes. There is no greater responsibility in education, than providing children with support in learning environments where children spend so much time.

Through thoughtful conversations, the teacher-educators participating in this study illustrated the positive influences of interventions based on cultural care and intentionally inviting practices on multiple areas of the learning environment. This study offered insights regarding the influence of a grassroots effort to build formative relationships, encompassed various aspects of educational reform, and suggested a context in which it can be achieved. In the words of James Comer, "No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship" (2001, p. 30).

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Exploring the Invitational Impact of Participation in an Inclusive Post-Secondary Academy

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the impact of participation in an inclusive post-secondary Academy's learning opportunities. The Academy intentionally utilized the Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) framework. During the study, Academy mentors and faculty members highlighted their experiences and described the ways they created an intentionally inviting environment that positively supported the learning opportunities for post-secondary students with diverse intellectual or developmental abilities. Examination of the Academy's people, places, policies, programs, and processes through the five elements: intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT), confirmed implementation of the ITP framework impacted the Academy's attainment of overarching goals, including a positive institutional climate and student satisfaction with learning opportunities.

Introduction

Participation in post-secondary inclusive learning opportunities is rapidly increasing across university campuses (Stodden, Whelley, Chang, & Harding, 2001). These programs give students with diverse intellectual or developmental abilities opportunities to earn certificates or other recognition when they do not meet the university requirements for admission as degree-seeking students. Post-secondary inclusive learning programs provide support systems that typically include mentors and the guidance of faculty members who equip students with tools for success. These programs are on the rise because they are making a difference in students' lives as they provide the benefits of university educational experiences.

This study focuses on an inclusive post-secondary opportunity in an Academy that went beyond typical expectations to provide students with a kaleidoscope of opportunity. Mentors were consistently available for assistance, and faculty members were highly innovative in a program that presented opportunities within and beyond the typical classroom. Within an Academy of a major university in the Southeast, this inclusive program aligned with the overarching goals, elements, and domains of Invitational Theory and Practice (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Shaw & Siegel, 2010; Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013).

Review of the Literature

An invitational school is a welcoming, student-centered educational environment (Purkey & Novak, 2016). The interviews and focus groups during this study consistently demonstrated the ways mentors and faculty members within the Academy created a welcoming environment that was supportive of students. Throughout the interviews of this study there were many links between

Invitational Education and the comments made by mentors and faculty members who were working for the Academy.

Invitational Education

As a theory of practice, Invitational Education (IE) is "designed to create and enhance human environments that cordially summon people to realize their potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. vii). IE "is an imaginative act of hope that explains how human potential can be realized. It identifies and changes the forces that defeat and destroy people" (p. vii)" IE recognizes five domains: people, places, policies, programs, and processes, that comprise "everyone and everything in an organization…(that) will either build or destroy intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and moral potential for stakeholders" (p.vii).

Invitational Theory and Practice

Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) "is viewed as the overarching theory for the base paradigm known as Invitational Education (IE)" (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 30). The authors emphasized the ways Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) "addresses the total culture/environment of an organization to provide a more welcoming, satisfying, and enriching experience for all involved" (p. 34). They also noted that "ITP focuses on increasing the authentically personal and professional verbal and non-verbal messages that seek to bring forth the best of human potential through trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality" (p. 34). As such, Invitational Education and Invitational Theory and Practice aligns directly with the comments made by mentors and faculty members during interviews and focus groups. Academy mentors and faculty worked to add to the potential of students and helped them actualize their potential in creative and meaningful ways.

Methodology

This qualitative interview study was designed to determine the impact of participating in the Academy's inclusive post-secondary program. Interviews and focus groups were the primary means of data collection. Typological data analysis (Hatch, 2002) helped codify the overarching themes.

Participants

Academy faculty and mentors who worked directly with students in the inclusive program shared their experiences and insights during the interviews and focus groups for this study. These faculty members and mentors provided ongoing support and guidance for non-degree seeking students auditing typical university courses. The courses of this program, featured social integration, training for life, and career exploration. The program resulted in a Certificate of Social Growth and Development.

The Academy mentors were degree-seeking students who were hired to provide ongoing support. The mentors assisted students in the program with various supports and accommodations, including, note-taking during class, proofreading homework assignments, or reading test items aloud. The Academy mentors also assisted students with daily challenges, such as purchasing books. Mentors were professionally prepared for these roles through extensive training at the beginning of each semester and monthly refresher sessions. Students were matched with mentors

in relation to availability and personality. During each semester, students chose to audit university classes according to their interests and goals. Specific faculty members worked within the Academy and developed individualized success plans in collaboration with the inclusive program's students to provide high interest, meaningful learning experiences.

For clarity throughout our discussion, the degree-seeking Academy mentors will be referred to as mentors. The university faculty members, who were teaching the classes attended by students in the inclusive program, will be referred to as faculty or faculty members. The students attending the Academy for post-secondary inclusive learning opportunities, will be referred to as students.

Data Collection

Interview questions and focus group questions served as the basis for data collection. They were designed to encourage participants to freely express their perceptions and feelings about the impact of participating in a post-secondary inclusive program. Interviews and focus groups progressed from general "grand tour questions" (Spradley, 2016), such as a description of a typical day, to more specific questions about their experiences. Open-ended interview questions gave participants opportunities to share their feelings in their own words.

Focus group questions were designed to corroborate statements from interviews to give participants opportunities to elaborate on certain issues that were emphasized during interviews. The semi-structured format provided the opportunity to follow leads from statements made by participants (Van Manen, 1990). These follow-up questions elicited rich descriptions, which provided a more complete picture of the lived experiences of the participants.

Data Analysis

Hatch's typological model (2002) provided the framework for data analysis from multiple perspectives (Glesne, 2015; Patton, 2014). Initial categorization of the data into typologies was followed by repeated readings, line-by-line analysis, and color-coding of the

data using *Microsoft Word*. This analysis was ongoing and utilized the nine steps for data analysis designed by Hatch (2002). According to Hatch (2002) typological analysis should only be used if the categories for analysis are evident. At the beginning of data analysis, it became evident that the data aligned with the assumptions, five elements, and five domains of Invitational Theory and Practice (Purkey & Novak, 2016).

Regularities and common characteristics in the responses of participants quickly emerged in a review of the data pattern analysis. As these semantic relationships emerged, they revealed patterns that were suggested in the research literature. These semantic relationships served as links in the data set and provided elaborations on these ideas from the literature. During this codifying process, charts listing relevant data helped identify the integrating concepts that ran through this data.

Color-coded *Post-it flags* were used to label the patterns within the typologies as they were recorded in relation to the specific codes for the participants. To record integrating concepts that ran through the data, stars were used to highlight powerful quotes to facilitate the selection of specific data to support generalizations from these patterns. Throughout these steps, the

typological model designed by Hatch (2002) continued to provide the framework that illuminated the process of data analysis.

Results

Based on the findings of this qualitative study, this section focuses on the ways that the Academy went beyond typical expectations to intentionally invite students to access a kaleidoscope of opportunities for success. This section describes specific ways in which the Academy's inclusive program at a major university in the Southeast aligned with the overarching assumptions, elements, and domains of Invitational Theory and Practice (Purkey, & Novak. 2016; Shaw & Siegel, 2010; Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013). These results reflect patterns identified across the study's interviews and focus group sessions.

Invitational Education (IE) presents the idea that "everyone has the ability and responsibility to function in a personally and professionally inviting manner" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 23). An intentionally inviting level of functioning creates a dependable stance that "increases the likelihood that a cordial summons will be accepted and acted upon (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 24). Implementation of an IE mindset impacts an organization's climate. Analyzing and improving each of the five Domains of Invitational Education theory: People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes, "within a framework of the five elements of IE: Intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT), systemically transforms the whole school" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 22). The results of this study found alignment between what is done during the Academy's inclusive program and the five domains and five elements of IE. The next section will highlight results of the study and discuss the impact of alignment with IE theory and practices.

Overarching Goals of Invitational Education

Implementation of Invitational Education theory and practices authentically creates and sustains welcoming learning environments. The systemic framework practices intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT). The goal is to promote "increased learning outcomes and personal growth" (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 33).

It was highly evident that these goals aligned with the approach of the mentors and faculty members who participated in this qualitative interview study. They collaborated carefully and consistently to assist students within the framework of the program. They regularly shared innovations for note-taking and other procedures to enhance success as they attended classes with students in an inclusive program that opened opportunities within and beyond the classroom.

Monitoring the five Domains of IE, or powerful '5 Ps,' helps ensure a warm and inviting atmosphere (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Shaw & Siegel, 2010). The elements of Invitational Education pair with these domains to intensify the power and significance of each domain (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013). The impact of these components in a post-secondary inclusive program was a kaleidoscope of opportunity that resulted in beautiful patterns of support and successful achievement. The following section describes the ways mentors and faculty members effectively collaborated with students through assimilation of IE domains and elements to ensure students' comfort, appropriate challenges, and success in the inclusive program.

People and Optimism

Invitational Education focuses on people and the importance of individuals for a successful educational experience (Purkey & Novak, 2016). The optimism expressed by individuals help make a school intentionally inviting by encouraging everyone involved. Optimism and enthusiasm for the program were highly evident during the interviews. The Academy mentors and faculty consistently conveyed an optimistic perspective. As indicated previously, they were available for assistance and helped students think through plans for learning most effectively. They considered the assets of each student and promoted the development of those assets using creativity and attention to details.

Places and Trust

Invitational Education acknowledges the importance of providing an aesthetic, pleasant, and comfortable physical learning environment, which nurtures growth (Purkey & Novak, 2016). Schools augment the benefits of this pleasant environment when leaders establish trustworthy patterns of interaction. These interactions are based on reliability, genuineness, truthfulness, competence, and knowledge (Arceneaux, 1994; Purkey & Novak, 2016). The Academy's mentors and faculty members worked from the beginning to establish trust and a pleasant rapport with students. The university itself is a safe, pleasant, and caring environment in which students feel comfortable. This inclusive program is an extension of the atmosphere of trust, which extends the basic needs for a safe and caring environment (Maslow, 1943) to the next level.

Mentors discussed ways they collaborated with the students and provided support and guidance as needed to help students feel comfortable and well-adjusted to campus life. For instance, a student was having challenges with being late to class. The student's Academy mentor discussed strategies to prepare for each day and alternatives for placing the alarm clock to help the student consistently arrive to class on time. This created a more comfortable learning environment that fostered success. This was typical of the sessions in which mentors and faculty members collaboratively discussed ways to identify problems and seek effective solutions. Intentionally inviting further discussions led to more solutions that empowered students to experience success in relation to the post-secondary inclusive program's class schedule and the learning environment.

Policies and Respect

Invitational Education emphasizes the importance of documenting policies and exhibiting consistency for the benefit of everyone in the program. Purkey and Novak (2016) described policies as "critical 'semantic webs' that influence the deep-seated structure of any school" (p. 21). The design of the Academy's policies intentionally reflects care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT). Respectful of students and their families' need for access, policies are clearly stated on the university website, allowing anyone interested in the Academy's inclusive program to access the same information. The Academy's mentors and faculty adhere to these policies to maximize opportunities for the post-secondary inclusive program's students.

Programs and Care

Programs that embrace Invitational Education theory and practices can be "formal or informal, curricular, or extra-curricular. It is important for educators to ensure that all the school's programs work for the benefit of everyone and that they encourage active engagement with

significant content" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 21). The Academy features a highly student-centered inclusive program designed to show care for each student. Academy mentors and faculty members described the ways they intentionally emphasized care to design learning experiences that connected with students' interests. The entire program is designed to help students maximize their learning and engage with significant content in meaningful ways. For instance, when mentors attend class with the students in the inclusive program, they exhibit care to sit in places that empowers the students' feeling of independence. Yet, the mentors intentionally remain vigilantly available to support an optimal learning experience before, during, and after class.

Processes and Intentionality

As a process for defining school climate, Invitational Education encourages a Democratic Ethos to feature "collaborative and cooperative procedures and continuous networking stakeholders" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 22). Intentionality in the design of these processes emphasizes the value and boundless potential of each individual (Novak, Rocca, & DiBiase, 2006). Systemic processes intentionally reflect care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) to actualize that fullest potential of a collaborative atmosphere. These intentional processes encourage ongoing development of cooperative procedures with reciprocal benefits. The Academy's processes and procedures carefully and intentionally promote independence and success among the post-secondary inclusive program's students. Academy leaders intentionally orchestrate experiences to provide relevant and meaningful experiences within the student's comfort zone, thereby promoting success without undue stress (Vygotsky, 1978).

Additional Insights

During this discussion of the study's results, specific domains of Invitational Theory and Practice were paired with specific elements to demonstrate the alignment of these components with the study and the characteristics of the Academy. However, as noted above, the five Domains of IE: People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes, must interdependently interact within the I-CORT framework to "systemically transforms the whole school" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 22). Each of the I-CORT elements align with the 5 Ps. In developing and evolving its inclusive program, the Academy actively and intentionally integrates and aligns the 5Ps through a framework of I-CORT, which provides a kaleidoscope of opportunities for success by the Academy's students, mentors, and faculty.

All of the post-secondary inclusive program's participants were enthusiastic about the Academy. The participants' main suggestion was to communicate the Academy's success to a wider community to reach potential candidates for the post-secondary inclusive program. They suggested contacting diverse organizations, for instance, to elicit whether Academy opportunities can be highlighted during a radio show, thereby helping others become familiar with the Academy's post-secondary inclusive program that effectively utilizes Invitational Education theory and practices.

Conclusion

This qualitative study supports the belief that the Academy's post-secondary inclusive education program naturally aligns with the domains and elements of Invitational Education theory and practices. The IE framework can be intentionally followed as the program continues to grow and evolve. Future programs can trust that IE theory and practices provide a framework for

promoting independence and successful achievement in post–secondary programs across university campuses. Implementation of the domains and elements of Invitation Education theory and practices will enhance the quality and benefits of educational programs. Specifically, post–secondary inclusive programs utilizing IE theory to guide or transform the 5 Ps through the implementation of I-CORT elements will positively impact diverse learners and their families as future opportunities for a university education are actualized. The Academy's systemic success opens significant doors for students as they enhance their careers and prepare to contribute to society in meaningful and satisfying ways.

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Examining Demonstrated Emotional Intelligence and Perceptions of Inviting Schools

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Abstract

During a quantitative study with a correlational design, a sample of 42 graduate and post baccalaureate students from a Mid-Atlantic region college accessed a digital survey that combined the *Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater* with the *Inviting School Survey-Revised*. Subsequent simple linear regression procedures found Emotional Self-Control [$\beta = 0.486$, $t(74) = 2.016$, $p = 0.052$] and Emotional Management of Others [$\beta = 0.494$, $t(74) = 2.310$, $p = 0.027$] predict a strong relationship in the positive direction between four of the five *Inviting School Survey-Revised* (ISS-R) domains of school climate. By contrast, analysis of the Emotional Self-Awareness [$\beta = -0.172$, $t(74) = -0.816$, $p = 0.420$] results identified a strong relationship in the negative direction between all five ISS-R dimensions of school climate. Results affirmed previous research that indicated the leader's overall emotional intelligence, rather than the leader's self-awareness alone, influences the followers' perception of an inviting work place. Implications suggest educational leaders seeking to improve school climate should develop their typically demonstrated emotional intelligence skills.

Keywords: Leaders' emotional intelligence behaviors, teachers' perceptions of school climate, Invitational Education theory

Introduction

How individuals perceive their school climate will set the foundation for their attitudes, behaviors and group norms (Loukas, 2007). The school leader establishes the school's climate (Goleman, 2006b). To be dependably inviting, effective school leaders need to check for receipt and seek acknowledgement of their invitations for personal and professional development (Purkey & Siegel, 2013).

A positive school climate results from relationships that flourish (Weymes, 2003). When perceived as functional, newcomers must then be taught the expected culture (Schein, 2009). Identifying the competencies that increase the conveyance and receipt of personal and professional development opportunities could optimize school climate for all stakeholders because people can only accept invitations that have been received (Purkey & Novak, 2016).

The quantitative study with a correlational design examined if and to what degree a certified teacher's rating of his or her school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors correlated with the teacher's perceptions of that school's climate. The Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater (Palmer et al., 2009) was used to rate the school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors. The *Inviting School Survey-Revised* (Smith, 2015) was used to

measure the teacher's perceptions of school climate. Analysis of results explored the complexity of relationships between the seven demonstrated emotional intelligence sub-scales and the five domains of Invitational Education theory.

Significance of the Study

The school's leader establishes the school's climate (Goleman, 2006b). One way the school leader contributes to a positive school climate is to nourish trusting and caring relationships and practicing empathetic social interactions. These are the behaviors exhibited by leaders with high emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006a; McWilliam & Hatcher, 2007). School leaders need to comprehend and understand the school's climate, requiring knowledge of how things are done and how students and teachers perceive these things (Marzano & Waters, 2009). A logical conclusion is to research how the leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence may directly influence teacher perceptions of school climate. This study adds information to the field of research examining the relationship between the leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors and the created school climate.

For optimizing school climate, Invitational Education (IE) differs from other theories reviewed through the professional literature by providing an overarching theoretical framework effective for a variety of educational approaches (Asbill & Gonzalez, 2000). IE theory advances five basic elements: intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust [I-CORT] (Purkey & Novak, 2016) that optimize personally and professionally inviting behaviors.

Problem Statement

It was not known if and to what degree there is a relationship between a teacher's rating of the school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors and the teacher's perceptions of school climate. The foundational constructs of emotional intelligence and school climate, based on assumptions explicated by Invitational Education (IE) theory, include influential factors for sending and receiving personally and professionally inviting behaviors. These factors were discussed in previous studies that examined the results of a less hierarchical, more collaborative school culture (Maulding et al., 2010; Sanders, 2010) as well as the impact upon school climate (Abdulkarim, 2013; Asbill & Gonzalez, 2000; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Juma, 2013; Ross, 2000). This empirical research on the relationship between the teachers' ratings of their diverse school leaders' demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors and perception of school climate based on the five domains of Invitational Education theory would build upon research by Abdulkarim (2013); Bear et al. (2014); Collie et al. (2012); Juma (2013); and Thapa et al. (2013).

Review of the Literature

The effectiveness of school leadership remains contingent upon teacher acceptance (Matthews & Brown, 1976). Teachers' attitudes and perceptions influence positive or negative responses to initiatives (Rokeach, 1968). Teachers' perception of respect and trust exhibited by the principal correlates with both teachers' and students' morale, commitment, and achievement (Ellis, 1988). When a school leader effectively communicates a vision for success, models positive expectations, exhibits optimism, and utilizes inviting leadership practices, the teachers' behaviors become positively influenced (Asbill, 1994; Asbill & Gonzalez, 2000; Burns & Martin, 2010).

Leadership Traits That Influence School Climate

Leaders demonstrating emotional intelligence and those promoting the tenets of Invitational Education (IE) theory exhibit common competencies. Emotional intelligence requires competency regarding one's own emotions and the emotional needs of others to effectively address the complex social challenges arising within one's environment (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000). Educators trained to develop emotional intelligence as part of their leadership development can proactively utilize both their cognitive and metacognitive skills (Brackett & Katulak, 2007). These educators can then evoke their emotional intelligence competencies and positively influence followers' well-being as well as performance by modifying approaches to align with the given situation (Pashiardis, 2009).

People with high emotional intelligence are more likely to exhibit attributes perceived by others as positive (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). A leader with high emotional intelligence optimizes the installation of trust (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Trustworthiness positively influences other areas, thereby increasing organizational success (Caldwell & Hayes, 2007).

Results of a study by Momeni (2009) found a positive association between managers with high emotional intelligence and organizational climate (OC). Further analysis of the relationship between dimensions of emotional intelligence and OC identified a positive correlation between all dimensions of both constructs. The emotional intelligence dimensions for self-awareness and self-management were most influential upon climate. Credibility, a synonym for trustworthiness, exhibited the most influence upon emotional intelligence (EI). By highlighting the importance of emotions and management styles in the creation of organizational climate, Momeni's (2009) study reinforced the need to investigate the relationship between a leader's demonstrated EI and teachers' perceptions of school climate as outlined by this study.

At the turn of the new millennium, research on the effects of IE theory in relation to educational administration and school climate remained comparatively new (Egley, 2003). As a comprehensive school climate approach, IE includes many elements needed for success within educational organizations (Purkey & Siegel, 2013). Research by Burns and Martin (2010) identified a statistically significant relationship between school climates that utilized Invitational Education practices and schools identified as effective.

A meta-analysis of relevant research identified twenty-one school leadership practices that positively influence student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). These behaviors were also present in studies that investigated Invitational Education (IE) Theory and school climate (Asbill, 1994; Smith, 2015; Schmidt, 2007). While previous literature identified the dynamics involving emotional intelligence skills (Goleman, 1998; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Sanders, 2010) and behaviors attributed to perceptions of positive school climate, a potential link between demonstrated emotional intelligence skills to school climate needed further research (Curry, 2009).

Leadership advancing Invitational Education (IE) theory encourages people to tap into their unlimited potential (Purkey & Siegel, 2013; Burns & Martin, 2010). Explicit invitations for personal and professional development need to be delivered and recognized as an opportunity (Purkey & Novak, 2016). Therefore, to be dependably inviting, school leaders need to have the skills to effectively convey and then check for receipt. Only then does acceptance become a possibility.

Effective leaders seek to produce a collective, energized, collaborative commitment to the organization's clear mission, shared vision, and non-negotiable values (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Effective leaders seek to find a balance between motivating their learners and minimizing negative emotions. While self-destructive schools gravitate toward fear and stress, schools making a

difference consistently exhibit love, courage, and hope (Reason, 2010). Therefore, the leader developing an effective school climate exhibits an ability to understand and address the range of emotions exhibited by stakeholders.

The relationship between leadership behaviors and stakeholder perceptions of trustworthiness is important to researchers and managers interested in how leadership behaviors influence other areas of the organization (Caldwell & Hayes, 2007). Key characteristics associated with most leadership theories include the ability to quickly assess situations, move accordingly for the benefit of the group, and to engender trust from followers (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007). Quickly assessing situations and moving accordingly for the benefit of the group is what Roach et al. (1999) called "wisdom in spontaneity" (p. 17). Emotional intelligence theorists call such abilities social awareness and relationship management (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

Constructs for Measuring Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence provides a framework for this study. Definitions and theories seeking to describe emotional intelligence continue to evolve. Thorndike (1920) described social intelligence. Describing multiple intelligences, Gardner (1983) identified interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Both interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences include elements related to, yet distinct from, social intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Emotional intelligence entails the accurate appraisal, expression, and regulation of emotions in oneself and others in a way that enhances living (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Cooper and Sawaf (1997) believed the following sub-skills comprise emotional intelligence: 1) emotional literacy, 2) emotional fitness, 3) emotional depth, and 4) emotional alchemy. As a general construct, emotional intelligence encompasses emotional, personal, and social abilities influential upon one's overall capability to effectively deal with environmental demands and pressures (McCallum & Piper, 2000). Schutte et al. (1998, 2001) further defined emotional intelligence as the ability to adaptively recognize, express, regulate, and harness emotions. Diverse cognitive or emotional intelligence skills vary by age, gender, and developmental level (Gardner, 1995); which impact one's level of competency or FLOW (Csikszentmihaly, 2013*)*.

Emotional intelligence skeptics believe there is little evidence to the existence of emotional intelligence because it cannot be reliably measured or predict important outcomes (Mayer et al., 1997). Other researchers (Zeidner, Matthews, Roberts, & MacCann, 2003) identified a variety of ambiguities within both ability and mixed models of emotional intelligence. Zeidner et al. (2003) believed "a valid test for EI needs to predict real-world competence and adaptation" (p. 71).

A related perspective views emotional intelligence as an aggregate of abilities and capabilities enabling a person to correctly understand one's own and others' emotions in real time to intelligently produce transactional outcomes that are personally and socially desirable (Kunnanatt, 2004). Traditionally, a mixed model of emotional intelligence explicitly merges a combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and non-emotional intelligence dimensions such as personality dimensions. This is evident in the Bar-On EQ-*I* survey, which includes a dimension rating one's ability to evaluate what is experienced compared to what objectively exists (Bar-On, 2000). However, this dimension more closely aligns with psychoticism, a psychopathological condition, rather than emotional intelligence. Another example of a mixed-model measure of emotional intelligence is found in the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), which includes a 'conscientiousness' dimensions, defined as, "Taking responsibility for personal performance" (Sala, 2013, p.2). However, McCrae (2004) considers conscientiousness a dimension of personality.

Within the context of emotional intelligence, at least two perspectives are possible: maximal emotional intelligence performance and typical emotional intelligence performance (Gignac, 2010). Typical performance is a more reliable indicator of actual behavior (Sackett et al., 1988). Gignac (2010) and Palmer et al. (2009) suggest emotional intelligence is purely relevant to the demonstration of emotional intelligence skills. The typical emotional intelligence performance perspective grounds the Genos Emotional Intelligence inventories (Palmer et al., 2009).

The Genos Emotional Intelligence inventories are not a mixed-model measure of emotional intelligence. In developing the Genos Emotional Intelligence inventories, the authors advanced the belief that a model of emotional intelligence should only include psychological attributes with direct relevance to the identification, utilization, and management of emotions (Gignac, 2010). Therefore, development of the Genos Emotional Intelligence inventories were based on an emotional intelligence model seeking to demonstrate emotional intelligence sub-skills across the following seven individual differences dimensions: Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Emotional Awareness of Others, Emotional Reasoning, Emotional Self-Management, Emotional Management of Others, and Emotional Self-Control. Thus, this study considered the evolving explication of emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions for effective living, working, and relating to others in an increasingly social world and workplace.

The evaluation of emotional intelligence with a self-report measure exacerbates possible problems resulting from socially desirable responding (SDR), which is known as faking good (Downey et al., 2006). While self-report approaches are appropriate as measures of self-perceived EI, they often do not actually measure emotional intelligence ability (Mayer et al., 2004a). To mitigate problems caused by the utilization of an approach that may produce SDR, this study will use the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater version. This instrument assesses typical emotional intelligence performance and requires study participants to complete a concise, third-person version of the Genos Emotional Intelligence Assessment (Palmer et al., 2009) to identify the leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors in the workplace.

Invitational Education Theory as a Framework for Measuring School Climate.

School climate based on Invitational Education theory (Purkey & Novak, 1994, 2008) provides the second framework for this study. School climate contributes to student achievement, success, and psychological well-being (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Fan, Williams, & Corkin, 2011; Steyn, 2007; Zullig, Koopman, Patton, & Ubbes, 2010). School climate also influences positive youth development, effective risk prevention, and increased retention rates for teachers and students (Cohen et al., 2009; Huebner & Diener, 2008). Although commonly used in research, school climate is a term without a common definition. Various studies might call school climate "school environment or school-level learning environment" (Johnson & Stevens, 2006, p. 111).

When trying to learn about organizational environments, Moos (1974) suggested evaluating and analyzing three dimensions of psychosocial environments. These three relationship-based dimensions should describe interpersonal interactions, personal development, and system maintenance/change. These dimensions exhibit similarities to Mayer and Salovey's (1997) emotional intelligence theory, whereby the ability to understand the relationships of people, understanding emotions, reacting to emotions, and tempering one's own emotion are all vital to the organization's overall health.

Reviewing the literature involving school climate revealed two levels. One is classroom level environments, which focus upon the relationships between students and teachers. The second is school level environments, which entails the relationships of teachers to other teachers as well as teachers to administration (Stewart, 1979). Previous studies on school level environments were associated with school leadership (Anderson, 1982; Fisher & Fraser, 1990) and identified the importance of studying school environments in relation to the school's functioning, levels of satisfaction, productivity exhibited within the school, and relationships with other teachers and school leaders.

School climate plays an important role in how stakeholders perceive the school (Curry, 2009). Evaluation of school climate reflects stakeholder perceptions of the social, emotional, and academic experiences of school life. Stakeholders need to include students, administrators, teachers, parents, and support staff (Smith 2012). The literature suggested leaders high in emotional intelligence may be more competent to influence, inspire, intellectually stimulate, and develop their staff to promote a culture of sustained educational success (George, 2000; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Moore, 2009; Ross, 2000; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Sanders, 2010; Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002). Inviting behaviors exhibited by the leader optimizes the school climate (Asbill, 1994; Purkey & Siegel, 2008; Schmidt, 2007; Smith, 2015).

Methodology

The scope of inquiry for this quantitative research method addressed specific questions and hypotheses. Data was described numerically while analysis employed descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation analysis, regression analysis, mean, mode, and median (VanderStroep & Johnson, 2010). This quantitative study investigated the relationships between variables. This study's methodology analyzed the magnitude of relationships found within the collected data to test stated hypotheses (Hopkins, 2008).

Since a more objective look at data allows objective conclusions to be drawn, utilization of quantitative methodology for this study minimized the subjectivity of judgment (Kealey, Protheroe, MacDonald, & Vulpe, 2003). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring, thereby allowing statistical analysis of numerical data (Smith, 1988). For the purposes of this study, quantitative methodology provided the best approach for identifying the relationship between the variables: a leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence and a teacher's perception of school climate.

Given the school climate reflects a personal evaluation of the school (Cohen, 2006; Freiberg, 1999), school leaders desirous of collecting and analyzing perceptions from the school community need reliable and valid instruments to measure school climate. The *Inviting School Survey-Revised* (*ISS-R*), (Smith, 2015), which is grounded in Invitational Education theory (Purkey & Novak, 2016) meets this need. Invitational Education (IE) theory "States that everyone and everything in and around the school contributes to the creation of the environment" (Asbill, 1994, p. 46). For this study, perceived school climate was rated based on the five domains explicated by Schmidt (2007) and Smith (2012, 2015). Because this study evaluated the rated emotional intelligence demonstrated by school leaders in relation to school climate as perceived by teachers, the ISS-R provided an ideal quantitative instrument.

The criterion (dependent) variable exhibited a potential ordinal range of responses based on the responding teacher's interval-level perceptions of school climate as identified through the Inviting School Survey-Revised (Smith, 2015). Development of the ISS-R utilized assumptions and practices of Invitational Education (IE) theory (Amos, Smith, & Purkey, 2004; Novak, 1992;

Purkey & Novak, 2008; Purkey & Schmidt, 1987; Purkey & Stanley, 1991). IE theory provides a template for successful educational leadership and increased accountability during educational change (Purkey & Novak, 1996, Novak, 2009; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Schmidt, 2007). IE theory contributes to the growth of trust and social capital by the way in which leaders promote a climate of caring and support for the efforts of others (Purkey & Siegel, 2013).

Third party rating of leaders' emotional intelligence and self-rating of perceptions of school climate based on Invitational Education theory and practice provided relatively new concepts for study. Leadership from a social perspective is more established. The study's predictor (independent) variable investigated the certified teacher's rating of his or her school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors in the workplace. Using the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater (Palmer et al., 2009), the predictor (independent) variable would exhibit a potential ordinal range of responses based on the certified teachers' ratings of his or her individual school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors.

A *Pearson* correlation tested the null hypothesis of the first research question. Given a relationship was found with the predictor variable, additional simple linear regression procedures then explored in-depth the responses specific to the seven subscales of the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater (Palmer et al., 2009) and the five domains of the ISS-R (Smith 2012). The five domains of the ISS-R are known as the 5-Ps: People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes (Schmidt, 2007; Smith, 2015). The additional simple linear regression analyses of results demonstrated the degree to which dimensions of the predictor variable (leader's EI behaviors) positively or negatively predict the teacher's perceptions based on five domains of school's climate.

Assumptions

One assumption of this study was that certified teachers could accurately describe emotional intelligence behaviors based on their experience with their principal or school leadership. Pertaining to this assumption, reliability was optimized by the target population completing a valid third-person version of the Genos EI Assessment (Palmer et al., 2009). This approach provided an assessment of the frequency of emotionally intelligent behaviors demonstrated by the respondent's school leader, which was then analyzed in relation to the respondent's perception of his or her school's climate.

The Genos EI Assessment was specifically designed for implementation within workplace settings (Palmer et al., 2009). The increased 'face validity' of the inventory resulted from specifying a context for respondents to complete the inventory. In contrast, to other emotional intelligence measures that may incorporate dimensions of personality or common competencies, only seven dimensions obviously associated with emotional intelligence in the workplace have been included within the Genos model of emotional intelligence.

Typical emotional intelligence performance, distinct from maximal emotional intelligence performance, describes the theoretical perspective of the Genos EI Assessment (Gignac, 2010). This makes the Genos EI Assessment unique. It is the only emotional intelligence inventory explicitly formulated within the context of typical emotional intelligence performance. Typical performance is a more reliable indicator of actual behavior (Sackett, Zedeck, & Fogli, 1988). As such, the Genos EI Assessment is better aligned with the needs of the workplace and thereby purely relevant to the demonstration of emotional intelligence behaviors across the following seven individual dimensions (subscales): Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Emotional

Awareness of Others, Emotional Reasoning, Emotional Self-Management, Emotional Management of Others, and Emotional Self-Control.

Criticism exists whenever emotional intelligence is exclusively measured using a self-report instrument so this research utilized an observer rating scale. While some self-report approaches are appropriate as measures of self-perceived emotional intelligence, they often do not actually measure emotional intelligence ability (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). To quell criticisms of emotional intelligence as a construct, utilization of an observer rating scale rather than self-assessing emotional intelligence, mitigates possible problems resulting from socially desirable responding (SDR), known as faking good (Downey, Godfrey, Hansen, & Stough, 2006).

Limitations

Self-perceptions created limitations to the study. Validated instruments such as the Genos 360 EI Assessment (Concise) (Palmer et al., 2009) and ISS-R (Smith, 2015) allowed for third-party rater and reporting of perceptions. This approach allowed subsequent analysis of the relationship between the identified independent variable and dependent variable. Analysis of the certified teacher's ratings of the school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors, correlated with the teacher's perceptions of school climate. This addressed the need identified by Curry (2009) to use quantitative instruments to explore the relationship of these variables. Analysis of demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors based on the seven subscales of the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater (Palmer et al., 2009) provided a succinct investigation of the relationship between the demonstrated emotional intelligence subscales and the five dimensions of school climate based on IE theory.

The quantitative correlational study created four primary limitations:

- The researcher's availability to access a single university within a specific geographical area, created a small sample size and low statistical power.
- The time of year for the data collection also presented a limitation in relation to the rate of response.
- The correlational research design only allowed reporting of the relationships based on the given context. For instance, there may be greater optimism at the beginning of a school year compared to the end.
- The Genos EI Assessment-Concise Rater version (Palmer et al., 2009) is a valid and reliable survey instrument. However, unfamiliarity with emotional intelligence, test anxiety, time of year when the survey was completed, time devoted to the survey completion, and fidelity in responding to the survey all created additional limitations.

Limitations could influence individual ratings and perceptions. Therefore, the overall analysis is potentially impacted. Individually and collectively, these limitations influence the ability to generalize results.

Delimitations

Delimitations define the parameters of an investigation. Frequently, delimitations in educational research involve the population, sample, time, setting, and utilized instruments. To be most reliable, school climate needs to be time tested (Johnson et al., 2007). This researcher understood that time of year, internal school events, external community events, attrition of staff, and media exposure based on high-stakes testing, influenced teacher perceptions of school climate. Since perceptions of school climate for a particular school may change daily, school climate needs

to be time tested (Johnson et al., 2007). Therefore, these school climate results were delimited by the point-in-time evaluation and, as a result, should not be generalized.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and null hypotheses guided this study:

R_1: Do the certified teachers' rating of their individual school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors correlate with perceptions of school climate based on Invitational Education theory?

$H_0$1: The certified teachers' rating of their individual school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors do not correlate with perceptions of school climate based on Invitational Education theory.

R_2: Based on teacher ratings, how does each of the seven dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions of the school's climate based on Invitational Education theory?

$H_0$2: Based on teacher ratings, there are no dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors that positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions of the school's climate based on Invitational Education theory.

R_3: Based on teacher ratings, how does each of the seven dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions of the five domains of the school's climate based on Invitational Education theory?

$H_0$3: Based on teacher ratings, there are no dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors that positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions of the five domains of school climate based on Invitational Education theory.

The research questions guided the investigation of relationships between variables identified in the problem statement. The first research question investigated the relationship between variables. The second and third research questions investigated whether the predictor (independent) variable: the seven observed emotional intelligence subscales of the Genos 360 EI Assessment (Concise) (Palmer et al., 2009) predicts the criterion (dependent) variable: the teacher's perception of school climate based on the five ISS-R Domains of Invitational Education theory known as: People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes (Smith, 2012).

Population and Sample Selection

The target population comprised 219 certified teachers participating as students within the Mid-Atlantic region college's Education Division graduate programs or its post-baccalaureate special education certification program. Potential participants were currently teaching or held a teaching position within the last year. An a priori power analysis is typically done when designing a study. Given the utilization of quantitative digital, Likert-Scale survey distributed through Qualtrics and three follow-up requests to participate, an exceptional 25% rate of response would result in 54 participants from the target population. Given the additional responsibilities during the beginning of the school year, a more realistic expectation was for a 20% rate of response to the survey, thereby comprising a sample of 44 students from the target. While the a priori power calculations indicated a larger sample as the ideal, the post hoc power analysis indicated the 42

participant cases that comprised the sample achieved significant statistical results based on the *Pearson* correlation procedure.

Data Collection Procedures

At least 40 volunteers needed to participate from the target population. The study required completion of a single, three-part, digital survey accessed through the Qualtrics system. The Genos 360 EI Assessment (Concise) (Palmer et al., 2009), the ISS-R (Smith, 2015) and a demographic profile comprised the three parts. Both instruments were rating scales, which are useful when evaluating behaviors on a continuum (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Utilization of a Likert scale provided interval data related to the level of agreement with behaviors described on the survey.

The first part of the single digital survey comprised the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater (Palmer, et al., 2009). The Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater is a 31-item instrument designed to rate individual school leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors specific to the work environment. Participants were able to complete this version in fewer than 15 minutes.

The second part of the single digital survey comprised the 50-item *Inviting School Survey-Revised* (Smith, 2005). The instrument measured the participant's perception of school climate based on Invitational Education theory and practice. Therefore, this part of the digital survey provided data responsive to the criterion (dependent) variable. Participants were able to complete this part in fewer than 20 minutes.

The third part of the survey identified demographic elements. The demographic data collection identified the respondent's age range, teaching experience, gender, and rated leader's gender and experience. This demographic data primarily ensured the respondent was a certified teacher and the rated leader was at the school for at least two years. Participants were able to complete this part in fewer than 5 minutes.

To protect the target population's confidentiality, the Mid-Atlantic region college's Registrar's office distributed the single, three-part digital survey through its Qualtrics system. This researcher developed an inviting email to participants anonymously identified by the Registrar as members within the target student population. The email included an introduction from this researcher, guaranteed confidentiality, and detailed the informed consent agreement. The email provided a link to the digital survey. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity of each voluntary participant within the target population was fully protected. Only a data file of responses was provided to the researcher. While informed consent was detailed in the email that provided the link to the survey, implied informed consent to participate in the study was based on voluntary completion of the digital survey accessed through the Qualtrics system.

The data collection of digital survey responses lasted six weeks during the fourth quarter of 2014. The Qualtrics system generated three follow-up e-mail reminders to potential unresponsive participants to initial requests for survey completion. This approach sought to optimize the rate of response (Dillman, 2007).

When participants completed the survey through the digital survey accessed through Qualtrics, data became available for analysis. The system anonymously tracked participation. This prevented redundancy of participation requests and allowed the potential for real-time monitoring of data collection.

Data Analysis Procedures

At the end of the data collection period, the Institutional Research Coordinator accessed the data collected from the digital survey and initially saved it as an excel spreadsheet. This researcher then uploaded the data to the Statistic Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software (Norusis, 2011). Since the two instruments were combined into one digital survey, each respondent represented a single case, responding to both instruments designed to test the null hypotheses of the research questions.

Data analysis began with preparation of the data. Preparation followed a logical order for cleaning and processing the data. Analytical procedures included descriptive analysis, testing of assumptions, tests for normalcy, *Pearson* ***r*** analysis, and simple linear regression analyses.

Descriptive analysis determined means, medians, and modes for the predictor and criterion variables. Tests for assumption of normal distribution were conducted to ensure the efficacy for using a *Pearson r* procedure. Assumptions of normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance were evaluated to detect the presence of any violation of parametric assumptions. It is only appropriate to use a *Pearson r* procedure if the data satisfies four assumptions that would produce a valid result.

Given satisfaction of all four test of assumptions, a *Pearson* correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between the variables. Again, all correlational data was acquired through the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater (Palmer et al., 2009) instrument and the Inviting School Survey-Revised (Smith, 2015) instrument that comprised this study's digital survey. Given a relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variable rejected the null hypothesis for the first research question, simple linear regression analyses then tested the degree to which dimensions of the predictor (independent) variable positively or negatively change the teacher's perception of the overall school's climate. This procedure rejected the null hypothesis of the second question. Further simple linear regression analyses then tested the degree to which dimensions of the predictor variable positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions based on the five domains of school climate. Thus, the third research question required estimating thirty-five simple linear regression analyses.

Results

Descriptive data described the sample's characteristics and the demographics of participants in the study. Demographically, the sample ranged in age from 22-56 years. Respondents averaged 36.4 years of age, have been certified teachers for 5.3 years, and employed at their current school for 5.3 years. On average, the rated principal provided 5.1 years of service to the rated school. Eleven of the respondents were beginning their second year of certified service to the rated school while seven principals were beginning their second year of leadership at the rated school. The sample (N= 42*)* represented seven males (16.7%) and 35 females (83.3%). While this distribution exhibits a lack of equity compared with the general population, it aligns with the distribution found within the teaching profession, whereby some 76 percent of public school teachers identified as female (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

For parametric testing such as the *Pearson r* correlation, both variables needed to be normally distributed. Tests of assumptions reviewed linearity and homoscedasticity. While linearity assumes a straight-line relationship between each of the variables in the analysis, homoscedasticity assumes normal distribution of the data around the regression line.

Given satisfaction of the tests of assumptions, *Pearson r* analysis was apropos for testing the null hypothesis of research question one, which examined the relationship between two variables. The *Pearson r* analysis revealed a moderately strong relationship in a positive direction (.564) between the leaders' demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors and their perception of school climate. *Pearson r* analysis results rejected the null hypothesis of the first research question.

Having found a positive linear relationship between the variables, the data were submitted to simple linear regression analysis. Simple linear regression procedures then investigated the leaders' demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors (predictor/independent) variable based on the seven subscales of the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater. As a reminder, the seven subscales include: Emotional Self-Awareness (ESA), Emotional Expression (EE), Emotional Awareness of Others (EAO), Emotional Reasoning (ER), Emotional Self-Management (ESM), Emotional Management of Others (EMO), and Emotional Self-Control (ESC) (Palmer et al., 2009). To test the null hypothesis of the second research question, seven simple linear regression procedures were utilized to analyze the results of the teacher's perception of the school climate based on the overall ISS-R scale. Results of the initial seven simple linear regression procedures rejected the null hypothesis of the second research question, thereby accepting the alternate.

Thirty-five additional simple linear regression procedures then identified the degree to which the seven dimensions of the leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors predicted the teachers' perceptions of the five measures of school climate. The additional simple linear regression analyses provided further information about the predictability of the relationship by analyzing the relationship between the leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors represented by the seven dimensions of the Genos 360 EI Assessment-Concise Rater instrument and the five domains of school climate represented by the Inviting School Survey-Revised instrument.

As noted below in Table 1, the *Pearson r* is .564. This demonstrates the strength and direction of the relationship as moderately strong in a positive direction. The strength and direction of the relationship suggest that as the teachers' rating of the leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors increase, so do their positive perceptions of school climate. Likewise, as their rating of the leader's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors decrease, so would the teachers' positive perceptions of school climate. The *Sig*. value in this analysis is 0.00 (See Table 1). Since the value is less than .05 there is arguably a statistically significant correlation between the two variables.

Table 1

Correlation Statistics for Dependent and Predictor Variables: Perceptions of School Climate and Leaders' Demonstrated Emotional Intelligence

		Mean_GenosEI_Overall_recode	Mean_ISSR_Overall
Mean_GenosEI_Overall_recode	Pearson Correlation	1	.564**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	42	42
Mean_ISSR_Overall	Pearson Correlation	.564**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	42	42

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis procedures measured how well the overall model fits. Specifically, how well the predictor: the leader's demonstrated EI behaviors based on the Genos instrument scores, predict the teacher's perception of school climate based on the ISS-R scores. As noted in Table 1 above, a *Pearson r* of .564 indicates the strength and direction of the relationship as being moderately strong in a positive direction. Table 2 below, identifies the *R* as .693[a] and the *R square* as .480, which shows a strong positive relationship between the group of predictors and the outcome variable (R). The results of the analysis suggests that as a collective, leaders' demonstrated EI can predict about 48% of the variance in teachers' perception of school climate.

Table 2
Model Summary for Dependent Variable: Perceptions of School Climate and Predictors Dimensions of Leaders' Demonstrated Emotional Intelligence

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.693[a]	.480	.372	.465

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_ESC, Mean_ESA, Mean_ER, Mean_EE, Mean_EMO, Mean_ESM, Mean_EAO

Table 3 below details the results of the linear regression procedures designed to test the null hypothesis for research question two. In relation to overall ISS-R responses, the *Coefficients*[a,] for four of the seven Genos EI subscales indicated a relationship in the positive direction. As a result of linear regression analysis procedures, for four of the seven EI subscales it can be concluded that an increase within the five point scale of the leader's exhibited dimension of EI, results in an increase within the mean of the teacher's perception of overall school climate. Most significantly, as noted in Table 3, a point increase within the five point scale of the leader's exhibited Emotional Management of Others (EMO) results in an increase of .329 within the mean of the teacher's perception of overall school climate. A point increase within the five point scale of the leader's exhibited Emotional Self-Control (ESC) results in an increase of .317 within the mean of the teacher's perception of overall school climate.

Table 3
Regression Analysis for Dependent and Predictor Variables Testing Null Hypothesis 2

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.377	.274		5.019	.000
Mean_ESA	-.128	.156	-.172	-.816	.420
Mean_EE	.130	.143	.189	.909	.370
Mean_EAO	-.063	.162	-.105	-.388	.700
Mean_ER	.071	.117	.122	.608	.547
Mean_ESM	-.221	.155	-.333	-1.421	.165
Mean_EMO	.329	.143	.494	2.310	.027
Mean_ESC	.317	.157	.486	2.016	.052

According to the coefficients in Table 3 above, by absolute value, regardless of the positive or negative sign of the beta value, EMO (.494) and ESC (.486) appears to be the most important predictors for school climate. By contrast, EAO (-.105) and ER (.122) appears to be the weakest predictors for school climate. Of the seven potential predictors, based on the *Sig.* value shown in Table 3, EMO and ESC were found to be significant predictors for school climate. Thus, the null hypothesis for the second research question was rejected; thereby accepting the alternate that dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors either positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions of overall school climate.

Additional linear regression procedures examined whether dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors can predict the teacher's perceptions of the five domains of school climate: People, Program, Process, Policy, and Place. The following Tables 4-8, detail the results of these additional linear regression procedures. Based on the results of the additional linear regression procedures, the null hypothesis for the third research question was rejected; thereby accepting the alternate that dimensions of a school leader's typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors either positively or negatively change the teacher's perceptions of a specific domains of the school's climate.

Table 4

*Regression Analysis: Coefficients[a] for the Seven Emotional Intelligence Dimensions in Relation to the **People** Subscale of School Climate Testing Null Hypothesis 3*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.199	.310		3.864	.000
Mean_ESA	-.086	.177	-.107	-.486	.630
Mean_EE	.192	.162	.257	1.187	.243
Mean_EAO	.055	.183	.085	.300	.766
Mean_ER	.017	.133	.026	.125	.901
Mean_ESM	-.172	.176	-.239	-.978	.335
Mean_EMO	.442	.161	.612	2.743	.010
Mean_ESC	.033	.178	.047	.186	.854

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_People_ISSR

Table 5

*Regression Analysis: Coefficients[a] for the Seven Emotional Intelligence Dimensions in Relation to the **Program** Subscale of School Climate Testing Null Hypothesis 3*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.390	.302		4.609	.000
Mean_ESA	-.005	.172	-.006	-.028	.978
Mean_EE	.037	.157	.048	.236	.815
Mean_EAO	.147	.178	.218	.825	.415
Mean_ER	.044	.129	.067	.339	.737
Mean_ESM	-.230	.171	-.308	-1.346	.187
Mean_EMO	.235	.157	.312	1.498	.143
Mean_ESC	.297	.173	.403	1.716	.095

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Program_ISSR

Table 6

*Regression Analysis: Coefficients[a] for the Seven Emotional Intelligence Dimensions in Relation to the **Process** Subscale of School Climate Testing Null Hypothesis 3*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.638	.404		4.050	.000
Mean_ESA	-.319	.231	-.338	-1.383	.176
Mean_EE	.217	.211	.248	1.028	.311
Mean_EAO	-.147	.238	-.195	-.618	.541
Mean_ER	.224	.173	.304	1.298	.203
Mean_ESM	-.220	.229	-.262	-.961	.343
Mean_EMO	.196	.210	.232	.932	.358
Mean_ESC	.354	.232	.428	1.527	.136

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Process_ISSR

Table 7

*Regression Analysis: Coefficients[a] for the Seven Emotional Intelligence Dimensions in Relation to the **Policy** Subscale of School Climate Testing Null Hypothesis 3*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.412	.324		4.360	.000
Mean_ESA	-.134	.185	-.166	-.725	.473
Mean_EE	.081	.169	.108	.478	.636
Mean_EAO	-.088	.191	-.136	-.459	.649
Mean_ER	.020	.139	.031	.143	.887
Mean_ESM	-.241	.183	-.337	-1.316	.197
Mean_EMO	.320	.168	.443	1.898	.066
Mean_ESC	.423	.186	.598	2.276	.029

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Policy_ISSR

Table 8

*Regression Analysis: Coefficients[a] for the Seven Emotional Intelligence Dimensions in Relation to the **Place** Subscale of School Climate Testing Null Hypothesis 3*

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.412	.338		4.180	.000
	Mean_ESA	-.123	.193	-.138	-.641	.526
	Mean_EE	.073	.176	.088	.412	.683
	Mean_EAO	-.271	.199	-.377	-1.360	.183
	Mean_ER	.088	.144	.126	.611	.545
	Mean_ESM	-.269	.191	-.338	-1.407	.169
	Mean_EMO	.329	.176	.410	1.872	.070
	Mean_ESC	.622	.194	.791	3.209	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Place_ISSR

Analysis of the Emotional Self-Control (ESC) results predicts a strong relationship in the positive direction between the Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes, domains of the ISS-R. Analysis of the Emotional Management of Others (EMO) results predicts a strong relationship in the positive between the People, Places, Policies, and Programs, domains of the ISS-R. By

contrast, analysis of the Emotional Self-Awareness (ESA) results predicts a strong relationship in the negative direction between the People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes, domains of the ISS-R. Analysis of the Emotional Awareness of Others (EAO) results predicts a mild to strong relationship in the negative direction between the Places, Policies, and Processes, domains of the ISS-R.

A point increase within the five-point scale of the leader's exhibited ESC predicts an increase of .622 within the mean of the Place domain of ISS-R responses. A point increase within the five-point scale of the leader's exhibited EMO, predicts an increase of .329 within the mean of the Policy domain of ISS-R responses. Linear regression procedures comparing ESC and the mean of the Place domain of ISS-R responses exhibit a very strong relationship in the positive direction *(Beta=*.791) and Significance (*p-value=*.003).

Conclusions

Previous literature (George, 2000; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Moore, 2009; Ross, 2000; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Sanders, 2010; Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002) suggested that leaders high in emotional intelligence may be more competent to influence, inspire, intellectually stimulate, and develop their staff to promote a culture of sustained educational success. This investigation reinforced those previous studies and support the conclusions that the EI dimensions: Emotional Self-Control and Emotional Management of Others, predict positive teacher perceptions of the place domain within a school's climate. This investigation certainly can influence teacher preparation programs, the development of educational leaders, staff professional development, and promotion of a school climate dedicated to optimizing the learning for all mission.

Recommendations for future research.

As noted above, this quantitative correlational study had three primary limitations that future research can mitigate. One limitation was the researcher's ability access only a single university within a specific geographical area. In the future, it would be important to conduct a similar study with a larger sample size to boost the statistical power to detect a stronger correlation. Replicating the study by accessing a target population of working certified teachers participating in graduate or baccalaureate teacher programs through a nationwide consortium of universities or multi-state public university systems can increase the sample and provide more generalizable results.

The time of year for the data collection also presented a limitation and adversely impacted the rate of response. To be most reliable, school climate needs to be time tested (Johnson et al., 2007). While perceptions of school climate for a particular school may change daily, assessing perception of school climate in May or June, whereby a full year can be considered and the pressures of the annual test period have concluded, may produce more reliable responses.

The correlational research design only allowed reporting of the relationships based on the given context. For instance, there may be greater optimism at the beginning of a school year compared to the end. Designing a future study of the variables can elicit responses at the beginning of the school year and end of the school year. Analysis of results can then identify the point in time that

will be optimal for future assessment of leaders' demonstrated EI behaviors in relation to school climate based on the dimensions of IE theory.

Recommendations for future practice.

Leaders promoting personally and professionally inviting opportunities for development provide an optimal model for success within today's schools (Burns & Martin, 2010; Purkey & Siegel, 2013). Intentionally advancing the competencies that increase the conveyance and receipt of personal and professional development opportunities could optimize school climate for all stakeholders (Purkey & Novak, 2016). Invitations for personal and professional development need to be explicitly intentional and recognized by the recipient as an opportunity (Purkey & Novak, 2016). Explicit course work in both emotional intelligence behaviors within the workplace and development of school climate based on Invitational Education theory would benefit teacher preparation as well as educational leadership programs.

A previous study by Rojas (2012) asserted three needs for optimal emotional intelligence development among prospective teachers:

1. Development of emotional intelligence begins with a commitment to change.
2. Application of emotional intelligence learning within environments favorable to emotional intelligence development.
3. Pursuit of an ideal allows interdependent application of all other emotional intelligence competencies.

Invitational Education theory seeks to promote trust, collaboration, and purposeful inclusion (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Purkey & Siegel, 2013). However, if "People cannot accept invitations they have never received" (Purkey & Novak, 1996, p.75), how does a teacher's level of emotional intelligence influence her ability to perceive an intentional invitation as an opportunity? Using Invitational Education theory to curriculum map teacher preparation and educational leadership programs could help institutionalize the linear change process entailing: awareness, acceptance, and action (AAA). When the people within an institution collectively demonstrate Emotional Self-Control and Emotional Management of Others they exhibit a greater willingness to create a better place. Related to reform efforts, it is not enough to want to change or need to change. Effective leaders recognize and help others to become aware of the need for change. Only through a linear process: AAA for change (Anderson, 2016), can acceptance of the need to change be reached. Without clear vision, awareness, and acceptance, the actions necessary for change seldom occur.

Summary

The evolving literature regarding leadership, leader's emotional intelligence, school success, and school climate, exhibited a need for further research. This study contributed additional knowledge to the field of education. This study's findings support the previous conclusions offered by Abdulkarim (2013); Juma (2013); Ross (2000); and Sanders (2010), which identified a relationship with the self-reported emotional intelligence in school leaders and the leaders' ability to promote cultural and organizational change within the school.

Emotional Self-Control measures the relative frequency whereby an individual controls her strong emotions appropriately in the workplace. It addresses demonstrated maintenance of focus or

concentration upon the task-at-hand, despite emotional adversity. Emotional Self-Control is more reactive compared to Emotional Self-Management, which is more proactive.

Emotional Management of Others (EMO) measures the relative frequency whereby an individual successfully manages the emotions of others at work, motivates colleagues or followers. EMO also models the modification of the emotions of others for their own personal betterment at work. These behaviors create a positive working environment for others as well as helping individuals resolve distressful issues.

Related to climate, perceptions of a place contribute to school success or failure. Burns and Martin (2010) concluded that observers almost immediately notice the personality of a place, differentiating between a sterile, empty, and lifeless environment compared to a place seen as warm, exciting, and personable based on those inhabiting the space. Purkey and Novak (2016) concluded the place element was the most visible factor within a school's climate. As the physical environment of an organization, places are the easiest element of the framework to change because of its visibility (Hobday-North & Smith, 2014). Given this, the leaders' demonstrated emotional self-control and emotional management of others are extremely influential upon a school's climate. Therefore, let us intentionally invite every educator to lead effectively with optimal emotional self-control and emotional management of others.

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An Invitation to Internet Safety and Ethics: School and family collaboration

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Abstract

More than ever, schools and families are embracing technology as positive aspects of creativity and collaboration. In a recent study, 78% of parents perceived technology as a constructive learning tool that has the potential to propel children toward highly successful lives and careers (Family Online Safety Institute, 2015). The increase in one-to-one device programs and recent government initiatives calling for upgraded connectivity, access to learning devices, increased support for teachers, and greater digital learning resources are evidence of a growing acceptance of technology in schools. While digital technology use continues to increase, what remains unclear is if students actually know how to use these tools safely, responsibly, and ethically. Similarly, many adults are not up-to-date with changing technological developments, nor are they prepared to have Internet safety and ethics discussions with young technology users. With the growing presence of Internet dangers, such as cyber victimization and sexting, it becomes evident that adults need to be aware of and understand Internet safety, as well as accept joint responsibility to keep youngsters safe. Using a qualitative, conversation analysis, the authors focused on the ways in which parents and teachers were invited to an Internet safety and digital citizenship professional development workshop, which included investigation of the structures of interactions between these two. The results provided insight into how adults view their role in providing safe online and offline learning environments for children, as well as beliefs for increasing their self-awareness of Internet safety and knowledge.

Introduction

Schools are moving away from fearing the misuse of Internet technologies to embracing the positive aspects of digital creativity and collaboration. An increased acceptance of technology in schools followed the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), the rise of one-to-one device initiatives, and recent government programs such as ConnectEd[1], which requires upgraded connectivity, increased access to learning devices, and more teacher support and digital learning resources. In addition to this widespread adoption of technology in schools, families have also become more accepting of technology in their homes. A recent study showed 78% of parents

[1] See http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/connected/

perceived technology as a positive learning tool that could direct children toward highly successful lives and careers in the future (Family Online Safety Institute, 2015).

The rapid development of technology has created a plethora of positive changes in our society (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2009). However, the rise of technology has not come without its share of roadblocks. Oftentimes, these seemingly innocuous tools have inadvertently created new ways for people to harm others. Irresponsible and unethical uses of technology have led to injustices such as cyberbullying (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011) and cyber-related suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). As documented in *From Fear to Facebook*, misuse of the Internet has the potential to run rampant among today's youth (Levinson, 2010). Jones, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2013) found trends where youth online harassment increased from 6% (n = 1,501) in 2000 to 11% (n = 1,560) in 2010, prompting the researchers to recommend implementation of school-based prevention programs focusing upon improving peer relationships and reducing bullying. In a recent national poll, adults ranked Internet safety as fourth (51%) and sexting as sixth (45%) in the top 10 growing health concerns among U.S. children (Child Health Evaluation and Research Unit, 2015).

To address this problem, schools must continuously seek ways by which Internet use during school and within the home can provide safer learning experiences (Young & Triphamer, 2009; O'Neill, 2014). Around the world, Internet safety and digital citizenship are growing areas of focus in schools. A recent Google web search (July 13, 2014) returned 154,000,000 results for Internet safety programs. In his analysis of related policies in 25 countries, O'Neill (2014) advocated for a broad spectrum of Internet safety activities that involve multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, O'Neill stated people need to acknowledge that all countries and even schools have different starting points when it comes to Internet safety policy implementation and resulting activity execution. While Internet safety messages and warnings have become prevalent in the media, and serve as reminders of the online dangers that exist, not as much attention has been paid to the actual steps people should be taking to protect themselves and others in an online world (Shillair, Cotten, Tsai, Alhabash, LaRose, & Rifon, 2015).

Schools have recognized that children need direct instruction for appropriate online behaviors, including clear and open discussions about online communications. Several researchers urged better understanding of the problems from a youth perspective: How do children feel when using the Internet? What online media do they prefer? What are their motivations for using the Internet? How are online actions filling certain needs in their personal lives? Answers to these questions based on a youth perspective increases the recognition of the need for children to develop coping techniques, practice responsible decision-making, and be cautious to avoid risky situations (Berson, Berson, Desai, & Falls, 2008; LaRose, Rifon, & Enbody, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Ybarra, Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2007).

However, school attention toward Internet safety alone will not be enough. There also needs to be partnership between parents and community members. While it is important to identify whether youth are knowledgeable of ethical technology use, it is of great importance to understand the specific roles and responsibilities of all adults who place these technological tools in the hands of young children (Mueller & Wood, 2012). In fact, the Pew American Life Project reported that most technology use occurs outside of the classroom (Lenhart, 2012). Risky online behavior (e.g., cyberbullying) has been associated with poor family dynamics, as well as either too much or too

little parental restrictions on technology use (Chng, Li, Liau, & Khoo, 2015; Sasson & Mesch, 2014).

Parent and family involvement in schools continue to have a positive influence on students' achievement (Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2009). Correlation exists between children's interests, aspirations, and learning with how their parents feel about school involvement. Involved parents tend to exhibit high expectations for their children, which positively impacts both the children and their teachers. "These positive outcomes are associated with parents and teachers forming partnerships that are respectful of one another's perspectives" (Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2009, p.444). Through this research study, the authors hoped to extend this notion to Internet safety. Therefore, in an effort to increase parents and community members' involvement in safeguarding children, Mark and Nguyen designed and delivered a professional development workshop for parents and educators to increase Internet safety education and begin forming partnerships to keep technology users safe.

Perspectives and Theoretical Framework

In this intervention, elements of Invitational Education were embedded within the workshop designed to educate relevant school stakeholders in the areas of Internet safety and digital citizenship. Invitational Education theory and practice can create and maintain safe and successful schools by addressing the total culture of the educational environment (Stanley, Juhnke, & Purkey, 2004). Key concepts considered in developing the training included transforming how people communicate with each other and assessing five critical Domains of a school: People, places, programs, policies, and processes. A group process exercise allowed the establishment of goals and an action plan for meeting the goals. The following foundational beliefs were developed for the intervention and executed during the workshop:

- All school stakeholders were intentionally invited to be *equal contributors* to the professional development workshop.
- The workshop's group discussions and activities were guided by the Invitational Education elements: Intentionality, care, optimism, respect and *trust [I-CORT]* (Purkey & Novak, 2016).
- Internet safety education incorporates a personal sense of accountability when it comes to keeping children safe in online and offline environments, therefore, a level of professionalism and collaboration must be expected and demonstrated by all stakeholders during the intervention training.
- Given the Five Assumptions of Invitational Education, parents and educators were asked to form professional learning communities (PLCs) prior to attending the workshop, whereby the workshop facilitators encouraged all stakeholders to be "intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 11).

The workshop itself was designed using Epstein's (1987, 1995) family-school-community partnerships theory and Bandura's (1977) concepts of modeling and self-efficacy. Based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory, Epstein posited that school-family-community partnerships are successful when people from different groups recognize shared common interests, goals, and responsibilities to create better opportunities for children (See Figure 1). This study's workshop intervention assumed Internet safety and digital citizenship education requires a shared

responsibility between parents and educators so the Internet safety workshop would offer a proactive solution to help bridge any gaps between the home and school.

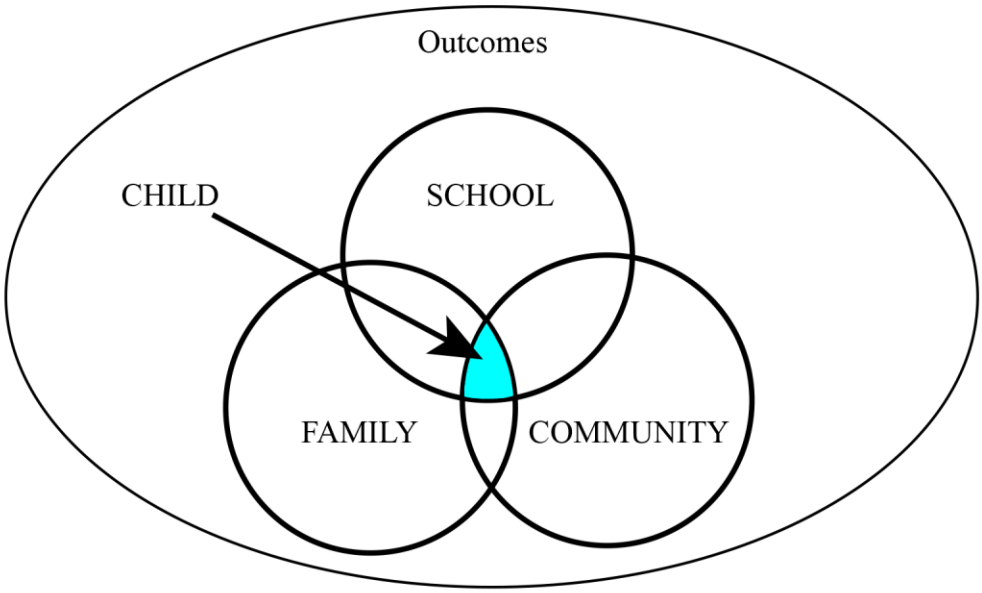

Figure 1. Epstein's (1987) overlapping spheres of influence model. This figure illustrates how collaboration between family, school, and community can have an impact on a child.

Objectives and Purposes

The objective of this study was to take the Five Assumptions of Invitational Education (IE), and examine the efficacy of an Internet safety workshop for parents and educators in relation to the Five Domains of IE: People, places, programs, policies, and processes (Purkey & Novak, 2016). The major research question was: How do the Five Assumptions of Invitational Education manifest within the attempts to intentionally invite parents and educators to encourage human potential during the Internet safety education efforts? Paxton's proposition of providing "trust, respect, and a belief in cooperation, empathic understanding and genuineness" (2003, p.144) also provided a guide.

Methods

Participants

Internet safety workshops occurred twice, once in May 2012 and another in September 2013. Thirty-two participants attended the first workshop and nineteen participants attended the second. In total, participants represented nine private schools, four public schools, two charter schools, and one community youth organization in the state of Hawai'i (n = 16 teams). Workshop invitations were sent to school principals and technology cadre via email, interested participants were intentionally invited to attend the workshop through professional learning communities (PLC)—collaborative groups of stakeholders with common, vested interests in education (DuFour,

2004)—with at least one parent and one school administrator per PLC. Eight school teams (50%) included a parent representative. However, three of those teams had a member serve both a parent and school personnel role. For data analysis purposes, participants serving dual-roles were identified only by their school personnel role. Nine schools (56.3%) included at least one school administrator (See Table 1).

Table 1
Workshop participants by school and parent roles

Role	Workshop I	Workshop II
Classroom teacher	4 (12.5%)	4 (21.1%)
Tech coordinator/ Library media specialist	10 (31.3%)	2 (6.3%)
Principal/Administrator	2 (6.3%)	7 (36.8%)
School counselor	5 (15.6%)	1 (5.3%)
*Parent representative	3 (9.4%)	2 (6.3%)
Other (e.g., health aide, community member, youth mentor)	8 (25.0%)	3 (15.8%)
Total (n = 51)	n = 32 (9 school teams)	n = 19 (7 school teams)

**Note.* A total of eight schools included a parent representative. However, three school teams included one member who acted in both parent and school personnel roles. Dual-role participants were only identified by their school roles.

Instruments

Parent and educator versions of a 5-point Likert-type survey on Internet safety knowledge, self-efficacy, and perspectives on collaboration were created based on Bandura's (2006) *Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales* and existing Internet safety and digital citizenship literature (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Ribble & Bailey, 2007). The reliability of all survey versions met acceptable Cronbach's alphas over .70. For the purpose of this study, Mark and Nguyen only reflected on the open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, as well as the qualitative data collected from the discussions that took place during and after the workshop.

The Internet Safety Workshop

The workshop focused on the 5-Ps: People, places, programs, policies, and processes, within a school organization. These IE Domains guided the workshop development and execution. As the workshop developers and facilitators, Mark and Nguyen:

(a) Identified the stakeholders ideal for participation, e.g., parents, teachers, and school administrators;

(b) Focused upon schools and homes as the environments where Internet safety discussions should originate;

(c) Targeted which programs and policies to discuss during the workshop, e.g., Internet safety and ethics education programs, and school rules and policies; and

(d) Developed workshop activities intended to help school teams generate their team's own individualized goals and action plans.

The intervention was a 3-1/2 hour workshop. Due to the rarity of empirically evaluated Internet safety and ethics programs that exist in the U.S. and internationally, Mark & Nguyen could not model the workshop based on a specific curriculum. Instead, workshop concepts were generated from the highly cited, research-based, *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* (Limber, Kowalski, & Agatston, 2008). Although this program focuses primarily on traditional, face-to-face bullying, it also incorporates ideas of setting limits on appropriate student behavior and emphasizing a non-violent school atmosphere. Digital citizenship concepts (Ribble & Bailey, 2007) were also included in the workshop development to teach adults about cultivating respectful and responsible digital citizens who are capable of making wise decisions. During the workshop, school teams were asked to devise specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART)) goals, school action plans, future Internet safety school programs, and school-wide policy proposals that could help them in their team's short- and long-term technology endeavors. Overall, the intervention workshop purposefully sought to:

a) Highlight how stakeholders can successfully work together to prevent and manage cyber problems,
b) Encourage adults to keep up with modern technology trends,
c) Keep adults informed on the current federal and state laws impacting how schools can legally deal with specific cyber issues, and
d) Empower adult stakeholders to influence school-wide policies and practice regarding Internet safety and ethics.

Data Sources and Analysis

Data sources included emails from the research team to participants, response emails, flyers, and conversations during and after the workshop. Additionally, the researchers decided to include open-ended responses from the questionnaire in the analysis, although these were not initially intended as a data source. A qualitative, conversation analysis was applied that focused upon the ways in which parents and teachers were invited to the workshop and how the structures of interactions during the workshop influenced perception of achievement as a result of workshop interactions (Silverman, 2010; Creswell, 2014). Codes and categories compared the four invitational education assumptions and analyzed emerging patterns that described the participants' overall experiences and perspectives.

Results

The workshop discussions and activities were analyzed in relation to four of the five Invitational Education elements: Trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality (Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 2016). These elements became the four codes used to categorize participants' documented feedback. Table 2 below exhibits the coding scheme, participant quotes, and researcher interpretations.

Table 2
Invitational Education in Internet Safety

Elements of Invitational Education	Internet Safety Feedback from Data Sources	Researcher Interpretations
Trust* - Human existence is a cooperative activity where process is just as important as product.	• Teacher 1: *Parents are an important part of schooling. Your voice in how we address Internet safety is important.* • Parent 1: *Thank you for allowing us the time to talk to each other. This is important to hear what teachers have to say about the Internet.* • Teacher 2: *When students think it's okay to behave a certain way online because it's a social norm, parents need to step in and take equal responsibility for ethically [training] their kids before sending them to school. I think we [at school] also need to do a better job of helping parents [in these efforts].* • Teacher 3: *We (adults) need to be educated on cyber issues, so we can teach, train, model, and accept personal responsibility for online actions.*	In an inviting learning environment, parents and educators were collectively involved in the process of developing Internet safety education plans for their schools. We asked schools to form their own professional learning community (PLC)—teams of parents, teachers, and administrators so that an existing level of trust and communication were already in place within these teams prior to the workshop. The workshop was intended to reinforce these relationships between stakeholders, as well as between the participants and the research team.
Respect* - People are able, valuable, and responsible, and should be treated accordingly.	• Teacher 4: *As parents, you have a unique understanding of your child. We value that perspective, but hope you can listen to the teacher's concerns too that might be different from yours.* • Parent 2: *We need to figure out how to get peers more involved somehow. They can bring a lot to the table too.* • Teacher 5: *The experts had so much to share and it was all very*	Parents and educators were treated as equal partners in their action planning. In the development of the workshop, it was a goal from the start to include the voices of parents, educators, school administrators, and other stakeholders in these critical conversations. The facilitators of the workshop were available as guides to assist teams in

	useful. • Parent 3: *I wish we had more time and events to share with each other like this; everyone's perspective is so valuable.*	their action planning processes. This allowed participants to take greater ownership of their school goals, policies, and action plans.
Optimism* - People possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor.	• Teacher 2: *Though we may not know the Internet [as well as kids], I have a lifetime of experience I can share with my students and with your children. You have that too! Just because it didn't happen online doesn't mean it's invalid.* • Teacher 6: *I want to have continuous conversations [with my students' parents] and have a regular dialogue with my students in class. This workshop has given me some great ideas.*	Participants expressed a genuine interest and eagerness to learn the content in the workshop, and in general shared a positive sense of hope for change within their school communities.
Intentionality* - Human potential can best be realized by places, policies, processes, and programs specifically designed to invite development and by people who are personally and professionally inviting with themselves and others.	• Researchers: *We invite you to attend the workshop with a team of parents, teachers, and school administrators.* • Teacher 7: *I think we need to make it a priority to go to more trainings like this and share this information with other faculty and staff, and parents and family members.* • Teacher 4: *I hope we can continue to be this open in our conversations after this workshop. I think we, as the schools and parents, need to put effort into inviting each other to continue talking. We all get busy, but this is ultimately for the children.*	The workshop was intended to provide specific education and awareness to an audience of parents and educators, who all have unique and valuable insights, experiences, and contributions to the cause. Through this purposeful effort to bring parents and educators together, we were able to observe what could be the beginning of effective family, school, and community partnerships.

Note: *Adapted from "An Introduction To Invitational Theory" by William W. Purkey (1992).

Emergent Themes

In two open-ended survey questions, participants were asked to share their perceptions for decreasing Internet-related problems in their schools. Four themes emerged from the data:

a) Awareness of Internet safety through education is important for all ages.
b) Triangulated communication between students, the home, and school, should be open, honest, and on a regular basis. This includes communication between students and parents; students and teachers; teachers and school administration; as well as schools and families.
c) Consistent technology rules must be implemented in both the school and home whereby parents and educators actively involve students in the rule-making process to encourage student ownership and accountability.
d) Sustained efforts to provide inclusive collaboration between parent and educators around Internet and school safety practices should be systemically planned and encouraged.

These emergent themes reflect the basic tenets of Invitational Education by highlighting the inclusive, collaborative, and empowering, nature of education. This study's participants' perceived the importance of the individuals who are necessary to make Internet safety education happen in schools. Furthermore, they expressed this type of education is relatable and relevant to technology users of any age and setting rather than just children or for a school setting. Participants recognized creating changes within their schools such as increasing open communication between homes and schools and revising outdated school rules and policies requires people and a process that would take time, effort, multiple resources, willingness, and dedication to institutionalize the change effort. Overall, these emergent themes reflected participants' desire for a shared commitment to being effective and ethical users of technology.

Additional Results

Overall, parents and teachers expressed feeling welcomed to the workshop and were pleased to be intentionally invited to the Internet safety discussions within their school PLC teams. Often parents are left out of school policy development, school-wide goal setting, and action planning, or are not included until the very end of the change process. This workshop allowed parents and teachers to collaborate on Internet safety school goals and strategies as a team from the very beginning. Through personal observations, all stakeholders voiced this as a positive outcome.

Participants also shared that they were thankful for the time and space to have Internet safety conversations with other parents and educators who were equally interested in creating safer online and offline learning environments for children. A common observation following the workshop intervention was that parents and teachers recognized that schools cannot walk the Internet safety path alone. The workshop participants exhibited increased awareness that parents and community members share equal responsibility for guiding youth through their online and offline technology explorations and discoveries.

Implications for Parents and Educators

School PLC teams initially expressed a deep concern for their students' well-being. Through the workshop intervention, concern gave way to an increased awareness that educating both students and adults about the appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology was a proactive way to address Internet misconduct. Regarding Bandura's (1977) concept of modeling,

many workshop participants believed adults need to pay more attention to modifying their own technology values, ethical decision-making skills, and behavior. Perhaps parents and educators could ask the following question of themselves: *Am I a good model of an ethical decision-maker online as well as offline?*

When it comes to enforcing essentially unenforceable online behavior, in which existing rules and regulations often do not yet exist, it is important for adults to explicitly discuss with children appropriate and inappropriate behaviors (Cross, 2009; Ribble & Bailey, 2007; Villano, 2008). Rules, consistency, and structure are important, especially for younger children. Too often children are not included in policy- or rule-making processes (Marzano, 2011). Therefore, adults should intentionally invite children to help in the creation of Internet rules to provide them with ownership of the limitations and empower their accountable for related actions.

Limitations

Of the 16 school PLC teams that took part in the workshops, only three teams actually followed-through to the end of the study, which included three follow-up communications not discussed above. It is difficult to know whether the schools in which researchers could not maintain ongoing contact took action beyond the Internet safety workshop intervention. Subsequent lack of communication results in only assumptions or speculation. Perhaps these-non-responsive schools to follow-up requests did not have sufficient time to apply what they had learned during the workshop. Perhaps they lacked strong PLC leadership to sustain the work begun during the intervention workshop. Another explanation could be that these school PLCs were in the process of working on implementation of their action plans, but were simply not as ready as other schools to make school-wide changes regarding Internet safety.

There was a concern about the generalizability of the study's results to different populations and settings because random selection and assignment of participants were not possible and overall participation in the study was voluntary. It is known that individuals who seek out or are willing to take part in research studies may have personal traits that set them apart from those who do not volunteer to participate, such as motivation, accessibility, ability, age, gender, race, or ethnicity (Parker, 1993).

Simply telling people something in a training session or workshop does not mean that the concept was taught or that the recipients of that information will necessarily take action (Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008). Studies on behavior and motivation are challenging because these concepts are difficult to observe and measure. Multiple factors can affect the decisions individuals make beyond professional development experiences. Yet, because no two individuals are alike, it was important for these researchers to be aware of the variability in motivation and capabilities when it comes to thoughts and actions.

Future Directions

- Further empirical evaluation needs to assess the effects of a collaborative parent and educator Internet safety workshop.
- Continuous follow-up communications could assess long-term behavior changes.
- Strong leadership within a professional learning community team is crucial.
- Stakeholders that include school administrators and school board members should be encouraged to attend future Internet safety workshops since school rules and policy changes typically require their authorization.

Conclusions

Invitational Education theory believes "human potential can best be realized by places, policies, programs, and processes that are specifically designed to encourage human potential, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 11). The Internet safety and ethics workshop study demonstrates when people feel intentionally invited into situations, optimal achievement can occur. Implementation of Invitational Education theory and practices creates and sustains holistic success in a school environment. While the Internet safety and ethics workshop study focused more on the process of helping Internet safety teams build their own capacity for creating safer online environments for students, parents, and educators, sustained success requires interdependency between people, places, programs, policies.

Ultimately, when dealing with Internet safety, it is important for awareness and education to be the top priorities of all members of a professional learning community. Schools alone cannot develop and sustain best practices. It is important for schools to involve parents and the community in the creation of Internet safety rules, policies, and action plans. Adults have the responsibility to be consistent models of appropriate behavior, both on and offline (Baum, 2005). Although many parents and educators vary in their own knowledge and understanding of technology, there is agreement in the need to use it safely and responsibly. This study could generate critical dialogue between parents and educators around the ideas of assessing school communities' values and priorities, as well as for setting goals and objectives based on the creation of inclusive, intentionally inviting, and collaborative Internet safety action teams. Action teams rooted in effective family-school-community partnerships, and the collaborative efforts stemming from these partnerships could help protect children from the growing list of Internet safety issues that ultimately affect the overall culture and climate of a school community.

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The Relevance of Empathy to the Intentionally Inviting Stance

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Abstract

A core component of invitational education is taking an intentionally inviting stance, whereby the teacher achieves and maintains an optimally inviting environment by intentionally practicing care, trust, respect, and optimism with students. These elements are rooted in the affective domain. Affective teaching involves the use of empathy. Humans are born with the capacity to feel the expressed emotions of others. This affective attribute is the basis for demonstrating empathy. However, empathy is a progressive construct. Initial affective mirroring must be augmented with cognitive, social and cultural experiences in order to be transformational. An intentionally inviting stance provides the potential for development of high-levels of empathy to occur.

Introduction

The framework for Invitational Education practice is designed for educators to take an "inviting stance" with their students using the following elements: *care, trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality* (Purkey & Novak, 2015; Shaw, et al., 2013). Caring teachers display positive regard for their students, actively encourage learning, and celebrate achievements. Trust is essential in the classroom to ensure collaboration, cooperation, and working relationships. Respect requires acknowledgement of one's presence and direction in life. Optimism expects the best outcomes for students whereby good things are permanent and bad things are temporary. Finally, through intentionality, educators deliberately invite their students to learn, succeed, and realize their fullest potential (Purkey & Novak, 2015). Arguably, these elements are rooted in the affective domain because emotions are involved when intentionally designing and conducting a caring, trusting, optimistic, and respectful learning environment. "No matter what is being taught, emotions are always happening and will influence and often determine results" (Radd, 2006, p. 85). American psychologist Carl Rogers advocated that affective elements should be provided for learning to have meaning:

> "Significant learning involves the whole person; it combines cognitive and affective experiential elements. It is a unified learning, yet with awareness of the different aspects. It does not separate the mind from the heart, from feelings, as most education attempts to do" (Patterson, 1977, p. 20).

Beyond subject knowledge and professional preparation, affective teacher qualities are essential for effective and meaningful learning to occur (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Such practices not only help students learn but "actively strengthens their capacity to learn" (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 27). Indeed, in order for a teacher to take an intentionally inviting stance, the understanding and application of these affective elements are crucial for education practices to

be invitational. When considering how to engage human emotions and human relationships, a basic understanding of empathy is paramount.

Empathy

Empathy is a process of both feeling (affective) and thinking (cognitive) through the perceived situation of another. Commonly referred to as *putting oneself into another's shoes*, empathy involves a "willingness of an observer to become part of another's experience, to share the feeling of that experience" (Rifkin, 2009, p 12). In part, empathy is often referenced as an affective mode of perceiving and sharing the emotions of others (Davis, 1996; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Hoffman, 1987; Rogers, 1983). Research has shown empathy to be an innate human predisposition that tends to increase responsibility, caring, and helping behavior (Kohn, 1990). The 1992 discovery of the brain's mirror-neuron system appears to have established a biological basis for empathy (Rifkin, 2009; Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004). This system enables humans to sense and feel the emotional state of others. Mirror neurons fire both when someone does an action as well as when observing another doing an action. This allows humans to autonomically sense and feel the emotional state of others and simulate observed actions, which helps with understanding and learning through imitation. Therefore, humans are designed to be social beings and emotionally connected to each other (Rifkin, 2009).

Although humans are born with an affective empathic capacity, its further development is largely cognitive and dependent on the cultural and experiential conditions of education and upbringing (Calloway-Thomas, 2010, Davis, 1996). Empathy becomes a key element to successful learning. Teachers who work on knowing and understanding students in order to gauge their perceptions and abilities accordingly will more likely have success than teachers who ignore empathy as a key element. Crucially, when involving both affective and cognitive understanding, education has been shown to develop higher levels of empathy in students. Studies conducted on empathy development during teacher/counselor education in social work (Pinderhughes, 1979), cultural studies (Cruz & Patterson, 2005), counseling (Hatcher et al., 1994), music education (Kalliopuska & Roukonen, 1993), and physical education (Monahan, 2013) suggest empathy can be enhanced by an educational program.

Developmental Levels of Empathy

Although most humans are born with a capability to vicariously feel another's emotional condition, empathy is an evolving ability. It must be cultivated through human interaction and experience to fully develop. The following developmental levels of empathy are adapted from Hoffman (1987):

Global empathy.

Global empathy represents the rudimentary operation of mirror-neurons in normally-functioning human brains. This level of empathy, demonstrated by most infants, is a basic response to the emotions of another. An infant who is resting comfortably, clean and nourished, would likely cry when hearing another infant cry or when witnessing the distress of the mother. This basic response is purely affective and involves little cognition. The human observes an action, simulates the observed emotion involved, and reacts accordingly. If empathy were fixed at this level, it would be extremely difficult for one to go through life. Just walking down the street would be a virtual roller coaster of sensation from viewing and mirroring the emotions of others.

Egocentric empathy

Egocentric empathy is commonly exhibited by young children. At this level, one experiences the basic understanding of another's condition, but either not yet prepared or possibly concerned to feel beyond the self. A young child seeing something distressing such as starving children on the television might yell, "Change the channel!" While perhaps understanding the plight of the starving children, the child is not prepared to fully feel their distress. It is natural for children to be egocentric and develop a social awareness with age and experience (Piaget, 1967). Young children naturally have less life experiences than adults, therefore, less cognitive understanding of observed actions and emotions. Nevertheless, empathy does not necessarily mature with age.

Since empathy is developmental, not all humans progress beyond this egotistical level. Studies have demonstrated that wealthy people have difficulty reading the emotions of others, while showing a lower compassion and generosity to those less fortunate (Piff, 2014, Pickett, & Wilkinson, 2011, Kraus, et al. 2010). This suggests entitled individuals tend to retain their ego while not considering the misfortune of others. While children displaying egotistical empathy might not be cognitively ready to place themselves in the shoes of others, children of wealth might not be concerned or inclined to do so.

Situational empathy

This level, common among adults, represents an increased awareness to empathize with another person's situation. The development of situational empathy is more dependent on cognition, such as accumulation of knowledge, culture, and social experiences, than affective mirroring (Lamm & Majdandžić, 2015). An individual demonstrating situational empathy has the ability to fully put themselves in another's shoes. However, people tend to empathize, and socially connect with those people who are most like them. Therefore, some situations can produce a more empathic response than others. This could be seen as a consequence of the social connection where like-group members share positive interactions toward each other but not toward unlike-group members (Seppala, et al., 2013). Empathy is practiced, but not necessarily toward all people or all groups. Situational empathy can thus be directed, shaped, and blunted, depending on the situation. Individuals demonstrating situational empathy may focus their empathy on specific groupings: Race, gender, class, sports, politics, religion, etc. Empathy is experienced in full, but only for the favorite team, politician, or spiritual leader, not for those on the other side.

Transformational empathy

Operating at this level of empathy exhibits identification of "someone else's situation as one's own" (Hoffman, 1987, p. 48). Transformational empathy is considered a higher-order empathy that represents a thorough capacity to empathize with entire groups of people, including those who are different. This includes keen cognitive perceptions, along with affective mirroring. Transformational empathy is believed to be a precursor to higher levels of morals, prosocial, and altruistic behaviors (Hoffman, 2003). An important aspect of transformational empathy is the ability to fully immerse oneself into another's experience while leaving the perceiving self behind; thereby resulting in a complete experience of the actions and feelings of another without judgment or bias. It should be noted that although the transformational empathic experience views the world through another without bias, it does not automatically put the viewer in a position to condone or

even agree with the actions of the other. More so, the experience may be seen by the viewer as why a particular action was taken. For example, to empathize with a murderer does not mean to condone murder. However, it may lead one to understand the reasons why such a crime was committed.

The Empathic Invitational Stance

Care. The requirement of care is a basic human need. Since humans are born unable survive on their own, the ability to care is absolutely necessary for human existence (Lieberman, 2013). Empathy is the social mechanism that allows humans to feel for others and respond to their needs. Infants are cared for because empathetic parents and care-givers feel compelled to ensure their health, comfort, and safety. In a school setting, care is the most essential element to the intentionally inviting stance (Purkey & Novak, 2015). It is necessary to foster a nurturing environment whereby students feel comfortable learning, exploring, and socializing. In addition, caring teachers tend to develop a caring capacity within their students (Noddings, 1992). Higher forms of empathy appear to be compatible with caring, prosocial practices, and higher moral development (Hoffman, 1987). Furthermore, higher-level empathy can lead to a more caring disposition that increases one's generosity and involvement in social causes (Monahan, 2013, Hoffman, 2003).

Trust. To be intentionally inviting is to be trusting. Trust involves the effort to work interdependently with others, to establish open and honest relationships, and to help others pursue goals and dreams (Purkey & Novak, 2015). It encompasses the qualities of reliability, genuineness, truthfulness, intent, and competence (Arceneaux, 1994). A teacher's ability to teach others by changing and shaping perceptions is dependent on the students' trust. The intentionally inviting stance assumes trust to be unconditional. However, that could be difficult without involving empathy. Trust enables student cooperation, harmony, and production (Arceneaux, 1994). Empathy helps to facilitate the relationship between teacher and student. Higher-order empathy allows the teacher to be fully immersed in a student's situation, regardless of how different the student. "When the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems *to the student*, then again, the likelihood of significant learning is increased" (Rogers, 1983, p. 125).

Respect. Students should be treated with dignity and as valuable and responsible contributors to the classroom (Purkey & Novak, 2015). To show respect is to give undivided attention to another, perceive from the other's point of view, and validate it. Respect is indeed earned but not through fear or intimidation. Rather, respect is based on valuing and sharing another's perception as an equal perspective. Respect requires acknowledgement and understanding another's point of view before challenging or debating it. Another's viewpoint should be seen as a valid contribution to the learning environment. Giving respect to others is to dignify, empower and elevate their status (Keltner, 2016). Empathy allows for the perception and sharing of another's point of view, initially without judgment, which gives authenticity to the sentiment. This allows the teacher to give attention to the backgrounds, experiences, views, and beliefs, of students in order to incorporate them into the learning process. Validation of students' contributions to their learning environment is respecting their worth within the classroom.

Optimism. The optimistic person is predisposed to view life's challenges in a positive light. Optimism is seen as an inclination to have confidence in favorable outcomes. This optimistic outlook is commonly referred to as *the glass being half-full* rather than the pessimistic referral that, *the glass is half-empty*). An optimist views good things as permanent and bad things as temporary, whereby setbacks are considered challenges with which to work harder on (Seligman, 2006). An optimistic teacher extends this positive view to students. "It is not enough to be inviting; it is critical to be optimistic about the process" (Purkey & Novak, 2015). Exhibiting optimism through an intentionally inviting stance is expecting positive outcomes for students. Intentionally inviting teachers nurture and care about their students' success. In turn, optimism is seen as a key factor in teacher likability ratings (Frymier, 1994). Research has shown empathy to be positively correlated with optimism and other affirming personality traits (Hojat, et al., 2015). Empathic understanding of students' circumstances and challenges can help the teacher to be committed to the students' success. Additionally, by understanding empathy can be enhanced through an educational program should cause teachers to become more optimistic about their students' empathic development.

Intentionality. The inviting stance centers upon the teacher's explicit behaviors that welcome, accepts, and facilitates students within the classroom. Intentionality epitomizes the primary effort of the teacher to create a consistent and dependable environment focused on students' realization of their fullest potential (Purkey & Novak, 2015; Shaw, et al., 2013). By being intentionally inviting, the teacher makes a conscious effort to care, trust, respect, and optimistically assist students to optimally achieve. Yet the teacher also needs to comprehend students from an interpersonal perspective. Empathy helps the teacher to accurately read students' emotions or concerns and to understand them from the students' perspective. This ultimately enhances the teacher's ability to unconditionally accept students for who they are rather than based on how they behave or perform on tasks (Kohn, 2005). It can be assumed that the intention to help students realize their potential is also shared by the students when students are seen as equal contributors to their education. Both empathy and shared intentionality are capacities that are necessary for moral agency to occur (Hourdequin, 2011). While empathy represents attunement to the emotions of another, shared intentionality can be seen as attunement to others' goals and ends (Hourdequin, 2011). Thus, the teacher's motivation to recognize and assist students' in the realization of their potential is intrinsically connected to empathic awareness of the students' situations.

Practical Implications

The alignment between an intentionally inviting stance and optimal progression through levels of developmental empathy discussed above may help teachers recognize and further develop their own empathy levels, which will help them effectively seek to cultivate their students' level of empathy. Teachers must acknowledge that during the school day, their empathic attention should be focused on their students. There are numerous student-focused empathy activities posted on the internet. However, empathic approaches can be categorized within the following avenues:

Discovery. This involves getting to know students and the self. Knowledge of each other is an important feature of working together. A simple day-one exercise is to have students share their name, including any nickname or preferred name. Then have students share where they are from, their hobbies/ interests, and something unique or less known about them. From the teacher's perspective, this provides a starting point for getting to know each student. Common interests can lead to further conversation and enhanced familiarity. Ascertaining the uniqueness of each student

allows the teacher to accept them as distinctive individuals. Another suggested discovery activity, titled *Who are you?,* is located from www.invitationaleducation.net >Programs & Services> Member Resources> Activities.

Dialogue. Encouraging dialog between students during class discussions helps the teacher understand perspectives beyond the textbook. Freire (1993) considered dialogue to be essential in education. It leads students and the instructor to work together to understand mutual problems and develop solutions. The intentionally inviting stance is important when engaging students in dialogue. Teachers who trust students' experiences and opinions demonstrate respect for their contributions to the class and demonstrate care about the students' viewpoint. It is important that students be given equal opportunity to contribute to class dialogue. From www.invitationaleducation.net >Programs & Services> Member Resources> many dialogue-building activities are available, including: *Puzzle Talk, Attack Thoughts, Barriers to Communication, Be Positive, I Heard What You Said, but What Did You Say?, and Words I Wish I Had Heard*.

Understanding. The result of empowering students' voices within the classroom is increased teacher empathy for the students' diverse situations and particular perspectives which allows students to better understand each other. Understanding different viewpoints raises collective consciousness of previously unknown perspectives. This can lead to increased tolerance, mutual respect, and acceptance of opposing perspectives. To be truly transformational, an intentionally inviting stance must be willing to see things from multiple perspectives. From www.invitationaleducation.net> Programs & Services> Member Resources> several activities are available that help to promote increased understanding of multiple perspectives including: *Blue and Orange Card Activity, Draw a Student, From the Other Side of the Desk, and Changing "You" messages to "I" messages.*

Conclusions

While human empathy appears to occur naturally, there is no assurance that higher-level empathy will develop in all humans (Davis, 1996; Emde, 1989). Normal-functioning human brains contain mirror-neurons, which allow humans to perceive the emotions of others. However, developing higher-level empathy further requires cognitive learning, social learning as well as experiential learning. Teachers are responsible for the effective education of their students. However, that education involves more than just cognitive conveyance of knowledge. Learning involves the affective domain. Beyond cognitive knowledge, students need to learn social interactions, interpersonal skills, a sense of belonging, the value of interdependence, as well as the expression and sharing of emotions. This requires an emotional investment on the part of the teacher, which in effect requires effective utilization of higher-levels of empathy.

Awareness of developmental empathy may help educators seeking to utilize an intentionally inviting stance to plan lessons and activities that include opportunities for students to reach their fullest potential by collaborating, sharing, observing others, participating in discussions, and expressing their opinions, feelings, or perspectives. This intentionally inviting framework potentially helps students develop socially, emotionally, as well as cognitively. The high-level empathic teacher utilizing an intentionally inviting stance not only helps students achieve but also fosters the students' development of higher-level empathy. While intentionality is considered to be the central aspect of the inviting stance, empathy may arguably be its connective

lattice. Empathy, as exhibited through intentional care, trust, respect, and optimism deepens and strengthens the inviting stance; which in turn has the potential to be an ideal situation for practicing, promoting, and nurturing higher-level empathy.

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An Intentionally Inviting Individualized Educational Program Meeting: It can happen!

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Abstract

Anyone who has attended an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting for a student with special needs knows that this gathering of individuals has the potential to be extremely contentious and adversarial if not handled effectively. Often parents become overwhelmed by terminology that is foreign to them and may feel as though the only comments they hear about their child's educational experiences are negative. By contrast, teachers and service providers too often approach these meetings as a fait accompli, whereby a plan for services and placement decision has been pre-determined, which is in sharp contrast to the mandated approach requiring the meeting to be a work in progress, developed by a team effort, and valuing the parents as active team members. Invitational Education theory encourages a more dependable stance. This article describes the benefits of applying Invitational Education theory to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.

Introduction

The International Alliance for Invitational Education (IAIE) starfish analogy (Purkey & Novak, 2016) lends itself perfectly to safeguarding the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting as a welcoming and positive experience for all participants. Invitational Education theory advocates for an emphasis upon programs, policies, peoples, processes and places "to transform the fundamental culture by centering all action on intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p.18). According to Purkey and Novak, "Invitational Education begins and ends with people" (2016, p. 20). In the case of an IEP meeting, IDEA (2004) mandates the stakeholder team comprised of parents/guardians, students, special educators, general educators, related service providers, and administrators, to work together to provide the best possible educational program for the student receiving services.

Research suggests that parent perceptions of welcoming or inviting experiences during the IEP process, including the classification meetings, is far from welcoming or inviting (Cheatham, et. al, 2012). In a review of 10 studies relating to parental perception of the IEP process, only one reported positive parental experiences (Reiman, Beck, Coppola & Engiles, 2010). The remaining reviewed studies found that the foundation for positive and inviting IEP meetings must begin with parent inclusion in every step of the evaluation and classification process. "Educators should refrain from predetermining IEP decisions, completing IEP forms without family input, and

excluding families when writing goals and objectives" (Fish, 2008, p. 13). Invitational Education theory applied to IEP team interactions can mitigate obstacles that limit family involvement due to the locus of control in educational planning and facilitation being firmly with the professionals (Childre & Chambers, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

People

All participants at the IEP meeting are important and worthy of respect, even when participants do not agree with one another. As cited in Purkey, Schmidt, and Novak (2010, p. 10), "the absence of conflict is death" (Fullan, 2001). Each participant is a valued team member and has something worthy to contribute to the goal of providing the most appropriate educational programming and related services for the student with special needs. From the parents' perspective, their contribution comes in the form of making appropriate parenting decisions for their child and being their child's strongest advocate. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) mandates the involvement of parents throughout the IEP process. Parental active involvement was shown to be beneficial for their children's receipt of services (Lo, 2012). As an IDEA mandate, Yell, Katsayannis, Ennis, and Losinski (2013) emphasize that if attempts to actively involve parents are not documented by the school, a due process hearing could determine that the student was denied a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). When a school implements invitational education practices in the pursuit of following legal protocol, it could establish the an intentionally inviting platform that supports the mindset needed to provide quality educational planning and programming for students with special needs (Hansen & Morrow, 2012). For the teachers, evaluators, and administrators, participating in the IEP process, the change in mindset should exhibit a "beneficial presence" (Purkey, Schmidt, & Novak, 2010, p. 9) in the lives of students with disabilities, their parents and other IEP team members.

Places

When coordinating details for an upcoming IEP meeting, one of the requirements must be "to ensure that IEP meetings are scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and place, which can include holding meetings by conference calls or via the Internet" (Yell, Katsayannis, Ennis, & Losinski, 2013, p. 59). While not required by law, when a parent cannot come to a meeting during the school day, the most intentionally inviting approach would be to either hold the meeting after school hours, by conference call, or through an internet session such as Zoom, FaceTime, or Skype. Technology has developed several programs that provide flexibility for identifying convenient dates and times for scheduling the meeting when the parent has access to a connected device. By providing such an opportunity, parents are given the respect to participate based on a time and place that welcomes their diverse schedules to optimize their active participation.

The IEP meeting environment can be intentionally inviting or intentionally disinviting, depending on the effort or lack thereof put forth by the educational stakeholders hosting the meeting. Thus, the place either positively or negatively set the tone for the IEP meeting before it begins. A meeting can occur in the most up to date place with video equipment, computers for every participant, and new furniture. Yet, it still can be intentionally disinviting if other team members present themselves in the meeting room in a manner that makes the student's parents feel welcome. When the parents are strategically seated across the table from the school's team members, opposing sides, rather than a group working together for the child's best interests, becomes a natural perception (Varvisotis, Matyo-Cepero, & Ziebarth-Bovill, 2016). Conversely, a meeting

can take place in an older, more outdated facility, yet still be intentionally inviting. When the educational members of the IEP team seeks to meet when it is most convenient for parents, when parents are greeted with a smile and a warm handshake, when all meeting participants are introduced before the start of the meeting, and when the case manager arranges to sit next to the parents, then the atmosphere of the IEP meeting place can be considerably more positive and inviting for success (Varvisotis, Matyo-Cepero, & Ziebarth-Bovill, 2016).

Policies

IDEA (2004) mandates required components of an IEP meeting. These specific requirements include:

"a) providing prior written notice of IEP meeting to parents
b) adhering to state-mandated timelines
c) involving a student's parents in education decision making
d) conducting complete and individualized evaluations
e) ensuring that all the necessary team members attend IEP meetings
f) including appropriate content in the IEP, and
g) ensuring that the IEP is implemented as written" (Yell, 2016, p.230).

Today, there are many single-parent homes and many two-parent homes whereby parents both hold multiple jobs to meet their family's needs.. A single-parent family with the father as the sole caretaker, may be especially vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed, a lack of partnership with the school or IEP team, which exacerbates conflicts (Mueller & Buckley, 2014). An intentionally disinviting way to comply with IDEA policies would be simply mailing a letter stating when and where the meeting is to be held not following up in any way. If the letter is not delivered to the correct address, or if the parent subsequently cannot attend the meeting, an intentionally disinviting mindset could misinterpret absence as a lack of parental interest or involvement. By contrast, an intentionally inviting mindset makes a concerted effort to align IEP policies with the parent's reality.

Programs

Once it has been determined that a student is eligible for special education and related services, the team must work together to arrange and implement the best possible educational program to meet that student's needs and optimize educational success. Too frequently, budget concerns influence allocation of services and educational programs. It is intentionally disinviting and potentially illegal for educational stakeholders of an IEP team to predetermine a student's classification category, service provision, and educational placement, before the IEP meeting (Yell, Katsiyannis, Ennis, & Losinski, 2013).

IDEA (2004) requires development of educational programs specifically crafted to meet the needs of students who are eligible for special education and related services, including giftedness. IEP team stakeholders have become increasingly educated about the many techniques, strategies, technologies, and accommodations, that are available and accessible to best serve students' with disabilities. Invitational Education theory utilized during the IEP process and meeting has the potential to create an invaluable, positive experience, which ultimately optimizes success for the student. Program options should be openly shared with the parents and the rationale for preferences for a specific program collaboratively discussed with the parents. An intentionally inviting mindset seeks to fully explain and patiently discuss a program's details with the parent. Whenever

the parent is unsure about a recommendation, the opportunity to be enlightened must be afforded the parent.

Processes

The Starfish Analogy of Invitational Education (Purkey & Novak, 2016) is apropos for IEP meetings. Through an intentionally inviting mindset, the IEP process brings together people, places, policies, and programs to create an effective means by which educational and parent stakeholders can collectively develop the foundation for meeting the needs of the child with a disability. More than satisfying the legal mandates required by an IEP meeting, an IEP meetings based on invitational education theory positively informs the child and parents of their sense of potential (Redford, 2015). An IEP meeting based on invitational education theory (Purkey & Novak, 2016) intentionally invites all stakeholders to actively contribute to the development of the IEP. The invitational education process thereby empowers collaborative formulation, implementation, and the evaluation of the student's progress.

Suggestions

There are many ways to make an IEP meeting more intentionally inviting. Many of these best practices are rooted in the IDEA mandates to increase active parental involvement in the IEP process. While parents must be provided a list of names and job titles of the school staff participating in the meeting, ask all educational stakeholders to wear names tags or provide names tents at each participant's seat. Ensure water and tissues are available, respective that an IEP meeting can be very emotional for parents. When upset, offer the opportunity to take a break. Avoid jargon! However, because special education uses many acronyms, be sure the required handbook of parents' rights includes an appendix that includes a list of commonly used acronyms and their meanings. If the state-distributed parents' rights handbook does not include a glossary and acronym list, develop one for your school/district. Following the IEP meeting, send the parents an evaluation survey in the parent's preferred mode of communication (digital or hardcopy) eliciting the parents' perception of the educational stakeholder's level of professionalism, school environment, hospitality, flexibility of meeting time, etc. Whenever, as is a right, the student plans to attend the IEP meeting, have "fidget devices" or stress-relieving objects to help aid the student's participation.

Conclusions

Even an invitational teacher who believes "the school's programs work for the benefit of everyone and that they encourage active engagement" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 21) must create strategies or programs to help children with special needs in their studies. The 5 P's discussed above "provide a language for strategic thinking. Analyzing and improving each of the 5 P's within a framework of intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) systemically transform the whole school" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 22). , From the time a child is initially referred for evaluation through the IEP team meeting to determine eligibility and create the IEP, your school and its IEP team may need to be restructured (Mueller & Buckley, 2014). Implementing invitational education theory into this reform efforts will create levels of functioning based on a "dependable stance, where school personnel understand the dynamics of an inviting relationship, increases the likelihood that a cordial summons will be accepted, and acted upon" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 24).

The point of an IEP meeting that implements invitational education theory is not to create an environment where there is a "warm and fuzzy feeling that makes people kind and likeable" (Noddings, 1995, p. 2). Rather, the value is derived from each participant interacting as an equal member of the team, whereby the production of caring, competent, loving and lovable people demonstrating respect for the human talents, becomes the educational goal (Noddings, 1995). Any IEP meeting that implements invitational education theory actively seeks to involve all participants in the discussion. In doing so, educational stakeholders satisfy IDEA (2004) mandates designed to benefit the children we serve while intentionally inviting collaborative discussions that generate and prioritize goals that transform practice based on a new vision for student success (Dabkowski, 2004).

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So, That is What You Said?

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Abstract

Classroom learning is a shared experience where ideas and concepts are shaped by the interactions between students and teachers. Different cultural backgrounds of the students compared to the teacher can increase misconceptions or confusion. Although the effective teacher may plan for a range of questions to promote classroom discussion, the more cultural diversity exhibited within a classroom, the greater the likelihood for miscommunication. The intentionally inviting teacher understands different does not mean deficient. This type of effective teacher handles miscommunication, misconceptions, or conceptual confusion by empowering the diverse learner to actively seek or provide greater clarity. By contrast, when a culturally diverse learner's response does not fit the instructor's preconceived expectations, the intentionally disinviting teacher can disable the learner's continued inclusion in class dialogue. As a foundational system for responsive classroom management, Invitational Education theory aligns with culturally responsive teaching practices. A key feature of culturally responsive teaching is presentation of knowledge in a way that builds upon the cultural knowledge, experience, and performance styles of the student. This practice-based analytical paper describes the authors' attempts to apply tenets of Invitational Education theory to optimize responsive communication within the culturally diverse undergraduate classroom.

Introduction

The goal of Communication Theory is for the sent message to be comprehensible by the receiver upon receipt. Effective communication results when there is a sharing of information that achieves a desired response or result (Mindszenthy & Roberts, 2000). However, during the ordinary instructional practice of expecting students to participate in classroom discussions, whenever a student's perspective is minimized by the sender, the receiver becomes intentionally disinvited. In such a situation, to optimize the learning for all mission (Lezotte and Snyder, 2011), the teacher's instructional practice needs to be modified to exhibit an intentionally inviting learning opportunity for all participants. The need for culturally responsive practices provide abundant opportunities for the instructor to apply Invitational Education theory (Purkey & Novak, 2016) to the classroom discussion so the ensuing student discussion can optimize "human potential" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p11). When a teacher invites active communication, the teacher will

essentially promote the "nature of human existence and opportunity" (Purkey and Novak, 2015). As a result, classroom engagement can become a more satisfying and enriching experience whereby discussions invite students' thoughts based on their lived realities that everyone can consider.

Although speaking the same language, each classroom discussion participant has a wide range of experiences and perceptions. This reality may lead to a lack of mutual understanding. Students have complained that teachers misunderstand them.

The premise of this paper is that the more culturally diverse a classroom, the greater the likelihood for miscommunication. While planning questions and creating a set of possible answers to facilitate the discussion, effective and thoughtful preparation based on cultural awareness increases student learning and participation. Teachers often plan lessons and sessions with prewritten questions designed to elicit discussion, elaborate important points, and encourage generalization of learning.

Classroom Engagement

Several approaches seek to promote active dialogue and learning. To prepare a class, the teacher will typically create notes for the lecture and have questions peppered throughout the notes that involve students in the topic and create an atmosphere for discussion. Often the teacher will identify several expected answers so the lecture can touch upon the desired focus points and efficiently transition to new topics during the discussion. However, what happens when a student misunderstands the question or perceives the intent of the discussion differently, resulting in an unexpected answer? The effective teacher must quickly evaluate whether the answer is satisfactory. If satisfactory, how much discussion must the diverse answer require? If the answer is unsatisfactory: Mystifying, off-topic, or not addressing the point of the question, then should the teacher take the time to explore the unexpected response? Brookfield (2011) believes an effective discussion thoroughly explores the topic with no predetermined summary. Therefore, a student's unexpected response creates a critically important need for action.

Compared to their teacher, many students experienced different types of primary education methods, lived in a variety of family models and interactions, and may have vastly different life experiences. A comprehensive list of "good" answers to the teacher's planned questions may actually be incomplete if not constructed from the students' perspectives. Within today's classrooms, especially in high schools and colleges, students may come from very diverse neighborhoods and cultures. By its nature, a diverse society will exhibit less common experiences compared to a culturally homogeneous group.

For instance, Payne (2009) researched the difference in conversation focus and style between diverse social classes. She found significant differences in the direct and anecdotal understanding between members of diverse social classes. This can easily influence how one may relate to an event or issue, perceive the patterns of a discussion, or comprehend the structure of statements depending upon the senders and receiver's social class. Formal language register, which is typically the language for education venues, is essentially foreign to a person from lower socio-economic circumstance whereby casual language register is the norm. Similarly, someone from a middle class background invited to a wealthy person's distinguished dinner party would find the event confusing and unfamiliar. Diversity transcends ethnicity, language, or special needs.

Given common experiences, cultural references become shorthand in conversations and in writing. For instance, as society becomes more secular, fewer people now go to houses of worship on a weekly basis. Therefore, fewer people in a diverse environment would understand religious

references. As a consequence, well-planned activities based solely on the teacher's perspective includes no guarantee that her students will fully comprehend culturally or historically sensitive messages.

The teacher who is less in-tune to the need for cultural responsiveness may erroneously perceive a class interaction as a "failure" if a desired response was not provided. The lack of further exploration of either the diverse or non-response only exacerbates the problem as alienated students further detach from the current or subsequent discussions. This downward spiral toward inactive classroom discussions is undesirable.

By contrast, in a culturally responsive, effective classroom, the goal of discussion is to achieve the desired learning outcome. If discussion is limited to the teacher's perception that the class did the assigned homework, then class discussion may also exhibit ineffective communication. It is important for each answer to be meaningful. When a divergent response is provided, exploration of what the student meant should be pursued. Thus, the teacher intentionally invites dialogue and increased success. This creates the desired climate of care, optimism, and trust, which empowers all students. By intentionally inviting dialogue and success, the teacher promotes formative assessment of students learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The ensuing communication loop increases the teacher's understanding of the students' diverse experiences.

Communication is related to its context. Context is generally influenced by culture and individual perception of external and internal stimuli. Therefore, it is important for the intentionally inviting teacher to create a bridge between the students' informal language register to the more formal language utilized in education venues (Payne, 2009). The open or flipped classroom creates greater opportunities for in-class discussion and mutual learning. Rather than maintaining the more structured role of the teacher as lecturer in the front of the classroom, the flipped classroom approach promotes open discussion, activities, and interactions. In the flipped classroom, the teacher needs to ask for definitions and conceptual meaning so that all diverse participants can exhibit increased active learning that results in conceptual understanding and perceptual awareness based on shared experiences and realities (Roehl, Reddy, & Shanno, 2013). Invitational Education theory intentionally invites success. Through the exercise of Invitational Education theory, stakeholders are encouraged to create an environment whereby care, trust, optimism, and respect are intentionally communicated and celebrated (Burns and Martin, 2010).

Benefits of Intentionality, Care, Optimism, Respect, and Trust (I-CORT)

Possible cognitive dissonance may arise when a student provides an unplanned response. How far off-topic and the function of the unexpected response determines the level of potential conflict. Is the response meant to take the class off-track or did the student respond based on cultural misinterpretation of the question? Is it possible that the student has had a very different set of life experiences and is answering the teacher's question in a way that the teacher does not recognize or understand? What happens to that student's academic experience if his/her response is dismissed or set aside in deference to the teacher's expected response? What happens to how the student perceives the teacher's response? How will that interaction affect the academic experience of the rest of the students in the class? Consideration of cultural responsive practices during planning invites success through consistently exercising care and respect for these dynamics. A key feature of culturally responsive teaching is presentation of knowledge in a way that builds upon the cultural knowledge, experience and performance styles of the student (Gay, 2002).

Creativity, inspiration, and intellectual curiosity may not be supported within the parameters of a planned lecture or lesson (Predmore, 2009). If the intent of the student was to provide a coherent and incisive response, the rejection or acceptance with faint praise may actually serve to alienate the student and fellow classmates. This then creates a noticeable gap between students and teacher experiences that impacts engagement within the classroom. Every instructor can relate to asking a question and then only listening for the predetermined answer. True depth of learning can actually be in further exploring unexpected answers.

The humanistic approach of Invitational Education theory differs from the behaviorism exhibited by Skinner's (1969) operant conditioning theory. Invitational Education theory intentionally promotes care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT), thereby promoting active discussion while wrestling with the concepts developed during class. Invitational Education theory invites group interaction, not a pre-determined action or response provided by the group to which the instructor may identify.

To be intentionally inviting, it is not sufficient to be positive about every response. Rather, diverse responses should be further explored, respective of the topic's central theme. Invitational Education theory and culturally responsive teaching promotes empowerment and inclusion, not anarchy. The goal of discussions based on "I-CORT" (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p 14) is to use the inviting stance to further the understanding of all discussion participants. Inclusive participation in any discussion is not about the quantity of spoken words but the quality of the engaged conversation. An open-minded examination of diverse responses provides additional learning opportunities. While promoting I-CORT, empowerment, and inclusion, it is important for the intentionally inviting teacher to follow the new conceptual thread offered by a student's diverse response so a different set of life experiences can influence or illuminate the conceptual discussion within the classroom. A primary difference between an intentionally inviting stance and an intentionally disinviting stance is in how a student's diverse response is received or treated.

Benefits of an Intentionally Inviting Stance

As noted above, the teacher's inviting stance will affect future responses from a student risking a diverse response as well as responses from the rest of the class. The teacher's inviting stance is influential upon every student's identity integration (Erikson, 1969), and self-perception (Thompson & Loveland, 2015). Identity integration looks at behavior as a reflection and an examination of the person. If someone participates in a classroom discussion, that person can identify as someone active in the classroom. The teacher's inviting stance is therefore important to supporting and encouraging active participation, which leads to optimal human potential. As a practitioner of Invitational Education theory and culturally responsive teaching, it is important to expand upon these four strategies:

- Share your divergent life experiences as a teacher and member of your culture.
- Extend an intentional invitation for students to share their own life experiences as a student and member of their culture,
- Collectively reflect upon increased awareness resulting from the exploration of diverse perspectives, and
- Periodically discuss how the class climate impacts the students' self-perception, innovation, and creativity.

Promoting Success and Self-Efficacy

When a student's answer is either not further considered or treated as superfluous, the student experiences "failure" as a discussion respondent. That self-evaluation of "failure" becomes part of the student's self-awareness and a part of his/her self-description: "I thought I understood the question and answered correctly, but I must not really understand either the topic or the question, I must be worse off than I thought." Such a negative self-perception adversely impacts the student's self-identity. As individuals interact with the world and their surrounding environment, self-perception, and self-identity changes based on perceptions of success or failure. As explored by Lukinsky, and reiterated by Reimer (2016), Erikson's identity theory illustrated that experience adds to understanding and definition of self. The interplay of individual personality and the negative experience creates opportunities for ineffective identity integration as individuals now perceive their lack of self-efficacy (Thompson & Loveland, 2015). Sadly, the instructor has lost an opportunity to make the classroom inviting or responsive.

However, through utilization of tenets of Invitational Education theory and culturally responsive practices the classroom climate evolves whereby the students' contribution can be revealed and all participants can be enlightened. In such a successful environment, the teacher readily learns from the students' cultural background and experiences and makes discussions and learning more relevant to the students. The students experience optimism and trust that their thoughts and perceptions are welcomed.

Any teacher taking the time to explore unexpected responses invites upon herself the same opportunity to expand her self-definition through identity integration. The self-image of being a good discussion leader, capable of drawing out students into effective classroom interactions, solidifies as the teacher continues to consider all answers worthy of exploration. Both the teacher and the student experience identity growth through the intentionally inviting stance.

Enhanced Creativity

Just as the self-perception of identity is cultivated by each new positive interaction, so too is the ability to be creative and innovative. When a student experiences unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957) during classroom discussions, that student will feel intentionally invited to continue participating. Positive experiences with taking risks lead to increased willingness to exhibit more creativity and greater innovation. "Human potential, though not always apparent, is always there waiting for the invitation (Purkey, 2017). While Skinner (1969) posited that successive approximations of behavior should be rewarded to shape desired behavior, planning culturally responsive class discussions based on intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust may more effectively promote identity integration and the experience of success within every educational construct.

Conclusions

Educational participants experience increased understanding and improved self-worth for their positive interactions during discussions, classroom interactions, and shared experiences. The Invitational Education practitioner intentionally invites participants to share experiences that allow for differences of interpretation based on diverse perceptions. This results in more than a shared, common academic language. Effective utilization of I-CORT and culturally responsive practices increases the teacher's ability to establish relevance by intentionally planning to invite diverse opportunities for success based on myriad perceptions occupying today's classrooms

(Mindszenthy & Roberts, 2000). The acceptance of divergent perspectives based on diverse cultural experiences is the hallmark of the Invitational Education practitioner. Respect for all cultures brings nuanced meaning and information into a culturally responsive classroom. As the classroom learning opportunities transition from teacher-directed lectures to student-directed discussion and interactivity, the class climate becomes more innovative, creative, and open to multiple perspectives.

The intentionally inviting stance generalizes to the future work place as well. As students transition to the world of work, they will naturally integrate the tenets of Invitational Education theory and cultural responsiveness that was effectively put into action during their education experiences. Thus, culturally responsive teachers that embrace diverse exploration of content provides their students essential collaboration skills, increased social awareness, and expanded relationship management. Blessed by the positive experiences provided by the Invitational Education practitioner, the students as workers will be better able to seek, develop, and appreciate opportunities to learn from diverse people. "To love is to act lovingly, to care is to act caringly. Unless invitations are sent and received, they can't be accepted" (Purkey, 2017, p 12).

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JITP Guidelines for Author Submissions

The Journal for Invitational Theory and Practice (JITP) (ISSN-1060-6041) publishes once a year and promotes the tenets of invitational theory and practice, self-concept theory, and perceptual psychology. First published in 1992, the JITP is currently indexed in the ERIC and EBSCO databases.

The JITP seeks to publish articles under two priorities: research and practice. First, manuscripts are encouraged that report research that examines and expands the theory and practice of invitational learning and development, investigates the efficacy of invitational practices, relates invitational theory to other theories of human development and behavior, or focuses on theories that are compatible with invitational theory and practice. Second, manuscripts will be considered that are more focused on the practice of invitational theory. These articles are less data-oriented and could describe authors' attempts to apply invitational theory to a variety of settings or activities related to invitational theory. The editorial board will also consider book reviews of professional books related to invitational or other related theories.

The JITP accepts articles for submission year round. However, the submission deadline for each issue is July 1st. The Journal uses a blind peer review of articles with final publication decisions made by the editor. Upon publication, authors will receive an electronic copy of the JITP. Manuscripts submitted to or under consideration for publication by other journals are not accepted. Authors must follow specific guidelines when submitting manuscripts for publication consideration:

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3. Include your home and business phone numbers.
    a. This will allow the editor to quickly contact you if necessary.
4. Create all manuscripts as Microsoft Word® documents.
    a. Please remove embedded comments, tracked changes, and hidden personal data in the file.
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    a. Use Times New Roman, 12 point font, with one-inch margins on each side, top, and bottom.
7. Format (APA, 2010) the cover page with the author's or authors' names, institutional affiliation(s), and title of the manuscript.
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