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JITP

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR INVITATIONAL EDUCATION ®

The ***Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*** (JITP) promotes the study, application, and research of invitational theory. It publishes articles to advance invitational learning and living and the foundations that support this theory of practice, particularly self-concept theory and perceptual psychology.

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EDITORIAL

A New Wave for the JITP

Daniel E. Shaw, Ph.D., M.Ed., Editor

Thanks

I wish to begin my first editorial with some well deserved thanks. Firstly, thank you to those who had the faith and trust in me by appointing me editor. I'll work hard to improve the journal.

Second, I see my work as part of a team and my right hand person is Ken Smith, the Associate Editor. Ken, your quick and efficient action in fulfilling your duties as well as your continual feedback to me has been invaluable this past year. I look forward to our continued personal and professional relationship.

Next, my thanks go out to the Board of Editors, the peer reviewers. Without your commitment and professionalism the journal would surely suffer. You make my job much easier.

Lastly, we all owe a debt of gratitude to our immediate past editor, Phil Riner. Nine years is a very long time to act in that capacity and your efforts are a testament to your commitment to the Alliance and to your individual perseverance. **Thanks Phil, you are a tough act to follow!**

New Wave

I first heard the phrase "New Wave" in the late 1970's, when it was used to describe an emerging genre in rock music. The first of the New Wave artists did not have a long history of recording music for major labels, let alone the little known small recording companies. What they did have, was a fresh energy and spirit toward the rock music they wrote and played. The *feel* of their music was crisp, upbeat, catchy, and distinctively different. This genre became so popular that in a brief time span it became the dominate music genre for a generation of youth.

Like those early new wavers', I too lack a long history, specifically in the role of being an editor for a journal. Actually it's my first time. With a natural propensity for self doubt, I personalize each and every bump in the road, if not create some of them myself, that the more experienced don't even notice as they effortlessly glide through their duties. I do however; believe I have a fresh energy and enthusiasm for the JITP that I try and share with a great associate editor and a cadre of wonderful peer reviewers (the members of the editorial review board) who teem with an eagerness to do good work.

A new generation of leadership.

At the 2009 Leadership Institute and World Conference, it was clear that different IAIE members are accepting important leadership roles in our organization. These folks as well, are to be thanked for assuming these

new professional roles. As such, they are also part of the rising tide of the New Wave that is surrounding the IAIE with renewed spirit and energy. The founders of the alliance should feel confident that the organization they passionately toiled over these many years will live on.

My Goals

I have three major goals for my editorship:

1. To increase the number of submissions through innovative ways of sending out the call.
2. To increase the quality of the articles we publish by educating the reviewers with clear and reasonable expectations/instructions for reviewing, provide them with honest constructive feedback.
3. Impart the spirit of Invitational Theory in all that the JITP does.

This Issue

Trudie Steyn starts us off with a study focusing on staff's positive perceptions of professional development (PD) programs on IE and strategies in which IE can be implemented.

Next, Al Milliren and Mitchell Messer, discuss the use of a new strategy called "focused invitations," whereby counselors and teachers can focus on 36 core components of character.

Then, Franklin Thompson, examines teacher dispositions within an undergraduate and graduate education course aimed at helping students gain a better appreciation for life-long multicultural education.

Lastly, Richard H. Chant, *et. al.*, demonstrate how the Osborne-Parnes Creative Problem-solving Model (CPS) can be used to enhance teacher creativity through the collaborative and inviting processes found within Invitational Education

I truly hope you enjoy the excellent articles we have selected for you in this issue of the JITP. Please feel free to send me your reactions and comments to this issues' content for potential publication in the next issue as "Letters to the Editor".

Next Issue

Volume 16 of the JITP for 2010 is already shaping up to be another quality collection for your professional library. We already have several submissions. Please review the "Guidelines for Authors" on page 68 and consider submitting a manuscript. I encourage new authors to send me a draft manuscript for my comments and suggestions before formal peer review by our outstanding board.

Have a great year!

Inviting Schools in the United States of America and Hong Kong: An Appreciative Inquiry

Trudie Steyn,
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Abstract

This article is a follow-up on a previous quantitative study (Steyn, 2007) which explored key aspects that influenced the effective implementation of Invitational Education (IE) in schools in the United States of America (US) and Hong Kong (HK). This is a qualitative study in which an appreciative inquiry (AI) is used to explain staff's positive perceptions of professional development (PD) programs on IE and strategies in which IE can be implemented. The findings explain how the first three phases of AI: discovery, dreaming and design manifest in the study. The following categories and subcategories emerged: The best practices (The role of leadership: setting the tone; the role of teachers: necessity to be actively involved in IE); and Dreaming and designing: recommendations for effective strategies to implement IE.

Introduction

The quality of teaching and learning depends on the professional development (PD) of teachers (Moswela, 2006; Van Veen & Sleegers, 2006). Furthermore, PD of teachers is regarded as a necessity for schools to intentionally care for learners for the sake of their improved performance. Successful PD is that which is embedded in daily practice, needs based and linked to learner needs, tailored to meet the specific circumstances or contexts of teachers and sustained over a period of time (What is Professional Learning, n.d.; Lee, 2005).

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The International Alliance for Invitational Education (IAIE) endorses invitational education (IE) as an approach which effectively enhances the schools culture (Asbill & Gonzalez, 2000) and which could lead to improved student performance.

School accountability standards in the US have increased a great deal in the US as a result of American legislation, in particular, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (West, 2005; Burns, 2007). This Act emphasise the improvement of academic performance of disadvantaged students, increasing teacher quality, moving limited English proficiency among students to English fluency, encouraging informed parental choice and programs, supporting safe schools, raising funding for Impact Aid and promoting freedom and accountability (United States Department of Education,

2002). Although increased accountability succeeded to improve the quality of schooling it has put added pressure on the functioning of schools to meet the set standards (Burns, 2007). The Act has been criticised because its measurement system compares student performance against certain state-determined criteria (West, 2005). In its place other measures of school performance that promote individuality and self-expression have been suggested (American Culture, n.d.). While state mandates may impact the implementation of IE, Steyn (2006) and Steyn (2009) show that inviting schools have succeeded in making caring a key focus since IE can operate within state mandates.

British colonial rule ended on July 1 1997 when China regained control of Hong Kong (HK). Since them HK has endeavoured to develop and assess the education school system under the banner of 'life-long learning and all-round development' (Postiglione & Lee, 1997; Sweeting, 2004). For educationists in HK the teaching force is vital for school development and teachers' promotion of professional standards through continuous learning and development. Many major changes in the school system occurred to prepare students in addressing the demands and challenges resulting from globalisation and the knowledge economy (Law, 2006). According to the Education Commission (2000) the Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong attempts to develop an education system with the guiding principles: student-focused, 'no-loser, quality, life-wide learning and society-wide mobilisation (Fok, 2001; Reform of the Education System in Hong Kong: Summary, 2001). An education officer from one of the four Regional Education Offices (REOs) of the Education Department (ED) believes that "much untapped potential of students could be developed if a school adopts the IE approach. This theory ties in very nicely with the recent emphasis for educational reform in Hong Kong."

The literature review consists of a conceptual framework which centres on Invitational Education (IE) and the social learning theories. The conceptual framework aligns with the theoretical framework, appreciative inquiry that I choose to guide the descriptive study.

Conceptual Framework

Invitational Education (IE) Philosophy

IE as philosophy is regarded as "a collection of assumptions that seek to explain phenomena and provide a means of intentionally summoning people to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor" (Purkey, 1992, p.5). Essentially it focuses on the whole school and endeavours to "make school a more exciting, satisfying, and enriching experience for everyone – all students, all staff, all visitors" (Purkey & Novak, 2008, p.19). Within this philosophy there are key assumptions which intend to advance the development of human potential. These assumptions (Kok & Van

der Merwe, 2002; Novak & Purkey, 2001; Purkey & Siegel, 2003) are:

- *Respect.* According to this assumption every human being is an individual of worth (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001) which supports the belief that everyone "possess worth and value and should be treated as such" (Burns, 2007, p. 120). In Tao, a Chinese philosophy, respect is considered as a key principle that believes that respect 'maximises respect', and that it leads to harmony in people's lives and work (Dreher, 2002). In essence the NCLB legislation also supports this IE assumption.

- *Optimism.* People possess untapped potential for their development and growth (Day et al, 2001).

- *Trust.* To promote empowerment and interdependency education has to involve everyone. This assumption emphasizes the "confidence in the abilities, integrity, and responsibilities of ourselves and others" (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p.12).

- *Intention.* It is a decision to intentionally to achieve and carry out a set goal and to act in a certain way (Day et al, 2001).

Social Learning Theories

According to Doring (2002, p.7) the "associated emergence of a "team culture" with an instrumental function of improving teaching and learning becomes a key component of professional growth" More-over, when staff members learn collectively, they are in a much better position to react to external challenges. The notion is therefore that individuals learn together in a collective system where the learning of one person/group is expected to impact on the learning of others in the organisation (Small & Irvine, 2006). The social learning theory is based on the following assumptions (Wenger, 1999):

- People are social beings – a fact that is a core aspect of learning.
- Knowledge refers to competence with respect to valued ventures.
- Knowing means to be actively engaged in the world and to participate in the pursuit of such ventures.
- Experience of the world and one's engagement in it should be meaningful which is "ultimately what learning produces".

Communities of practice are the "social containers" of competence and also the basic building block of a social learning system (Wenger, 2000, p.229). Three characteristics are required for a community to be a community of practice (Wenger, 2007):

- *The domain:* Members of community of practice have a shared domain of interest.
- *The community:* Members are involved in joint activities and discussions; assist each other and share knowledge and skills. Relationships are built where they learn from one another.
- *The practice:* 'Members of a community of practice are practitioners' who develop a shared practice through ways of addressing problems and sharing practices.

Theoretical Framework: Appreciative Inquiry

In Cooperrider and Srivasta's seminal work (1987) they developed the appreciative inquiry (AI) technique which positively focuses on what works well in organizations/situations (Lewis & Van Tiem, 2004). It is built on the 'positive psychology of Seligman in the late 1990s' (Billings & Kowalski, 2008). AI 'is a research perspective, research method and world view' (Calabrese, Hummel & Martin 2007:278) and is defined as the study for searching the best in people, organizations and the life world (Lewis & Van Tiem, 2004). The AI approach is based on the premise that humans socially construct meaning (Calabrese et al, 2007). By asking provocative questions, the momentum for change is created (Calabrese et al, 2007; Lewis & Van Tiem, 2004).

Instead of focussing on problems AI attempts to build on that which works well (Bushe, 2007; Billings & Kowalski, 2008). It promotes positive relationships and builds on the basic strengths of people or situations. AI theorists try to create a 'new lens for seeing old issues' (Bushe & Kassam, 2005, p.164). It involves an inquiry that begins with appreciation, is applicable, is provocative and is collaborative (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987). In other words, it studies the best of the phenomenon, its highest values and desires and its noblest actions (Bushe, 1998; Bushe & Kassam, 2005). Furthermore, AI postulates that change can be created by paying more attention to what is required than to focus on problems (Bushe, 1998; Billings & Kowalski, 2008).

The AI model consists of a 4-D cycle which was used in the study (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Dunlap, 2008; Elleven, 2007Lewis & Van Tiem, 2004; Lehner & Hight, 2006):

1. *Discovery* (appreciating what exists, 'the best of what has been and what is') (Dunlap, 2008, p.26). People explain their personal experience of a phenomenon. From these responses a researchers then attempt to uncover and strengthen the positive in a phenomenon/situation.
2. *Dreaming* (imagining what could be; envisioning the results). By creating new ground, new possibilities arise. This phase involves the creation of a new vision for the future.
3. *Design* (What should be, co-constructing) and
4. *Destiny* (creating what will be; sustaining).

Research Design

The researcher intended to study the perceptions of participants in the US and HK regarding the effective implementation of IE in their respective schools (best practices). Based in an AI perspective, a qualitative study was employed to determine the US and HK participants' positive experiences of the implementation of IE (Calabrese et al, 2007) and guidelines that can assist in improving the implementation of IE. Apart from the AI perspective a phenomenological approach assisted in obtaining a better picture of the life worlds of US and HK participants and to understand their

perceptions constructed from their "lived experiences" (Johnson & Christenson, 2000; Rudestam & Newton, 2001). In this case, appropriate PD programs and factors which influence the effective implementation of IE in inviting schools in the US and HK were described. The study was therefore grounded on the IE and social constructivist theories and 'filtered' through the theoretical perspective of AI (Calabrese et al, 2007:280). Employing an AI perspective indicates the intent to identify the positive core of experiences that exist among participants regarding the implementation of IE (Cooperrider & Srivaste, 1987; Calabrese et al, 2007). The following research questions were posed: What are staff's positive perceptions of invitational professional development programs and what is necessary to improve the implementation of IE in US and HK schools?

Participants for the study were chosen by means of purposive, convenience sampling. Conference delegates, who attended the researcher's presentation of the findings of her earlier study (Steyn, 2007) at a conference arranged by the Invitational Education World Leadership Institute in October 2007 in Georgetown, Kentucky (US), were invited to participate in the study. Sixteen of the delegates indicated their willingness to do so and provided their names and e-mail addresses. E-mails consisting of open-ended questions to provide naive sketches were chosen because this data collection method is both time and cost effective and allows for prompt responses. It also allows for follow-up responses, which was often needed in this type of study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:239). The researcher also approached two additional 'information rich' participants to participate in the study to describe their experiences in implementing IE: A HK Education Officer, who attended the conference but not the presentation as well as an IAIE coordinator from the US.

Participants were invited to write naive sketches based on five questions. These questions included their biographical details and participants' perceptions of key aspects influencing the implementation of IE in schools. The following questions were posed: How has your school become aware of Invitational Education (IE) and how has it been implemented? What type of professional development programs did your school use when implementing IE and which programs would you recommend for the effective implementation of IE in other schools? What role does leadership play in implementing and sustaining IE? What role do teachers play in implementing IE?

For the purpose of this study AI was employed to analyse the data by focussing on three phases in the 4-D cycle that is discovery, dreaming and design. In the analysis the naïve sketches of participants were segmented and coded (Giorgi, 1985; Johnson & Christenson, 2000; Patton, 2002) from which patterns emerged and themes could be identified (Lehner & Hight, 2006; Elleven, 2007). The major categories that emerged are: The best practices (The role of leadership: setting the tone; the role of teachers: necessity to be actively involved in

IE); and Dreaming and designing: recommendations for effective strategies to implement IE.

Findings

In Table 1 the profile of participants in the study are indicated. Although not initially planned, two participants (one from US and the other from HK) provided 'rich information' on their experiences of IE programs. Since three of the naive sketches were completed in Chinese they were incomprehensible and therefore discarded. HK participants indicated that English is not their mother tongue and that it should be considered in the data analysis. More US participants were involved in the study because the IAIE conference was held in their home country. Regardless of the diversity among participants, earlier findings (Steyn, 2007; Steyn 2009) showed that both countries unanimously agreed that IE fits their respective cultures.

Table 1

Biographical Data

	Frequency
Gender:	
Male	9
Female	4
Post level:	
Teachers	4
Head of department	1
Principals	7
Other	2
I am currently teaching in:	
1 : United States of America	9
2 : Hong Kong	4
I am currently teaching in a:	
1 : Primary/Elementary school	5
2 : Middle school	2
3 : High school	4
4: Other	2 Coordinators 1 Education officer HK

The Best Practices

In the discovery phase of the 4-D cycle of AI, the best practices that exist of a particular phenomenon are described. Various valuable contributions were mentioned. A Head of Department (HOD) from HK succinctly described her experience of PD on IE: "All my growth and success should be attributed to my parents, principals, colleagues, students, students' parents, friends from the IAIE (HK) and all the visitors who have kindly visited my lessons. Without their support, encouragement, patience, feedback as well as willingness to be my mentors, I would not have evolved into the person you see today. Without their collective efforts, I would not have the courage to explore in the voyage of making Hong Kong classrooms genuinely inviting. For these reasons, I strongly believe that an inviting teacher has a lot to give but also has a lot to earn."

A US principal noted that the research is quite clear on what makes an IE school exceptional and what needs to be done to change the school. A US teacher explained that the more successful schools "use IE theory to form the foundation upon which all other school initiatives are built". She referred to the struggle of US schools 'under the mandates of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) legislation'. But according to her IE "can do much to alleviate the burdens of intense accountability for teachers and students who struggle to meet goals as defined by standardized tests. An inviting school atmosphere can ensure the success of both teachers and students alike".

Another US principal explained that it is necessary to know that the implementation of IE can be a slow and methodical approach in an effort to gain support. "We have a very strong core group who work hard to better understand IE and to not only talk about it, but also live it. In an effort to improve the climate and culture of our school community, we felt the principles of IE would be most effective".

The influence of Dr Betty Siegel was expressed by one US participant who said that many schools in her area have become aware of IE as a result of Dr Siegel, one of the authors of the invitational theory. "Her success has generated interest on the part of educators in our area."

A US teacher said: "I have seen schools implement IE in a variety of ways. Some incorporate the philosophy into 'mandates' from the systems they serve and others, the more successful ones, in my experience, use IE theory to form the foundation upon which all other school initiatives are built. These schools are led by a true understanding of collegiality and intentionality". Some school in the US use staff development modules, offered during two or three day workshops to introduce IE. Professionally-prepared DVD's showing IE in action throughout the US which are excellent tools for introducing IE to schools (Purkey & Stanley, n.d.). Purkey and Stanley (n.d., p.1) regard staff meetings, workshops and as excellent ways to present a programme on Invitational Education: "With a little research and effort you can become a voice for creating inviting schools".

Another US teacher mentioned the important role that a district can play in supporting the IE philosophy among schools. This is also in line with the views of a HK principal who said that "We got to know IE through the Education Bureau, Hong Kong." In particular they (Hong Kong) adopted a whole school approach for improvement of IE in their schools. A HOD in HK, whose school received the inviting teacher award in 2007, explained: "The Multiple Intelligence and Invitational Education Committee (MIE) was instituted in 2002 'to plan, implement and monitor the development of IE in all aspects of school matters. As the chairperson of the MIE, I have tried to assist colleagues in having a more comprehensive understanding of the philosophy of IE. The new MIE members are usually given a workshop about IE at the beginning of the school year. All teachers are cordially invited to attend different IE workshops to share and reflect upon how IE has been implemented at school".

However, according to a US principal PD is the way to acquaint staff with the principles of IE. The coordinator for IE in the US mentioned that she visits schools monthly during staff meetings where they 'break the IE instruction into smaller, more manage-able time slots'. This idea of consultation and sharing was also mentioned by a HOD in HK who said that she had made use of the valuable experience she gained on earlier visits to Kentucky and Atlanta: "I have organized a number of workshops for my colleagues about how we can take advantage of our subject-based resource rooms to maximize self-learning. Having conducted a number of sharing sessions, we have been progressing in the design and usage of the rooms and we share our experiences with the public".

In the discovery of best practices it seems as if a number of aspects play an important role: The role of leadership: setting the tone and the role of teachers: necessity to be actively involved in IE.

The Role of Leadership: Setting the Tone

From all the responses among both US and HK participants it is quite clear that leadership have been "crucial", "sets the tone", and is "vital to the success of implementation and sustenance of IE in any school". A US principal said: "It [leadership] is very key to the success." He added that "change would not take place without the leadership implementing and sustaining IE. The leader is the facilitator of change and ensures that people understand the role of IE in the school. It is an ongoing process that must engage all of the community." Another US participant said that "leader is the facilitator of change and ensures that people understand the role of IE in the school". The HK participants added that leaders fulfil a "consistent and proactive role" and that their school leaders were "determined in implementing IE" and that they were constantly sharing their ideas about IE. The Education Officer in HK explained that "the Education Commission of Hong Kong took heed of the literature on school effectiveness, on the role and potential of good school leaders, on the

advantages of decoupling schools from excessive central control, and on giving opportunity and responsibility to school staff".

The importance of leadership providing an appropriate model whereby an example can be set for staff to follow is supported by literature (Yu, Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005; Moswela, 2006). The findings of the Burns study (2007:101) indicate that good leadership intentional and that school leaders should be "proactive, compassionate and willing to be a servant to others". Literature also confirms the necessity of leadership supporting teachers during the process of change (Robinson & Carrington, 2002; Brandt, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Somers & Sikorova, 2002).

The Role of Teachers: Necessity to Be Actively Involved In IE

The findings of Steyn (2006; 2007; 2009) show that staff play an important role in their own development. Both US and HK responses confirm that teachers play an "active"; "key" and "critical" role in the implementation of IE. A US principal justified this: "Teachers are the force that makes a school pleasant and inviting or cold and repelling". Moreover, a HOD in HK referred to the conditions for implementing IE: teachers should be willing to learn about IE and also be determined to implement it. This confirms the comment by a US principal the key to IE is the "buy-in" of teachers. "This is not something that is forced (mandated)" from outside schools." This view somewhat opposes the views of participants of what actually happened in the one REO in HK and the one district in Kentucky in the US. Consequently, while IE necessitates a willingness and commitment teachers to implement it in schools, IE can be also be effectively "driven" by education officials. It, however, means that everybody in the school should work collectively and has to be actively involved to create an inviting atmosphere in the school (Steyn, 2006; Steyn 2009).

The literature confirms a positive attitude and commitment of staff as a prerequisite for all change initiatives to be successful (Blackmore, 2000; Yu et al, 2000), including that of IE. Furthermore, the need for ownership of teachers regarding their effective PD is also supported by literature (Cardno, 2005). As such, teachers need to embrace IE and be committed to implement it to ensure its success in schools.

For the purpose of this study the next two phases in AI; dreaming and designing are briefly discussed.

Dreaming and Designing: Recommendations for Effective Strategies to Implement IE

The participants in the study mentioned a variety of views to imagining what could be (dreaming) and what should be (designing) in implementing IE effectively. They suggested a number of strategies for schools that are interested in implementing IE:

- *Appropriate training sessions*. Participants agreed that IE training sessions should be appealing and have a hands-on approach. Staff should also actively participate in their own development regarding IE. A US participant felt it should be a "retreat dedicated to IE away from school" while other participants prefer training in their own schools where they feel more comfortable. It is therefore necessary to consider the preferences of staff where such programs should be held. Maaranen, Kynäslahti, Krokfors (2008) agree that formal learning can occur through workshops or other training activities with "planned aims, objectives and pedagogical content" which is also suitable for IE training sessions.

- *Reading and learning about IE.* Schools that are interested in employing IE should have an opportunity to read and learn about the IE approach before implementing IE. To assist in the background knowledge it is also possible for coordinators of IE or other influential IE advocates to publish "successful IE programs (booklets, CD's) to be distributed to interested parties" [HK participant] and for schools to look at DVD's on the successful implementation of IE in particular schools [US participant]. One US participant emphasized the important role of the principal: "The principal should read about the foundation and philosophy of IE, inform the staff by means of appropriate professional development programs and to "get 'buy-in' from all staff members".

- *Consultants on IE*. Consultants can play an important role in makes driving and implementing the IE initiative. Massey and Walker (1999) and Bradbery (2007) believe that consultants can play an important role in organisational learning, which may also be applicable when implementing IE in schools.

- *Attending conferences/seminars on IE*. The attendance of conferences (US and HK) or seminars on IE as offered by Education Bureau (HK) can provide excellent learning opportunities about approaches to implement IE in schools.

- *Visiting and consulting IE schools*. Participants agreed that visiting and consulting with other schools that succeeded to implement IE are useful strategies to become acquainted with IE practices. This recommendation is confirmed by Steyn's earlier studies (2006, 2007; 2009). A US principal elaborated on this by saying that "experiencing IE" is important and that a lot of talk may not help "until they [staff] see it [schools employing IE]". According to (Novak & Purkey, 2001) schools reached the highest phase according to phases in steps in implementing IE when they succeed in becoming examples of inviting schools. In this final phase, the school can provide leadership and be an exemplar for other schools. "IE permeates the whole school" (Novak & Purkey, 2001:51).

- *Networking and internet searching.* A US participant mentioned that it is important to "Network with IE members to get a 'feel' from their perspective". He also stated that with more resources available on the Internet and that staff should "tap into them". Similarly, a HK participant suggested that people interested in IE should "visit the online site of IAIE".

- *Becoming a member of the International Alliance for Invitational Education*

(IAIE). Participants recommended the importance of becoming members of IAIE. It ensures that members receive the FORUM (Alliance Newsletter), The Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice and related IE material, including announcements of conferences and workshops on Invitational Education (Purkey & Stanley, n.d.).

- *Applying the criteria for becoming an inviting school.* These criteria may assist schools to implement IE in schools. A US participant was of the opinion that it can be very helpful if schools follow "the steps outlined within the requirements for receiving the Inviting School Award". In the application form for prospective inviting schools five categories in the school are addressed: People, Places, Policies, Programs and Processes. Each of these categories requires schools to collect samples of strategies they employed within each category justifying how they undertook to make the school more inviting. In line with the previous suggestion, a HK participant mentioned the valuable experience she had gained from participating in the IE teacher award which she had received in 2007. She therefore suggested that other teachers and students should "participate in the IE teacher and student awards organized by IAIE HK".
- *Using IE as a school improvement plan:* Two US participants mentioned that implementing IE can be seen as "an effort for school improvement plan" and that "IE can find its way into any school improvement program that has already been adopted. The adoption of IE does not have to represent to teachers or administrators "one more thing to do". A US principal noted that the process of implementing IE can be viewed as "an effort for school improvement plan". This corroborates the notion that effective PD programs can lead to improved teaching and learning in schools (Professional development for teachers, 2007).
- *Monitoring*. Monitoring essential for the effective implementation of any PD program, including IE. A US principal explained: "They [PD programs] are multi-stepped and should provide feedback on success and implementation as each new step is implemented. Monitoring is key to analyzing the success of any program." The idea of designing appropriate IE programs and considering their success is also supported by Novak and Purkey's (2001) phases in implementing IE. Furthermore, without appropriate monitoring teachers' professional development may not be successful (Meiers & Ingvarson, 2005; Continuing Professional Development for Teachers in Schools, 2001) which also applies for IE.
- *Implementing IE: An ongoing process.* One US participant pointed out that schools should realize that "it [IE] is really an ongoing process that will continue to grow. The implementation and information happens over time." As mentioned before, this also supports the idea that any effective PD program is an ongoing process (Richardson, 2003; Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshuizen., 2005). It, however, requires effective leadership and the commitment and active involvement of all staff members to ensure its effectiveness.

Schools may choose a particular strategy or use a combined approach to implement IE. It implies that the choice of strategy will

depend upon the expectations and needs of staff in a specific school (Guskey, 2002; Lee, 2005). Ribisch (1999) also confirms that PD cannot be conducted in the same type of environment for all schools. As such, the country's culture of the country, the school context of the school and the choices and preferences of staff should be considered when choosing and implementting potentially promising IE programs. One US participant succinctly summarized the above views: "The best programs are designed to specifically target the needs of the individual school… Most importantly, IE should be implemented in action and not just in appearance".

The professional development of staff is most likely to occur when staff have sustained opportunities to to experiment, to learn, and to receive feedback on specific changes they have made (King & Newman, 2001; Robinson & Carrington, 2002). Furthermore, when teachers have a say on the content and process of PD, it can be more effective (King & Newman, 2001; Bernauer, 2002). Conferences and workshops may enhance awareness of certain educational initiatives as long as there are opportunities for follow-up and feedback (King & Newman, 2001:87; Richardson, 2003). As regards consultants, they can play an important role in facilitating individual and organisational learning (Redding & Kamm, 1999).

Conclusions

The study in the first phase (Steyn, 2007) sought to explore key aspects that influence the effective implementation of IE in the USA and HK. This qualitative study sought to provide an understanding of the first three phases of the appreciative enquiry model a deeper understanding of IE programs that were employed in USA and HK schools. As regards the discovery phase it explained best practices in the US and HK. These best practices also include the role of leadership and the role of teachers. In the dreaming and designing phase of the appreciative enquiry attention was paid to possible IE strategies that schools may employ to implement IE.

From the findings it is clear that the particular country, the circumstances of schools, and the preferences and expectations of staff will determine how the IE initiative should be implemented. This implies that that these mentioned aspects should be carefully deliberated when choosing the appropriate IE programs. What is important is that staff should be actively involved in the process of IE. This also means that the whole process of implementing IE needs to be monitored which involves constant feedback from staff to determine the progress of IE. This will allow implementers to establish whether the strategies can continue to be employed or if necessary changes have to be made to these selected strategies.

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"Invitations" To Character

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Abstract

If we are to help children develop character, we have to go beyond offering a character education class once or twice each month. We actually have to validate character when we see it or hear about it happening. Through the use of a new strategy called "focused invitations," counselors and teachers can focus on the 36 core components of character. The results from using this technique are profound and children respond as if we were shining a positive spotlight on the inner-most core of their being. In this article, focused invitations will be described and suggestions will be offered for use in one-on-one situations.

Introduction

Educators are being asked to provide more and more emphasis on the social and emotional development of children. Character education is now one of the hot topics in the schools.

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With the hundreds of books that are available which provide character curricula and lesson plans, one would wonder why these programs are not more effective. The truth is that the job of developing character is often relegated to the school counselor presenting a class on character once a month or the school adopting a "character" word of the week or month. It may boil down to passing out the "Word Search" of the month for the students to work on during study hall! We assume that if we talk about a character trait, like responsibility, for example, it will come to pass. Nothing is further from the truth!

Although Alfred Adler, the creator of Individual Psychology, did not focus directly on character education, he did offer one of the more important concepts to be found in the counseling literature. For Adler,

the single criterion for "success" in life was embodied in the extent to which the individual possesses "social interest" (Yang, Milliren, & Blagen, 2009). It is this concept that describes the ideal state of the individual's mental health or what we might term today as "character." Adler described social interest as being an aptitude or innate potentiality for living cooperatively and contributing to the good of others. However, according to Adler, social interest or character had to be consciously developed. Therefore, it becomes the function of education (families and schools) and educators (parents and teachers) to convert this potential into an ability or skill. Just like we educate an individual's potential for music or numbers or artistic productions, we must also take time to develop an individual's social interest. With the development of one's social interest comes the development of the capacities for cooperation and contribution which are primary components of character (Milliren, Evans & Newbauer, 2006).

If we are to draw out and help develop social interest and character in others, it is important that we validate it when we see (or hear about) it happening. Our students report their successes to us all the time yet we rarely see these reports as opportunities for developing character. A chance encounter with a student -- "I really did well in Ms. Wilson's class today!" – presents a tremendous opportunity to draw out traits of character that may already be there. Although we usually respond positively with a "That's great!" or a "I knew you could do it!" we can develop it even more. We have an opportunity to reflect the underlying character components and thereby reinforce the life choices that our students are making. Thus, character education can become an everyday opportunity.

These everyday opportunities are part and parcel of the invitational classroom. Over 20 years ago, when John Wilson (1986) was discussing the invitational elementary classroom, he stated that "invitations are the messages and signals used by classroom teachers to communicate about the students' capabilities, their inherent value, their tendency for responsible behaviors, and these students' basic dignity as unique human beings" (p. 4). What we are discussing in this article, the "focused invitations," are specific references to an identifiable trait. We are deliberately pointing out a 'character'istic belonging to the student that he or she may not even recognize the he or she holds! This is an excellent way to be professionally inviting with others, to invite them to realize their potential and meet the needs of society (Purkey & Novak, 1984; 2008).

Messer (2001) relates character to the concept of self-respect. He quotes Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, a student of Alfred Adler, as defining self-respect as "the feeling that one is a worthwhile human being in spite of one's faults and imperfections" (p. 265). This represents the "courage to be imperfect" that Dreikurs talked about on so many occasions (Terner & Pew, 1978) and is the key to the development of character. Self-respect (or character) "is not expressed

in terms of "knowing," but of "feeling." It is not based on objective conditions. It is a subjective experience. It is not conditional and does not depend on external indicators of achievement. It cannot be given or taken away by external agencies" (Messer, 2001, p. 265). ". . . If we learn to function – to do our best regardless of what it is – out of the enjoyment of functioning, we can grow just as well, even better than if we drove ourselves to be perfect" (Terner & Pew, 1978, p. 289).

"Character"istics

Table 1 lists 36 "character"istics or components that help to define one's character. These serve as the traits or qualities that can be directly reflected back to the student in response to his or her "success" report. This process is demonstrated in the examples which follow. Each response is designed to capture a different character component. The various components of character, noted in Table 1, are deliberately reflected back to the student. In the examples, the components are noted in parentheses.

We have discovered that it is best to utilize a five-step response sequence that includes variations of five different components of character. This system seems to provide a broader range of validation and seems to be most reinforcing for the student. At a minimum, a three-step system works pretty well; at a maximum, anything that exceeds five different responses becomes overkill. This first example is from an exchange with a third grade boy that took place in a brief meeting in the hall. The entire conversation was focused on putting a "shine on his character button."

Student: "I cleaned the whole house by myself on the weekend."

Adult: "You must feel really proud to have made that happen." (Power and Control)

Student: Smiling and beaming.

Adult: "And it makes you feel good to have contributed like that." (Accomplishment)

Student: "My momma was really happy and all smilin' when she come home!"

Adult: "There's a good feeling that comes from seeing her smile like that." (Success)

Student: "Yeah! She thought I was like one of the big kids."

Adult: "It makes you feel really grown-up when she thinks that about you – like you are really capable." (Maturity)

Student: "Yeah!" Beaming.

Adult: "Makes you feel really worthwhile and important." (Belonging)

Student: "Yeah."

Table 1
The Thirty-Six Components of Character

Acceptance of Unpleasant Reality – to do the best with what comes one's way.	**Accomplishment** – to know that one achieved and that it was good enough.	**Approachability** – to be available to others who may seek them out.
Appropriate Anger – can express legitimate anger in mature/responsible ways.	**Appropriate Responsibility** – assumes level of responsibility appropriate to the situation.	**Belonging** – feeling that one is a member in good standing in the human race.
Confidence – feeling prepared to cope with the positives and negatives that life offers.	**Counting One's Blessings** – to recognize and appreciate one's blessings.	**Courage** – knows which risks need to be taken and those that do not.
Courage to Succeed – to be able to risk success and tolerate a successful outcome.	**Equality** – behaving as an equal, feeling neither inferior nor superior to others.	**Identity** – to be one's own person and have flexibility in one's relationships.
In Touch with Reality – to perceive the world objectively and appropriately.	**Independence** – free from a dependence on others to validate one's existence.	**Intellectual Self-Respect** – to feel smart enough in the moment.
Less Vulnerable to Temptation – no need to resort to mischief or self-destructive behavior.	**Liberation** – neither rebel nor victim but can solve problems constructively.	**Living in the Present** – to be able to function in the real world right now.
Lovability – able to love and be loved.	**Maturity** – being at an appropriate stage of development for one's age.	**Positive Regard** – free to have a positive regard for fellow human beings.
Power and Control – to be able to make positive things happen.	**Power of Choice** – can make choices and live with the consequences of the choices.	**Relief** – from the pressure, tension and stress of having to prove one's worth.
Relief from Guilt – feeling active remorse and able to make restitution when needed.	**Relief from Fear and Anxiety** – to have a positive view of the future and take life as it comes.	**Security** – to be comfortable in one's ability to cope with the ups and downs of life.
Securing Cooperation – to be able to work in an atmosphere of mutual respect with others.	**Self-Acceptance** – feeling *good enough* as one is. "I am a worthwhile human being in spite of	**Self Respect** – able to live with others as equals and positively contribute to one's community.
Serenity – at peace with one's self and free to be at peace with one's neighbors.	**Success** – possess the feeling that they are free to succeed and to be successful.	**Tolerance of Pain or Dis-appointment** – accepts life as it comes without despairing.
Trust – trusting one's self while discriminating those worthy of trust.	**Trust in One's Judgment** – and open to learning from experience.	**Unselfish** – having the freedom to give of one's self to others.

*Adapted from Messer, M. (1995). *The components of our character*. Chicago, IL, Anger Institute. P. 29-40.

This next example, with a fifth grade student, occurred a day or so after her class was shown a strategy for better spelling. She was on the playground and actually sought the adult out to share her success.

Student: "I practiced that spelling thing you showed us and got 100 on the test!"

Adult: "Makes you feel pretty smart to do so well." (Intellectual Self-Respect)

Student: "They were all really surprised."

Adult: "But you showed them how capable you are." (Self-Acceptance)

Student: "Like yeah! It felt really good to know all the words."

Adult: "Like you were really on top of things – like you're the master." (Power and Control)

Student: "Now I know I'm smart! I think I can do better on other stuff too!"

Adult: "So it's like your 'smart' is spreading out to other stuff." (Courage to Succeed)

Student: "It's so neat to feel so good about myself."

Adult: "You're feeling like a pretty worthwhile person, then." (Confidence)

Student: "Yup! And getting better!"

The young man in this example went looking for the counselor to share the results of his participation in the Science Fair. Although he didn't win first place, he discovered that winning first place wasn't quite as important as putting in the effort just to show!

Student: "Did you see my science project down there in the display case?"

Counselor: "I sure did. It's a great feeling to have won a ribbon for your efforts." (Accomplishment)

Student: "I was kind of disappointed with only 3rd place when they announced it."

Counselor: "Disappointments can happen. You seem to be okay with it now." (Acceptance of Unpleasant Reality)

Student: "I am – I know I worked hard and did my best. It was a really good project."

Counselor: "So, you appreciate your own work and effort." (Counting one's Blessings)

Student: "I was 3rd place in the whole city! That's pretty good!"

Counselor: "You bet that's pretty good. Makes you feel mighty capable and worthwhile." (Confidence)

Student: "You're darn right! Just wait 'til next year!"

Counselor: "Ah! You're planning to hang in there and go at it again." (Courage to Succeed)

Student: "Of course – and I'll work just a little bit harder too!"

In this final example, a Junior girl is reporting what might be termed a "negative" success. However, even in some of the sadness about losing a relationship, there are opportunities to directly reflect the underlying positive elements of character that made it possible for her to end the relationship.

Girl: "I finally broke up with my boyfriend last night. You know, he was pretty abusive to me."

Adult: "As much as that may hurt right now, you sound pretty confident about what you did." (Confidence)

Girl: "I was kind of scared for a long time but I made up my mind to do it and now it's done."

Adult: "So, you overcame your fear and took a big step." (Freedom from Fear/Anxiety)

Girl: "It was – especially for me – I don't like to cause trouble."

Adult: "You'd rather keep the peace if you can but now you know you can take charge like this yourself!" (Power and Control)

Girl: "I deserve better – he always put me down and told me I was stupid."

Adult: "And you have more worth and value than that." (Equality)

Girl: "Duhhhhh! Of course I do!"

Adult: "And now you are feeling really in control of the situation." (Independence)

Girl: "Yeah. He wants to make up but I'm not interested anymore."

The Procedure

You will note that all the preceding examples include five different focused invitations. This is important since we want the person to really "hear" what we are saying. In the event one invitation of a character component doesn't quite take, we increase the odds of being heard by adding the other four. The general outcome, however, is that each of the focused invitations connects in some way with the core of a person's being and serves to reinforce some aspect of the individual's "inner self."

The intention of a focused invitation is to draw out the elements of character that already exist for the person. The purpose is to "tag" that inner core where belief in self lies. Listen to the responses that follow and "hear" the differences between the three of them.

1. "How did you feel about that?"
2. "You must feel good about how that turned out for you."
3. "It feels really good inside when *you realize that you are capable of handling things for yourself.*"

The last example is a focused invitation. It is focused on the feeling component of the experience (which is similar to the skill of reflective listening, as in #2 above) and also the character component that is being displayed by the person. It is this latter element that is so critical to identify in and for the person. Note the empowerment of the response. We need to draw that element out in our conversations with young people and demonstrate to them that they are already acting in positive, useful, and constructive ways.

Focused invitations are based on the skill of intelligent or "educated" guessing. We need to hear the trait or quality that is behind the person's words. Adler (Ansbacher &

Ansbacher, 1964) and Dreikurs (Terner & Pew, 1978) were strong proponents of this guessing process. For Adler, guessing was a means for discovering the private logic of the individual. Dreikurs (Terner & Pew, 1978) developed the "concept of 'two points on a line.' If a client reveals two apparently independent and contrary facts, a line of logic can be drawn to delineate a picture of a unified, self-consistent life style. The counselor attempts to find the line of logic through intelligent guessing…" (p. 247). Dreikurs would admonish his students that it was always better to guess and be wrong than to never guess at all. He believed that too many counselors spent too much time just gathering information, a condition he termed "factophilia." Guessing, whether right or wrong, allows the counselor to arrive at the core of the situation much more quickly than endless fact-gathering and useless questioning.

If a student makes a comment such as, "I did it!" we know there is a reference to Power and Control. Here the person is stating the belief that he or she is able to make positive things happen. If a third grade student "high fives" his teacher after spelling a word backwards correctly, we know that there should be a reference to Accomplishment because the person is "saying" that he or she achieved something and feels like it is good enough. Or, if a high school student tells you, "She believed me when I told her!" it is fairly clear that we could respond with a Trust in One's Judgment invitation. All of these examples are just the product of intelligent guesswork.

Table 2 contains samples of focused invitations that were created for each of the specific character components. In some cases there are more examples than there are of others. Many of the examples were derived from real situations so may not be particularly suitable to other situations where the conditions might be quite different. Your own creativity will allow you to develop some new ones of your own. The character reference in each focused invitation is printed in *italics.*

If we do not get reports of successes spontaneously, we might wish to open our individual (and even group) contacts with students with the following statements or questions: "Tell me about one of your 'wins' or successes." "What's been going well for you lately?" "Tell me what you accomplished lately." "Have you done something new that you've never done before?" "What kind of positive risks have you taken?" "Tell me about some good news."

Table 2
Components of Character with Examples of Focused Invitations

Character Components	**Sample focused invitation**
Acceptance of Unpleasant Reality – to do the best with what comes one's way.	"You're feeling good about *handling all the stuff that has been coming along*." "*Despite all that's come down on you*, you must feel really good about *how things are going*."
Accomplishment – to know that one achieved and that it was good enough.	"*Even though it didn't come out perfectly*, it is nice to know that *it was good enough as it was*." "It is really energizing for you when *you know you've done it and it is good enough as it is!"*
Approachability – to be available to others who may seek them out.	"I've noticed how *you show a real concern for others*. It must make you feel good when others seek you out." "*You have a nice manner that draws people to you*. That must really make you feel good about yourself."
Appropriate Anger – can express legitimate anger in mature/ responsible ways.	"It's really great when you are *able to express your anger appropriately*." "It must feel good for you to *express your grievance to them without getting all out of sorts.*"
Appropriate Responsibility – assumes level of responsibility appropriate to the situation.	"You handled that really nicely *and still let them be responsible for themselves*." "How good is that for you? *You took responsibility for your part and that was enough for now*."
Belonging – feeling that one is a member in good standing in the human race.	"It's nice to feel that *you fit in and belong*." "There's a good feeling in feeling that *you are included and that you belong*."
Confidence – feeling prepared to cope with the positives and negatives that life offers.	"It feels good to know *you can handle whatever comes your way*." "There's a powerful feeling to *knowing that you can succeed*."
Counting One's Blessings – to recognize and appreciate one's blessings.	"It's great knowing that *you can focus on what is going right for you*." "You must really feel on top of things knowing *you have a knack for appreciating what you have going for you*."
Courage – knows which risks need to be taken and those that do not.	"You took the risk and had *the courage to see what would happen*." "*You know what risks are worth taking and which ones aren't*."

Courage to Succeed – to be able to risk success and tolerate a successful outcome.	"You must feel pretty courageous when *you try something new without knowing how it will turn out*." "You've got to be proud of yourself for *sticking to it and trying again.*"
Equality – behaving as an equal, feeling neither inferior nor superior to others.	"It's like *you are no more or no less than anyone* else." "There's a good feeling that comes from *not having to prove that you are equal to others*."
Identity – to be one's own person and have flexibility in one's relationships.	"It's great when *you don't feel like you have to play a role anymore*." "It's great being able to *operate on your own terms and not someone else's*."
In Touch with Reality – to perceive the world objectively and appropriately.	"You are right on target *with your view of the world and it makes everything have more sense.*" "I'm sure it feels pretty good to *realize that your plan was impossible but you have put together an even better alternative one.*"
Independence – free from a dependence on others to validate their existence.	"You're feeling good about really *being free to make your own decisions*." "Right now you are feeling pretty independent -- *you are living life on your own terms*."
Intellectual Self-Respect – to feel smart enough in the moment.	"It's just really nice to know that *you are smart enough to handle the situation*." "You feel confident about *your abilities to handle something new*."
Less Vulnerable to Temptation – no need to resort to mischief or self-destructive behavior.	"It's nice just *being yourself for who you are, not for what others want you to be*." "You've got to be feeling on top of the world! *You're not needing to create mischief in order to be noticed.*"
Liberation – neither rebel nor victim but can solve problems constructively.	"It's great *not being trapped in your old beliefs about people (things).*" "You're feeling pretty energized right now *when you are able and capable to solve problems in useful ways."*
Living in the Present – to be able to function in the real world right now.	"There's a nice feeling when *you are able to move ahead and make things happen*." "*You didn't just sit around waiting for the perfect time; you did it right now*."

Lovability – able to love and be loved.	"What you did just then was like *giving yourself a hug for being okay*." "I'm sure that is a really secure feeling *to be comfortable enough with yourself to love and be loved.*"
Maturity – being at an appropriate stage of development for one's age.	"You're feeling pretty grown-up now when *you make good decisions for yourself*." "It's an important part of growing up to *feel as capable as you do right now*."
Positive Regard – free to have a positive regard for fellow human beings.	"*You are approaching others as equals – no more or less than you see in yourself.*" *"You seem to understand others' viewpoints and respect their right to their opinion.* That's got to be a great feeling."
Power and Control – to be able to make positive things happen.	"You're feeling proud of yourself. *You did well and were in control of the situation at the same time*." "Wow! You must be feeling really in charge of things. *You were in control of yourself and could make things better for everyone*."
Power of Choice – can make choices and live with the consequences of the choices.	"*You chose to do what you needed to do and live with the outcome*. That must make you feel pretty capable." "That must be a powerful feeling *to be aware of the consequences of your actions and to accept the outcomes.*"
Relief – from the pressure, tension and stress of having to prove one's worth.	"It's nice to know *you can just be your own person*." "It's a great feeling of relief *to just know that you are enough.*"
Relief from Guilt – feeling active remorse and able to make restitution when needed.	"It feels like a good space to be in – *you can fix the situation and then move on without worrying about it any more.* "You should be feeling pretty guilt-free – *you made a mistake, but were able to fix it and then move on*."
Relief from Fear and Anxiety – to have a positive view of the future and take life as it comes.	"That must be pretty good for you. *You can make things happen as they come and have a good outlook about it*." *"You're taking life as it comes and handling it*."
Security – to be comfortable in one's ability to cope with the ups and downs of life.	"You're feeling pretty okay *just within yourself and your ability to handle it*." "That makes you feel pretty secure in yourself; *accepting life's challenges as they come and know you will cope.*"
Securing Cooperation – to be able to work in an atmosphere of mutual respect with others.	"That seems to be a positive thing going for you – *getting others to pull together to do what needs to be done*." "It must be a great feeling to realize that *you've participated in helping your team (group) work well together*."

Self-Acceptance – feeling *good enough* as one is. "I am a worthwhile human being in spite of my faults and imperfections!"	"*As good as you are right now – that's good enough*." "You feel just *okay as you are and that is good enough*."
Self Respect – able to live with others as equals and positively contribute to one's community.	"You got a good thing going for you right now, *a give and take respect for others and what you can contribute.*" "That's got to make you pretty comfortable – *to see your value and worth as well as everyone else's.*"
Serenity – at peace with one's self and free to be at peace with one's neighbors.	"It is a really comfortable feeling when *you don't have to keep up your guard*." "It's a nice feeling of *peace of mind*."
Success – possess the feeling that one is free to succeed and to be successful.	"*You accomplished what you set out to do!*" "You feel free to *succeed in your own way without having to prove yourself*."
Tolerance of Pain or Disappointment – accepts life as it comes without despairing.	"*Even when you were having a bad day (time), your optimism seems to come shining through*." "Even though you are feeling sad right now, *it is good to know you tried your best and you can do it again if you wish.*"
Trust – trusting one's self while discriminating those worth of trust.	"It's an okay feeling *to be able to trust other people*." "You feel disappointed but *even when they let you down, you can make other decisions*."
Trust in One's Judgment – and open to learning from experience.	"So you decided to do the homework *and it turned out to be a good decision*." "You now know that *it is okay to trust your judgment*."
Unselfish – having the freedom to give of one's self to others.	"*Your compassion for others* must give you a great feeling of being okay in yourself." "It feels good to give *without expecting anything in return.*"

Then, get set to listen and focus on the character component. If the person's first response doesn't seem to lead anywhere, then an appropriate response might be: "And how was that for you?"

In classroom groups, we can select a story with a theme or character issue. Stories like the following work well with children in grades 3 through 6. They are fairly reasonable in cost and a decent library of character development books can be built by tapping the used book market.

Couric, K. (2000). *The Brand New Kid.* New York: Doubleday. ISBN: 0385599300.

Curtis, J. L., & Cornell, L. (2006). *Is There Really a Human Race?* New York: HarperCollins Children's Books. ISBN: 0060753463.

Deacon, A. (2003). *Beegu.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. ISBN: 0374306672.

dePaola, T. (1979). *Oliver Button Is a Sissy.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. ISBN: 0152578528.

Greenfield, E. (1980). *Grandmama's Joy*. New York: Philomel Books. ISBN: 0399210644.

Hest, A. (2004). *Mr. George Baker*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN: 0763612332.

Holabird, K. (1986). *Angelina on Stage*. New York: Viking. ISBN: 0670060585.

Isaak, C. T., Cooper, K. A., & Nutt, D. (2002). *Unique Monique.* Hartline, WA: Moki Time. ISBN: 0972272909.

Kann, V., & Kann, E. (2007). *Purplicious.* New York: HarperCollins Children's Books. ISBN: 9780061244056.

Kann, V., & Kann, E. (2006). *Pinkalicious.* New York: HarperCollins Children's Books. ISBN: 0060776390.

Keats, E. J. (1980). *Louie's Search.* New York: Puffin Books. ISBN: 0140567615.

Keats, E. J. (1971). Apt. 3. New York: Aladdin Books. ISBN: 0689710593.

Keats, E. J. (1964). Whistle for Willie. New York: Puffin Books. ISBN: 0140502025.

Munsch, R. (1996). Stephanie's Ponytail. Toronto: Annick Press. ISBN: 1550374842.

Viorst, J. (1995). Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 0590899821.

These stories can all serve as a stimulus for discussions and focused invitations. As the student(s) relate their stories, respond to their telling with appropriate focused invitations from the thirty-six components of character.

Focused invitations are a strategy that should *only* be used to "catch" character when it is occurring. We cannot force the issue of character development. We can only reinforce the appropriate components of character when we have an opportunity to "observe" them in action. The observations can be in "real" time or in the success stories others tell us – but they must exist. This is not a technique that serves as a subtle means of imparting values when they are not there, even though such action may be tempting. And, it is not intended as a technique for influencing behavior change although this is also a tempting alternative.

When used inappropriately, all elements of genuineness disappear and the words sound hollow and mechanical. When used with appropriate timing and sincerity, we have an opportunity to catch just a little piece of the individual's core values. And it is at that core where character and social interest reside.

End Note

"It has been really fascinating to experiment with the focused invitations as my students have experimented in their learning of new skills and techniques."

"So, you find it to be really freeing to be able to work on your own skill development while at the same time teaching and reinforcing the skill development of your own students."

"Absolutely!"

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The Instruction and Assessment of Multicultural Dispositions in Teacher and Counselor Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher dispositions within an undergraduate and graduate education course aimed at helping students gain a better appreciation for lifelong multicultural education. Education majors (N=202) from a Midwestern metropolitan university were asked to rate the viability of 13 dispositions as a training and instructional tool. Curriculum based on the underlying principles of the dispositions served as the treatment plan. Significant pretest (M=7.92, SD=0.77) to post-test (M=8.45, SD=0.56) change in mean scores was shown for the combined data set (t(204)=-10.32, p<.0005) with a large effect size (d=.80). Dispositional growth was evident despite a limited impact of selected demographic variables. Results of this institutional review board approved study demonstrate that multicultural dispositions applied within an intentionally inviting learning environment can be used to assess changes in student perceptions over the span of a semester or across a program of professional preparation. This will help college students better assess whether or not teaching and counseling career paths are correct ones for them to pursue.

Introduction

From the time that the Nation at Risk Report (U.S. Department of Education, 1983) was published up to more recent debates over President Bush's No Child Left Behind legislation, much attention has been given to school reform (Farley, 2005; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Huerta, 2009). Of the school factors that bolster student achievement, individual teacher characteristics and the quality of instruction are the most important (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Bransford, Darling-Hammond & Le Page, 2005). Even when home, neighborhood, and environmental determinants fail to provide students with tools to succeed, well-trained educators can make a positive difference in the way students achieve academically (Carter, 2000; Farley, 2005).

Teacher training is incomplete, however, if education preparation programs fail to emphasize the need for school personnel to be intentionally inviting with regards to the policies, places, programs, and processes they utilize to construct school climate (Purkey & Novak, 2008). Schmidt (2004) reminds us that school districts who adopt a

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policy that advocates strict cut-off points on state mandated tests adhere to a misguided belief that everyone should be treated the same, disregarding individual and collective differences. "At the same time, places that reflect only the dominant culture without recognizing the presence of diverse populations practice exclusion rather than inclusion in daily life. Programs that neglect or ignore culture or individual differences [and] processes adopted for the convenience of an elite few, may disinvite people who feel slighted or set apart from the rest of the population," (p.30-31).

Theoretical Framework

The initial impetus and theoretical framework for this study, related to multicultural dispositions, was inspired by recommendations made by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) - the nation's largest accrediting agency. NCATE requires that teacher preparation programs assess the dispositions of their candidates. It is believed by some, though not all, professionals that teacher dispositions play a critical role in teacher quality and effectiveness as do teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge and skills (Wasicsko, 2002).

Additional theoretical impetus was provided from related academic disciplines. From the multicultural education literature comes a recommendation from Klinger & Edwards (2006) and Trent, Kea, & Oh (2008) that beginning teacher education programs and in-service professional development efforts do a better job of equipping educators with culturally responsive, evidence-based strategies. De' Melendez and Beck (2010) warn against adopting a one-size-fits-all, monocultural mindset when teaching students. Gollnick and Chin (2009) emphasize the need for educators to move beyond the dominant canon of knowledge and ways of knowing. Several counseling education experts (e.g., Arredondo, et al., 1996; Axelson, 1999; Baruth & Manning, 2003; Ivey, D'Andrea, & Simon-Morgan, 2002; Constantine, 2003; Robinson, 2005; Sue & Sue, 2008) advocate a set of disposition-like multicultural competencies that emphasize not only knowledge and skills, but also counselor attitudes and beliefs.

Principles borrowed from Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) also provide an important theoretical backdrop. When surveying the literature, one can identify a natural link that appears to connect ITP with the multicultural education movement. William Purkey and John Novak (1996), founders of ITP, affirm that, "In the fight against prejudices, teachers cannot be neutral spectators. They should be combatants against the subtle and not so subtle forces that negate the worth and ability of large numbers of their students," (p. 66). However, Schmidt (2004) notes that, "Over the years, literature and research about invitational education has not addressed the nuances of applying this approach with students, parents, employees, clients, or other populations from diverse backgrounds," (p. 44). He proceeds to issue a call for that gap in literature to be closed.

Within the school setting, Purkey and Novak (1996) teach that effective educators must

adhere to four fundamental beliefs: That (1) all students deserve to be affirmed as valuable, capable, and responsible, and treated with acceptance, (2) administrators, teachers, and students all have the responsibility to create beneficial messages for themselves and others, (3) all students regardless of their background possess relatively untapped potential in all areas of learning and human development, and (4) human potential is best realized when the administration purposely orchestrates a positive school climate.

Purkey and Novak (1996) further break down effective relationship building into four levels of functioning across a spectrum of helping and harmful behaviors: Policies and practices that are (a) Intentionally Disinviting – blatant racism and sexism fit into this category, (b) Unintentionally Disinviting – indistinctive institutional forms of oppression would be good examples, (c) Unintentionally Inviting – such as great intervention strategies that become hard to duplicate due to a lack of purpose and deliberation, and (d) Intentionally Inviting – intervention and strategies that are purposely designed to invite optimal development and encourage students to realize the potential in themselves and others. "At the intentionally inviting level, educators deliberately choose caring and democratic purpose," (Purkey & Novak, 2008, p. 30). This study posits that the application of multicultural dispositions as a training tool for classroom teachers and counselors is a prime example of adopting policy and practice that is intentionally inviting to the benefit of a diverse student population.

Dispositions Defined

The definition of dispositions is varied and imprecise; still, there are commonalities of thought. Early writers (Beyer, 1987; Ennis, 1987) refer to dispositions as tendencies to behave. Katz (1993) defined the term as a voluntary and intentional pattern of behavior exhibited frequently and oriented to broad goals. In later writings, dispositions are described by Carr and Claxton (2002) as habits of mind and tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways. Cudahy, Finnan, Jaruszewicz, and McCarty (2002) define dispositions as values, commitments, or ethics that are internally held and externally exhibited. Leader and Middleton (2004) describe them as learning experiences that go beyond cognitive abilities into a realm of attitudes and awareness about critical thinking. This study relies on a definition provided by Gollnick and Chinn (2009) which views dispositions as, "values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence teaching and interactions with students, families, colleagues, and communities," (p. 379).

Dispositions and Effective Teaching

The movement toward the greater professionalization of teaching through assessment based accreditation was spearheaded by NCATE as a way to not only assess knowledge and skills but also whether a person was the right match for the classroom, thus the reinforcement of teacher dispositions (McKnight, 2004). Teacher dispositions strongly influence the impact

educators have on student development (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1999). Teacher preparation programs must help candidates develop the necessary dispositions to be effective educators (Florio-Ruane and Lensmire, 1990). Training for greater multicultural awareness is a major part of that preparation (Gay, 2003; Tozer, Senese, & Vilas, 2006).

Information regarding dispositions as it specifically relates to the multicultural training of education majors is less defined compared to the general dispositional discourse, and yet there are important considerations one can glean from the literature. Stevens and Charles (2005) identify understanding, tolerance, and respect as important dispositions. Garmon (2006) highlights openness, self-awareness, self-reflection, and a commitment to social justice as important correlates to effective diversity instruction. Helm's (2006) review of the literature includes kindness, initiative, honesty, humility, healing, a sense of community, and a service-to-others orientation.

Leading multicultural textbook authors address characteristics that have a disposition-like quality without necessarily labeling them as so. For example, Grant and Gomez (2001) emphasize valuing diversity through adopting non-traditional mindsets. Banks (2009) calls for active and meaningful values and character education. Bennett (2007) emphasizes the importance of instilling fair-minded critical thinking. Nieto (2004) is a proponent of shaping cultural sensitivity through a critical pedagogy that embraces a multiple lens approach to valuing differences. An exception is the Gollnick and Chin (2009) text which actively promotes multicultural dispositions as formulated by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) - an agency that collaborates with state teacher licensing departments.

The following eight dispositions were gleaned from a larger listing of 36 successful beginning teacher correlates representing the diversity component of the INTASC (1992) recommendations. Effective multicultural teachers:

1. Believe that all children can learn at high levels and persist in helping all children achieve success;
2. Are sensitive to community and cultural norms;
3. Appreciate multiple perspectives and convey to learners how knowledge is developed from the vantage point of the knower;
4. Appreciate and value human diversity, show respect for students' varied talents and perspectives, and is committed to the pursuit of individually configured excellence;
5. Respect students as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, talents, and interests;
6. Appreciate the cultural dimensions of communication, respond appropriately, and seek to foster culturally sensitive

communication by and among all students in the classroom setting;

7. Value and appreciate the importance of all of a child's lived experience; and
8. Make students feel valued for their potential as people, and help them learn to value each other.

At the turn of the century, the American Psychological Association (2002) endorsed multicultural competencies for counselor education. Pope-Davis, Coleman, Lui, and Toporek (2003) produced the most comprehensive handbook to date on multicultural competencies. If multicultural competencies make school counselors more effective, they may also have a similar impact on teachers and administrators (Moore, 2003).

Assessment of Dispositions

Not all writers agree that dispositions can or should be assessed. "Despite all the emphasis on dispositions, professionals believe that dispositions are a vague construct that is hard to define and measure," (Singh & Stoloff, 2008). Damon (2007) argues that while the scientific definition of a disposition emphasizes a birth-until-now process that impacts personality development, the NCATE definition focuses on the candidate's value-driven conduct, hence there is misalignment of purpose between established research and current practice. There is also concern that loosely defined standards of dispositions can lead to program dismissal of people who do not pass a certain political litmus test, as well as intimidate those who are afraid of being eliminated. Damon further warns that "the politics of multiculturalism," (page 369) should be avoided, but he fails to go into further detail.

Criticism includes the argument that dispositions (a) are currently defined in non-scientific ways that allow for too much subjective interpretation (Damon, 2007; Murray, 2007); (b) like intelligence, cannot be measured directly (Singh & Stoloff, 2008; Wasicsko, 2002), (c) are closely tied to variables [i.e., age, academic exposure, and moral development] that are too hard to control for (McKnight, 2004); and (d) cannot be dis-embedded from a larger set of environmental factors [i.e., parent involvement, peer pressure] that account for the total learning experience (Allal, 2002; Sadler, 2002).

Proponents of dispositions (Carr & Claxton, 2002; Villegas, 2007) argue that, even though human behavior is highly dependent on a large number of interwoven factors, dispositions can be defined in a developmental fashion that takes into account differentiation in robustness and socio-cultural sophistication. Singh and Stoloff (2008) suggest that despite problems with defining and measuring teacher dispositions, teacher preparation programs should continue to conduct research aimed at adding to the emerging literature on the topic. Even writers who are conflicted about dispositions agree that if done correctly, students can benefit greatly from instruction that encourages an educator code of ethics that can be effectively assessed (Burant, Chubbuck & Whipp, 2007; Diez, 2007).

Despite reservations about dispositions, Damon (2007) believes that students deserve to be instructed by teachers who are ethics-driven. The following are suggestions for dispositional reform:

1. We should not assess attitudes and beliefs that relate to religious preference or political ideologies;
2. We should not assess personal characteristics (such as being gregarious or shy) that only have a speculative relationship with teaching ability.
3. Beliefs that are directly related to a candidate's capacity to teach, as well as personal and professional teacher characteristics should be assessed; and
4. Dispositions must be defined via scholarship and systematic application of established knowledge gained from the behavioral sciences.

Assessment tools aimed at measuring dispositional awareness are high in demand, but short in supply. Fortunately, Thompson (2009) utilized a convenience sample of Midwest undergraduate and graduate education majors (N = 1,092) over a 5-year period to create an instrument referred to as the Multicultural Dispositions Index (MDI) aimed at effectively measuring multicultural dispositional growth. Significant pre-test-to-posttest growth of student multicultural dispositions was found, as well as strong student support for adopting dispositions as a program completion requirement. It is believed that the MDI is one of the first assessment tools of its kind.

Regardless of whether one supports dispositions in its current or in an amended form, there is a lack of strategies aimed at examining dispositional instruction in the classroom. This study hopes to address that need. In addition, this paper attempts to fill a small portion of the large gap in literature that previously failed to connect the goals of the Invitational Theory and Practice to the Dispositions movement.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between disposition scores before and after application of a course focused on multicultural education?
2. Given a listing of 13 selected multicultural dispositions, how do education majors rank them as important training tools?

The multicultural course applied a dynamic curriculum developed by the investigator known as the Critical Multicultural Imperative (CMI). CMI teaching techniques are based on the following instructional strategies and principles:

1. Multicultural controversy should be embraced rather than avoided. Students are taught that that political correctness often acts as a filter to cloud important issues that need to be discussed. One example of this might be a need among young people of our time to have an open and honest discussion of why African Americans get to use the N-

Word, but Whites can't;

2. Partisan political pandering is often challenged. Students are taught that BOTH of the major American political parties have positive things to offer to the larger multicultural discourse, as well as things that need to be eliminated or modified in order for meaningful social progress to be made;
3. The attainment of skill sets aimed at conflict resolution is a top priority of multicultural education. It should never be just a feel-good or a simple awareness-only exercise.
4. In order for life-long learning to take place, instruction must simultaneously be aimed at the head (academic), gut (feeling), and heart (social change) levels;
5. Successful instruction must pay attention to both content and process. If certain groups know about a certain truth on one hand, but they don't "feel it" or "feel you" as being an authentic helper on the other hand, it becomes harder for them to experience the change that they need;
6. Significant attention must be paid to combating multicultural learner resistance and what multicultural counseling experts refer to as ego defense mechanisms;
7. The instructor must become adept at releasing students from historical guilt about race and ethnicity, while at the same time encouraging and recruiting students to become change agents for the future;
8. Multicultural education is enhanced when instruction highlights the pain and suffering of human relations, as well as testimonials of how obstacles were overcome. A delicate balance of both perspectives is needed;
9. Once race, ethnicity, religious, gender, and disabilities issues are thoroughly established and discussed, significant attention must also be paid to going beyond those factors and exploring a phenomenon known as the abuse of power and privilege. Failure to look at the human condition above and beyond traditional indicators will result in only a partial awareness of the bigger diversity picture;
10. Multicultural education is greatly enhanced when traditional lecture instruction is augmented with interactive learning experiences;
11. On-going reflection and self-assessment improve teacher and counselor performance on both a professional and personal level; and
12. Educators and counselors who adopt a multicultural dispositions mindset will have a greater opportunity to bring about positive and meaningful social change compared to those who are dispositional critics.

This study is primarily aimed at addressing the viability of the last tenet, the importance of teacher candidates adopting a multicultural dispositional mindset.

Student outcomes for the multicultural course itself included the following expec-

tations. Essentially, it was expected that students would:

1. Endorse multicultural dispositions as a useful program completion requirement;
2. Be positively impacted by dispositional instruction and experience statistically significant pretest-to-posttest mean score gains;
3. Closely mirror the investigator's initial ranking of the selected dispositions; and
4. See no need to eliminate any of the dispositions.

It was also believed that the demographics of the student might play a role in their interaction with the disposition instruction, and thus the scores before and after the course. For example, it was hypothesized that Caucasian, Republican, older, and male respondents might have lower pre-test disposition scores compared to younger, female, minority, and Democrat or Independent respondents. The researcher acknowledges that these demographics expectations can potentially be related to stereotyping, but it is the very investigation of such diversity myths that need to be considered, studied, and confronted in such disposition instruction research. It was hoped that the application of CMI instruction in the course would perhaps have a leveling effect on post test scores.

Method

Participants

Participants who comprised a convenience sample for this study were teacher and counselor candidates (N=201) who attended a Midwestern metropolitan university situated in an urban setting of 800,000 people. Fifty-two of the individuals surveyed were male and 149 were female. One hundred eighty-five persons (92%) were Caucasian, while 16 were non-majority group members. Of those sixteen, 6 were African American, 5 were Hispanic, and 5 were Asian. Low percentages of students of color applying to become educators have been a long-standing issue for the community.

There were 68 persons who fell in the 17-19 age range, 76 persons who fell in the 20-24 age range and 57 individuals who were 25 to 56 years old. One hundred and fifty one persons had only a high school degree, while 50 persons had obtained a bachelor's degree. One hundred and fifty one respondents were undergraduate education majors, while 31 were graduates studying to be counselors (16 school counselors and 15 community counselors). Nineteen were non-education majors. Sixty one individuals classified themselves as being a Democrat, while 66 and 33 persons said they were Republican and Independent respectively. Forty-one respondents were politically undecided.

The Survey Instrument

The dispositions assessment tool developed for this study was based on an inter-disciplinary theoretical framework. That framework included (1) disposition recommendations from NCATE and INTASC – two professional education agencies, (2) input gleaned from a careful review of multicultural education,

multicultural counseling, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and invitational theory and practice literature, and (3) craft knowledge of the investigator gained from 34 years of teaching multicultural education and race relations. Appendix A is the actual survey given to respondents. Appendix B provides an explanation of how the items included in the survey instrument were linked to the review of literature.

Prior to the implementation of the survey and during the development of the instrument, the investigator allowed colleagues and students an opportunity to have input on each disposition over a period of time. Originally, there were 20 survey items, but a three-year development and vetting process paired the initial listing down to 13. The following is an example of a disposition that was eliminated during the development phase: Educators should endorse an eclectic political stance towards race, gender, sexual orientation, and physical impairment issues. Because it was decided that the statement might infringe upon the free speech rights of certain politically-minded educators, a more universal disposition—It's not about me, my politics, or my creature comforts, but rather it's about the needs of my students and clients—was substituted. Through the vetting process, the instrument was refined into its final form as represented in Appendix A.

Data Collection Procedures

Completion of the dispositions assessment instrument was an instructor requirement for students who took a semester long, state mandated, human relations course designated for teacher and counselor certification. The utilization of the data collected for research was voluntary and anonymous. Pre and post treatment surveys were distributed over the course of a semester. Student participation in the voluntary portion that led to this research was 98%.

Data Analysis

Utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program, the following statistical analyses were conducted:

1. A summarization of descriptive data and student rankings of the dispositions;
2. An analysis of pretest-to-posttest mean score differences by conducting a paired-samples t-test; and
3. A two-way ANOVA to estimate potential relationships between respondents' pretest and posttest scores as they were potentially mediated by selected demographic attribute variables.

Results

Descriptive Findings

Descriptive findings of survey results can be found in Table 1. Education majors clearly endorsed the collective set of multicultural dispositions as a useful training tool, as witnessed by significant means scores reflecting student acceptance. Surprisingly, this was true not only of posttest results (M = 8.45), but also of pretest results (M = 7.95). Students came into the semester not being intimidated by multicultural dis-

positions, and then went on to experience additional growth in their appreciation of them as a result of meaningful instruction. When separated, all 13 dispositions were also supported.

Although respondents rated all the dispositions as important tools of professional developmental, the following were ranked as the top five: (1) a belief that kids from ALL backgrounds have the ability to learn and that ALL kids deserve an educator's best effort, (2) that true multicultural teaching and counseling cannot have a "what-about-me" focus, (3) that differences should be celebrated and not feared, (4) that if change is needed in my school or within my community it must start with positive acts initiated by me, and (5) that while getting everyone to agree on various diversity issues is ideal, true multicultural instruction must first demonstrate how to disagree without being disagreeable. Curriculum based on these principles can become life-changing.

The prioritization of each disposition by students was relatively similar to the instructor's initial rankings (see Table 2). Although respondents and the instructor did not have an exact match, the first eight dispositions were relatively ranked the same with the exception of the fact that respondents put greater emphasis on disposition #12 [change must start with me] and #10 [good intentions are not good enough]. Still, general consensus between the student and instructor rankings may be evidence that the instructor may have had some limited influence on the developing dispositions of the students. Also, when given a chance to eliminate one or more of the 13 dispositions, respondents clearly chose to retain them all. Only disposition #7 [educators must teach students to constantly examine the status quo] received any opposition, and even then there was a 96% approval rating for that item.

Table 1

Paired-Sample T-Test Results for: Respondent Acceptance of Multicultural Teacher Dispositions, Pretest-to-Posttest Change in Mean Scores (N = 200).

		Pretest Mean	SD	Postest Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	df	t-score	p	d
I.	Combined Results:	7.92	0.77	8.45	0.56	0.53	204	-10.32	< .0005	.80
II.	Individual Dispositions:									
1.	It's not about me; it's about my kids/clients.	7.82	1.39	8.53	0.77	0.71	199	-7.13	< .0005	.66
2.	Kids from all ethnic groups can learn.	8.29	1.25	8.70	0.81	0.41	199	-4.29	< .0005	.40
3.	Don't fear diversity; celebrate differences.	7.92	1.29	8.55	0.87	0.63	199	-6.69	< .0005	.58
4.	Many truths exist simultaneously.	7.52	1.50	8.32	1.01	0.80	199	-7.81	< .0005	.64
5.	I must disagree with-out being disagreeable.	8.25	1.05	8.65	0.60	0.40	199	-5.24	< .0005	.48
6.	MC clichés not enough; need critical analyses.	7.75	1.19	8.45	0.83	0.70	199	-8.28	< .0005	.69
7.	We must regularly question status quo.	6.75	2.03	7.54	1.93	0.79	197	-4.49	< .0005	.40
8.	Teach all sides, then trust your students.	8.33	0.98	8.59	0.78	0.26	199	-3.31	< .001	.30
9.	Educators/Counselors can't be fragile.	7.59	1.49	8.43	0.96	0.84	199	-9.19	< .0005	.69
10.	Good intentions are not good enough.	8.18	1.01	8.59	0.68	0.41	199	-6.12	< .0005	.49
11.	Need more than foods& festivals approach.	7.90	1.19	8.44	0.98	0.54	199	-5.71	< .0005	.50
12.	Social change must start with me.	8.29	1.00	8.62	0.73	0.33	199	-4.38	< .0005	.38
13.	Lifelong self-analysis is a good thing.	8.29	0.95	8.67	0.66	0.38	199	-5.50	< .0005	.47

Alpha = .05

Table 2

Student Ranking of the Most-to-Least Important Disposition that Impacted Professional Growth.

Disposition		Ranking	Mean	*SD*	N	Retain *(f)*	Omit *(f)*
2.	Kids from all ethnic groups can learn.	1st	3.87	3.04	198	199	0
1.	It's not about me; it's about my students.	2nd	4.22	3.65	198	199	0
3.	Don't fear diversity; celebrate it!	3rd	5.56	3.40	198	198	1
12.	Social change must start with me.	4th	6.52	3.90	198	199	0
5.	Disagree without being disagreeable.	5th	6.63	3.49	197	199	0
4.	Many truths simultaneously exist.	6th	7.01	3.33	197	197	2
10.	Good intentions are not good enough.	7th	7.27	3.12	197	199	0
6.	Instructors must teach critical analysis.	8th	7.52	3.15	198	199	0
9.	Educators/Counselors can't be fragile.	9th	7.67	3.58	197	196	3
8.	Teach all sides, then trust your students.	10th	7.80	3.07	197	199	0
13.	Lifelong self-analysis is a good thing.	11th	7.82	4.08	197	199	0
11.	Need more than foods/festivals approach.	12th	9.39	2.92	197	197	2
7.	Regularly question the status quo.	13th	9.45	3.01	197	191	8

Paired Sample t-Tests

Within the course, students appeared to be positively impacted by the application of the 13 multicultural dispositions. Results (see Table 1) show that respondents gave multicultural dispositions a pre-treatment rating of 7.92 (SD=.77) and a post-treatment rating of 8.45 (SD=.56). A mean difference of 0.53 for the combined data set was statistically significant $t(199) = -9.19$, $p < .0005$) with a relatively large effect size ($d = .80$). These findings go a long way in helping to silence a suggestion by some critics that dispositions are being forced on teacher candidates, or that they short-circuit the democratic process in education.

In addition to the student ranking previously mentioned, the largest individual gain in mean scores representing dispositional growth included: Disposition #9 – educators cannot afford to be fragile [this disposition had a mean score gain of .84 with a high-medium effect size of .69]; Disposition #6 – critical analysis is needed [a gain of .70 with a high-medium effect size of .69]; Disposition #1 – multicultural education is not about me [a gain of .71 with a high-medium effect size of .66]; Disposition #4 – many truths exist simultaneously [a gain of .80 with a high-medium effect size of .64]; Disposition #7 – we must constantly examine the status quo [a gain of .79 with a medium effect size of .40], and finally; Disposition 3 – we must celebrate, not fear our diversity differences [a gain of .63 with a medium effect size of .58]. These findings highlight areas that prior education may not have made a deep impact on the dispositional consciousness of an important group of students wishing to become classroom teachers and counselors. Teacher preparation programs must go beyond

merely training their candidates about content knowledge. This is true whether or not they work with a diverse population of students and parents.

Two-Way ANOVA Analyses

By and large, increases in pretest-to-posttest means appeared to be relatively independent of the demographic variables selected for this study. There were, however, a few exceptions when looking at the relationship of age and college major with a few of the dispositions. Older students appeared to have had a greater appreciation for multicultural dispositions compared to younger students. As expected, counseling (i.e., graduate level) students were more culturally sensitive to dispositions compared to pre-service teacher candidates. Differences based on race and gender were not found to be statistically significant—ethnic minorities and females were not more sensitive to multicultural dispositions than were Whites and males. Political affiliation did not make an impact on the findings. Democrats and Republicans showed no significant statistical differences at either the pretest or the posttest levels. Independents and Undecided persons did show significant differences with Democrats and Republicans on disposition #1 (kidfocus), but even those findings were above the .01 alpha level as often designated for multiple testing designs.

The results of this study indicate that a generally high rating of multicultural dispositions by a convenience sample of (92% Caucasian) education majors is evidence of the strength of the instructive quality of multicultural dispositions as a learning tool. If properly developed and applied, dispositions are not only palatable with the goals of teacher preparation programs, they have the power to provide a measure of growth in multicultural perception and awareness that cannot be obtained without their usage.

Discussion

The dispositions covered in the under-graduate and graduate courses investigated in this study were developed and applied in a fair and systematic way. Care was taken to avoid the pitfalls of failed efforts, namely, (a) vague and spurious dispositions such as "the teacher believes in social justice" were purposely omitted, (b) special attention was given to constructing certain dispositions (i.e., 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10) that purposely highlighted the crippling impact of multicultural resistance and the misunderstood dynamics of majority group power and privilege—yet it was done in a way that was non-threatening, (c) students, not instructors, were responsible for the assessment of their own growth or lack thereof, and (c) although a few students were privately counseled, no student was punished or involuntarily exited from the program as a result of their dispositional stance. It is believed that most education candidates who are resistant to multicultural dispositions will either modify their perspectives or voluntarily exit themselves from teacher education programs. Those who continue to resist dispositions still have to pass multicultural scrutiny during most hiring processes. Either way, the First Amendment rights of education majors are

protected while the human relations safe-guards of public and private school children are strongly emphasized.

Disaggregated results show that race and gender did not make a significant difference on how multicultural dispositions were viewed. The fact that both genders and representatives from majority and minority groups embraced multicultural dispositions as a needed component of teacher and counselor training is encouraging to say the least. This outcome may very well be a function of the quality of candidates who choose to enter the field, but it may also say something about the expectations of students set by the multicultural mission statement of the college. It is unclear whether or not a similar endorsement for multicultural dispositions would come from students attending a different university or students from fields of study other than education. More research needs to be conducted to answer these questions.

Results did show older students having a greater appreciation for multicultural dispositions compared to younger students. The same is true for graduate level counseling majors compared to under-graduate pre-service teachers. This may largely be due to the fact that age and time spent working with pre-college students brings about a greater awareness of what their diversity needs are. It's one thing to grow up having close friends of another race or ethnicity. It's another thing having to actually devise strategies that help underprivileged groups navigate the societal roadblocks they encounter as they climb academic and career ladders.

The results by political party tend to corroborate the findings of Adorno, Frekel, Levinson and Sanford (1950) that both liberal and conservative individuals have the ability to be unprejudiced, as well as findings by Sniderman and Piazza (1993) that conservatism and prejudice, often viewed as one in the same, are separate measures. This finding goes against popular contemporary culture which states that Republicans are against things that help minority causes and that Democrats are a minority and underprivileged person's best friend. Caution must be taken, however, not to sanitize history or candy-coat the fact that over the years a lot of legislation aimed at increasing diversity initiatives was often torpedoed by people who represent the far right wing of the Republican Party. Caution must also be taken not to assume that 100% of the philosophy of modern day Democrats is in fact what the doctor should order for a "patient" who has needed healing for quite some time. Somehow, the real truth seems to lie in a critical middle yet to be discovered. The good news is that educators from varying political perspectives have the potential to create a school climate that is intentionally inviting to students of multiple backgrounds.

At the end of the 2007 fall semester, one Caucasian male offered the following testimony on the open-ended portion of his evaluation of the course:

"I admit to a slightly defensive attitude after the first few classes. The things you were

talking about were very different from what I have previously been exposed to. However, as the semester went on, I began to see a different perspective on the topic of race and discrimination, white privilege, minority groups, and multicultural dispositions that I had never seen before. I felt that my eyes were being opened to an entirely different reality that was there all along despite my blindness to it."

Each semester, there are more than a few personal testimonies such as this one that highlight the predictive quality of utilizing multicultural dispositions as a training tool.

Conclusions

This research is not comprehensive in its attention to multicultural disposition instruction and assessment. It does, however, provide additional evidence that (1) dispositions can be defined and framed in meaningful ways, (2) student input on the viability and structure of dispositions can go a long way in making the instructional process more meaningful for education majors, and (3) teachers and counselor candidates can be effectively trained how to master the multicultural portion of the larger task of creating schools that are intentionally inviting.

The findings of this study appear to point to the fact that a false polemic probably exists among those who fight over the implementation of dispositions. Dispositions and democracy are not natural enemies as some critics would have us believe. Still, there are legitimate arguments about dispositions that must be addressed. In particular, dispositions must be defined and developed in more systematic ways. Although they can become important tools for career counseling, dispositions should never be used as a hammer for program-related punishments or for the instructional separation between individuals. Proponents must also avoid dispositional pitfalls that seek to convert students in partisan political ways. Nevertheless, the adoption of a dispositional approach encourages education majors to critically reflect and move beyond feel-good multicultural education. It must also be stated that benefits of dispositions go far beyond just making minority students feel more included. In this study, majority group students reported that multicultural dispositions broadened their horizons.

Multicultural dispositions were only one part of a broader strategy known as the Critical Multicultural Imperative (CMI) that the investigator developed to obtain positive results. A twelve point plan describing the makeup of the approach was included in this paper. Further explanation of other elements of the approach will be addressed in follow-up publications. The cornerstone of CMI curriculum, however, is the 13 multicultural dispositions investigated by this study. It is important to mention that this is just one listing of dispositions that happened to work for one group of education students from the Midwest. To be sure, there are other worthy listings not identified by this research. The dispositions from this study are offered as one possible model.

A pleasant by-product of the research came in the form of discovering a great amount of commonality that existed between the 13 dispositions and the writings of Invitational Theory and Practice writers. For example, in an editorial piece written by Phil Riner (2006) we find that helping behavior that is done with a selfish motive might not qualify as truly being inviting. Back in 1996, the writer developed disposition #1 – Education is not about me, my feelings, or my set of philosophical and political beliefs; rather, it's about my students/clients and what they need – as the foundation upon which he developed CMI instruction. Although not 100% the same, the similarity in dispositional mindset between the writer and Riner (2006) is encouraging, especially in light of the fact that they were arrived at separately and independently.

Likewise, John Schmidt's 2007 call for "celebrating unique differences that individuals and groups possess and through which they enrich the greater community," (p. 17) is very similar to disposition #3 used in this study (see Appendix A). It is also similar to the third, fourth, and fifth INTASC teacher disposition highlighted in this paper. Schmidt (2007) goes on to recommend that educators must (a) set high expectations for ALL students [very similar to disposition 2], (b) empower others with a sense of control over the decisions they face [somewhat similar to disposition 8], and (c) challenge traditional programs and outmoded policies that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate [somewhat similar to disposition 7].

The review of literature conducted for this study suggests that there is a natural connection between portions of the Dispositions, Multicultural Education, Multicultural Counseling, and the Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) movements that are not always brought to the forefront. The instructive tenets of ITP have the potential to act as a glue that cements the disciplines into an overall interdisciplinary approach for school reform. To one degree or another, there is a desire in each of the disciplines to create policies, places, programs and processes aimed at ensuring holistic development for all children regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. Each discipline attempts to place the student or the client at the center of our attention. They also strive to enrich the larger society by highlighting the views and perspectives of individuals and groups who traditionally do not have input into the dominant literary canon.

Students and clients are better served when our invitations are intentionally inviting. However, organizations wishing to be equitable must be careful, "not to confuse fair and just practices with the misguided notion of treating everyone the same. Such confusion would fail to recognize the uniqueness that each person brings to a relationship," (Schmidt, 2007, p. 17). At the very heart of multicultural education is a noble desire to constantly redefine the concept of democracy. "The primary purpose of education is to summon people cordially to realize their potential in all areas of worthwhile human activity. This includes meeting the democratic goals of society and

participating in the progress of civilization," (Purkey & Novak, 2008, p. 34). Novak (2002) calls for educational conditions that relate to a "deepening of an understanding of democracy," (p. 152). It is believed that this research effort accomplishes a small but important part of these democratic goals.

More importantly, this study suggests that students are not intimidated by dispositions, but rather they are positively impacted by those that are carefully constructed and applied. It also provides a solid base that encourages educators to consider how to go about developing meaningful multicultural curriculum that impacts students for a lifetime. Multicultural dispositions can be used to assess changes in perceptions over the span of a semester or across a program of professional preparation to help candidates determine if teaching and counseling are appropriate professional matches.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Multicultural Educator Dispositions Survey

4 Digit ID _____

Dr. Franklin Thompson, College of Education
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Scale

Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Clearly Agree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Directions: Use the above scale to register your agreement or disagreement with the following proposed multicultural and human relations teacher dispositions. Do not give answers that you think the instructor wants to hear, but rather ones that reflect your true feelings.

Effective multicultural classroom teachers and school counselors must:

_____ 1. Accept the premise that the business of teaching and counseling is not about me, my feelings, or my set of philosophical and political beliefs. Rather, it's about my students/clients and what they need. Therefore, it is not ethical for me to use my classroom or the counseling session in a way that simply validates or justifies a particular worldview I happen to hold;

_____ 2. Adopt the premise that students, regardless of their ethnic or socioeconomic background, have the potential to learn higher order thinking skills. Therefore, all students deserve my best teaching effort.

_____ 3. Embrace a belief that views different as just what it is; different, and not better or worse. Ethnic and cultural differences should be celebrated, not feared;

_____ 4. Accept the premise that many truths exist simultaneously in the world, and that truth defined solely by the group in power without the input of out-group members has a higher probability of only being partial truth;

_____ 5. Remain professional to others even when communicating with people we disagree with. In order for me to be an effective multicultural and human relations communicator, *I must learn how to disagree without being disagreeable*;

_____ 6. Realize that warm feelings and nice sounding phrases (i.e., "Can't we just all get along?") do not in and of themselves solve problems in the multicultural and diversity arena of life. Rather, a critical analysis of power and privilege is needed in order to understand the bigger picture of racism and problems that flow from academic, social, and economic disadvantage;

_____ 7. Constantly remind themselves of factors within society that make it easy to justify the status quo and engage in denial and resistance behaviors when it comes to accepting multicultural education and social justice themes;

_____ 8. Accept the premise that while it may be next to impossible to get everyone to agree on multicultural content, it is nonetheless necessary that educators allow students an opportunity to hear the facts about living in this society from multiple perspectives and then proceed to trust them to form their own worldview independent of the instructor's beliefs or the traditions of their nation's past;

_____ 9. Realize that I cannot be an effective multicultural educator if I am a fragile person. In order to positively impact people who come from poor neighborhoods and tough backgrounds, I must acquire thick skin and a deeper knowledge base;

_____ 10. Realize that general awareness and good intentions are not good enough. In addition to possessing a good heart, I must gain the necessary *abilities and skills* to communicate and work across cultural lines;

_____ 11. Realize that it is hard to make a lasting multicultural impact on my students by relying on a history-foods-and-festivals-only perspective. Rather, a multi-disciplinary approach that incorporates research and knowledge gained from many diverse fields of human behavior will yield the most complete results;

_____ 12. Acknowledge that social progress starts with me—I must be the change my community seeks after. I must acknowledge that educators have the power and responsibility to make a positive impact on the lives of young people even when other forces make a negative impact; and

_____ 13. Willingly embrace the practice of on-going self-assessment and reflection. The more teachers know about themselves, the more benefit will be accrued to children.

Additional Survey Questions:

_____ 14. College teacher & counselor preparation programs *should not exit students who are weak in multicultural dispositions* from their program of study, **BUT** they still should emphasize dispositions and other important diversity mindsets for the sake of better preparing teacher candidates for public service.

15. Rank the multicultural counselor dispositions in order of the most (1st) to the least (13th) important factor that you feel makes a person an effective professional: Looking at **Disposition #1** listed above, I give it a _____ ranking; D2 _____ D3 _____ D4 _____ D5_____ D6 _____ D7 _____ D8_____ D9 _____ D10 _____ D11 _____ D12 _____ D13 _____

16. The one disposition I think should most be dropped from the assessment is number _____ (put a N/A for "Not Applicable" if you think all of the dispositions should be required of students).

17. Open-Ended Student Comments and Feedback:

Appendix B

Theoretical framework utilized for development of the 13 multicultural educator dispositions.*

Source of inspiration	Targeted disposition investigated by this study
I.	Aligned with current INTASC (1992) standards that have similar verbiage: Disposition 2, 3, and 13.
II.	Aligned with James Banks (2009) multicultural literature and research: Disposition 8 and 11.
III.	Aligned with Critical Pedagogy research – Paulo Freire (2005), and Joan Wink (2000): Disposition 4.
IV.	Aligned with principles from Critical Race Theory – Derrick Bell (2004), and Gloria Ladson-Billings (2003): Disposition 6 and 7
V.	Aligned with multicultural counseling research – Sue & Sue (2008): Disposition 9 and 10.
VI.	Aligned with the teachings of M. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and John F. Kennedy: Disposition 12.
VII.	Craft knowledge – new dispositions based on investigator teaching experience: Disposition 1 and 5.
VIII.	Multicultural Dispositions that are aligned to one degree or another with Invitational Theory and Practice teachings: (a.) John J. Schmidt (2007) – Disposition 2, 3, 7, and 8 (b.) Phil Riner (2006) – Disposition 1

* Note: Refer to Appendix A for the actual wording of each disposition.

Curriculum Construction and Teacher Empowerment: Supporting Invitational Education with a Creative Problem Solving Model

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Abstract

This case study demonstrates how the Osborne-Parnes Creative Problem-solving Model (CPS) can be used to enhance teacher creativity through the collaborative and inviting processes found within Invitational Education, which counter the individualistic and product-oriented enterprises often associated with creative endeavors. Conclusions indicate that the model's three stages guided, via sequenced divergent and convergent thinking strategies, teacher curricular decision-making and, ultimately, the learning opportunities provided to students. The CPS framework encouraged participants to engage in and experience optimism, trust, respect, care, and intentionality, which are the five value-based assumptions of Invitational Education.

Introduction

Can the enhancement of creativity in classrooms be supportive of the attributes associated with *Invitational Education*, especially given the individualistic assumptions associated with creativity?

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Creativity, as reflected in more recent descriptions, is perceived as a mechanism for individual expression, self-realization, and self-fulfillment (Cropley, 2006). Barron (1969) suggested that creative people often resist socialization, go against the conventional routes and, instead, take individualistic paths when undergoing personal endeavors. Creativity is frequently expressed by the willingness to take sensible risks and resist the collective reasoning by purposefully choosing to be original and independent (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995).

Such independent and isolated views would have little place in *Invitational Education*, where the dimensions of being personally and professionally inviting of others are key goals (Purkey & Novak, 1996). The notion

that people should function within a communicative process, one focused on understanding and communicating messages related to one's potential (Purkey & Schmidt, 1996), would eschew the individualism and resistance to socialization often found in the literature related to creativity. Instead, *Invitational Education* is more supportive of the processes associated with democratic practice – or the ethical commitment that values cooperation and collaboration as key principles in all people (Purkey & Novak, 1996).

Invitational Education and Creativity

The cooperative and collaborative processes espoused in *Invitational Education* and employed by those engaged in creative efforts are rarely used to define creativity. Instead, creativity (and creative people, for that matter) is often defined by a particular product that has been generated. This product over process approach at examining creativity has had implications on teachers and school environments, as products or outcomes become the focus of creative endeavors. However, Cropley (2006) suggests that there is an alternative approach to examine creativity and creative environments – one that is centered on the social interactions surrounding creative efforts. In this approach, creativity is fostered not individually and in isolation (picture the image of the scientific genius working alone in a lab), but in a social network that fosters individual and group growth collectively (picture the image of a team of workers problem-solving).

Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) model does much to support the linkages between socially-oriented creativity (and its development) and *Invitational Education*. His model suggests that creativity is not simply an objective property, but instead an effect of social interactions between an individual and the environment in which he or she interacts. These social interactions can be structured to foster human potential in ways that allow people to add to, rather than subtract from, the process of being a beneficial presence to schools and those they serve (Novak & Purkey, 2001). However, current school climates are not always conducive to organizing the positive and inviting social structures that embrace creativity. Can curriculum, while adhering to national and state standards, be constructed and taught in a way that is both social and conducive to the cultivation of creativity? We believe so and believe that the creative aspect of teaching is not separate from the content, and fostering creativity requires a safe and flexible environment that supports, among other things, the collective posing of challenging questions and shared control (Worldwide Outreach for the Walt Disney Company, 2004). We also believe that creative curriculum innovation and implementation well support the five basic assumptions of *Invitational Education*: Optimism, Trust, Respect, Care, and Intentionality. By embracing and practicing these assumptions as part of curriculum construction, we can collectively work to increase our potential to improve the opportunities and experiences that are provided to students.

Creativity and the Larger School Agenda

The national journal *Independent School* devoted 80 pages in its Winter 2004 issue to "Releasing the Imagination," providing a forum for authors whose publications discuss the link between creative insight and powerful learning, and the role of imagination in educational endeavors. As noted by one contributing author, this connection is being lost "in a world that increasingly advocates high standards through standardization of teacher instruct-tion and student response" (Green, 2004, p. 12).

Although writings on the importance of creativity to human endeavors are extensive, the study of creativity and its role in the classroom is a fairly recent undertaking (Puccio, 1999). Important to refute is the myth that creativity is a special province of unique personalities or those persons deemed intellectually gifted. Torrance and Goff (1989) and Guilford (1981) challenged this fixed idea, stating that everyone has creative potential. Similarly, Kim (2005) noted a negligible correlation between creativity and IQ. If all people have the potential to be creative, as these arguments suggest, then what factors exist within schooling that either cultivate or extinguish creativity?

Creativity can be endorsed or ignored at all levels of education; national decisions regarding educational policy and daily choices made by teachers across America impact the degree to which creativity enters into the schooling experience. Also, rapid changes in a knowledge-based and a technology-saturated environment have led to an urgency in revolutionizing some of the ways educational training has been for centuries (Fatt, 2000). This evolution of societal needs presents a real opportunity for educators to address how creativity features in today's schools.

Outside of the United States, there has been a strong interest for creative models of education; for years, schools worldwide have adopted the strategies designed by Italian educators Reggio Emilia and Maria Montessori for infusing creativity into schooling pedagogy that advances meaningful learning (Hertzog, 2001). In 2002, Singapore launched its Global Schoolhouse Project in order to facilitate the cultivation of creativity in its educational institutions in an effort to "inject entrepreneurship and innovation into the Singapore DNA" (Sidhu, 2005, p. 51). The results from several creativity-based studies out of MacQuarie University in Sydney, Australia have sparked the advent of new courses and academic programs that use creative problem-solving training as a means to enhance student skills, both academically and for future employability (Reid & Petocz, 2004). In comparison to the aforementioned countries, the United States has been slower to acknowledge the importance of creativity in educational contexts.

National and state legislators, local policy-makers, and school administrative teams can have a large impact on whether or not creativity is a supported skill within certain school districts. Many researchers agree (Brabant & Hochman, 2004; Fatt, 2000;

Ritchhart, 2003) that administrative efficiency and collegial support is a crucial factor in the successful promotion of creativity in the classroom, and that school officials must have a diverse response to standardization (Ritchhart, 2003). This support includes having effective academic management (McGoldrick, 2002), allowing structured time for reflection of practice and meaningful evaluations among colleagues (Brabant & Hochman, 2004), and even the introduction of educational courses that center on creative skills and applications (Brabant & Hochman, 2004; Fatt, 2000).

Teacher Creativity

As instrumental stakeholders in planning, implementing, and assessing curriculum, teachers may benefit from undertaking creative pedagogical processes. Perhaps contrary to popular sentiment, a creative teacher does not have to reflect a fixed and elite personality trait, something along the lines of Robin William's charismatic and exhaustingly innovative character in the film *Dead Poets Society*. In fact, there are many broad and accessible forms of teaching practice that embrace creativity in daily instruction. Many strategies support the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and understanding, but also involve students with material in new ways, using new modalities, approaches or ways of thinking. Creative instructional practices often recognize the multiple ways in which human beings are smart (Gardner, 1983) and "happen whenever teachers ask themselves, how can I make this content more engaging and meaningful for my students?" (Ritchhart, 2003, p. 4).

Encouraging teachers to decrease content coverage in lieu of active engagement and analysis within the learning process is one key element for the promotion of creativity (Jackson, 2003). Ritchhart (2003) offers that a creative curriculum starts with a teacher's insight into his or her subject matter, begins with issues that lack easy answers, and involves "looking at what one is asked to teach with an eye towards shaping it in new and more productive ways" (p. 3). Notably, research (Fatt, 2000; Brabant & Hochman, 2004; Strom & Strom, 2002; Ritchhart, 2003) also advocates frequent and reliable collaboration between colleagues, and the organization of helpful teacher workshops that demonstrate how to think about curriculum differently.

Finally, teacher creativity requires a shared effort and commitment, especially in light of the existing demands generated by current educational standards, the implications of mandated testing, and expected educational practices as stipulated by national and state mandates. Many researchers (Brabant & Hochman, 2004; Fatt, 2000; Florida, 2002) confirm the crucial importance of outside support in promoting creativity, and that school officials and teachers must have a diverse response when implementing creative practices (Ritchart, 2003). Two key characteristics of this support include the allowance of structured time for reflection on practice and meaningful dialogue with peers regarding creative curriculum and pedagogical decisions (Brabant & Hochman,

2004). Additional studies advocate frequent and reliable collaboration between colleagues and the organization of teacher seminars and colloquiums focused on new and different ways of thinking about methods to enhance creativity in classrooms. (Fatt, 2000; Ritchhart, 2003; Strom & Strom, 2002; Weisbart, 2001). Collectively, these were the influences that guided the development and implementation of our investigation.

Method

The model we employed to guide our collaborative process was the Osborne-Panes Creative Problem-solving Model (CPS), which we used as a means to facilitate teacher reflection, classroom creativity, and curriculum construction. Initially developed by Alex Osborn and Sidney Parnes in the 1960's, the CPS model is an established and applied method for teaching critical thinking skills and metacognitive strategies, particularly in the realm of gifted education (Treffinger & Isaksen, 2005). CPS has also been found to yield positive outcomes in additional populations, including inmates, high-school dropouts, underachieving native populations, and at-risk urban youths (McCluskey, Baker, & McCluskey, 2005). In our situation, we applied the CPS model as a shared method to guide teacher reflection and to enhance teacher curricular decision-making regarding the development of creative instructional processes and learning activities.

The implementation of the CPS model specifically within teacher curriculum development is a novel process and, as such, we wanted to test the model in a manner that fostered both thinking and dialogue in an effort for all involved to better understand the influence of CPS on teacher actions. Hence, we wanted to invite a participant who was reflective, willing to share reflections, and demonstrated effective practices (see Cornett, 1990 and Elbaz, 1983 regarding case study participant selection). A second grade teacher from a Jacksonville, Florida elementary school, Melissa Ross, was invited, and agreed, to participate in the project. Melissa, as noted by peers and colleagues, was highly reflective and had demonstrated strong practices as a beginning teacher. In addition, being new to the profession, Melissa was grappling with the many influences on teacher decision-making and was curious about how the CPS model could be used to enhance how she implemented critical thinking skills and facilitate her reflection.

The CPS model implementation consists of three distinct stages, each devoted to a particular objective (see Figure 1). The process involves a facilitator who guides the interaction, a resource person or team to help generate ideas and provide follow-up assistance for taking action, and the teacher participant. We elected to use an outside CPS-experienced facilitator to lead each phase of the project – enabling us to act as the resource team while we observed and collected data related to the process. Therefore, four individuals were involved in this project: Melissa, as the teacher

participant; the authors, as both researchers and resource team members; and the facilitator.

The first session, entitled "Exploring the Challenge," acknowledged Melissa's objectives, explored relevant factual information pertaining to those objectives, and identified a workable problem statement or question related to the objectives (e.g. "In what ways might I integrate art into my American history unit?"). The second session, "Idea Generation," was entirely devoted to suggesting possible ideas that

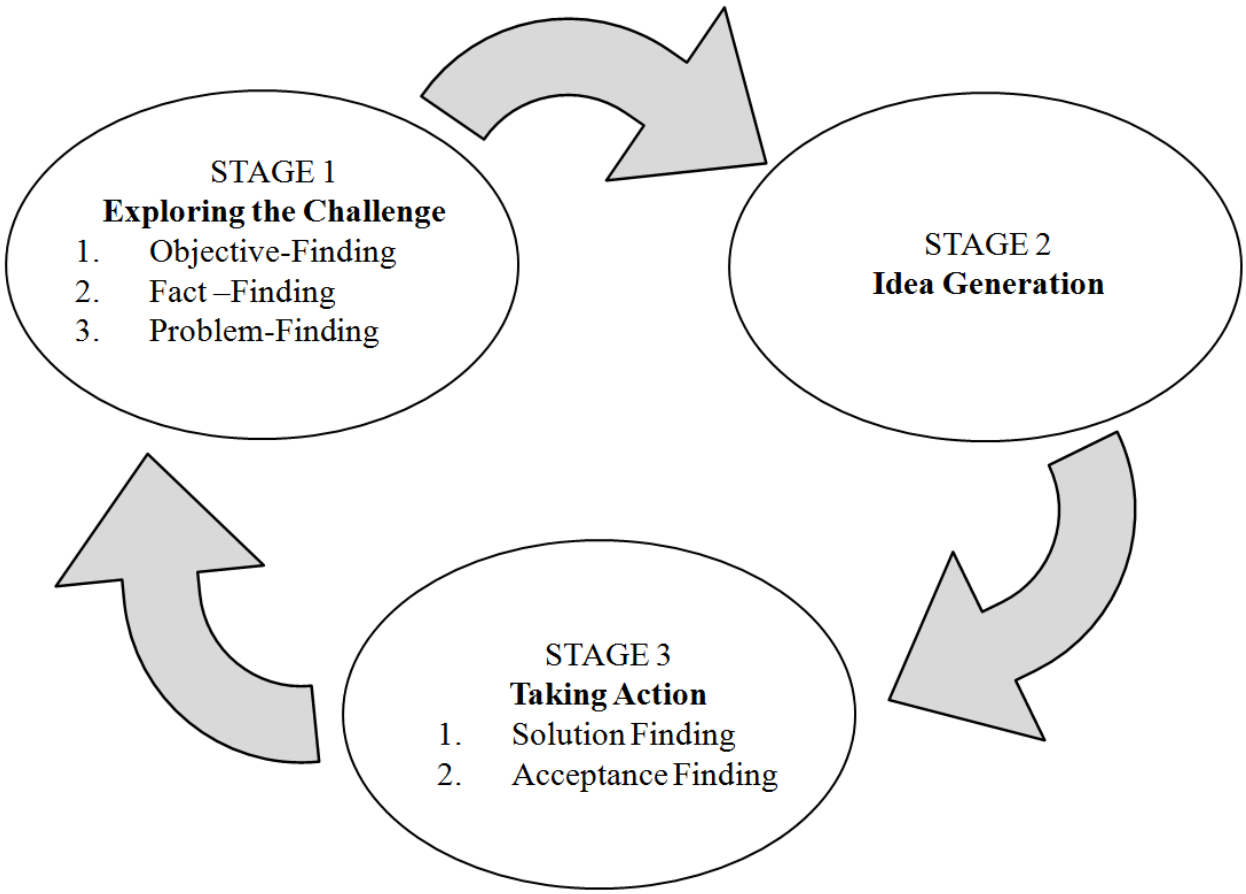

Figure 1 The CPS Model

addressed the problem statement. These ideas were generated through brainstorming, brainwriting, and prompts and techniques aimed at exploring possible solutions. The final session, "Preparing for Action," evaluated the generated ideas against specific criteria, and culminated with a pragmatic action plan, complete with timeline, in order to implement the final selected idea. We conducted the three sessions, each approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length, with Melissa. Each session was not more than two weeks from the last. Materials used included an easel with chart paper and colored markers for the visual recording of thoughts, ideas, selection criteria, and steps for action. Melissa's own classroom was used for the sessions. Within each phase, Melissa was asked to employ, via the guidance of the CPS facilitator, two distinct modes of thinking: divergent and convergent. Both of these thinking modes are associated with creativity and creative thinking as the former centers on quantity and novelty of ideas while the latter involves combining and selecting ideas based on criteria (see Dewulf & Baillie, 1999).

Exploring the Challenge

In the first stage, the facilitator helped Melissa to identify curriculum goals she had for her classroom. Melissa's goals were varied, including establishing engaging social studies instruction appropriate for second-grade students, connecting content under study with those in the school's surrounding community, and generating more student responsibility within her instruction. Once the goals were established, we examined the external influences on the development of these goals. In other words, what and who were the various people, objects, and other factors influencing Melissa's curriculum development? Melissa noted that there were many stakeholders (e.g., parents, colleagues, administrators) and circumstances (e.g., costs, standards, pacing guides) that affect her teaching and need to be considered when planning. We used divergent thinking strategies to help Melissa contemplate how her goals related to the myriad of external influences and convergent thinking strategies to focus on attainable outcomes. By the end of this stage, Melissa had identified a specific curriculum issue that might benefit from the investigation, and had restated the issue in the form of a workable question: "In what ways might I create feasible and interactive social studies experiences for my students which encourage meaningful learning?"

Idea Generation

In the "Idea Generation" stage, Melissa and the resource team listed possible solutions for the problem statement. We spent nearly one hour using divergent thinking strategies to brainstorm a wide range of answers that addressed the question. The team's suggestions ranged from painting a community mural to publishing a student-produced neighborhood journal in the vein of a *Foxfire* experience (Wigginton, 1985). Importantly, this stage of the process is centered on generating any and all ideas that address the problem statement. During the

stage, neither Melissa nor the resource team immediately judged or critiqued the ideas. In fact, our brainstorming often led us to embellish another's idea, allowing us to generate thoughts that would most likely not have been possible without collaboration. Once confident that we exhausted all possible solutions, the facilitator asked Melissa to select several of the ideas that she strongly favored and could be examined in the third stage of the process.

Taking Action

The final stage prompted the exploration of criteria by which to judge the narrowed list of ideas that Melissa selected in stage two. We considered the previously identified external influences important to Melissa's planning as well as her original question. Which ideas were cost effective? Which could be accomplished within the required curriculum? Which supported meaningful social studies experiences? At the end of this stage, Melissa chose to focus on the construction of an interactive, three-dimensional map of a local zoo by her students as part of planned field trip. As session three progressed, we drew up an action plan to implement the map project. The facilitator concluded this stage by acknowledging the potential benefits of Melissa's plan and delegating the various responsibilities associated with each step of the action plan. We were left with a solution that addressed Melissa's initial desires, matched the outlined criteria, and to which we were now accountable via a set and agreed upon action plan.

Conclusions

Although the CPS model identifies distinct roles for those involved, the process relies on the collaborative efforts of individuals committed to work together to creatively improve a given environment (Treffinger, Selby, & Isaksen, 2008). As it was evidenced in our efforts, the CPS model was also supportive of the five basic assumptions of *Invitational Education*: Optimism, Trust, Respect, Care, and Intentionality. From the beginning, we were actively engaged with the people, places, and procedures of curriculum development in a manner that fostered human potential and growth – there was a clear *intentionality* to this project. As a team, we conducted the three stages of facilitation over a six-week period in Melissa's classroom. This context provided the key location to conduct our curricular efforts as we had access to and interacted with the commonplaces and stakeholders influential on Melissa's teaching. Each session started with a review of our purpose and ended, explicitly, with measures used to assess our goal of improving the curriculum. Furthermore, our overall efforts did not cease until the team, including Melissa, was satisfied with the solution. As a group, we consistently interacted positively, con-templatively, and geared our thoughts toward Melissa's stated interests and obstacles. In a post-facilitation interview, Melissa indicated that when a teacher has the opportunity to engage with the process, CPS is a helpful way to utilize the support of others in redefining or surpassing perceived limitations and improve one's practice. We believe that CPS is an emergent process

supporting meaningful reflection while minimizing the premature elimination of potentially useful thoughts and ideas so important for teacher planning. The aspect that makes CPS especially applicable to classroom teachers is its evolving nature; although the process itself has structure, the problems, facts, and ideas discussed rely entirely upon the person or persons with whom the process is conducted.

As illustrated by our solution, CPS can assist in the generation of innovative curriculum and creative activities, but it also informs pedagogy. In many elementary schools, particularly in early grade levels, it is difficult to find meaningful social studies content that can be instructed in engaging, active ways (O'Connor, Heafner, & Groce, 2007). In Melissa's case, we are comfortable in concluding that she not only transformed her explicit curriculum, but also how she perceives curriculum generation. Viewing all the information relevant to one's existing challenge can be extremely empowering. In Melissa's words, "It was pretty neat to see how you could go from a broad topic to expanding your ideas on and on… all the ideas are do-able, and they are not as abstract as I would have thought." She also acknowledged that her views on creativity were altered as a result of this project. As Melissa said, "This was a much more engaging alternative to simply modifying existing lessons from textbooks or other published sources." Melissa's words illustrate how *optimism* is reflected in the process when she said, "I believed I could plan this way, but I rarely get the chance to practice this on a regular basis. It provides a way for me to really unlock my thinking and improve my planning."

Several themes emerged during this case study. The most overt is the notion of perceived control. At several points in the CPS facilitation, it became clear that Melissa, in her regular planning efforts, often prematurely eliminated ideas based on perceived limitations and external boundaries. There are, of course, many legal and political stipulations on what can and cannot occur in a public school classroom, but more often than not, we found an idea to be workable after undergoing a small amount of consideration. For instance, at one point, the momentum in a session shifted towards some community outreach projects such as developing, manufacturing, and selling a product that would be useful in the students' community, or perhaps visiting the surrounding neighborhoods to interview employed citizens about their job and place in the economy. Initially, this idea seemed time-consuming and expensive, and Melissa expressed great concern over the legality of taking children off school grounds during class time. By this point in our deliberations, it was clear that mutual *trust* was well established, which allowed us to expand our research and brainstorming and the idea not only seemed plausible to Melissa, but she had also attained a better understanding of school policy and the actual, rather than perceived, limitations on instructional activities. *Trust* extended beyond just our interactions, but went to a level that included each member of the team to believe in the other and to do the right thing. This was important as Melissa was potentially

stretching beyond her typical frameworks and was truly challenging her own assumptions about her role as a curricular gatekeeper. As she summarized, "I have a lot more control than I thought I had."

Another theme that emerged was that of informed reflection. Using the CPS process as a scaffold, we were able to work together on clearly stated and prioritized objectives. Everyone engaged in the process was privy to the reasons for, the facts surrounding, and the potential answers to Melissa's challenge. The resource team is helpful firstly in the sense that they provide additional minds to think through a problem; secondly, the resource team becomes intimately connected to the process, having been present in the initial "Exploring the Challenge" session. This not only better informs their ideas and possible solutions, but the team members also take a sincere ownership of the problem and *care* about the process, its potential solutions, and Melissa's growth. We were interested and concerned that the process come to fruition and provide a meaningful solution for Melissa. This intimacy helped the resource team prompt Melissa, exposing verbally the personal values and beliefs that influence her decision-making. The resource team frequently met outside of the regularly scheduled CPS sessions to review progress and to consider possible resources that could be used in upcoming sessions. There existed within the resource team a genuine sincerity and desire to help Melissa throughout the CPS process and, afterwards, as we co-instructed lessons in her classroom as part of the field trip and mapping activities.

A third theme that surfaced was that of committed collaboration – both during and after the CPS facilitation. In every phase, but particularly in the last two sessions, we continually sparked new ideas, questions, and elaboration of proposed solutions under the guidance of the facilitator. Interestingly, our collaboration continuously reflected *respect* for each other, and for Melissa, in particular. Even though the CPS process brought a structure to curriculum development, we were always aware that the process was firstly about Melissa and her self-direction. We were accountable to facilitate for her a framework for curriculum development. We believe that occurred, as a powerful synergy seemed to arise when we shared ideas, which sparked new questions, which in turn generated more solutions to the challenge. The collaborative process persisted after the last CPS session and post-facilitation interview; we (as the resource team) met regularly and continued to work with Melissa to assist her in implementing the map project. Our collaborative involvement prompted our agreeing to teach several Social Studies lessons based around this concept, and all three educators collaborated during the implementation of Melissa's action plan.

In Melissa's case, the CPS model guided our efforts at finding a pragmatic solution to her challenges. Its implementation by knowledgeable practitioners can facilitate reflective pedagogy as well as promote behaviors associated with creativity. In emphasizing processes with products, Plucker (as cited in Beghetto, 2005) noted that creativity is "the interaction among

aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context" (p. 255). This definition also illustrates the aim and outcome of this effort: Inviting collaboration amongst professionals to identify and implement workable solutions and resources in response to specific teacher needs. Empowering teachers to benefit from their own creativity is a worthwhile pursuit. We feel that duplication of this work, and perhaps further investigations into using this process on a wider scale could help alleviate the isolation and stress many educators feel on a daily basis. Although today's teachers are faced with a multitude of expectations and demands, there are still ways in which educators can successfully integrate creativity into their own reflection and planning, and eventually into the learning experiences of their students.

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