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JITP

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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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Theory

Book Review

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EDITORIAL

National Focus on Education

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

For those of you who follow the national news, you can't help but recognize the significant attention given to the state of education in America. The national TV broadcast network NBC has initiated a series titled "Education Nation". Their state goal is to, "…help Americans make decisions about how best to improve our education system."

On their dedicated website (http://www.educationnation.com) they state, "Education is key to the success of our country, and yet we have allowed our students to fall behind. It's time to put education back at the top of the national agenda. It's time to reinvent America as an Education Nation."

As I've watched their various news segments on the topic, I've noticed that despite the bottom line concern of measured academic excellence, they usually conclude that the teacher is the key to success in the classroom. Moreover, they frequently highlight an individual teacher, typically focusing on the positive attitude of that teacher extolling the affirmative impact their style of interaction has on students.

We as members of the IAIE have always been committed to the importance of education to the future of our country. Furthermore the Alliance has put forth a theory of practice that when consistently applied, increases the probability for success in the classroom, regardless of the educational level in which it occurs.

I believe our efforts should be placed on communicating and educating others as to the efficacy of Invitational Theory (IT). It's not enough to simply be inviting with self and others. We need to explain what it is that we do and why we do it. Share your understanding of Invitational Theory with other teachers, administrators, parents, and the community at large. Send a letter or email to the editor of your local newspaper about the successes you've achieved through the application of IT. Send a letter or email to your state legislators and commissioners of education explaining what IT is and how it can help them achieve their goals. Don't forget to include the web address for the Alliance (www.InvitationalEducation.net). Our web pages abound with information about IT. Be a spokesperson for IT. Be proud of what you believe in and share that pride with others.

This Issue

Volume 16 of the JITP is the largest in the history of the journal. Your editorial board has worked hard to accept and work with authors to improve the quality of the manuscripts that appear in this issue.

The articles herein include thoughtful viewpoints, empirical research, case studies,

a book review, and creative perspectives on Invitational Theory.

I hope you learn from and enjoy reading this issue. I encourage you to submit a manuscript or at least a "letter to the editor."

Stay well,
Daniel Shaw

World Conference 2010, Columbus Ohio

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The inviting professional educator: A reflective practitioner and action researcher

Kenneth H. Smith, Ph.D
Australian Catholic University

This article calls for all educators (teachers, administrators, counselors, supervisors) to implement systematic reflection and action research in their day-to-day professional activities. Additionally, it invites readers to go one step beyond to publish - thus making their findings public. Relevant resources and suggestions for further reading are given at the end of the article

It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it.
(Lawrence Stenhouse, as cited in Rudduck, 1988, p.79.

The purpose of this article is two-fold: 1) to encourage educators (teachers, administrators, counselors, supervisors) to think about undertaking action research activities and 2) to publish their findings in the *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice* (JITP).

> Now before you say:
> *"Research! I can't do that! I'm a teacher - NOT a researcher. Besides, I don't have the necessary background in statistics nor publishing expertise.*

Let me state some 'home truths' that just may get you to rethink your perception of your research and publishing ability.

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What is Action Research?

It [Action Research] is research that is undertaken by educational practitioners because they believe that by doing so they can make better decisions and engage in better actions (Stephen M. Corey, 1953, p. viii).

In the first instance, ALL teachers in fact do undertake research! Corey (1949) succinctly stated:

> Anyone who tries to get better evidence of the success or failure of his/her teaching or administrative or supervisory activities, and what he/she does in the light of this evidence is conducting a type of action research (p.149).

As can be inferred educators are undertaking research when they reflect on their non-systematic memories of teaching events.

However, <u>systematic reflection</u> of one's professional practices, in order to increase teaching effectiveness, is the core of action research in an educational setting. Action

research is an ideal approach for facilitating educational changes within a classroom, a school, across districts, if not nationally (Johnson, 2008).

The concept of teacher-as-researcher is not new. According to Parsons and Brown (2002) the concept of teacher-as-researcher has been around for many years:

> Although action research is currently receiving a lot of attention among educators, it is far form a new or short-lived approach to professional practice. In fact, the concept of teacher-as-researcher was discussed in the 1920s. Further, the use of action research within the classroom has been in evidence since the early 1950s. (p. 4).

As previously stated educators have always undertaken research as they observed students, modified teaching strategies to improve learning, and cultivated a desire to improve their effectiveness and maintain their professionalism. So how does this "normal" teacher behavior differ from teacher-as-researcher? Author and educator Geoffrey Mills (2000) identifies the teacher-as-researcher as:

> Any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counsellors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn (as cited in Henney, Stone, & Kelly, 2009, p. 5).

It can be inferred that systematic reflection of one's activities is the hallmark of a teacher-as-researcher. The teacher-as-researcher systematically investigates his/her teaching and learning so as to improve their own and their students' learning. The educational researcher, B. R. Buckingham (1926) supported this idea when he stated:

> The teacher has opportunities for research, which if seized, will not only powerfully and rapidly develop the technique of teaching, but will also react to vitalize and dignify the work of the individual teacher (p. iv).

What is required of a teacher in order to undertake this systematic reflection is a five step process namely; Planning, Collecting data, Analyzing the data, Data reflection, and Action (implementing action based on findings). Undertaking this systematic reflective approach to teaching will not only improve one's own teaching but in addition improve student learning (Henning et al., 2009; McIntyre, 2008).

Publishing

> *We have read your manuscript with boundless delight. If we were to publish your paper, it would be impossible for us to publish any work of lower standard. And as it is unthinkable that in the next thousand years we shall see its equal, we are, to our regret, compelled to return your divine composition, and to beg you a thousand times to overlook our short sight and timidity* (A rejection letter from an economics journal).

All submissions to the *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice* (JITP) will never receive such a letter as above. The Editor of the JITP and the Board of Reviewers employ a very inviting perception of the process that results in a published paper. Considerable support to authors in meeting the submission guidelines is provided. Additionally, upon request, the Editor and the Board of Reviewers are readily available to assist teachers-as-researchers in presentation styles, research design, and qualitative and quantitative analyses.

Submissions are expected to be relevant to invitational theory and practice and adhere to the published "Guidelines for Authors", with particular reference to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010). For concise JITP manuscript submission requirements refer to http://www.nova.edu/~danshaw/jitp/subinfo.htm.

Following review of a submission, authors receive detailed advice on how to improve their manuscript to meet the standards of the JITP. While not forgoing quality, the overriding principle of the JITP is to assist educators to publicize their invitational activities in a systematic and professional manner. By publishing the results of your research you have the opportunity to reach to the wider community, to share your findings, and to promote discussion.

Conclusion

Teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting. By collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work. And by sharing what they see (Linda Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 8).

A major goal of invitational theory is to encourage individuals to enrich their lives in each of four basic dimensions: 1) being personally inviting with oneself; 2) being personally inviting with others; 3) being professionally inviting with oneself; and 4) being professionally inviting with others (Purkey & Novak, 1996). By attempting to be a reflective, teacher-as-researcher, one is striving to be professionally inviting to oneself and to others. The underlying notion behind this approach is that to be successful, educators must develop an authentically professionally inviting attitude, toward themselves and others, both inside and outside of school. One way of achieving this goal is to undertake a systematic reflective approach to one's educative activities and to share the findings of such activities with others. Undertaking such activities is surely an example of professional inviting with oneself and with others.

The following useful resources are included to assist new and aspiring authors to commence undertaking action research and in preparing your research for publication.

Further Reading

Baumfield, V., Hall, E. & Wall, K. (2008). *Action research in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Burton, D. M. & Bartlett, S. (2005). *Practitioner research for teachers*. London: Paul Chapman.

Fichtman, D., & Yendol-Silva, D. (2003). *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Koshy, V. (2009). *Action research for improving educational practice: A step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Mertler, C. (2006). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Mills, G. (2006). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Noffke, S., & Somekh, B. (Eds.). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of educational action research*. London: SAGE.

Sagor, R. (2005). *The action research guidebook: A four-step process for educators and school teams*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Stringer, E. (2008). *Action research in education* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall.

Whitehead, J. & McNiff, J. (2006). *Action research: Living theory.* London: SAGE.

Useful Action Research Websites

http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/researcher.htm

(Teacher-As-Researcher)

http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/teacher-as-researcher-taking-action-research-to-task

(Taking Action Research to Task)

http://www.teach-nology.com/currenttrends/teach_as_rese/

(Online Teacher Resource)

http://www.nefstem.org/teacher_guide/intro/index.htm

(Action Research for Teachers)

http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/

(Teacher-as-Researcher Resources)

http://www.nelliemuller.com/Action_Research_Projects.htm

(Action Research Projects for Teachers)

http://www.teachers.tv/video/4883

(Action Research Video)

Useful Publication Resource Websites

http://www.nova.edu/~danshaw/jitp/subinfo.htm

(Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice Manuscript Submission Information)

http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/whatsnew/index.htm

(What's New in American Psychological Association 6th edition Publication Manual)

http://apastyle.apa.org/

(American Psychological Association Style Website)

http://www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm

(American Psychological Association Publication Style Crib Sheet)

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

(*American Psychological Association 6th ed. Formatting and Style Guide*)

http://www.psychwww.com/resource/APA%20Research%20Style%20Crib%20Sheet.htm

(American Psychological Association Research Style Crib Sheet)

http://umclibrary.crk.umn.edu/apa6thedition.pdf

(American Psychological Association Format, 6th ed., 2010)

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Corey, S. (1949). Curriculum development through action research. *Educational Leadership, 7*, 147-153.

Corey, S. (1953). *Action research to improve school practices*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership, 55*, 6-11.

Henning, J., Stine, J., & Kelly, J. (2009). *Using action research to improve instruction: An interactive guide for teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Johnson, A. (2008). *What every teacher should know about action research*. Columbus, OH: Allyn and Bacon.

McIntyre, A. (2008). *Participatory action research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Mills, G. (2000). *Action Research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Parsons, R., & Brown, K. (2002). *Teacher as reflective practitioner and action researcher*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/ Thomas.

Purkey, W., & Novak, J. (1996). *Inviting school success: A self-concept approach to teaching and learning* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Rudduck, J. (1988). Changing the world of the classroom by understanding it: A review of some aspects of the work of Lawrence Stenhouse. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 4*, 30-42.

Whispering Selves and Reflective Transformations in the Internal Dialogue of Teachers and Students

Sukhdeep Kaur Chohan

Acknowledgments Special thanks to Dr. John Novak and Dr. Daniel Shaw for consultation, advice and suggestions on revisions to earlier drafts of the paper. A heartfelt thank you to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and Vaheguru Ji for ongoing guidance and support

It is beyond debate that the way one perceives oneself is influenced by the way one speaks to oneself. Becoming aware of the conversations that take place within the mind has the potential to assist one in recognizing whether the internal voice is self-limiting or self-encouraging. Making classrooms places where teachers and learners are inviting to themselves and each other is a key aspect of invitational theory and practice. My intent in this paper is to (1) discuss the influential role of the inner voice in shaping the experiences of teachers and students in classrooms, (2) introduce the art of transformation in their internal dialogue through ongoing self-reflection, monitoring, and revisions to the ways they speak to themselves, and (3) highlight the practical implications in classroom settings. The paper invites teachers and students to envision themselves in positive ways by promoting the transformation of negative, unhealthy, and irrational self-talk to inner communication that is positive, productive, and rational.

Introduction

> *If you hear a voice within you saying, "You are not a painter," then by all means paint... and that voice will be silenced.*
>
> *Vincent Van Gogh*

An individual's journey in life is interwoven with invaluable learning experiences. The internal dialogue that takes place before, during, and after the experiences influences, the perceptive filters, interpretive paradigms, and the meanings that are abstracted from conversations and events.

The manner in which these are understood is altered when the internal dialogue is changed. By engaging in reflective practice, people can delve deeper into the intricate aspects of their thought patterns and become increasingly conscious of their values, beliefs, and assumptions and how they in turn frame how they behave.

The thoughts of many philosophers, literary writers, and novelists have been captivated by the phenomenon of the inner voice. According to Hikins (1989), in our everyday language, we use many phrases that relate to the inner voice including: "I'll have to think about it," "so I stopped and said to myself," "a penny for your thoughts," and "listen to

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your conscience." The inner voice is powerful and highly personal, with each individual's private thoughts being unique. The nature and content of the inner speech significantly and inevitably affects an individual's emotions, behaviors, and moods. When our self-talk is "pessimistic, negative and irrational, we tend to feel sad, anxious or depressed. On the other hand, when we talk to ourselves in optimistic, hopeful, and positive ways we tend to feel happy, positive, and hopeful" (Payne & Manning, 1998, p. 199). Through self-reflection, "we possess the power of choice and the ability to identify, challenge, and change this counterproductive thinking" (p.199). An alteration in the inner voice can empower an individual to transform the self in times of change, partake in positive self-leadership, and persevere in a desired direction.

It is the competent self that has the ability to look beyond obstacles and see possibilities (Denmark, 1993). According to Saral (1983), the "external structures that we perceive, cognize, and communicate to others are mere reflections or manifestations of our inner structures" (p. 55). To bring about changes in the external structures, one needs to facilitate an ongoing process of intrapersonal communication. As an individual begins to acknowledge and communicate with different aspects of their self, "the external structure begins to dissolve and reform into different patterns of relationship reflecting the existing status of [their] internal structures" (p. 55). This calls attention to the paramount need and intrinsic value behind ongoing intrapersonal communication.

The Influential Role of a Self-communication System on Self-perceptions

Ever since I was a little girl I can remember talking to myself. Through the innocence of childhood, I engaged in rich conversations with myself regarding friends, family members, and every day events. As I grew older, I learned to silence personal conversations with myself to those around me. As childhood innocence faded, I began to see the world through the eyes of a maturing adult, and the nature of my self-talk changed. Little did I understand how self-talk developed and the extent of its influence on how I perceived my world. I was unaware of its overpowering nature in being able to encourage and motivate me to accomplish my goals or limit me through debilitating thoughts and resulting behaviors. While my inner voice was gentle and self-nurturing at times, it was demanding and self-demeaning at others. Through increased self-awareness and reflection on the patterns of my self-talk, I slowly came to believe that I was personally responsible for the way that I had created my world and, as a result, became determined to recreate it more positively. My lived experience, as both a student and a teacher, has revealed the fruitful results of a healthy inner voice and intrapersonal awareness to me and the detrimental effects of negative internal conversations.

Transforming the Self Through an Inward Journey into the Nature of Internal Dialogue

Current literature pertaining to the concept of inner voice does not address the importance of monitoring and transforming the self and how the relationship with the self is affected by the inner voice. It does not focus upon how the inner voice is an instrumental guiding force in self-awareness as a prerequisite to self-transformation and, in turn, self-leadership. This form of leadership starts from within and is influenced by the inner voice that can be perceived as an inner anchor or inner guide. This relates to what Ambrose (1995) states: that "to transform our organizations, our communities, or our lives, we must first transform ourselves. Leadership development, then, becomes a process of self-reflection aimed at personal growth: a journey inward" (p. 25).

Invitational education emphasizes the importance of drawing attention to the voices of children and their teachers in the classroom, how they speak to themselves, and how their self-talk influences the other through the decisions and actions that they take. Deeper insights into the inner workings of the classroom can be gained by advancing our understanding of children's and teachers' experiences regarding their inner voice and subsequent interactions in the classroom.

The purpose behind this paper is not merely to analyze or interpret but rather to fill a void in the literature, extend invitational thinking, and understand the influential role of the inner voice. It raises the question: To what extent does self-talk play a role in influencing, shaping, and interpreting the experiences of teachers and students in schools? An articulate, provocative, and informed response to this question involves an in-depth discussion of teacher self-talk, teacher influence on student self-talk, and student self-talk. This paper provides a portal to improve our understanding of the importance behind teachers and children transforming their internal dialogue by listening to their inner voices, becoming healthy-minded individuals, inviting positive self-talk, and moving beyond challenges.

Who Am I? The Impact Of Messages Received From Significant Others On Self-Concept

> *Re-examine all that you have been told... dismiss that which insults your soul.*
>
> *Walt Whitman*

Invitational theory is grounded in self-concept theory. Self-concept is defined as a "complex, dynamic, and organized system of learned beliefs that an individual holds to be true about his or her personal existence" (Purkey, 2000, p. 14). Proponents of invitational education believe that "respect for individual uniqueness is essential for positive self-concept development, academic achievement, and ultimately, success in life" (Reed as cited in Novak, 1992, p. 48). This self is highly abstract and multifaceted. A person knows his or her self through internal dialogue which is influenced by the "experiences woven in everyday life, concealed in everyday occurrences [and] hidden in deep communications of unspoken feelings" (Purkey, 2000, p. 48). Messages given to a child can be filtered through

invitational propositions that "proclaim that the child is able, valuable, and responsible or unable, worthless, and irresponsible" (p. 54). The role of the teacher is of particular significance in this enculturation process, since the child progressively internalizes these messages. The self is a core dimension of human experience and plays an instrumental role in an individual's internal dialogue and personal self-awareness. It can never be understood in its entirety because it is culturally bound and primarily implicit (Purkey, 2000).

Invitational education, as a theory of practice, attempts to "provide an integrative framework for constructing environments and cultures that extend and evaluate intentional messages that affirm the uniqueness, possibilities, and dignity of all involved in the educative process" (Novak, 1992; Stanley as cited in Novak, 1992, p. 3). It provides a "positive lens from which to view student potential, skills and abilities" (Reed as cited in Novak, 1992, p. 69). According to "invitational education," schools should be "the most inviting places in town" (Purkey & Novak, 1996, p.3). Due to constant interaction between children and the educational system, schools, next to the home, "probably exert the single greatest influence on how students see themselves and their abilities" (p. 27).

Personal experiences shape self-perceptions

> *There is no greater penance than patience, No greater happiness than contentment, No greater evil than greed, No greater virtue than mercy, And no more potent weapon than forgiveness.*
>
> *Sri Guru Amar Das Ji*

The early years of a child's life are critical in forming his or her self-concept. A child's self-concept is shaped by the nature of the invitations that are received through interactions with significant others. Self-evaluations stem rather directly from the evaluations made of the child by others. These evaluations are more than words and are "embedded in body language, looks, touch, tone of voice, and other nonverbal messages" (Purkey, 2000, p. 45). "Asking a student to describe what significant others say about him or her reveals much about what students say to themselves" (p. 26). In the give and take of countless interactions, "children tend to believe what the world believes about them" (p. 45). These beliefs coupled with the treatment by significant others influence how students define themselves. In turn, self-definitions influence internal dialogue and ultimately academic success or failure (Purkey, 2000). Our self-perceptions vary from situation to situation and from one phase of our lives to another. Thus, the self-concept evolves through constant self-evaluation in different situations and is influenced by various experiences and events including performance in school and treatment by teachers and peers. Teachers, as significant others in their students' lives, have the potential to open new worlds for their students and can either inhibit or enable them to grow as students and people.

By listening to their inner voices, individuals can steer themselves through

challenges and transform their lives, or cave in to self-debilitating thoughts and not persevere through hardships (Purkey, 2000). In order to see the complexities of the inner voice and how it influences the self-concept of a child, a myriad of theories pertaining to the inner voice and the self must be examined. The current knowledge regarding human development is interdisciplinary. Numerous perspectives put forth in the literature focus on the different domains of human development and how the self is influenced. Among the many researchers who have focused on the development of the self, three distinct researchers have explicitly put forth theories that stress the importance that influence plays in this development. Cooley's (1902) looking glass theory, Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory, and Bandura's social learning theory (1977) allow us to understand how we define the self in relation to others and how we draw meaning from our world. An individual's sense of self, feelings, and behaviors are strongly influenced by his or her internal dialogue (Butler, 1992). Thus, changes in this dialogue would result in changes in overt behaviors. Various cognitive behavioral models including rational-emotive therapy (Ellis, 1976), cognitive therapy (Beck, 1976), and cognitive behavior modification (Meichenbaum, 1977) have consistently documented the importance of the influential link between a person's thoughts and inner speech, what they feel, and how they behave.

What Are The Whispers Saying To The Self?

> *We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts.*
>
> *With our thoughts we make the world.*
>
> *Buddha*

As social beings, we develop a diverse array of assumptions and beliefs about ourselves and others and, in turn, use them as a frame of reference for understanding the world. Our psychological reality consists of a reciprocal relationship between our experiences, beliefs, and internal dialogue. Self-talk, also referred to as internal dialogue, inner conversations, inner voices, and the whispering self, enables students, teachers, and others to organize their interpretations of the world and "speak to themselves about who they are and how they fit in their world" (Purkey, 2000, p. 1). The language they use to articulate their thoughts impacts their internal dialogue, shapes their perceptual world, and influences their behavior.

Self-talk, a unique and ongoing personal voice, constitutes a substantial part of an individual's thought process and, as a constant companion, influences behaviors and allows him or her to draw meaning from the world. A self-communication system enables individuals to reflect upon the experiences and events that they encounter every day. Intrapersonal communication is "all of the physiological and psychological processing of messages that happens within individuals at conscious and non-conscious levels as they attempt to understand themselves and their environment" (Roberts, Edwards, & Barker, 1987, p. 2). This process is best understood when it is related

to interpersonal communication. Barker and Wiseman (1966) believe that "intrapersonal communication is the foundation upon which interpersonal communication is based, but intrapersonal communication may also occur independently" (p. 173). Research on the concept of intrapersonal communication comes not only from the field of communication but crosses into other disciplines including business, education, and sociology. In these disciplines, it is understood that our inner voice shapes our world (Fodor, Bever, & Garrett, 1974; Manz, 1983; Manz & Neck, 1999; Roberts et al., 1987). Since our inner voice shapes our thoughts and feelings, it plays a major role in self-regulation, problem solving, and planning (Payne & Manning, 1998). Many of the inner voice's major activities involve the process of internal problem solving, resolution of internal conflict, planning for the future, emotional catharsis, evaluations of ourselves and others, and the relationships between ourselves and others. Intrapersonal communication involves only the self, and it must be clearly understood by the self because it constitutes the basis for all other communication. (Pearson & Nelson, 1985, p. 12)

Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000) puts forth the idea that an individual can become aware of holding a limiting or distorted view. If the individual critically examines this view, opens up to alternatives, and consequently changes perception, a transformation in some part of how they make meaning out of the world takes place. According to Mezirow (1997), "transformative learning develops autonomous thinking" (p. 5). It takes place when the process of questioning and discussing previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives leads "us to open up our frame of reference, discard a habit of mind, see alternatives, and thereby act differently in the world" (Mezirow and Associates, 2000, as cited in Cranton & King, 2003, p. 32). Schools must intentionally invite students and teachers to engage in positive internal conversations. By transforming inner speech, these individuals can alter their outer behavior and promote healthy school environments in which these transformative invitations are extended to all those involved in the educational sphere.

Teacher Self-reflections on Internal Dialogue

> *You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe deserve your love and affection.*
>
> *Buddha*

Classrooms today are "characterized by student diversity in all its facets – racial, gender, and socio-economic as well as by wide differences in ability, educational readiness, motivation and age" (Brookfield, 2002, p. 31). To address such diversity, teachers must engage in a practice where they are conscious of their values, beliefs, and assumptions, because inevitably, they influence their teaching practice. The craft of teaching involves teachers understanding themselves, others, and the norms of the educative system, community, and society in which they live (Cranton & King, 2003).

Through the lens of transformative learning theory, knowledge about teaching can be regarded as being primarily communicative in nature (Cranton & Carusetta, 2002). This knowledge is "acquired and revised through discourse, interpretation, and reflection on experience" (p. 167). At the heart of transformative learning, this knowledge is about teachers questioning and reflecting upon what they do and why they believe it is important. By critically examining their teaching practices, teachers may transform how they derive meaning from the world, acquire alternative ways of understanding what they do, and consequently alter their teaching practice.

Self-reflection and self-discovery are ongoing and necessary processes. They enable teachers to acquire the tools to develop, articulate, and then defend their teaching philosophy, practices, and beliefs. Invitational theory accentuates the significance of continual connection of ideas and beliefs to practice, encourages ongoing dialogue concerning the complexities and effectiveness behind teaching from an inviting stance, and highlights the transformative possibilities of invitational thinking. Through enhanced self-awareness, educators open the possibilities of allowing their personal experiences to become the vehicle for understanding their students. Transformation in thinking can manifest when teachers are faced with new teaching contexts and forced to partake in critical reflection on their philosophy and practice of teaching. Such reflection has the potential to "lead to revised assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives" (p. 167). Although being a teacher can be intrinsically rewarding when seeing children grasp complicated concepts, strengthen their skills, and extend newly learned knowledge into their daily lives, it can also be an extremely demanding, challenging, and sometimes stressful profession. Teachers can choose how they speak to themselves and can frequently regulate the level of stress in their lives by choosing inviting language that counteracts stress (Payne & Manning, 1998). For example, "I can handle this," "it does not matter if I make a mistake," "this is a learning experience."

It is crucial for teachers to value themselves in the educative process and not perceive themselves as working in a structured organization where they are just functionaries. The process by which a teacher perceives prominence in classrooms and becomes a beneficial presence in the lives of students rests on two vital factors: "(a) the whispering self of the teacher and (b) what the teacher does" (Purkey, 2000, p. 56). Ideally, the task of teachers is to "purposefully monitor negative self-talk, formulate productive internal dialogue, and then practice it until it becomes an automatic part of consciousness" (p. 56). By achieving mastery over their self-talk, which leads to mastery of consciousness itself, a teacher becomes a beneficial presence in the lives of students. To ameliorate the learning environments in today's schools, what teachers say to themselves about their situations and purposes must be refined. Their internal dialogue can hinder both their personal and professional development and colour their daily experiences with a negative paintbrush. Burns (1980), Butler (1992), Helmstetter (1991), and

Meichenbaum (1977) put forth the idea that the language utilized in private speech inhibits, initiates, and reinforces behaviour. According to these cognitive semanticists, behaviour is self-regulated through self-talk.

How people feel about themselves rests upon how their minds filter and interpret everyday experiences (Csikszentmihaly, 1990). Teachers' inner conversations relate to both their professional and personal lives. Their internal dialogue influences their happiness in the classroom and in life (Purkey, 2000). Only when "teachers possess an inner voice that speaks positively and realistically about themselves and their abilities can they hope to give full attention to the needs of students" (p. 58). Beliefs and thoughts possessed by teachers influence and shape the decisions they make as educators. These "beliefs create a total school climate and when shared, shape school culture" (p. 78). Curtis and Altmann (1977) argue that a relationship exists between what teachers say to themselves about themselves and what they say to themselves about students. Teachers who think good thoughts about themselves tend to evaluate their students more positively. The "reverse is true of teachers who rate themselves low on self-concept" (Purkey, 2000, p. 58). According to Secretan (2001), "it is not what we say that makes a difference and changes the world, or even how we say it, but why we say it and who we are while we are saying it" (p. 19).

The Process of Perspective Transformation

> *Declare the truth of your own beauty to yourself and be free from the dungeons both of pleasures and pains that you have made for yourself*
>
> *Puran Singh*

One may not be fully ready to explore the full range of emotions that may be unearthed as a result of delving into a reflective process. There are internal barriers which one has to confront and overcome in order to enable transformative learning to transpire. When taking steps towards perspective transformation, the need for change and empowerment must be recognized. At the same time, one must be ready for the change. The provision of support from one's environment can facilitate this process. When feeling the frustrations of one's limiting patterns and the empowering effects that evolve from an awareness of new possibilities, the reflective process is made more effective. To understand ourselves, we must ground ourselves in our own rich histories of teaching and learning. According to Fenwick and Parsons (1998), "autobiographical reflection is a powerful learning process" (p. 3). Critical reflection entails understanding one's own patterns of behaviour and thinking in one's own history. Through such analysis, we can discern "how our present envelops our past, and shapes future choices" (p. 3).

Reflecting on daily teaching experiences, whether individually or with colleagues, provides teachers with an avenue to improve their teaching. To start the reflective process, they are encouraged not to leap into an interpretive mode. A teacher must attempt to understand why an event happened the way it did and "search the

context within which the event occurred for explanations" (Hole & McEntee, 1999, p. 35). However, to become a reflective practitioner, a teacher must go beyond just the simple answer to why an event happened. Deeper meanings of the episodes must be unearthed (Hole & McEntee, 1999). As discussed by Hole and McEntee, it is helpful for teachers to hold their practice to the light of new understandings that may emerge during the cultivation of deep reflection and consider the implications for their practice. Reflection on experience can be perceived as a springboard for action and in turn transformation (Dyke, 2006). Reflection can be enhanced through open engagement with different worldviews, perceptions, and interpretations of experiences by others. Self-reflection, discussed by Boud (1993, as cited in Dyke, 2006), emphasizes the value of learning from the experiences of others and sharing one's own experiences. By doing so, individuals expose their ideas to the critical gaze of others, prevent possessing a closed, localized view, and allow themselves to be placed in positions where their own assumptions are challenged. He argues that individuals need to be challenged so that they do not fool themselves with personally distorted assumptions or fail to consider new information which may reside outside their current realm of experience.

Within the context of teaching lies "a paradox between adapting to and becoming a conforming member of society and becoming an individual in that society" (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 21). As opposed to looking for standardized principles of effective practice, it is important for educators to "examine how they as social human beings and individuals can develop their own way in the world of teaching" (p. 21). As a part of developing authenticity, teachers must differentiate their "own thoughts and values from those of the community within which they work" (p. 7). This process entails teachers being aware of their thoughts and genuinely being able to express themselves within the social context of their work. In essence, authenticity entails teachers knowing who they are and what they believe, bringing themselves into their classrooms, developing their personal teaching styles, and thereby communicating and relating to their students in a genuine way (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). Critical reflection allows for open questioning and consideration of how teachers think about themselves and their teaching. The context within which they work, including the norms and expectations in the school and those in the broader community, "influences their perceptions of themselves, their students, and their relationships with students" (p. 17). A teacher who has a good understanding of herself or himself, both personally and professionally, "is more likely to articulate values, demonstrate congruence between values and actions, and be genuine and open" (p. 19).

In order to be a leader of others in life, one must be a leader of himself or herself first (Manz, 1983). Thus, teachers must learn how to be leaders of themselves in order to be able to effectively lead the students in their classrooms. Self-leadership is a process of self-influence that begins by listening to one's inner voice. The connection between inner voice and the true essence of teacher

self-leadership allows teachers to move through change and beyond obstacles placed before them. According to Payne and Manning (1998), new ways for teachers to think about their inner speech have the potential "to impact either positively or negatively their feelings, self-esteem, health, and behavior" (p. 195). Leadership is not solely an outward process. Rather, it is an inward process that is influenced by past events that have played a major role in shaping one's life (Manz, 1983). All teachers talk to themselves, and their inner voices are capable of influencing and determining the direction and the quality of their daily personal and professional lives. In teacher education, research indicates that: the use of self-talk with in-service and pre-service teachers has merit, especially when teachers are stressed, when circumstances lead to a disruption of previously acquired skills, when they are first learning to teach, or when they are attempting a new skill (Gallimore et al., 1986, as cited in Payne & Manning, 1998, p.197).

Transforming Negative Teacher Self-Talk Through Changing Beliefs

> *Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.*
>
> *Rumi*

There are a number of powerful, irrational, and illogical beliefs that prohibit many people from leading an unperturbed life (Ellis & Harper, 1975). These beliefs result in maladaptive, unhealthy, and nonfacilitative self-talk. By changing irrational beliefs into rational ones, teachers positively affect and transform the nature of their self-talk (Payne & Manning, 1998). Rational, healthy self-talk promotes rational, healthy teacher behaviour. Thus, it is beneficial for teachers to place themselves in positions whereby they recognize unhealthy internal conversations and, in turn, substitute healthy ways to guide themselves while functioning in educational settings and in their personal lives.

Steps For Improving Teacher Self-Talk

Payne and Manning (1998) put forth five steps for improving teacher self-talk:

1. Change irrational beliefs to rational ones. When beliefs are changed to rational, healthy ones, self-talk is affected positively and changes. Rational self-talk promotes productive teacher behavior and may reduce teacher stress.
2. Record and examine the self-talk that takes place both out aloud and silently within the mind. Awareness is the first step for breaking out of an unhelpful self-talk cycle.
3. Become aware of cues that may signal unhelpful self-talk including feeling anxious or depressed, sudden shifts in emotions, and avoidance thoughts or behaviours. Physical symptoms may include uneasy stomach, sweaty palms and tension headaches. External events often instigate unhelpful self-talk. When its presence is noticed, interrupt the self-critical onslaught with the firm statement - "STOP! It is not helpful to talk to myself this way. Would I talk to a good friend this way" By realizing that critical

self-talk is not helpful, an individual can begin to disengage from it with the realization that it is no longer acceptable.

4. Identify and change negative self-talk statements to more positive, self-supportive, and constructive ones. For example, as opposed to saying, "Oh no, what will the parents think when their children go home and tell them about my mistake?" say, "Even teachers are entitled to human error. I can make mistakes and still be a good teacher." While the negative self-talk originates from the erroneous belief that mistakes are not acceptable, the more constructive self-statement arises from the rational belief that although it is marvelous to do something without error, some mistakes are unfortunate. If they are made, it is not the end of the world.
5. Encourage small improvements and be careful not to impose the 'Be Perfect' voice as improvements to self-talk are being tried. The goal is to reduce unhelpful self-talk and increase helpful self-talk. It takes considerable time, practice, and determination to change self-talk.

In discussing these five steps, Payne and Manning (1998) found it important to specify a set of self-questions that may be asked by teachers as identified by Maultsby (1975): (a) Is my self-talk helping me to solve problems? (b) Is my self-talk based on objective reality? (c) Is my self-talk optimistic? (d) Is my self-talk being a good friend to me? (e) Is my self-talk helping me to reach my short- and long-term goals, personally and professionally? Interventions in teacher self-talk have been shown to be beneficial in reducing self-reported anxiety about teaching (Payne & Manning, 1990), improving lesson planning and teaching performance (Neely, 1986), and reducing stress in teaching (Forman, 1982).

So How Do Teachers Influence Student Self-Talk And Self-Perceptions In Classrooms?

> *I've come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.*
>
> *Hiam Ginott (1972)*

Many factors affect teacher-student experiences in a classroom on a day-to-day and moment-by-moment basis. Students spend a sizeable portion of their lives in school, and their teachers determine the nature of its impact (Combs, 1982). Teachers who consciously are aware of teacher-student relationships are more likely to foster the growth of their students, care for them, and engage in dialogue with them (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). This dialogue is critical to the learning process, and teachers define its nature. Teachers possess

immense influential power over their students' self-concepts, self-talk, level of success within the classroom, and attitudes toward school. Thus, they are encouraged to extend efforts to understand the perspectives of their students and keep their emotional well-being, diverse needs, and academic abilities in mind when interacting with them. Their perceptions influence the world of students, "who tend to see themselves as the teacher sees them" (Purkey, 2000, p. 57).

The essence of effective teaching must entwine a personal dimension and focus upon the fostering and strengthening of "inviting" relationships in the classroom. Research identifies good teachers as "task-oriented, organized, structured and in control" (Payne & Manning, 1998, p. 195). However, attention must be awarded to the social and psychological factors related to teaching and learning. Teachers are prime agents in setting the emotional climate in the classroom. Through a heightened sense of emotional well-being, they place themselves in a better position to be able to create optimal learning environments in which students feel physically and psychologically safe (Maslow, 1970). Teachers must understand how their own beliefs and feelings affect their work with their students (Aspy & Roebuck, 1982). They are encouraged to actively monitor and reflect on their attitudes, personal values, and experiences, since they shape their teaching practice and treatment of students. Teachers constantly establish distinct relationships with their students, communicate their inner thoughts in their overt behavior, reveal their beliefs in their actions, and summon students to respond accordingly. Thus, their beliefs about students are the critical ingredients in student success or failure in school. By sending out powerful invitations to students to share in positive experiences in the classroom, a teacher encourages students to believe in the intrinsic value of learning and foster positive internal dialogue. Teachers can either help promote a child's self-esteem or hinder a child's growth by constantly sending the child disinviting messages. When teachers "think well of their students and their abilities, students are likely to respond in positive ways" (Purkey, 2000, p. 60). Conversely, when they tell themselves that their students cannot achieve, "then student performance is influenced negatively" (p. 59). The teacher's internal dialogue about students has the power to influence how students view themselves and how well they learn in school.

The writings of Vygotsky are important to consider when discussing how teachers influence student self-talk and their behaviors. Accentuating the regulatory effect of inner speech upon behavior, Vygotsky (1962) postulated the theory of verbal self-regulation. He considered thought as internal self-talk, and language the substance of thought which directs action. According to this developmental psychologist, when children engage in private speech, they utilize the same words that adults once used to regulate their behaviors for the purposes of self-regulation. In relation to the educational sphere, he described self-regulation as an "inner-speech" function students internalize from the language that teachers use to mediate student learning in the classroom. Thus, a

student's self-talk serves to direct and guide their progress through difficult and unfamiliar materials, as adults, including teachers, have previously guided them. Vygotsky proposed that instruction in and mastery of subject-matter knowledge are primary forces underlying cognitive growth and that high level cognitive processes emerge through teacher-student interactions.

Self-talk has been studied as a means of enhancing self-awareness, self-regulation, and problem-solving. Vygotsky (as cited in Depape, Hakim, Voelkar, Page & Jackson, 2006) maintained that "overt self-talk served an adaptive function in children by regulating their actions during difficult problem solving, and that it eventually became internalized as self-regulatory thoughts or covert private speech by the early school-age years" (p. 2). Research has found developmental differences in student self-talk when they are faced with problem-solving situations. In their research on private speech with preschool children, Duncan and Pratt (1997) found that the preschoolers were more likely to use private speech when a task was difficult or novel than when it was easy or familiar. Furthermore, Winsler, DeLeon, Wallace, Carlton, and Willson-Quayle (2003) found evidence for consistency in children's private speech across problem-solving tasks in their research with children aged three to five years. Their study revealed that older children used more partially internalized forms of private speech such as whispering or muttering to themselves. In tune with Vygotsky's theory, their findings suggested a connection between children's internalization of speech and behavioral self-regulation.

It is a "teacher's professional responsibility to be inviting in a deliberate and consistent manner" and to engage in positive self-talk about students by viewing them as able, valuable, and responsible (Beardsley & Jacobs as cited in Novak, 1992, p. 26). By doing so, teachers intentionally invite positive and realistic self-talk in their students. Each instructional move has an effect on the development of the child's sense of self.

What Is The Nature Of The Internal Conversations That Students Have With Themselves?

> *The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action.*
>
> *John Dewey*

The early years of a child's life are critical in forming his or her self-concept. This self is formed from the experiences interwoven in everyday life. The educational institution is an important agent in a child's development. The prevailing nature of messages they receive in school affects their perceptions about themselves and their internal dialogue, which in turn affects their attitudes toward school, the relationships they form in school, and their school achievements. Teachers play a significant role in the messages that are filtered to children and their formulation of productive internal conversations.

Many of the successes and failures encountered and experienced by students "throughout their educational careers are

closely connected with their inner voices" (Purkey, 2000, p. 10). Students who experience continued honest success in school over time are likely "to develop self-talk that encourages them to put forth the effort, energy, and resources to learn what is being presented in the classroom" (p. 75). On the other hand, students who "encounter consistent failure and disapproval will move from negative self-talk ('I'm so stupid') to learned helplessness" (p. 75). Learned helplessness is the giving-up reaction whereby the student tells himself or herself that there is nothing that he or she can do to change. This lapse into total apathy "is often mistaken by educators as lack of motivation" (p. 75). While the inner voice in healthy personalities speaks of success, fulfillment, and assurance, individuals with negative internal dialogue establish limits to their performances and possess an inner voice that "speaks of fear, anxiety, and defeat" (p. 8). These individuals "tell themselves that they cannot learn, succeed, or assert, even when such things are not objectively true" (p. 10).

According to Seligman (1991), individuals can choose the way they think. The language they use to speak to themselves impacts their choices - choice of feelings and choice of behaviors. While healthy and appropriate self-talk leads to more productive affective, cognitive and behavior responses, unhealthy and inappropriate self-talk leads to more maladaptive responses. Humans are susceptible to negative self-talk. Approximately 75% (Helmstetter, 1986) of everything we say to ourselves is counterproductive. The ability to speak to oneself about oneself in positive and realistic ways is an important aspect of invitational education.

Teaching individuals to alter their thoughts and internal conversations in an effort to bring forth constructive and productive emotions and behaviours is supported through numerous studies (Manning, 1991). In the educational sphere, self-talk strategies have resulted in improvements in student performance in the areas of academic performance of behaviour-problem students (Lovitt & Curtis, 1968), mathematics (Leon & Pepe, 1983), reading comprehension (Elliott-Faust & Pressley, 1986), and creative writing (Trimbur, 1987). By monitoring counterproductive and negative self-talk in the classroom, teachers can create a climate of optimism and respect, encouraging the growth of productive self-talk and the perceptions of their abilities in a propitious light. It is vital that educators have "respect, trust, and confidence in their children before their children can develop self-respect, self-trust, and self-confidence" (Purkey, 2000, p. 49). By giving students permission to attend to their internal dialogues, teachers encourage students to modify their inner conversations. Through core reflection, profound and fundamental changes can be made by reaching into deep-rooted beliefs and underlying issues that lie behind certain choices of actions. Core reflection "aims at building on people's strengths, and on the positive feelings often triggered when people feel in touch with positive meanings, and with their strengths" (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 64). By assisting students in delving deeper into the richness of their inner potential, teachers encourage their students to enter into an

adventure of learning about their "self" and transforming their inner voices.

Conclusions

Do not utter even a single harsh word; your True Lord abides in all.
Do not break anyone's heart; these are all priceless jewels.
The minds of all are like precious jewels; to harm them is not good at all.

Bhagat Sheikh Fareed Ji

Together, teachers and students can create learning environments that intentionally summon productive internal dialogue. Only through a deeper understanding and awareness of the beliefs that students and teachers hold about themselves, can the transformation in internal dialogue be initiated. People's beliefs, affective reactions, and assumptions play a prominent role in structuring realities. Reviewing teaching and learning practices through various lenses helps to surface the assumptions teachers hold about pedagogic methods alongside the assumptions educators make concerning the "conditions that best foster student learning" (Brookfield, 2002, p. 32). By cultivating deep reflections, teachers are able to get to the heart of their teaching practices, acquire new insights, and make necessary changes.

The art of teaching is "a deeply human, social activity" (Combs, 1982, p. 162). The interactions that take place within the educational ecosystem communicate messages of personal adequacy or inadequacy to teachers and children, having an impact on what they say to themselves and how they perceive their abilities. Invitations are at the heart of invitational education and "are messages which communicate to people that they are valuable, able, responsible and worthy of respect" (Russell as cited in Novak, 1992, p. 160).

Through enhanced self-awareness and healthy inner conversations, an individual can be empowered to invite positive experiences into daily life and deal with stresses in productive ways. A major benefit of self-supportive self-talk is that "it allows us to develop a protective barrier or buffer against the unpleasant situations in which we may find ourselves" (Payne & Manning, 1998, p. 200). Environmental unpredictability, sudden changes in schedules and lesson plans, unforeseen problems, and individual stress characterize the teaching profession. Circumstances of "teacher accountability and close public scrutiny necessitate the teacher's need for positive, self-supportive speech" (Payne & Manning, 1998, p. 200). By regularly monitoring their inner conversations, teachers can choose and regulate many of their emotional and resulting behavioral reactions.

Educators play an instrumental role in guiding children on their personal journey and empowering them with positive beliefs in themselves as learners. To keep themselves grounded, teachers must "never forget what it's like to be a child" (Purkey, 1992). By assisting students in visualizing their roles as active, productive, and successful members of their community, teachers can foster positive internal dialogue

and a self-monitoring process of thoughts. By being inviting, both personally and professionally, invitational educators can engage in practices that encourage positive and realistic self-talk in their students. This is a form of teaching that "involves commitment to the notion of the ability, value, and self-directing powers of every student" (Purkey, 2000, p. 61).

When an individual shares their private speech, it allows an observer a window into the mind. There is no tool that can measure the extent to which self-talk shapes an individual's life experiences and interpretations of them. However, the contributions teachers "make to the growth of students often do not show until long after students have left" them (Combs, 1982, p. 175). The effect of a teacher's actions or words upon a student's internal dialogue may never be known to the teacher or even the student. The messages may have a great impact upon the whispering self and slowly send the student either into a cycle of negative self-talk or towards a strong sense of self-confidence. Students must be encouraged to monitor their internal dialogue on a regular basis and ensure that they choose beneficial steps towards self-fulfillment.

According to Payne and Manning (1998): The daily running dialogue or commentary inside our heads has the potential to impact, either positively or negatively, our feelings, level of stress, self-esteem, health, behavior, and interpersonal relationships. If we become aware of what we are telling ourselves ('What am I saying to scare myself? Panic myself? Worry myself?') then we have taken the first steps to assuring a positive, rather than a negative impact. Once we become cognizant of the fact that the unhelpful things we are saying to ourselves are hurting us, then we can make a conscious choice to talk to ourselves in more helpful ways. (p. 197)

The greatest challenge is to weaken the power of self-defeating inner conversations and to empower oneself with positive beliefs by monitoring and altering the conversations. The question put forth in this paper, to what extent does self-talk play a role in influencing, shaping, and interpreting the experiences of teachers and students in schools? does not have a definitive answer. Instead, it results in a tentative answer that leads to further questions including, "how can the positive self-talk cycle be instigated?" This process would entail all individuals to start altering their thought processes and sending positive messages to others both verbally and nonverbally. This leads one to start pondering the role of "significant others" in an individual's life. How does one build resilience to the negative messages received from significant others and not allow them to interfere with one's own thought processes? Can the effects of negative self-talk be reversed, minimized, or even eliminated at a later stage in one's life? Much research has been conducted on teacher influence on student self-talk. Future research inquiries must delve into understanding student influence on teacher self-talk. By doing so, further insights would be gained into the inner working of today's classrooms and the impact on teacher-student interactions.

Final Thoughts

Reflecting upon myself, and conquering my mind, I have seen there is no other friend like You.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

We are a product of extensive qualities of experiences that frame our perceptual worlds and define how we view ourselves. Our beliefs, affective reactions, and assumptions play a prominent role in structuring our realities. Our lives are knitted into the fabric that we refer to as "reality." This fabric forms a veil over our ability to understand ourselves, and when slowly shattered, may reveal further layers of distorted perceptions concealed deep within the mind. The reflective process enables one to dismantle the veil and restructure the thought processes that guide one's actions. The ramification of the transformative experience rests in the hands of the individual.

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Examination of the Effectiveness of Male and Female Educational Leaders Who Made Use of the Invitational Leadership Style Of Leadership

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The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the effectiveness of male and female educational leaders who made use of the invitational leadership style of leadership in their k-12 school settings. Study participants consisted of 14 principals (7 female and 7 male) and 164 teachers. While quantitative findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the usages of invitational leadership qualities in effective schools versus less effective schools, there were no differences based on gender. Follow-up interviews with teachers and principals established that teachers believed that the invitational qualities of respect and trust were the most influential leadership qualities, while principals viewed trust as the predominant influencing factor.

Introduction

As a result of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002, educational accountability standards have increased tremendously (Stecher & Kirby, 2004). Subsequently, educational leaders are now responsible for meeting expectations unparalleled to that of previous decades (Aldridge, 2003). In response to these changing and amplified conditions of accountability, numerous leadership models have been designed to meet the leadership needs of the past several decades (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Kezar, 2000; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2000; Spears & Lawrence, 2004; Yukl, 2006). While models such as transformational and servant leadership have served educational leaders for several decades, one comprehensive model has been created that promises to provide a positive and encouraging structure to guide today's leaders through complex times.

The relatively new model referred to is invitational leadership. The invitational leadership model was designed by William Purkey and Betty Siegel in 2002 based on invitational theory. As Purkey (1992, p. 5) articulated, "Invitational theory is a

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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 further explained, "The purpose of invitational leadership is to address the entire global nature of human existence and opportunity." Thus, this invitational leadership model is a comprehensive design that is inclusive of many vital elements needed for the success of today's educational organizations (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). As Bolman and Deal (2002, p. 1) ascertained, "The most important responsibility of school leaders is not to answer every question but serve a deeper, more powerful and more durable role." Since the current literature firmly supports the need for a change in leadership in order to adequately meet the needs of current educational institutions (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2003), the need to examine a new leadership model is essential. As Halpern (2004, p.126) affirmed, "Rapid changes require new kinds of leadership—leaders who have the necessary knowledge to achieve a goal and leaders who can manage amid the uncertainty of nonstop change." The necessity for a change in leadership is further warranted based on the need for an "ethic of caring" (Grogan, 2003, p. 25). Current literature also strongly supports this need for a leadership model that is caring and ethical in nature (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Grogan, 2003; Halpin, 2003). Grogan (2003, p. 24) described leadership as being "predicated on caring about those he or she serves." Consequently, Halpin (2003, p. 84) concluded, "Invitational leadership contributes to school effectiveness by the way in which it cares for and supports the efforts of others." Since Invitational leadership is comprehensive in nature, consisting of many positive and essentially sound educational components (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005), it may well serve as a model of leadership that will positively impact the diverse and changing needs of today's educational organizations.

As Egley (2003, p. 57) argued, "the research on the effects of Invitational Education Theory in the educational administrative process is relatively new as compared to other theories pertaining to leadership." Thus, this research attempted to find answers to the following questions: 1) Is there a significant difference between the presence of invitational leadership qualities in effective schools versus less effective schools? and 2) Is there a significant difference between the invitational leadership qualities of male and female administrators? If so, what are they?

Conceptual Underpinnings

Invitational Leadership

It has been authenticated throughout this literature review (Aldridge, 2003; Jennings, 2003; Penner, 1981; Shapiro, 1990; Stillion & Siegel, 2005) that a new day has transpired for contemporary leaders, requiring skills and knowledge exceeding that of previous needs in leadership (Caldwell & Hayward, 1998). As today's leaders seek to acquire the skills and

knowledge necessary to prove effective in current educational organizations, it becomes important to realize that there are no simple answers to achieve leadership excellence. Bolman and Deal (2002, p. 1) affirmed, "When you look at examples of effective leadership, it becomes clear that it's not related to any one style, personality, gender, or ethnicity. Many pathways point to effective leadership. But some qualities are consistent across effective leaders." The critical task is to find the combination of qualities and characteristics that will consistently provide leaders with the skills and knowledge to succeed on a regular basis. Purkey and Siegel (2003) attempted to blend leadership qualities, values, and principles when they developed the invitational leadership theory and model for inviting success from all interested stakeholders. In their book, *Becoming an Invitational Leader*, Purkey and Siegel (2003, p.1) explained, "This model shifts from emphasizing control and dominance to one that focuses on connectedness, cooperation, and communication."

The invitational leadership model seeks to invite all interested stakeholders to succeed (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Kelly et al., 1998; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005). As noted by Day, Harris, and Hadfield (2001, p. 34), invitations are "messages communicated to people which inform them that they are able, responsible and worthwhile." These messages are communicated through "inter-personal action, but also through institutional policies, programmes [sic], practices, and physical environments" (Day et al., 2001, p. 34).

Interestingly, invitational leadership has a highly personal and ethical component included within the constructs of the model. Stillion and Siegel (2005) articulated that invitational leaders work to establish an environment where workers are able to achieve their goals and potential while participating in the shared vision and mission of the group. The above mentioned authors further determined that "Invitational leadership intentionally creates positive physical places to work and puts into place policies that reflect the optimism of the leader and lead to trust and respect among workers" (Stillion & Siegel, p. 9).

It is important to note that invitational leadership has been created based upon four basic assumptions that exemplify invitational leaders. The assumptions are optimism, respect, trust, and intentionality. Day et al. (2001, p. 34) described these four assumptions as follows:

> *Optimism*–the belief that people have untapped potential for growth and development
>
> Respect–the recognition that each person is an individual of worth
>
> *Trust*–possessing "confidence in the abilities, integrity, and responsibilities of ourselves and others" (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p. 12).
>
> *Intention*–a decision to purposely act in a certain way, to achieve and carry out a set goal, (Day et. al, 2001, p. 34). These four principles serve as core values to invitational leadership. Stillion and

> Siegel (2005, p. 15) defined intention as "knowing what we intend to bring about as well as how we intend it to happen gives clarity and direction to our work."

Optimism is a fundamental component of invitational leadership. Social reformer, John Gardner (1990, p. 1), reflected that "a prime function of a leader is to keep hope alive." Stillion and Siegel (2005) depicted an optimistic leader as one "who can reframe problem situations as opportunities and view the impossible as merely difficult" (¶ 14).

In the midst of today's difficult challenges and high accountability standards, the characteristic of optimism could prove to be a dynamic element to success for educational organizations. Stillion and Siegel (2005) argued that "Optimistic leaders embrace both challenge and change, expecting that the outcome will be a positive one" (¶ 14). Today's educational institutions and stakeholders need to experience the positive outcomes that the value of optimism may bring.

The value of respect is one of the most innate needs of all human nature (Purkey, 1992). Purkey (1992) affirmed that "people are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly" (p. 6). Respect for others demonstrates a basic belief in the worth and value of our fellow workers, students, parents, and leaders. Showing respect to fellow organizational members "leads to an inviting, inclusive workplace where diversity is the norm and every individual can flourish" (Stillion & Siegel, 2005, ¶ 12).

The value of trust is closely related to respect. Purkey and Siegel (2003, p.12) defined trust as "having confidence in the abilities, integrity and responsibilities of ourselves and others" Trust is a crucial element that contributes to the success of an organization. Conversely, lack of trust serves as a barrier to the development of cohesive team work and efforts. As Lencioni (2002, p. 195) observed, "Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible." Subsequently, building trust is a critical element for any successful leader to possess.

Intentionality is another important component of the invitational leadership model. Stillion and Siegel (2005) concluded that "knowing what we intend to bring about as well as how we intend it to happen gives clarity and direction to our work" (¶ 15). Developing and maintaining specific and clear intentions facilitates the process of organizational growth and success. As Purkey (1992, p.9) articulated, "Intentionality can be a tremendous asset for educators and others in the helping professions, for it is a constant reminder of what is truly important in human service." Invitational leaders are purposefully intentional in their work and their efforts with all stakeholders.

Additionally, Purkey and Siegel (2003) postulated a specific framework by which schools can become "invitational" by concentrating on five areas contributing to success or failure: places, policies, programs, processes, and people. The authors believed that each of these elements

contributes to the creation of a positive school climate and ultimately a healthy and successful organization. The personality of a place is at once noticeable to observers. It is evident if the environment is sterile, empty, and lifeless or warm, exciting, and filled with the personalities of all those who inhabit that space. As Purkey (1992, p. 7) affirmed, "Places are the easiest to change because they are the most visible element in any environment. They [places] also offer the opportunity for immediate improvement." Since places are so visible, they are essential to promote in a positive manner, as well as being more readily managed aspects of an organization's image.

Policies is another component of success or failure in invitational leadership. Leaders must determine if their organization's policies serve only to restrict and confine, squelching all sense of individuality; or whether they create positive and productive opportunities for the organization (Fowler, 2004). Policies of schools that are successful and create a positive school culture are developed to encourage and seek a win/win result. Covey (1989) described win/win as a mindset that constantly seeks to provide mutual benefits in all human interactions. Schools that establish such policies seek to create a cooperative, rather than a competitive arena.

The establishment of attractive programs becomes yet another element in Purkey and Siegel's (2003) framework for establishing a positive and successful organization. Most often, school leaders are guilty of offering very few options and choices. According to Hansen (1998, p.1), students often feel "disinvited in school" due to the fact that they always feel overlooked. No one cared enough to encourage their participation in sports or other school activities; they receive papers with a grade only, lacking additional comments; and their absences were rarely, if ever, noticed by their teachers. Hansen further explained that, "these students suffered from a caring disability; not enough educators cared to invite them to participate in school life" (p. 16).

Schools that possess a positive school culture appear to make great effort to provide for a variety of creative and attractive programs (Witcher, 1993). Rigorous academic courses taught by outstanding teachers help to increase the effectiveness of the instructional program, as well as raise the standards for academic achievement (Edmonds, 1979; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

Processes are yet another vital component of the invitational leadership model (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Stillion & Siegel, 2005). In many schools, the participation process is limited to "here's the deal, take it or leave it" (Cleveland, 2002, p.1). Cleveland (2002, p.1) concluded that some leaders desire to be "presumed to be in charge" however, leaders who make the effort to establish a successful school culture seem to be much more aware of the need to include all stakeholders in as many of the decision making processes as possible. According to Hansen (1998, p. 17), "Schools that are

noted for possessing a positive school climate encourage decision making characterized by participation, cooperation, and collaboration. Students are encouraged to take responsibility, to be involved, and to speak with their own voices."

The final element of Purkey and Siegel's (2003) framework of five areas contributing to success or failure is the aspect of people. In this essential area, the most important element for leaders developing a successful school is the people who comprise the school and its many facets. People are the one resource that is most guaranteed to make a difference in creating a positive school culture. Hansen (1998, p.17) confirmed, "Investment in people results in effective change." Involving people in as many activities that require cooperation and positive results is an excellent way to help individuals become part of an effective team. It is also an outstanding starting place for developing a more positive work and learning environment. Providing people with the recognition that they have earned is critically important to the change process (Hansen, 1998). Teachers and students alike enjoy the feeling of being appreciated for a job well done. This simple truth is a fundamental need of all of humankind (Halpin, 2003; Tallon, 1997).

Yet another aspect of meeting the needs of the people in an organization is the creation of relationships (Bruffee, 1999; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Lencioni, 2002; Tallon, 1997). The formation of positive relationships is an integral part of creating a successful school. As Kelly et al. (1998, p. 62) suggested, "Every child deserves a school that is inviting, academically challenging, and safe. The overall ambiance of the school and quality of instruction are enhanced as the school develops a 'concordant relationship' among the students, parents, teachers, and administrators."

Purkey and Siegel (2003, p. 104) refer to five P's as a means by which to invite others professionally. As the authors concluded the, "five powerful factors–people, places, policies, programs, and processes (the five P's)–are highly significant for their separate and combined influence on Invitational Leadership." Purkey and Siegel (p. 104) continued to affirm the importance of the five P's when they proclaimed, "The combination of these five P's offers an almost limitless number of opportunities for the Invitational Leader, for they address the total culture or ecosystem of almost any organization." The inclusion of the five P's significantly assists in making invitational leadership a unique and holistic leadership model (Stillion & Siegel, 2005). The researchers have included a visualization that shows the connection between the four basic assumptions and the five P's of the invitational leadership model.

Gender Issues in Leadership

The issue of gender differences in educational leadership has been studied for numerous years (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000; Rosenbach & Taylor, 1998; Rosener, 1990; Stelter, 2002). Research has long supported the precept that males are perceived to be more competent than females when considering work-related

issues. “Earlier researchers postulated that most workers believed women to be less competent than men in the workplace” (Henderson, 1994, p. 51). Henderson (1994, p.51) further observed that male and female workers preferred male supervisors, for they “were believed to possess the characteristics of good managers—emotional stability, ability to make correct decisions, analytic ability, and the like.” Henderson further found that this general preference for male leadership created a specific hierarchy of leadership. Henderson (p.52) argued, “The erroneous belief that males are more competent than female workers has resulted in a hierarchy of preferred leaders in the following descending order: (1) white males, (2) nonwhite males, (3) white females, and (4) nonwhite females.”

Conversely, Krantz (1998, p.150) reported that while superiors generally preferred ‘masculine’ traits in their leaders, it was found that ‘feminine’ traits were more highly valued by subordinates.” As a result of extensive gender research, Rosener (1990) established that women consistently strive to create positive interactions with fellow co-workers and followers. Rosener (p.120) further contended that female leaders “encourage participation, share power, and information, enhance other people’s self-worth, and get others excited about their work.”

While males have typically held positions of authority, women have slowly begun to break into upper management positions in the last several decades. “The relative scarcity of women in top leadership roles is not a new phenomenon and can be demonstrated both in national U.S. and international terms” (Stelter, 2002, p. 1). Henderson (1994, p. 58) further argued that “despite many gains, women are still grossly underrepresented in professional and managerial jobs.”

Social perceptions have greatly contributed to the issues of gender in leadership. Stelter (2002, p. 1) concluded that "Where gender is perceived within the context of social status, female leaders may be perceived more negatively than male leaders.” The author further articulated that “traditional perspectives of leadership center on masculine-oriented concepts of authoritarian and task-oriented behavior, then these same perspectives may contribute to a ‘glass ceiling’ essentially prohibiting relationship-oriented (i.e. feminine) leadership behaviors from being recognized as viable leadership behavior” (Stelter, 2002, p. 1).

As women attempt to break through this imposed glass ceiling, it is important to continue to research how men and women vary in their leadership styles. Stelter (2002, p.1) emphasized that “gender differences in leadership can be accounted for through a variety of rationale. From interpersonal relationships to social role expectations to differences in perception and styles, men and women may indeed lead differently in addition to being ‘followed’ differently.” Most assuredly, general agreement exists that men and women will naturally vary in their leadership styles. Asbill and Gonzalez (2000, p. 58) postured that “using the command-and-control style of managing, a

style traditionally associated with males, is not the only way to succeed." While differing leadership styles are to be expected, one cannot underestimate the still prevalent propensity to stereotype based on gender. Stelter (2002, p. 1) postulated that "superiors may rely more on gender stereotypes and assumptions in describing and rating male and female leadership effectiveness and performance" than on any other standard of effectiveness.

While Rosener (1990, p.121) affirmed that "effective leaders don't come from one mold," she noted that female leaders have been forced to pattern their leadership styles, to a large degree, based on successful male leadership behaviors. Rosener (p. 123) articulated that "the first female executives imitated their successful male role models in order to get into top management." Henderson (1994, p. 52) added that "women in leadership positions are often in a Catch-22 situation: they are devalued if they display 'feminine' behaviors (nurturing, cooperative, passive) and chided when they exhibit 'masculine' behaviors (assertiveness, independence, aggressiveness)." In a more positive light, Rosener (p.124) suggested that she "sees a 'second wave' of successful women who are not adopting styles and habits of successful men, but are drawing on skills and attitudes they have developed as women."

Current research concerning gender issues in leadership suggested that, "Women… are naturally socialized towards skills in participative leadership, collaborative group management, and quality interpersonal relation…, whereas men's styles have been more described as goal-directed" (Stelter, 2002, p. 1). Rosener (1990) cautioned, however, against attributing transformational and participative leadership only to female leaders since numerous male leaders also demonstrate these positive leadership characteristics.

Rosenbach and Taylor (1998, p.56) confirmed the need to consider gender issues as "an important challenge for leadership." In the attempt to fully understand the characteristics that lead to successful leadership within today's organizations, it is imperative that gender issues be considered. Henderson (1994, p.54) observed that "the major issue is not men versus women. Instead, it is fairness for all workers regardless of their gender." Additionally, Stelter (2002, p. 1) affirmed that, "The successful organization of the future will not only understand leadership in terms of gender but also its contribution to workforce and organizational effectiveness."

Methodology

Population

The sample consisted of an *n* of 14 principals, and an *n* of 164 teachers currently employed in Missouri public schools. A purposeful sampling method, which consisted of a multi-tiered criteria process, was used to select the schools. The first criterion was geographical in nature, as we divided a Midwest state into quadrants. In order to select principals from schools considered effective in meeting high accountability standards from each quadrant, the researchers identified all school districts based on their district's performance in meeting Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) standards, which qualified the district for the label of "*Accredited for Distinction in Performance.*" We further required that the district had successfully met the MSIP standards with distinction for four or five years, assuring greater consistency of effective achievement. *Accredited for Distinction in Performance* has been defined as "districts that meet all but one of the MSIP Performance measures and all MAP and Reading standards according to the most recent Annual Performance report (APR)" (Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Website, (¶ 10). Conversely, once districts had been identified as effective based on receiving Distinction in Performance, we then identified districts to be considered less effective if they had never received recognition for *Accreditation for Distinction in Performance* status. Once we identified the districts, we then applied additional criteria by which to assure that leadership of each school could be attributed to the characteristics of the current leader. Each school ultimately chosen to be included in this study had to meet the criteria of their principal having served in their current position for an average range of three to five years. Conger et al. (1999, p. 246) supported this criterion as they affirmed that evidence supports the fact that a time frame for effective change "takes place over three to five years." After identifying the effective and ineffective schools in each quadrant and meeting the tenure of the leadership criterion, we randomly selected seven schools considered effective and seven schools considered less effective. The final criterion applied was that of gender consideration, which was necessary for the purpose of distinguishing between possible differences in leadership characteristics based on gender. Of the 14 principal surveys sent out to participating schools, all 14 surveys were returned, yielding a return rate of 100%. Of the 252 teacher surveys sent out to participating schools, 164 were returned, yielding a return rate of 65%. Finally, participants were interviewed who indicated on the *Principal Perceptions of Leadership Practices* survey or the *Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Practices* survey their willingness, using an eleven semi-structured, open-ended question protocol. This resulted in two female principals and two male principals being interviewed, along with five teachers from a stratified sample method.

Instrumentation

We modified some items found on Asbill's (2000) leadership survey for teachers, with the intent of creating a survey that would more directly fit the design of this particular study. The 44-item Likert type surveys used in this inquiry were entitled *Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Practices* (TPLP) and *Principal Perceptions of Leadership Practices* (PPLP). The teacher's survey consisted of a 44-item scale that was divided into five subscales, designed to ascertain educators' perceptions of their principal's leadership characteristics. Survey questions were selected to replicate the components of the invitational theory, as well as perceived leadership effectiveness. The subscales of *trust*, *respect*, *optimism*, *intentionality*, and *perceived effectiveness* from Asbill's (2000) survey were retained in this inquiry; however, to assure reliability of the modified instrument, a test-retest process was used. While the Asbill's survey was found to "have a .97 level of reliability, indicating a high degree of internal consistency for this instrument" (Asbill & Gonzalez, 2000, p. 18), the test-retest on the modified instrument found an alpha coefficient of .73. The consistency of the scores between the two distributions was a measure of the reliability with the correlation of the two distributions using an estimate of the reliability coefficient (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 1995). These correlations were Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the two sets of scores. The reliability of the 44 items was at an acceptable level of $p = .05$. Furthermore, the test-retest revealed the following alpha coefficient for each of the following subscales, *Trust*, ? = .75; Respect = .73, Optimism, $\alpha = .68$, Intentionality, $\alpha = .72$, Effectiveness, $\alpha = .76$. Thus the reliability of the five subscales was at an acceptable level of $p = .05$. These subscales were used to measure the four assumptions of invitational leadership qualities and the aspect of perceived leadership effectiveness. (See Appendix A)

Interview Protocol

Participants were asked to indicate on the survey if they would be interested in taking part in an interview to collect more in-depth information. From these responses, a stratified sample was chosen to participate in the interview phase of the study. During the interview process, open-ended, semi-structured questions were asked of the selected principals. Each participant was asked the same set of questions in the same order with flexibility to explore issues that may come to the surface during the interview (Merriam, 1998). Advantages of this type of interview included reduction of interviewer bias during the interview and facilitation of organization and analysis of the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The interview protocols consisted of eleven semi-structured, open-ended questions that were grounded in the literature (Purkey & Siegel, 2003) in the endeavor to gain enriched insight into leaders' and followers' perceptions of invitational leadership qualities and the effect on organizational success.

Data Analysis

Data analyses involved several procedures for examining both quantitative and qualitative data. In general, raw data collected are prepared for analysis and explored for preliminary understandings in conjunction with choosing the type of analyses based on the research questions and preparing the presentation of the results of the analyses. Each research approach, quantitative and qualitative, was initially analyzed separately, and then merged in the discussion of the research findings utilizing the tenets of invitational leadership.

Quantitative

A multivariate analysis of variance method (MANOVA) was used to determine if a statistical difference in each of the subscales or dependent and independent variables existed between the two categories. The MANOVA is a parametric statistical test that allows for testing of more than one dependent variable in the same analysis and identifies if changes in independent variables have a significant effect on dependent variables; thus, the use of the MANOVA test was appropriate for data analysis using the survey scores of successful schools and schools not successful in sustaining school change (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). With the schools sorted into the two predetermined groups, each score for each subscale or characteristic was evaluated for significant differences. Significance was determined at the .05 level.

Qualitative

The use of interviews contributed to the enriched description contained within this study along with subsequent triangulation of documents. The researchers constantly clarified and classified emerging themes and categories (Creswell, 2003) from the interviews. Member-checking assured that participants felt their stories were told as they had intended. Rich and thick description was used to help transport the reader to the setting of the experience. Additionally, the researchers obtained documents for analysis such as district AYP, a statistical profile of each district, and student data such as dropout rates and graduation analysis, as well as the district's report card available on the DESE website. These artifacts helped to supplement the researchers' depth of understanding of each district's organizational beliefs and priorities.

Results

Schools considered to be effective (M = 3.93, SD = .43990) on the average were led by leaders who were perceived to demonstrate consistently higher attributes of effective invitational leadership qualities than those schools considered to be less effective (M = 3.65, SD = .30255). This finding was significant, t (173) = 4.99, p < .001. Represented in Table 1 is the overall average of the leaders' invitational leadership in both effective schools and non-effective schools. The researchers' totaled and averaged the subscale answers from the survey in order to generate an average score for this overall component. (See Table 1)

Usages of Invitational Leadership Qualities in Effective versus Less Effective Schools

While an even number of Effective and Less Effective Schools were included in this study, significantly fewer Less Effective Schools responded to the survey instrument. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

To determine if a statistical difference in each of the five components of invitational leadership, or dependent variables, existed between the two categories, or the independent variables, in which the schools were sorted, a multivariate analysis of variance method (MANOVA) was used. The MANOVA is a parametric statistical test that allows for testing of more than one dependent variable in the same analysis and identifies if changes in independent variables have a significant effect on dependent variables. The data were analyzed to determine if there were differences in the survey scores for each of the invitational leadership characteristics (*trust*, *respect*, *optimism*, *intentionality*, and *perceived effectiveness*) between the two school groupings. A 0.05 significance level was established for all statistical tests conducted. The results achieved were as follows:

Trust

When examining the leadership characteristic of trust, participants were asked to consider the belief that faculty and staff members were responsible and capable and if the school had a climate of trust. Furthermore participants were asked to consider that if mistakes were made, were they viewed as learning experiences. Lastly participants were asked if all educators modeled values, and attitudes that encouraged others to grow. This characteristic served as a subscale on the survey and was measured by combining questions number 1, 2, 24, 26, and 35.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the difference between *trust* in the workplace of schools deemed effective as opposed to schools less effective. For the characteristic of trust in the work of invitational leadership, the analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,67) = 15.24$, $p < .0001$. The strength of the level of significance means that the probability of the dependent variable to occur by chance is very unlikely. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic of trust in the work of invitational principals ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .579$) than participants in less effective schools ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .440$).

Table 1

Usages of Invitational Leadership Qualities in Effective versus Less Effective Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Effective Schools	108	3.9325	.43990	.04233
Less Effective Schools	70	3.6542	.30255	.03616

Note. While an even number of Effective and Less Effective Schools were included in this study, significantly fewer Less Effective Schools responded to the survey instrument. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

Respect

Questions on the survey asked participants to reflect on how individuals were treated and if negative statements were made or insensitivity was demonstrated among the faculty and staff. In addition, addressed were the aspects of offering constructive feedback for improvement in a respectful way coupled with the belief that people were more important than things or results. Reflecting on one's communications and assessing if they reached all individuals involved, was surveyed as well, along with treating each other as unique individuals. This characteristic served as a subscale on the survey and was measured by combining questions number 4, 14, 15, 16, 18, 25, 27, 36, and 37. For the characteristic *respect*, analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,67) = 14.53$, $p < .0001$. The strength of the level of significance means that the probability of the dependent variable to occur by chance is very unlikely. Participants completing the survey in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic of respect within their faculty ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .495$) than participants completing the survey in less effective schools ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .344$).

Optimism

The items on the survey related to *optimism* asked participants to consider the expectation of high levels of performance among co-workers, the demonstration of optimism during the school day and with decision-making, and the demonstration of enthusiasm for the job. Questions on the survey related to this characteristic were questions number 7, 8, and 28. The analysis found significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1, 66) = 17.85$, $p < .0001$ for *optimism* verified in the school setting. The strength of the level of significance means that the probability of the dependent variable to occur by chance is very unlikely. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic ($M = 4.37$, $SD = .535$) than

participants in less effective schools (M = 4.03, SD = .422).

Intentionality

When examining the invitational leadership characteristic of *intentionality*, participants were asked to consider the governance of policies and procedures that benefitted staff, students, and teachers. They also noted if the principal made an intentional effort to provide necessary instructional materials and to keep everyone informed about important issues. Also, participants were asked to reflect on whether opportunities for professional growth through meaningful in-service were provided, while encouraging everyone to tap their unrealized potential. This characteristic served as a subscale on the survey and was measured by combining questions number 6, 10, 12, 17, 22, 23, 31, and 34. The analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,66) = 15.22$, $p < .0001$. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores for the characteristic of intentionality (M = 4.28, SD = .584) than participants in less effective schools (M = 4.06, SD = .425).

Perceived Effectiveness

Lambert (2003) argued that by establishing and implementing standards and creating high expectations for student performance resulted in all children learning. To examine this characteristic, participants were asked about the effectiveness of the overall climate in their schools and how effectively the needs of individuals within the organizations. Ultimately, this resulted in the participants viewing their schools has having been positively transformed by the use of the invitational leadership within the workplace. Questions on the survey relating to this characteristic were questions numbers 38-41. Again, the analysis revealed significant differences between the school groupings, $F(1,66) = 17.46$, $p < .0001$. Participants in effective schools reported higher scores regarding the effectiveness of their school in transforming (M = 4.25, SD = .748) than participants in less effective schools (M = 3.59, SD = .662). Table 2 illustrates the means and the standard deviations for all five of the dependent variables.

Table 2

Characteristics of the Work of Invitational Leadership

			Effective Schools			Less Effective Schools		
Characteristic	**Effect**	**Power**	***N***	***M***	***SD***	***N***	***M***	***SD***
Trust	.178	.971	108	4.36	.579	70	4.10	.440
Respect	.180	.964	108	4.04	.495	70	3.84	.344
Optimism	.213	.986	108	4.37	.535	70	4.03	.422
Intentionality	.187	.970	108	4.28	.584	70	4.06	.425

Note: Power was computed using alpha = .05 and scores above .80 are considered as very strong. While an even number of Effective and Less Effective Schools were included in this study, significantly fewer Less Effective Schools responded to the survey instrument. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

During the course of the interview process, the voices of study participants supported numerous quantitative findings. As the means of the subscales were analyzed, the research that educators in effective schools were much more likely to perceive that being optimistic within a trusting school environment probably occurred because they held to a collectively vision (intentionality). The educators in less effective schools viewed trust and intentionality as characteristics needed in a school to be effective. One survey respondent said of the principal, "It is January 7th, and my principal has not visited my room once. I feel he does not stick to school policies when dealing with discipline issues. He is too soft." Another interviewee articulated, "There is no real rhyme or reason as to the 'how' things get done around here. It is rather hit and miss, I'm sorry to say."

Conversely, one comment from an effective school setting was, "Our current principal is a very capable leader. She has good communication and organizational skills. She leads with respect for the individual so that all feel they are valued and can be successful." A particularly moving interview session rendered the following response, "My principal is highly effective. Good leadership is intentional. Just as a ship needs a captain, a school needs good leadership to move from good to great. A leader should be proactive, compassionate, and willing to be a servant to others."

When principals who were considered to be effective in their leadership endeavor were asked how they implemented the invitational leadership qualities of trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality, one

leader succinctly stated, “Each of these qualities are pivotal to the creation of a team that works. I try to consistently demonstrate each of these qualities to my staff members. You never know what any given person is going to need on any given day, so you must be demonstrating these positive characteristics on an ongoing basis in order to build a strong foundation for success.” Similarly, one principal noted, “I believe if I exhibit each of these characteristics on a consistent and daily basis, my staff will feel better about what they do and therefore they will be more productive, which has to be good for kids.”

Next, an independent–samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate if a significant difference existed between the invitational leadership qualities of male and female leaders. This test was found to not be significant, t (175) = -.365, p = .716. The invitational leadership qualities of male administrators (M = 3.80, SD = .33922) on the average received similar scores concerning the usage of invitational leadership qualities as did their female counterparts (M = 3.83, SD = .43237). Additional comparison of the means revealed no appreciable difference in the usage of invitational leadership qualities based on the gender of the administrator (see Table 3). An overall average for the component of gender is represented in Table 3.

Table 3

Invitational Leadership Qualities Based on Gender of Principal

	N *Teachers*	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Male Principals	98	3.8008	.33922	.05734
Female Principals	80	3.8294	.43237	.03628

*Note. A*n even number of male and female principals were selected from Effective Schools and Less Effective Schools to be included in this study. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

As the researchers sought to find themes among the transcripts of interviewees, two themes became notably clear: *Trust is essential, it is all about people*

Table 4

Subscale Findings for Invitational Leadership Qualities Based on *Gender Differences*

Subscale	Variable	*N Teachers*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Standard Error Mean*
Trust t (171.433) = 3.386 p = .001	Male	98	4.24	.420	.071
	Female	80	4.26	.571	.048
Respect t (175.130) = 3.138 p = .002	Male	98	4.00	.359	.061
	Female	80	3.96	.471	.040
Optimism t (169.164) = 4.604 p < .001	Male	98	4.18	.419	.071
	Female	80	4.25	.543	.046
Intentionality t (173.586) = 3.008 p = .003	Male	98	4.18	.463	.078
	Female	80	4.20	.556	.047
Perceived Effectiveness t (175.130) = 3.138 p = .002	Male	98	3.94	.645	.109
	Female	80	4.00	.817	.069

Note. An even number of male and female principals were selected from Effective Schools and Less Effective Schools to be included in this study. The average subscale numbers shown above reflect the scores received on Likert-type items that ranged from a 1 (strongly disagree) to a 5 (strongly agree).

Educators were very clear that the invitational quality of trust was one of the most important when considering the creation of organizational success, regardless of gender. One teacher interviewee succinctly stated, "If a leader doesn't have the trust of their staff, they will not be an effective leader." Based on interview results and survey written comments, it appeared clear that educators are also strongly affected by the presence or absence of the leadership characteristics of optimism and intent or vision as implemented by their leaders. One interviewee elaborated, "I don't feel my principal respects us nor even feels we can make a difference, so I feel ill at ease every time I am in his presence." Conversely, one survey participant wrote, "My principal, she is always positive and treats each person with respect. Feeling respected for what I do means the world to me." Another participant noted, "The whole school feels we can make a difference so we do!"

Without hesitation, interviewees responded with the belief that people are the central aspect that must be attended to and be

considered. Principals and teachers agreed that the way people are treated comprises a significant component that contributes to the success or failure of an organization. One teacher commented, "I feel our principal is very effective because she puts people first, above all else. She takes the stance that if your people aren't happy, nothing productive is going to happen." Similarly, a principal remarked, "The most important thing in any organization is the people. Relationships are the cornerstone to everything that takes place in my organization." When asked about the most important factor to address when building an effective organization, yet another principal answered simply, "People, people, people. That's what it's all about!" Another principal noted, "Because we all feel we are in it together and can make a difference, I believe we do."

Conclusions

This data set first confirmed that there were significant differences between the usages of invitational leadership qualities in effective schools versus less effective schools. The significance levels were, in fact, so compelling that it is reasonable to suggest that the principals leading in those schools found through the MSIP process to be more effective, ascribe to invitational leadership behaviors on a regular basis. It was further established through written comments and follow-up interviews that perceptions of these leaders were consistently more positive and affirming than the perceptions of leaders in schools that were determined to be less effective. Perhaps one teacher interviewee put it best when she concluded, "I've worked for effective principals and I've worked for ineffective principals. Without a doubt, everything that the effective principal does is more people-oriented and positive in nature. The ineffective principals seem to always just be putting in their time." Thus, the consistent use of invitational leadership tenets was found to assist in the creation of a successful and healthy organization.

In addition, the researchers sought to determine which characteristics of invitational leadership teachers and administrators viewed as the most present in contributing to an overall effective school or organization. When asked what aspect they considered most influential in contributing to an overall effective school, teachers and principals overwhelmingly agreed that "people" within an organization was the most influential factor to consider when seeking the establishment of any successful organization. While the other factors of places, policies, programs, and processes were addressed, it was fascinating to observe that each respondent offered the same answer to this question; people are the most influential element in an organization. It is important to note that regardless of the background of the teachers and principals, effective or less effective schools, each firmly believed in the factor of people.

Finally, this investigation revealed that quite simply, effective leadership behaviors will always prove effective, regardless of the gender of the leader. The interviewees praised the efforts of effective leaders, regardless of gender. Leadership characteristics considered to be effective

and helpful in the creation of successful organizations were not based on the gender of the leader, but rather on the leader's effective behaviors exhibited.

While numerous researchers (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000; Rosenbach & Taylor, 1998; Rosener, 1990; Stelter, 2002) have discussed at length the differences that exist between the leadership styles of men and women, the results from this study did not support that belief. The findings from this study can be transferable to the supposition that effective leadership qualities should simply be considered effective, regardless of the gender of the leader. It is not difficult to envision that male and female leaders might well ascribe to such positive leadership attributes as establishing trust among their organization's members, convey respect for their employees, express encouragement, or compliment a job well done. Indeed, positive and effective leadership behaviors remain positive and effective, regardless of the individual demonstrating them.

Subsequently, it seems reasonable to infer that effective leadership takes on many facets, as Rosener (1990, p.121) suggested, "effective leaders don't come from one mold." When seeking to create a healthy and successful organization, the most critical aspect to consider is the implementation of effective leadership skills. As Stelter (2002, p. 1) affirmed, "The successful organization of the future will not only understand leadership in terms of gender but also its contribution to workforce and organizational effectiveness."

Implications for Practice

Since the invitational leadership theory "is believed to be a process for improving schools" (Asbill, 2000, p. 109), an important implication for practice would be for school districts to pay close attention to the tenets of invitational leadership, applying them accordingly to their educational setting, perhaps even selecting candidates based on their beliefs regarding the use of such characteristics.

In addition, an extensive review of literature and written comments and interview results from this study strongly support the belief that principals have the power to positively affect the creation of an effective learning organization. Thus we are suggesting that the invitational leadership theory be utilized at the university level to assist in the training of aspiring leaders. In so doing, future leaders may be educated in the skills and knowledge necessary to acquire leadership behaviors and qualities that can positively transform an organization.

Yet another implication for practice may be derived from the invitational leadership's assumption of intentionality (Stillion & Siegel, p. 9). It is recommended that all leaders become well versed in the issue of intentionality. Intentionality has been defined as "a decision to purposely act in a certain way, to achieve and carry out a set goal, (Day, et. al., 2001, p. 34). Founders of the invitational leadership model, William Purkey and Betty Siegel, articulated that "Intentionality is at the very heart of Invitational Leadership. Of the four principles, intentionality plays the

paramount role in Invitational Leadership because it is the element that gives any human activity purpose and direction" (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p. 19). It is additionally advocated that active use of intentionality be initiated at all levels of an organization.

Based on the findings of how influential the aspect of people are to the creation of a successful and healthy organization, it is essential for school leaders to work to develop the positive people skills and necessary communication skills to maintain the necessary level of treatment that members of an organization deserve. Steps should be taken to assure that people within an organization are recognized for their contributions and treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that in order for effective organizations to be created and maintained, positive leadership skills that are grounded in the invitational leadership model should be highly considered by leaders. We further argue, based on our findings, that reflective practices on one's leadership skills and people skills should be assessed frequently in order to maintain optimal benefit for the organization. Further implications for practice should include not only educational institutes, but the application of invitational leadership principles to the business world, as well.

In conclusion, data from this investigation have substantiated the need for teaching and understanding the model of invitational leadership as espoused by Purkey and Siegel (2003). Perhaps by utilization of a new framework by which schools can become "invitational" by concentrating on five areas contributing to success or failure: places, policies, programs, processes, and people (Purkey & Siegel), leadership will transcend models and theories previously utilized (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Day, et. al., 2001). Moreover, based on the findings in this study, it is our opinion that the invitational leadership model should serve as a means to achieve positive results in effective leadership. Halpin (2003, p. 84) articulated that "invitational leadership contributes… by the way in which it cares for and supports the efforts of others." The reviewed literature and study results support the belief that the invitational leadership model should serve as a positive source to help prepare educational leaders, regardless of gender, for the challenges they face in creating effective and successful educational organizations.

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Appendix A

Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Practices
TPLP

***Instructions*:**

Please rate your principal by selecting the response for each item which best describes your own perceptions of his or her leadership behaviors. Mark only one response per item.

Directions: For items, 1 – 37 please answer the following questions by placing an "X" in the box that best matches your level of agreement with the statement.

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Demonstrates a belief that faculty and staff members are responsible and capable					
2	Creates a climate of trust					
3	Makes a special effort to learn names					
4	Uses sarcasm, name-calling and negative statements					
5	Often causes others to feel stressed					
6	Facilitates policies, and procedures which benefit staff, students, and teachers					
7	Demonstrates optimism					
8	Expects high levels of performance from co-workers					
9	Is resistant to change					

10	Makes an intentional effort to provide necessary instructional materials					
11	Creates a climate for improvement through collaboration and shared decision-making					
12	Remains informed about important issues					
13	Encourages cooperation rather than competition					
14	Assures that all necessary communications reach those concerned					
15	Treats faculty and staff as though they are irresponsible					
16	Expresses appreciation for faculty and staff's presence in school					
17	Provides opportunities for professional growth through meaningful in-service					
18	Offers constructive feedback for improvement in a respectful manner					
19	Cares about co-workers					
20	Takes time to talk with faculty and staff about their out-of-school activities					
21	Listens to co-workers					

22	Communicates expectations for high academic performance from students					
23	Encourages staff members to tap their unrealized potential					
24	Views mistakes as learning experiences					
25	Shows insensitivity to the feelings of faculty and staff					
26	Models values, attitudes, and beliefs that encourage others to improve their skills/abilities					
27	Believes that people are more important than things or results					
28	Demonstrates a lack of enthusiasm about his or her job as a principal					
29	Fails to follow through					
30	Appears to view the principalship as a position of service to others					
31	Makes an intentional effort to treat others with trust and respect					
32	Delegates authority and responsibility when appropriate					
33	Is impolite to others					
34	Has a sense of mission which he or she shares with others					

35	Delegates responsibilities to provide learning opportunities					
36	Expresses appreciation for a job well done					
37	Treats each co-worker as a unique individual					
38	How do you classify the overall work effectiveness of your school?					
39	How do you rate your school's effectiveness compared to other schools you have worked in?					
40	How do you rate your principal's effectiveness in meeting the job-related needs of the faculty and staff?					
41	How effective has your principal been in positively transforming your school?					

Please circle one:

42. I am a: 1. Male 2. Female

43. Please express your general observations about the leadership behaviors demonstrated by your current principal.

44. Please express any specific comments about the effectiveness of your current principal as a leader.

Any additional comments:

A Survey of Bahamian and Jamaican Teachers' Level of Motivation and Job Satisfaction.

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of self-reported job satisfaction and motivation among teachers in the Bahamas and Jamaica. A total of 168 Bahamian (n =75) and Jamaican (n = 93) teachers completed the Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey. Overall results indicate that teachers in the Bahamas reported higher levels of job satisfaction as compared to teachers in Jamaica. Other findings relating to job satisfaction and motivation are discussed, and various aspects of job satisfaction are discussed in relationship to the principles of Invitational Education.

Work occupies a central position in people's lives, and with the problems of inflation, outsourcing, shrinking labor supply, and slowdowns in the economic expansion, etc., the role that a job plays in a person's life takes a high priority. Additionally, the level of satisfaction that a person experiences as a result of his or her job can have a significant effect not only on the individual, but on those he or she interacts with as well. This is especially true for teachers, who have an immeasurable influence on their students. Thus, it is important to study the many variables relating to job satisfaction in an attempt to identify those variables or conditions that could be modified, leading to increased feelings of job satisfaction, motivation, and well being.

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Review of the Literature

Job satisfaction has been the focus of countless studies. Over 40 years ago, Neff (1968) reported that the average individual spends two-thirds of his/her life engaged in work. With a significant portion of our lives spent in the workforce, it makes sense to examine the many variables surrounding what is often referred to as "job satisfaction".

Satisfaction in a job means different things to different people, and job satisfaction is a complex concept that is influenced by, and influences other variables. To come to a basic understanding of what job satisfaction really entails, I will review of some of the theories that account for individuals' feelings of job satisfaction.

Gruneberg (1976) defined job satisfaction as the total cluster of feelings an individual had about his job. He indicated that the nature of the job itself, the pay, the work environment, etc. were all important variables that led to a feeling of job satisfaction. Schultz (1982) indicated that job satisfaction is "the

psychological disposition of people toward their work" (p. 287). Thus, as with Gruenberg's (1976) definition, job satisfaction is not limited to a single factor such as salary, but is dependent on a collection of work related tasks or activities. Okafor (1985) provided a definition of job satisfaction as well as job dissatisfaction. He stated that job satisfaction is the worker's appraisal of the extent to which the work environment fulfills his or her requirements, while job dissatisfaction is a negative feeling toward one's job that can be related to outcomes that are counterproductive.

Just as several definitions relating to job satisfaction have been proposed, numerous theories have been developed that attempt to explain why people differ in respect to satisfaction with their jobs. Many of the early studies assumed that job satisfaction had a unidimensional characteristic. In this sense, the same variables of the job determined satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) proposed a two-factor theory of job satisfaction. Here, the primary determinants of satisfaction are the intrinsic aspects of the job (motivators; e.g. recognition, promotions, etc.), and the primary determinants of job dissatisfaction are the extrinsic factors (hygienes; e.g. salary, working conditions, etc.). Thus, job satisfaction results when intrinsic aspects of work promote feelings of happiness in the worker, and job dissatisfaction results when the extrinsic factors are considered. Criticisms of this model indicate that the same factors can cause both satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Brunetti, 2001, U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Statistics, 2007).

Davis (1981) proposed a three-component model of job satisfaction; facet-free, facet-specific, and overall. He explained that facet-free is a general feeling toward one's work. Facet-specific relates to job comfort, challenge, pay, co-worker relations, promotion, and resource adequacy. Overall job satisfaction is a weighted index of the other components.

Various Factors Relating to Job Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction

Researchers have studied factors relating to job satisfaction for years. These studies set the foundation for the current research on job satisfaction. Researchers have also, over the past several years, attempted to isolate components of the job which appear to affect workers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction. One variable that has been studied extensively is that of compensation or salary. Locke (1976) found that the amount of pay a person receives plays an important role in job satisfaction, however Kessler (1982) found a gender effect; there was a positive relationship between personal income and well-being for men, but not so for women. Purohit and Lambert (1983) reported that a sense of accomplishment, use of training, learning opportunities, and relationship with co-workers all added to job satisfaction besides the amount of pay. Thus, many of the studies which examine job satisfaction indicate that the amount of pay a worker receives is important; however, it is not the only factor leading to job satisfaction. Other factors relating to job satisfaction include task

complexity (Moseley, 1988), and the ability to control the nature and pace of the job (Walsh, 1982). Needless to say, factors relating to job satisfaction vary from person to person, and job to job.

There is also a body of research focusing on variables relating to job dissatisfaction. These variables include burnout (Newcome & Clark 1985), employee strikes (Okafor, 1985), turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), as well as poor job performance and decreased productivity (Beatty & Schneier, 1977), and stress (Eichinger, 2000).

Demographic Variables and Job Satisfaction

The literature also contains numerous studies which evaluate the relationship between demographic variables and job satisfaction. When looking at how a person's age correlates with job satisfaction, Herzberg, Mausner, Patterson, and Capwell, (1957) found that job satisfaction started high, declined, and then started to improve again with increasing age in a U-shaped curve. The rationale here was that as one gets older, one's prestige and confidence also increases, which in turn is related to job satisfaction. Also, the extrinsic rewards of work tend to increase with age. An interesting explanation for this is proposed by Wright and Hamilton (1978); as individuals enter the work force, they have very high hopes of success. These high hopes are lowered as they encounter difficulties attaining their goals. As a result, as they become older, they tend to be satisfied with less.

Another variable associated with job satisfaction is that of gender. In his research, Gruneberg (1979) concluded that female workers were less concerned with career aspects and more concerned with social aspects of the job; however, the general consensus concerning gender differences and job satisfaction is that the difference between the two sexes is not large enough to be of value in the practical sense.

Job Satisfaction in Teacher Education

Over the past 30 years, there have been many research articles focusing on teachers' levels of satisfaction with their jobs.

In 1981 Sweeney reported that 23% of the teachers surveyed reported dissatisfaction with their jobs. Heller (1992) found that only 58% of the teachers in his study reported satisfaction with their job, while Moore, (1987) reported that more than half of the teachers in her study reported dissatisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career. Reasons given for dissatisfaction included low status, poor pay, and lack of power.

Oakes (1980) indicated that English teachers reported higher levels job satisfaction than those who taught other subjects, while Perie and Baker (1997) indicated that elementary teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction than secondary teachers. When looking at teachers' job satisfaction and gender, McConaghy (1993) found that female teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction than male teachers. As for the relationship between the teacher's age and job satisfaction, Dinham and Scott (1996) found no significant relationship between age and

teacher job satisfaction. Thus, as the research indicates, a single variable alone can not be a predictor of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Baughman (1996) found that various workplace factors (supportive principals, focus on academic excellence, morale) were important determinants of job satisfaction among New York state teachers. Likewise, Perie and Baker (1997) found that administrative support (among other extrinsic factors) led to teachers' feelings of job satisfaction.

Kreis and Brookopp (1986) found that teachers report higher levels of job satisfaction when they have greater autonomy in the classroom. Thus, the feelings of being in control of what is taught and the ability to make important classroom decisions can lead to increased job satisfaction. This is similar to the findings of Rathmann (2002). He researched the level of job satisfaction of teachers employed in Lutheran schools, and found that they reported high levels of fulfillment. This is an interesting finding, since teachers in private schools in the United States are usually paid less than those in public schools. In 1998, McClure, Weidman, and Sharp reported private school teachers cited low salaries as a reason for job dissatisfaction. According to Rathmann (2002), the Lutheran teachers felt that their job as teachers was a religious calling, which provided satisfaction, despite the lover-than-average salary. Additionally, the Lutheran teachers reported high levels of autonomy, and a great deal of freedom to plan what goes on the classroom, which as indicated above, leads to higher levels of job satisfaction.

Mertler (2002) reported that 23% of the teachers in his study indicated dissatisfaction with their jobs as teachers, while males reported a greater level of satisfaction than females. Brunetti (2001) found different results in a study of high school teachers. He reported that teachers in his study were highly satisfied with their jobs, and one reason leading to this feeling of satisfaction was being able to watch the students learn and grow. Interestingly, he also reported that salary, benefits, and job security were less important variables related to job satisfaction as compared to a belief that they (the teachers) had a positive impact in the classroom.

Stempien and Loeb (2002) compared overall job satisfaction between regular education and special education teachers, and reported that teachers who taught students with special needs reported more job dissatisfaction. To account for this difference, these authors reported that stress and frustration are possible causes related to job dissatisfaction. Additionally, student achievement in many special education classrooms is at a much slower rate as compared to regular education classrooms, and lack of (or limited) achievement or student progress could account for dissatisfaction.

Morgan and O'Leary (2004) reported that the single most important factor relating to job satisfaction in their study was perceived level of support. They looked at job satisfaction of relatively new teachers (six to 18 months in the classroom), and the level of support these new teachers deemed important was that from other classroom teachers. In other words, new teachers would benefit not only from

mentoring provided by experienced teachers, but also social support from teachers in the same school.

In another approach, the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Statistics surveyed 9,000 teachers 10 years after completing their bachelor's degrees. The findings in The Educational Digest (2007) indicate that 93% of the teachers reported satisfaction with their jobs. Additionally, the findings reported that more than 50% were still in the teaching profession. This disputes other findings that attrition is at a high rate among teachers (Alliance for Teacher Education, 2005). Of those who left the teaching profession, only 13% reported that salary was the main reason for leaving. Thus, this finding again demonstrates that compensation appears to be only one factor leading to job dissatisfaction/satisfaction.

Importance of Studying Teachers' Levels of Job Satisfaction

Finally, it is worthwhile to ask the question, "Why is it important to study factors relating to job satisfaction among teachers?" Teachers have a vast influence on the lives of others, and the role that teachers play in the lives of children is immeasurable. Additionally, the morale of teachers can have a significant impact on student learning in the classroom (Lumsden, 1998). Thus, how satisfied a teacher is with his or her job can have dramatic affects on their life and the lives of others. This directly relates to the philosophy of Invitational Education (IE), as introduced by Dr. William Purkey in the 1970's.

Purkey and Strahan (1995) summarize this approach by indicating its aim is to promote an overall school climate that is welcoming, and looks beyond the goals of only student achievement. Purkey and Strahan continue to explain that the IE approach attempts to make schools places that are satisfying to not only the students, but to the staff, teachers, parents, and members of the community, as well. Thus, the classroom should provide an inviting environment and be structured so that everyone can experience success. To accomplish this goal, Steyn (2006) emphasizes that teachers are the most important people in the schools, because "everything happens in the classroom" (p. 26). Steyn continues to add that teachers must have a positive attitude and demonstrate commitment to the IE approach for it to be effective.

Purkey (1992) discusses the four basic assumptions of trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality related to this theory. These key elements are important to promote this fulfilling school experience for all involved.

First of all, Trust is a crucial component that must be present in the classroom (Purkey, 1992). The students need to have a sense of trust that they are in a safe environment and will be treated without prejudice. Likewise, there needs to be the feeling of trust between the teachers, and between the teachers and the administrative staff. This sense of trust can promote cooperation and collaboration, and it can enhance the overall classroom environment. Finally, parents need to have trust that the classroom teacher will provide the best possible learning experience for their children. Lack of trust can promote feelings

of uneasiness and create an environment filled with anxiety.

Respect is also a key element that needs to be present in the school environment (Purkey, 1992). Teachers need to treat students with respect, and, likewise, they need to be shown respect by students and parents. Members of the administration need to treat teachers respectfully to enhance their feelings of self-worth, and in turn, promote an environment where learning can occur. Purkey (1970) emphasized the importance of self-esteem building to promote healthy growth and development. Students and teachers need to feel that they are important and valued because of their unique strengths. There needs to be the mutual feeling of respect between the parent(s) and the teacher(s) to further reinforce the positive classroom experience. Lack of respect can lead to lower feelings of self-worth. For students, this can result in failure in the classroom, and for teachers this can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction in their teaching position.

Optimism is important for students, as well as teachers (Purkey, 1992). Students need to feel that they can be successful in the classroom, and teachers need to believe that they can make a positive impact on their students. School administrators should display this sense of optimism by supporting the feeling of self-direction in teachers. This overall feeling of independence supports the notion that "students want to learn, and they will learn in a cooperative and supportive environment" (Purkey & Strahan, 2002, p. 12).

Finally, Intentionality in the classroom refers to the "what/how/and why" teachers do what they do (Purkey, 1992). Each teacher has a unique approach to pedagogy. Teachers are trained in what to teach and why they need to teach it; however, each teacher develops his or her own creative approach to teaching the subject matter (the how"). When restrictions are placed on this element, boredom in the classroom can result, and student failure, as well as teacher job dissatisfaction, is likely to occur. As Steyn (2006) indicates, "Creating an inviting school environment requires the cultivation of shared values and the development of an appreciation for the value of staff working together and caring about each other" (p. 26).

In summary, if variables related to job dissatisfaction can be identified and addressed, hopefully the results will be seen in a more positive classroom environment and significant academic achievement of students. Teachers who have this sense of job satisfaction are more likely to create a classroom environment that promotes the elements of trust, intentionality, respect, and optimism (Purkey, 1992).

The Purpose of this Study

This exploratory study looks at the self-reported motivation and job satisfaction in two groups of teachers: Those who teach in Nassau, The Bahamas, and those who teach in Jamaica. Most of the research looking specifically at classroom teachers and job satisfaction focus on American or European teachers; thus, this study is somewhat different in that it focuses only on Bahamian and Jamaican teachers.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 168 teachers completed the survey. Of these, 93.5% were female, and 44.6% taught in The Bahamas. A total of 69.0% taught in elementary schools, 12.5% taught in the middle/junior high, and 18.5% taught in high schools. As for number of years teaching, 51.2% reported between 1 and 10 years experience, 36.3% reported between 11 and 25 years, and 12.5% reported more than 26 years teaching experience. As for the age of respondents, 47.6% reported they were between 31 and 45 years old. Table 1 contains a summary of these data.

The Bahamian teachers who completed the survey were from the greater Nassau area, while the Jamaican teachers who completed the survey were from four different geographic areas (Kingston, Montego Bay, Mandeville, and Browns Town). Participants were recruited by the author, and individually asked to complete the survey. All responses were anonymous; teachers were told not to put their names on the questionnaires. The author record the respondent's initials, school location, and grade level to prevent duplicate responses. No teacher who was asked to participate in the study declined. Teachers were thanked for their participation, and they were given the email address, toll-free phone number, and mailing address of the author in case they wanted information relating to this study.

Measurements

Numerous survey instruments are available to measure job satisfaction; however, few are designed to measure job satisfaction specifically within the profession of teacher education. One job satisfaction survey instrument that has been used successfully with teachers in the past is the "Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey" (Mertler, 2002b) (Appendix). This survey has been used both live and in an online (Web-based) format (Mertler, 2002b). It asks the respondent to rate his or her overall level of satisfaction relating to his or her teaching position, as well as asks the respondent to rate various items/activities/behaviors that would serve as potentially motivating factors for teachers. Respondents rate items based on a 5-item Likert scale. A paper-pencil format for completing the survey was used due to the nature of limited internet access in both Nassau and Jamaica. (Even though Internet access is available in most areas, it can be costly to access and sporadic in some locations.

Table 1.

Summary of General Information

	Teachers in The Bahamas (N = 75)	**Teachers in Jamaica** N = 93)
Gender		
Male (n = 11)	9.3%	4.3%
Female (n = 157)	90.7%	95.7%
Age		
21-30 Years (n = 47)	37.3%	20.4%
31-45 Years (n = 80)	37.3%	55.9%
46 Years and older (n = 41)	25.3%	23.7%
Number of Years Teaching Experience		
1 - 10 Years (n = 86)	46.7%	54.8%
11 - 25 Years (n = 61)	41.3%	32.3%
26 Years and more (n = 21)	12.0%	12.9%
School Level		
Elementary (n = 116)	82.7%	58.1%
Middle/Jr. High (n = 21)	6.7%	17.2%
High School (n = 31)	10.7%	24.7%

Thus, a pencil/paper version was used to avoid the cost/limited availability of accessing the Internet).

Items on the Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey are aligned with the key elements of Invitational/Educational Theory; teachers are asked to rate elements of their jobs, such as: Recognition, Interpersonal Relationships, Sense of Achievement, Responsibility, Sense of Accountability, etc.

Results

The survey questionnaires were reviewed for completeness (no missing items and no

duplicate responses) and entered into a computer for analysis. Since several of the chi-square analyses resulted in cells with either low or no frequencies, cells were collapsed to make the analysis more meaningful (for example, the categories "very satisfied" and "satisfied" were combined, and the categories "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" were combined).

When looking at overall job satisfaction, 46.4% (n = 78) of those surveyed reported that they were either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with their jobs as teachers. A total of 35.1% (n = 59) reported either "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied". Teachers in The Bahamas (n = 75) reported higher levels of job satisfaction than teachers in Jamaica (n = 93) (χ^2 = 24.775, p < .001, df = 2).

Overall, elementary school teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 13.167, p = .010, df = 4, n = 168) as compared to the reported overall job satisfaction of middle school and high school teachers. When looking at country specific data, elementary school teachers in Jamaica (n = 25) reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 11.854, p = .018, df = 4) than middle or high school teachers in Jamaica. For teachers in The Bahamas, however, no statistically significant differences were found when looking at overall job satisfaction and grade level taught (elementary, middle/junior high, or high school).

In reviewing the data for the total sample, teachers who had been in the field for more than 26 years reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 27.665, p = .001, df = 8, n = 21). When looking at country-specific data, for teachers in Jamaica, results indicate that those who have been teaching longer than 26 years (n = 12) reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 20.084, p = .003, df = 6) as compared to those who had been teaching less than 10 years. The opposite was found for teachers in The Bahamas. Here, teachers who have been in the field for less than 10 years reported higher levels of job satisfaction than teachers who have been in the field for more than 26 years (χ^2 = 15.182, p = .019, df = 6, n = 35).

As for gender, male teachers (n = 11) reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 21.9, p < .001, df = 4) than female teachers. When looking at country specific data, male teachers in The Bahamas reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 11.627, p = .009, df = 3, n = 7) than male teachers in Jamaica.

When looking at the teacher's age, teachers over the age of 46 reported higher levels of job satisfaction (χ^2 = 25.093, p = .001, df = 8, n = 41) than those under the age of 46. This finding held for teachers in The Bahamas (χ^2 = 20.183, p = .003, df = 6, n = 19) and for teachers in Jamaica (χ^2 = 12.242, p = .05, df = 6, n = 22).

When asked if they would choose teaching again as a career, 60.1% of the total group of teachers reported that they would not. For teachers in The Bahamas, 58.7% reported they would not choose the same career, and 61.3% of the teachers in Jamaica indicated likewise (results were not statistically significant).

Older teachers (over 46 years of age) reported that they were more likely to choose teaching again for a career as compared to younger teachers (χ^2 = 28.850, p < .001, df = 4, n = 41). This finding held true for both teachers in The Bahamas (χ^2 = 13.483, p = .001, df = 2, n = 19) and teachers in Jamaica (χ^2 = 21.675, p < .001, df = 4, n = 22).

When asked if they felt that other teachers with whom they worked demonstrated motivation, no significant differences were found in gender, setting, or years experience; however, more teachers in Nassau (n = 39) reported that the teachers with whom they worked showed higher levels of motivation than reported by the teachers in Jamaica (n = 36) (χ^2 = 16.6, p < .001, df =2).

The respondents were next asked to rate various items/activities/behaviors they felt would serve as potential motivators for teachers. A sample of the results relating to these factors will be presented next. (Refer to Table 2 for additional information)

Younger teachers (age less than 30) were more likely to indicate salary would be a motivating factor as compared to older teachers (χ^2 = 29.800, p < .001, df = 8, n = 47). This was also true for teachers in The Bahamas as compared to teachers in Jamaica (χ^2 = 39.334, p < .001, df = 4, n = 75). Interestingly, when looking at the relationship between gender and salary as a reported motivating factor, a significant number of males and females in the total sample (n = 168) rated salary to be either un-motivating or highly un-motivating (χ^2 = 13.924, p = .008, df = 4).

Teachers who had been in the field for less than 10 years (n = 86) reported that job security would serve as a motivating factor as opposed to teachers who had been in the field longer (χ^2 = 20.945, p = .007, df = 8). Likewise, job security was reported to be more of a motivating factor for teachers in The Bahamas as compared to Jamaican teachers (χ^2 = 24.507, p < .001, df = 4, n = 75).

Status (the professional status relating to teaching) was reported to be more of a motivating factor by teachers in The Bahamas (χ^2 = 23.671, p < .001, df = 4, n = 75) than for teachers in Jamaica.

Table 2.

Motivating Factor by Country

	Country				
	Jamaica	Bahamas	χ^2	*p*	*df*
Motivating Factor					
Potential for professional growth		Significant	10.844	.028	4
Salary		Significant	39.334	< .001	4
Job security		Significant	24.507	< .001	4
Status (as a teacher)		Significant	23.671	< .001	4
Interpersonal relations with administrators		Significant	18.141	< .001	3
Interpersonal relations with students	Significant		10.352	.035	3
Interpersonal relations with colleagues		Significant	29.496	< .001	3
Job security		Significant	24.507	< .001	4
Sense of accountability (responsible for student learning)		Significant	15.360	.002	3
Sense of achievement		Significant	14.787	.002	3
"Teacher of the year" award		Significant	14.170	.007	4

Teachers who had been in the field more than 26 years (n = 21) rated interpersonal relationships with administrators as a motivating factor higher than teachers who had been in the field less than 26 years (χ^2 = 17.202, p = .009, df = 6), and teachers in The Bahamas rated this variable higher than teachers in Jamaica (χ^2 = 18.141, p < .001, n = 75) as a motivating factor.

Working conditions were rated as a variable that would be highly motivating by the Bahamian teachers more so than the Jamaican teachers (χ^2 = 39.468, p < .001, df = 4, n = 75).

Table 2 contains a summary of the statistically significant results.

Discussion

The general results of this study indicate that the Bahamian teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction than the Jamaican teachers. The Bahamian teachers were from the greater Nassau area, while the Jamaican teachers were from four different cities, as discussed previously. Teachers from Brown's Town and Mandeville, Jamaica generally teach in a more rural area; thus, it is possible that the teaching facilities, availability of classroom supplies, etc., are at a lower level for teachers in these geographic locations. (As indicated above, the variable of working conditions proved to be significant). These variables are related to the intentionality element of IE; the ability to create and maintain an environment that "invites" development. If one does not have the ability to create this stimulating environment due to lack of resources, a feeling of job dissatisfaction can result.

Relationships with administrators (overall interactions with those in authority positions) was rated as a highly motivating factor. This is supported by Asbill and Gonalez (2000) who found a relationship between positive principal-teacher interactions and teacher job satisfaction. Egley (2003) found similar results and emphasized the importance of a supportive principal-teacher relationship. Likewise, potential for advancement (the possibility of improving one's professional skills) was rated as highly motivating. Both of these variables are directly related to Purkey and Strahan's (2002) approach to Invitational Education. Working in a classroom environment where there is administrative support enhances the elements of respect, trust, optimism and intentionality. The overall feeling that there is a potential for advancement relates to the key element of Optimism.

Additionally, male teachers in this sample reported higher levels of job satisfaction, which is a different finding from what Mertler (2002a) reported. This could most likely be due to the cultural differences as a result of the different samples (Bahamian/Jamaican teachers and US teachers) between this study and the Mertler study; however, it is important to note that only 11 male teachers participated in this study. Thus, caution should be emphasized when making gender comparisons.

Salary was reported to serve as a more important motivator for teachers in The

Bahamas, male teachers, and younger teachers. Even though there was a relatively small sample of male teachers, traditionally, males have been the source of income for the family (currently not always the case in many countries). Perhaps this was the reason for this finding in Bahamian/Jamaican teachers. Younger teachers frequently have financial responsibilities resulting from their education (loans, etc.), as well as financial responsibilities relating to establishing a family, home, etc.; thus, higher salaries might be more important for them than other aspects of the job.

Summary and Concluding Discussion

It is crucial for teachers to have an overall positive feeling of job satisfaction and motivation to create a classroom environment that is conducive to overall development of the student. This overall development goes beyond academic achievement, as emphasized by the philosophy of Invitational Education; the focus is on the overall well-being of the student. Thus, if specific elements of a teacher's job that lead to job dissatisfaction can be identified, it may be possible to address these areas in hopes of bringing about positive classroom changes. Additionally, these variables should be considered by administrators when hiring new teachers or evaluating existing teachers in relationship to overall job satisfaction and motivation. Again, by identifying specific correlates of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction, changes could be implemented to bring about more positive feelings relating to job satisfaction, which may result in the teachers' ability to create a classroom environment that is inviting, and a place where respect, trust, optimism, and intentionality are modeled.

Study Limitations

Due to the fact that teachers were asked to complete the survey questionnaire individually, this resulted in a reduced number of responses as compared to the number which might have been obtained using a Web-based approach, as described by Mertler (2002b). It was felt that teachers in The Bahamas and Jamaica could complete the survey easier "in person," as opposed to accessing it through the Internet. This approach provided a total of 168, and, of these, only 11 were male teachers. As Internet access becomes more available/affordable (especially in Jamaica), a Web-based survey approach could be investigated. This would generate a much larger sample size, which would be more representative of the teachers in the two locations.

Secondly, the survey instrument used has been used successfully with teachers in the past; however, the psychometric properties for this instrument have yet to be established. Additionally, a factor analysis was not conducted on the survey instrument utilized.

The teachers who completed the survey in the The Bahamas were from the greater Nassau area. Those who completed the survey in Jamaica were from four different areas; Kingston, Montego Bay, Brown's Town, and Mandeville. It is possible that

teachers in different locations of the countries might respond differently. Thus, the results can only be generalized to reflect this limitation. Finally, this study could be strengthened by including qualitative data; perhaps personal interviews with a select sample of the teachers to further investigate factors relating to motivation and job satisfaction could be conducted. Even though this approach would require a significant amount of time, the quantitative data obtained could be enhanced by including interview responses. Likewise, it would be interesting to interview or survey teachers who left the teaching profession, to investigate why (specifically) they chose to leave. Thus, specific factors relating to job dissatisfaction could be identified and potential changes could be implemented to reduce overall feelings of job dissatisfaction resulting in a more positive, nurturing environment.

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Appendix A

Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey (Mertler, 2002b)

Please answer every item. Since you do not need to put your name on this form, your responses are anonymous.

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1. What is your overall level of satisfaction with your job as a teacher?					

2. If you had the opportunity to start over in a new career, would you choose to become a teacher?	____YES ____ NO
3. Generally speaking, do you believe that the teachers with whom you work are motivated?	____YES ____ NO
4. How many teachers that you know or work with would you classify as unmotivated?	___ 1 - 2 ___3-4 ___5-6 ___ 7-8 ___ 9-10 ___ > 10

5. On the following 5-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a motivating factor or an unmotivating factor for teachers by placing an X in the appropriate box.

	HIGHLY UNMOTIVATING	UNMOTIVATING	NEUTRAL	MOTIVATING	HIGHLY MOTIVATING
recognition (e.g., receiving praise from administrators, parents, students, or others)					
potential for professional growth (e.g., possibility of improving one's own professional skills)					

supervision by superiors (e.g., overall competence of superiors)					
interpersonal relationships with colleagues (e.g., interaction with other teachers)					
salary (e.g., financial compensation)					
job security (e.g., tenure)					
status (e.g., professional status of teaching)					

On the following 5-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a motivating factor or an unmotivating factor for teachers by placing an X in the appropriate box.

	HIGHLY UNMOTIVATING	UNMOTIVATING	NEUTRAL	MOTIVATING	HIGHLY MOTIVATING
interpersonal relationships with administrators (e.g., interaction with administrators)					
sense of achievement (e.g., experiencing success)					
working conditions (e.g., building conditions, amount of work, facilities available)					

district policies (e.g., overall effects of the district as an organization)					
teacher evaluation (e.g., appraisal of classroom instruction by evaluator)					
responsibility (e.g., autonomy, authority and responsibility for own work)					
potential for advancement (e.g., possibility of assuming different positions in the profession)					
work itself (e.g., aspects associated with the tasks of teaching)					
factors in personal life (e.g., effects of teaching on one's personal life)					
interpersonal relationships with students (e.g., interaction with students) others)					
sense of accountability (e.g., being held directly responsible for student learning)					

On the following 5-point scale, indicate the degree to which each of the following serve as a motivating factor or an unmotivating factor for teachers by placing an X in the appropriate box

	HIGHLY UNMOTIVATING	UNMOTIVATING	NEUTRAL	MOTIVATING	HIGHLY MOTIVATING
a one-time monetary award (supplemental to the step increase)					
being selected as "Teacher of the Year" in the district					
an instructional workshop offered by the district for a fee					
having students thank a teacher for aiding in the understanding of a difficult concept					
an instructional workshop offered and paid for by the district					
being given the opportunity to participate in teacher projects (e.g., research, curriculum development)					
early retirement/contract buy-out					

observing vast improvement in the achievement levels of one's students since the beginning of the year					
being awarded a plaque by students					
being permitted to purchase additional equipment and supplies for the classroom					

What is your ethnicity? ___ African American ____ Asian American ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___ Other (list)_____

What is your age? __ 21 - 25 Years __ 26 - 30 Years __ 31 - 35 Years __ 36 - 40 Years __ 41 - 45 Years

__ 46 - 50 Years __ 51 - 55 Years __ Over 55 years

Including the current school year, how many __ 1 - 5 years __ 6 - 10 years __ 11 - 15 years __ 16 - 20 Years

years of teaching experience do you have? __ 21 - 25 years __ 26 - 30 Years __ 31 - 35 Years __ over 35 years

Which best describes your current school setting? __URBAN __ SUBURBAN __RURAL

Which best describes your current school level? __ Elementary School __ Middle/Junior High School __ High School

What is your gender? _____ Male _____Female

Responsive Teaching: A Framework for Inviting Success with Students who "Fly Below the Radar" in Middle School Classrooms

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By focusing on one student, this case study illustrated ways that successful teachers invited success and may help other teachers create connections with students. This study chronicled one student's responses to her teachers' efforts to engage her during a teaching activity. Data from interviews, observations, and work samples showed how the connections she made with teachers, classmates, and information shaped her understanding on content. During this activity, Mariah developed personal connections with concepts which helped her understand ideas at a deeper level. Teachers encouraged these connections by differentiating instruction in a personal way as they identified Mariah's learning strengths, tapped her interests, and extended her thoughts.

Good teachers have always known how important it is to establish positive working relationships with their students. In recent years, researchers have provided a deeper understanding of the essential dynamics of supportive classroom interactions

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Many of these studies have focused on what successful teachers do to create nurturing classroom climates (Strahan, Smith, McElrath, & Toole, 2001; Strahan & Layell, 2006; Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005). Research has shown that reluctant students make academic progress when they experience responsive teaching. Case studies have documented the importance of "responsive teaching" characterized by ongoing personal support, candid feedback, and dialogue regarding academic and personal choices (Strahan, 2008, p. 8). As described further in the methodology section, to analyze the dynamics of teacher responsiveness from a student's point of view, we crafted this case study with a seventh grade student as she responded to instructional activities during a month-long unit of integrated instruction. By observing Mariah during lessons, talking with her

about instructional activities, interviewing her teachers, and analyzing samples of her work, this case study offers a detailed description of how she responded to her teachers' efforts to teach responsively.

Perspectives

A growing body of research has documented the power of relationships in nurturing academic achievement. Furrer and Skinner (2003) analyzed students' perceptions of their relationships with others as factors in engagement and learning. Data from 641 students showed that "children's sense of relatedness plays an important role in their academic motivation and performance" (p. 158).Students who reported the most positive levels of support from teachers demonstrated higher levels of effort, attention, and persistence. Researchers concluded "feelings of belonging may have an energetic function, awakening enthusiasm, interest, and willingness to participate in academic activities" (p. 158). Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, and Bransford (2005) found that responsive teaching results from a strong focus on students as individuals: "Descriptions of classroom practice suggest that some teachers eventually develop a strong focus on student welfare and learning that drives their teaching decisions and self-improvement efforts" (p. 379). In a related study, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) concluded that this level of expertise is the essential quality that distinguishes accomplished teaching from the ordinary.

Studies of successful efforts to promote school completion underscore the importance of relationships as a critical factor in school success.. Hammond (2007) reviewed more than 75 studies of effective dropout prevention programs and concluded "In particular, the 'personalization' of education—striving to understand the nature of academic, social, and personal problems affecting students and tailoring services to address individualized concerns—is an essential component" (p. 7). Tomlinson's (2003) definition of differentiated instruction as "responsive" synthesizes the essential elements of personalization:

> Differentiated Instruction is responsive instruction. It occurs as teachers become increasingly proficient in understanding their students as individuals, increasingly comfortable with the meaning and structures of the disciplines they teach, and increasingly expert at teaching flexibly in order to match instruction to student need with the goal of maximizing the potential of each learner in a given area. (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 3)

Invitational Education provides a framework for thinking more specifically about these personal dynamics. As summarized by Purkey and Strahan (1995) the basic goal of an invitational approach is to "intentionally summon success for everyone" (p. 1). When teachers view students as able, valuable, and responsible, they are more likely to plan lessons that tap potential and respond with encouragement (Riner, 2003). Schmidt (2007) described invitational education as "an inclusive model of communication and

human relations," guided by a belief system that "embraces, celebrates, and honors diversity" (p. 16).

To examine these dynamics at the classroom level, Strahan and colleagues conducted a series of case studies with teachers who have demonstrated success with students in challenging settings (Strahan, Smith, McElrath, & Toole, 2001; Strahan, Faircloth, Cope, & Hundley, 2006; Strahan & Layell, 2006; Strahan, Faircloth, Cope and Hundley, 2007). Based on these studies and others, Strahan (2008) developed a conceptual framework for "developing academic momentum with reluctant students."

In a school setting, momentum is the strength of a student's engagement with learning activities. Students with strong academic momentum approach new assignments with confidence. Based on previous experiences with similar tasks, they know they are likely to do well. If a task proves to be difficult, they know they have a repertoire of skills and strategies they can employ. Students with little academic momentum show little confidence and doubt their abilities to do well. In some cases, they have internalized a sense of inadequacy that makes it very difficult to invest effort on assignments. To observers, they may appear "unmotivated," "turned off," or "disconnected." (Strahan, 2008, p. 4)

Figure 1. The dynamics of developing academic momentum with reluctant students – adapted from Strahan, D. (2008). "Successful Teachers Develop Academic Momentum with Reluctant Students, Middle School Journal 39 (5), 4-12

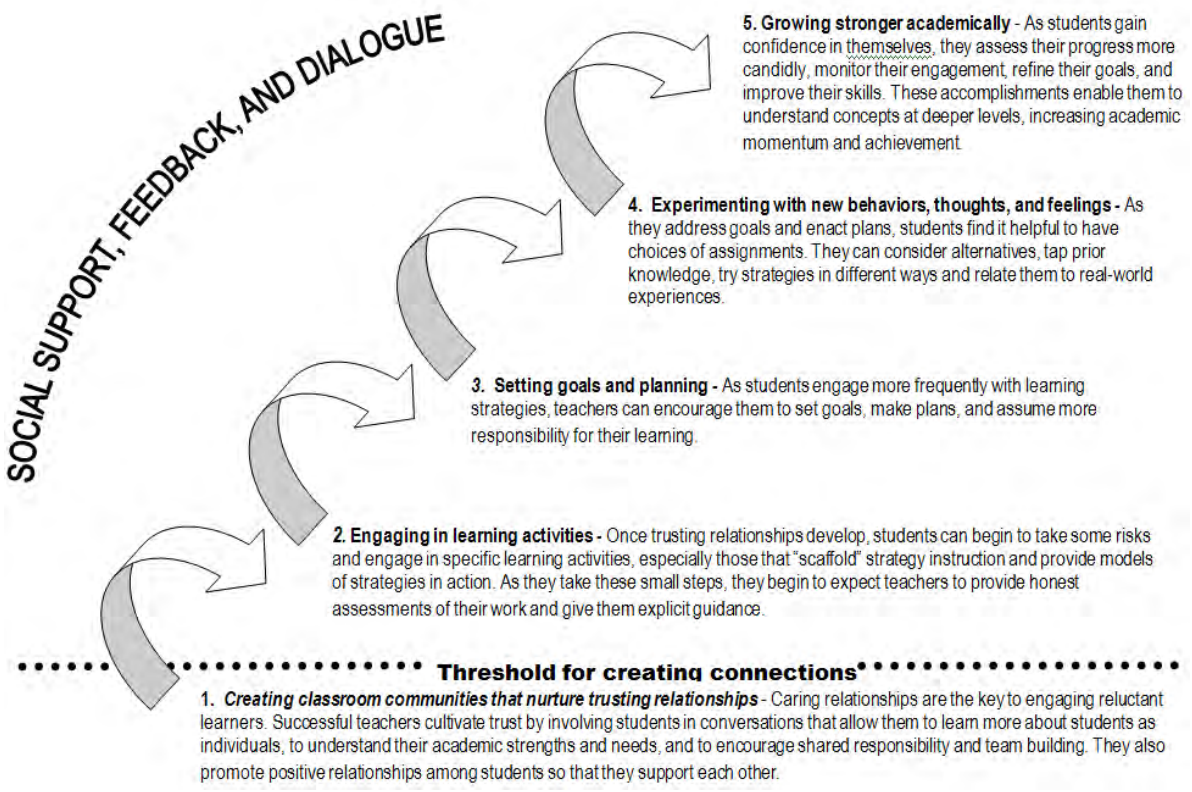

Figure 1 presents a model that shows how successful teachers nurture academic momentum. As this diagram suggests, successful teachers provide social support, feedback, and dialogue in ways that encourage students to take more ownership of their learning. From the bottom up, teachers begin this process by creating classroom communities that invite trusting relationships. They make a conscious effort to learn more about students as individuals and to promote positive relationships among classmates. In doing so, they create climates that promotes trust. Trusting teachers and peers creates a "threshold" that invites students to engage more intensively with lesson activities. Based on their growing understanding of students' strengths, interests, and needs, teachers scaffold lessons that focus explicitly on learning strategies. Positive lesson experiences give students the confidence they need to assume more responsibility for their own learning. They can set goals, make plans, and assess their own progress more proficiently. As momentum grows stronger, students can experiment with new learning strategies and make more productive choices. These dynamics result in higher levels of efficacy, self-regulation, and achievement.

These studies of successful teaching provided a conceptual framework for examining more intensively the dynamics of success among teachers and students on one middle school team. In an earlier report, researchers documented ways that Robert and Janet increased engagement with their seventh grade students through a process of "academic connections" (Strahan and Hedt, 2009). Analysis of observations, interviews, and documents showed that three major types of events – creating classroom learning communities, learning more about students as individuals, and drawing from a main menu of instructional strategies - resulted in higher levels of engagement and higher levels of reasoning. Results from achievement tests given at the end of the school year showed that students on this team made higher growth in both reading and math than the average gain for the grade level at the school.

Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis

Based on the study by Strahan and Hedt, (2009), we designed a follow-up case study to examine the dynamics of responsive teaching in greater detail. We analyzed ways that Robert and Janet implemented an integrated unit and chronicled the ways that five students responded (Strahan, Kronenberg, Burgner, Doherty, and Hedt, M., 2010). In this investigation, we re-analyzed data from that investigation to focus more specifically on the dynamics of responsiveness with one student. Two questions guided this investigation:

1. How do teachers attempt to create academic connections with Mariah?

2. How does Mariah's understanding of concepts relate to connections she makes with teachers, classmates, and ideas?

This study focused on Mariah's responses to her teachers' efforts to create connections with her and engage her more fully in lessons. Mariah was one of 47 students on Robert and Janet's seventh grade team at Central City Middle, a school which serves just over 600 students in a small city in the southeast. At Central, 35% of the students are members of minority groups and 45% of whom qualify for free and reduced meals.

During the fall of 2008, teachers worked together to develop an interdisciplinary unit entitled "Hungry Planet." The unit began with a video about hunger around the world, a speaker from a local food bank, and a presentation on Doctors without Borders. Lesson activities in language arts, social studies, math and science provided opportunities to examine data and explore issues. Researchers selected this unit as the focus of the study so that Mariah's development of concepts could be situated in the context of specific content.

In the broader study (Strahan, Kronenberg, Burgner, Doherty, & Hedt, 2010), teachers identified five students who represented a range of academic performance and who had demonstrated varied approaches to instructional activities. Researchers obtained consent from these students and their parents to participate in a case study. To explore ways that students learned central concepts, researchers observed lesson activities, examined work products, and interviewed students. For this report, we reexamined the data collected with Mariah, a thirteen-year old minority student. We replaced the names of students and teachers with pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality.

The Hungry Planet unit was guided by five main themes that were linked to world hunger: nature, education, economics, population, and politics. To describe Mariah's understanding of concepts, researchers examined four central work samples (science lab summary, math charts and graphs, final concept map, and the concluding essay) and interviewed her about her experiences with the activities. Researchers also interviewed teachers about their work with her. Researchers interpreted data using pattern matching procedures, integrating analyses of work samples with Mariah's comments and her teachers' reflections. In writing this report, researchers constructed a narrative case summary to describe the types of connections Mariah made with concepts and activities.

Results

During the Hungry Planet unit, Mariah developed personal connections with concepts related to hunger which helped her understand ideas at a deeper level. She often made sense of new ideas by relating them to her own experience. For example, she explained a connection she saw between the opening video and her work in math:

In the math lesson my group chose life expectancy and how small they were as babies. In the auditorium we saw about how long you can live if you are hungry. The people in the video were so hungry that it could change how long they could live.

In many of her comments, Mariah seemed aware of her learning preferences. For instance, she described her reaction to the opening seminar by explaining:

I liked seeing the video—the people were very small and hungry. It really showed the hungry planet. It showed it - that's why I liked it. I learn sometimes by just watching something.

In a related way, she often reflected on activities by summarizing what she had read or seen. For example, when asked for her reaction to the lesson using the Hungry Planet books she described it by saying:

"You had to pick a family from a country, and write about them and how much money they used for food each week. We also wrote about the number of people in the family. We picked one family from each region. I was surprised at the families that didn't have a lot of money but had a lot of food for just four people. It was related to hunger because it showed pictures of people from areas that had lots of food or no food. There were different amounts of food in different regions."

In a subsequent lesson, students read and discussed articles about the situation in Sudan. In this lesson, Mariah found it difficult to relate ideas to each other. In her interview, she said,

"The Sudan lesson was most related to hunger because it was about genocide. That is when one group of people is wiping out another group. Also, there are people who have no food in Africa. People are taking away their food, too."

While she linked hunger and genocide, her response showed a limited grasp of the complexity of the situation.

Mariah often recalled the elements of lessons in step-by-step fashion, explaining each activity specifically. After the dew point science lab, for example, Mariah described the procedure of the experiment, the equipment used to complete the experiment, and explanations her teachers supplied to help guide students through the experiment. She used vocabulary such as "temperature," "minimum temperature," and "10.5 degrees Celsius," to describe the activity. Although it was apparent that Mariah enjoyed this lesson, she made few connections between the concepts dew point and hunger. On the assignment sheet, Mariah underlined the following information, "The dew point temperature is the temperature at which the air can no longer hold all of its water vapor, and some of the water vapor must condense into liquid water…In very warm, humid conditions, the dew point temperature can reach 75 to 77 degrees." In the margins, next to the text she underlines, Mariah wrote "key sentence" and "important."

As the unit progressed, Mariah built more connections related to her own personal experiences. An assignment at the end of the Hungry Planet unit involved the use of a graphic organizer that encouraged students to connect ideas about the guiding themes of the unit to each other. For the section about hunger and education, Mariah wrote, "You

need enough food to feed your brain, to receive information." She later explained that she came up with this idea, not from reviewing information from her hungry planet assignments but from her memory about a conversation in her Social Studies class.

"I didn't use any assignments to come up with the idea about having food to feed your brain so you can learn. We talked about it in class. Like how hunger can make it hard to think. So it would be hard to get an education."

She mentioned how, in class, they talked about times they have been hungry in morning classes because they did not have breakfast, and that was how she understood the connection between education and hunger.

Relating information to herself and seeing demonstrations or examples of new concepts helped Mariah strengthen conceptual connections. On another section of her graphic organizer, Mariah wrote, "If the soil is not rich enough and the rain is not heavy enough to produce food, people cannot get food." She reflected on this statement by saying "I thought of this because we talked about different places that try to grow food and why it is harder in some places than others. The soil really matters."

The Hungry Planet unit concluded with a seminar in which students viewed a photograph of a city. After sharing observations, they were presented with a second photo - an image of people scavenging in a large pile of rubble along a river. Students then put the photographs together to see that they were really one image cut into two. They discussed the issue of "the haves" and "have nots" living side by side. The seminar ended with the questions, "How do these photos relate to our study of hunger during Hungry Planet? And, what are specific actions we could take at school, home or in our communities to help end poverty?" Mariah explained, "I think that hunger in the US might be stopped if some people stopped wasting food." While Mariah identified the concept of waste as a part of hunger, she struggled to articulate other causes of the situation in the photo.

The final assessment was a writing task in which students wrote to the United Nations to present a plan to solve world hunger. Mariah generated ideas for raising funds to benefit the hungry. She described the countries that would receive food and how she would get it there. She thought of countries which needed food and how she would organize distribution. Her solution focused solely on her efforts as an individual solving world hunger on her own and did not clearly link together connections with the major themes of the unit.

When asked to share perceptions of Mariah and her work in interviews, Janet and Robert reported that they learned to group Mariah with friends, emphasizing that she was comfortable with them and productive with them. Janet recalled "We knew we had to put her with the person she knew best in the class or she'd just shut down; she's shy like that." The teachers noted that within her friendship group she demonstrated social

leadership skills that she was not aware of until they were pointed out to her. "We explained to her that they see her as the 'mom'—the nurturer who cares for people and keeps them in line. We used this to push her into leadership positions she might not have otherwise taken on in her group of friends. She's definitely maternal, and could use that to get results."

Both teachers appreciated they way Mariah improved her reading score. Janet noted, "We thought she could pass, we just weren't sure she really tried the first time. She had to re-take the reading test. I was pretty sure she'd pass on a second try. She is really focused on the grades, or the numbers. She can be motivated by all that." Robert added "In math, I wasn't always seeing her get it, like witnessing her complete problems, but she always knew how, like she soaked it up from class somehow. She must have been doing the work but not always turning it in. She always did well on assessments so I assumed she had her own system for 'getting it.' It was always a bit of a mystery that she did as well as she did throughout the year. I just had to trust she understood it all when she said she did." Janet found it interesting that Mariah often hid her abilities from her friends.

It was seen as not cool to read, but she found ways to get it done. She also worked well with adults and thrived on positive adult attention - though, again, she had to make it seem like she did not like the attention when around her friends. One reason she improved her reading so much is that she is a secret reader. I learned not to talk with her about books in front of other students. She is super shy. If we offered to work with her during class, she would say "I don't need help." I found that if I talked with her off-stage, she loved talking about books. I ordered a few things just for her and made sure she got to keep them. (June 30, 2009)

Teachers expressed concern that the eighth grade teachers continue to pay close attention to Mariah. Janet expressed this clearly when she concluded:

"They really need to make sure they get the feedback from her side to know she is getting it—there is the potential for her to fall through the cracks as she goes. It can't just be assumed that she'll be okay without checking in with her. You need to conference with her privately. Mariah is a girly-girl at heart. This interest can be used to motivate her. I used glamour books that I knew she'd love to get her to read. It's one way to connect to her, to her personal interests- that are important to consider. To get her to read, you can push books toward her that you think she'd be in to, then walk away. She doesn't really want you to see her getting in to it. But, she does want to read it. She might be an excellent candidate for the cosmetology program at the high school—she's into that. She is much more 'glam' than her family, a teacher can use that to make a connection with her. She has a keen ability to fly below the radar—she is most comfortable there, not drawing attention to herself".

At the end of the year, Mariah demonstrated dramatic growth on her state-mandated achievement tests. She gained ten

developmental scale points in reading and three in math, maintaining her status of "proficient" in both areas. In her final interview, she noted:

"I got a 3 on math. I expected it so it felt good to get a 3. I had to retake the reading test and got a 3 the second time. I knew I did not pass the reading test on the first try because I kept on falling asleep on the first time. I made more effort on my second try, not to fall asleep. I went to bed earlier the night before and I ate breakfast, that all helped me for the second time."

She said she wanted to make AB Honor Roll. "I was really close all this past year. I want to do all my work and pay attention in class. And, I want to learn what I need to learn." She added:

"I learn easy when I do things like hands-on activities. I like to read fiction. I am quiet and not really a people-person. Group work is better for me when I am with a friend. When I am with a friend they can help me do stuff, they help me understand".

A telling statement Mariah made about the kind of student she would like to be next year was, "I will ask for help when I need it, and pay attention." As her teachers noted, Mariah almost never asked for help in seventh grade.

When asked, "What were the most helpful things your teachers did?" her responses included:

"With Mr. B. we learned about the median and the upper/lower quartile. We had a chance to do it on the graphing calculator and that really helped me, to be able to see it. I got to see it and actually do it.

Ms. D. would help us learn things using videos and making us do big projects. Putting things on the board and walking us through problems, then giving us some problems to work on our own or like in pairs - that would help me. They would check in on us when we worked alone and answered questions, gave us more time too if we needed it.

Mr. B. would give us some problems to work on. If someone couldn't get the new thing right away he could stay to get extra help if he needed it, like right away. Like, instead of just waiting until tomorrow to see if he could help, he'd let him stay during part of exploratories or like during lunch or after school. That surprised me".

Conclusions

Mariah's responses to her teachers' efforts to create connections with her provided a glimpse of the dynamics of responsive teaching in microcosm. Robert and Janet demonstrated the type of "strong focus on student welfare and learning that drives their teaching decisions and self-improvement efforts" emphasized by Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford (2005, p. 379). By focusing on one student, this case study showed that responsive teaching is not only a focus on student welfare in general, but also the art of orchestrating responses simultaneously with individual students.

Analysis of Mariah's responses to her teachers' invitations illustrated the dynamics of "developing academic momentum with reluctant students" described in Strahan's (2008) conceptual framework. Janet and Robert made conscious efforts to create a classroom community that nurtures trusting relationships. They cultivated trust by learning more about Mariah as an individual. They observed that she worked best with certain students, encouraged her to be a leader among these students, and held "off-stage" conversations with her to learn more about her reading interests. Aware of her "keen ability to fly below the radar," they paid careful attention to her through observations and conferences. Crossing a threshold of trust, Mariah began to engage in learning activities more enthusiastically, readily expressing her enjoyment of specific lessons such as the opening seminar, the dew point science lab, and the letter writing assignment. As the year progressed, she became much more proficient in setting goals and planning. She took responsibility for understanding math problems, reading selections she chose, and improving her score on the end-of-grade reading test. Although she set goals for herself to make the honor roll as an eighth grader and ask her teachers for help more often, she rarely articulated more immediate goals. At the end of seventh grade, her test scores and grades indicated that she had grown stronger academically. Even so, her teachers were concerned that her progress into eighth grade might be fragile.

Mariah's progress affirms previous studies that have emphasized the power of positive relationships in middle level classrooms (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Strahan, 2008). From the beginning of the year, Janet and Robert made conscious efforts to get to know her as a person. They learned that she worked well with certain friends, that she was interested in fashion, and that these interests sparked enjoyment of reading. By being attuned to their students' academic, social and emotional needs, Robert and Janet were able to cultivate a sense of belonging. In so doing, they personalized the process of differentiation. Responsive instruction on their team was not just about academic concepts; it was a process of inviting Mariah, as a unique individual, to be successful.

At the same time, her teachers' concerns that she not "fall through the cracks" as an eighth grader remind the authors that progress across grade levels may depend on a range of factors not considered in this investigation. Although limited in time and scope, results might help teachers in other settings create connections with students, especially those like Mariah who "fly beneath the radar." Robert and Janet learned about her interests and found ways to address them. They identified the structure of her thoughts and helped her build upon partial structures to accomplish deeper levels of comprehension. In doing so, they "summoned" success with Mariah. They enacted their views of her as able, valuable, and responsible and encouraged her to see herself in those ways, demonstrating the power of invitations as an essential element of the responsiveness that distinguishes

accomplished teaching from the ordinary (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005).

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East or West, the Goal Is the Same: Buddhist Psychology and Its Potential Contributions to Invitational Education

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After describing the basic tenets of Invitational Education and Buddhist psychology, this article explores four commonalities and their implications: The individual is in control; knowing is not doing; others can help; and we can facilitate others' efforts to use effective strategies to reach happiness. The paper concludes by contrasting Invitational Education and Buddhist views on self, perception, and appropriate action. Invitational appropriate wisdom (pradjna paramita) and is totally under the control of the individual.

The United States has a multi-billion dollar weight loss industry. There are pills, books, DVD's, CD's, diets, food diaries, special foods, support groups, personal trainers, television programs, game shows, point systems, weigh-ins, an army of machines, and even special rubber suits…you name it, we sell it to those who want to lose weight. And why do we want to lose weight? Appropriate weight management is related to good health, longevity, a more active life, and, perhaps, also to one's attractiveness. In the west, good health, long life, active living, and caring friends are all associated with the ultimate goal of happiness. Given the keys to weight loss we are concomitantly given the keys to one route to happiness.

If this is true, wouldn't those keys be coveted, embraced, and used to guide our daily living?

Fortunately the keys to healthy weight management are well known. There are few things in science known as well as we know the two irrefutable strategies for healthy weight management: exercise more and eat less. This is a guarantee. It does work. So why do so many have such difficulty with the concept? Paradoxically many of us do not want to give up pleasure to get happiness. We desire an easier way and do not like relying on the energy of our volition but prefer some substitute for self discipline. This propensity (but not necessity) for externalization presents us with a continual

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array of new problems, each in turn relying on yet another externalized solution.

The premise behind describing this gloomy outlook is that even if we had unquestioned strategies that would lead us to happiness, as individuals we would still confront substantial personal difficulties in accepting and implementing them. For example, just as in weight loss, one significant roadblock to getting to a state of happiness would be the pleasure we must for forgo to get happiness. In short, happiness requires substantial personal effort, perhaps too much effort. Rather than internal self discipline, our tendency is to avoid fundamental changes in our thinking and action in lieu of finding an environment that requires considerably less effort and self-discipline. In weight loss, we look for the right gym, the right diet, the right gear, the right personal trainer, the right supplements, and the right prepackaged meals. And yet, for many of us, the goal of weight loss and the benefits weight management provides remains elusive. We do, however, have two vehicles that can help us, one from the west and one from the east.

East and West Meet On Uncommon Ground

Invitational education is representative of western viewpoints and is designed to be a vehicle where one person can be of benefit to others, usually through an invitation to participation provided by way of the people, places, procedures, processes, and policies (Purkey & Novak, 1996) that make up a learning environment. By manipulating these variables the likelihood that others experience success and happiness is greatly enhanced. However, it is always the purview of the individual to accept or reject the invitation.

From the east, Buddhist psychology claims we all want to be happy. Further, all the causes and conditions needed to be happy are already in us. (Gnanarama, 2000; Hagen, 1997) Happiness is unlocked by the recognition that suffering exists as a natural state of being; this suffering is caused by desire; desire can be extinguished; and happiness obtained. In response to these propositions the western view counterpunches with some problematic issues: not everyone has the strength to accomplish this journey; someone must teach the ways to happiness; life can present fostering situations but also stultifying challenges; and self discipline alone cannot bring about pleasant events or meet personal needs.

The perspective of Buddhist psychology, we can conclude that both eastern and western views demonstrate that we cannot unlock happiness for others. We cannot ensure the success of others. Both east and west have identified many barriers to happiness and have provided a number of poignant solutions. When considering ways to help others be happy, two very substantial situations are confronted: (1) We confuse knowledge with action, and (2) We cannot control others; we can only control ourselves. Both invitational theory and Buddhist psychology clearly establish these parameters in that both recognize that the necessary first step in being helpful to others is to be helpful to oneself first. Fortunately both perspectives offer direction, often

complimentary, for overcoming these barriers.

The Individual Is In Charge

Knowing what, knowing how, and choosing to do are three distinct phases of education: They correspond to content acquisition, skill development, and motivation-into-action. A unifying and defining commonality between Buddhist psychology and Invitational Learning is that both recognize others may invite, but only the individual can accept: The individual is in charge. We may influence, encourage, discourage, facilitate, and interfere, but the individual is always the determiner of personal effort. Invitational theory calls this process "honoring the net." Both Invitational Learning and Buddhism consider opportunity to learn and practice to be critical to happiness. In invitational theory the invitation sincerely sent by caring educators initiates the needed ameliorative emotional and cognitive processes. In Buddhist psychology the dharma (or "the way to wisdom") is made available through written teachings and through the guidance of the sangha, a dedicated group of scholar practitioners that readily assist those who desire it. However, both invitational theory and Buddhist psychology recognize that coercion is no answer. While we may provide sufficient sanctions to suppress behavior in a certain forum, the decision to act or not to act beneficially in a way the leads to true happiness is still the province of the individual.

However, there is a glaring difference between Buddhist psychology and Invitational Learning. While each view accepts that the individual is in control of the individual life given, Invitational Learning believes that improving the personal environment and providing experiences that are personally rewarding will foster a resulting improvement in attitude, behavior, self concept, and happiness. Buddhist psychology, however, maintains that a person's mental well being is totally *independent* of one's surroundings and the environment has little to do with the attainment of happiness. In the Buddhist view, whatever the environment may supply to create pleasure is impermanent and will surely pass. Happiness, encapsulated in a Buddhist view, is living in mindfulness: That is, living in full awareness of the here and now, without imposition of any judgment of what "should" or "ought" to be. Any happiness that is dependent on things being "just right" is condemned to create sorrow and suffering. If favorable circumstances are needed for happiness, happiness will never last since all things are impermanent and will change, including the favorable circumstances on which one may base personal happiness. It is in this difference Buddhism may contribute most to invitational thinking.

Shared Basic Principles

Psychological principles concerning success and happiness exist in both perspectives in ways similar to the weight loss industry's basic truths, but not quite as definite. Like our weight loss truths, these basic principles are easily overlooked because of the demands they make upon us.

Invitational Education provides a progressive logic in building success and happiness (Purkey & Novak, 1996):

- Within every individual there is unlocked potential.
- That potential often needs an invitation to actualize.
- If we treat people with trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality, that potential is more likely to emerge.
- The resulting engagement of potential results in success and happiness.

Buddhism has its Four Noble Truths (Rahula, 1959; Thich Nhat Hanh, 1998):

- Not everything in life will be to our liking.
- The more we attach ourselves to a single way we believe things should be, the more dislikes we will have.
- We don't have to suffer disappointment and hurt as much as we do.
- If we act in certain ways, suffering is lessened and enjoyment is increased regardless of our surroundings.

The Perspective of Invitational Education

The basic tenets of Invitational Education are straightforward and are presented graphically in Figure 1. The fundamental premise of invitational theory is that within each individual that exists untapped potential that needs just a gentle nudge to actualize, there are strategies describing how that can be done (Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey & Strahan, 1995; Stanley & Purkey, 1994). In getting individuals to recognize their potential, the educator needs to provide opportunities for engagement or "invitations" to participate. Managing these invitations so that they are systematic and systemic to the environment requires attention to context or in invitational parlance, "the five P's" (people, places, policies, procedures, and processes.) Rather than an incidental or haphazard management of these entities, the invitational stance is one of deliberate action based on trust, respect, and optimism.

One of the most direct linkages between invitational theory and the Buddhist perspective of the mind is that each of us needs to be helpful to others. In short, one must attend to establishing and maintaining one's own health before helping others. Thus in invitational theory being professionally and personally inviting to oneself is a co-requisite to being professionally and personally inviting to others.

Invitational theory owes much to the groundwork laid out in self concept theory where ideas held about oneself have a profound influence on the ideas and conclusions one has about the world and how it should be engaged (Novak, 1981; Purkey & Novak, 1996). Ideas about self are thought to relate perceptually to ideas about the world surrounding the individual. In Invitational Education, it is argued that the perceptions of the individual create the reality he or she will assume is true and real and will act in accordance with those beliefs. Denying the perceptual reality of another isn't likely to bring benefits.

Invitational learning places great emphasis in ameliorating the environment to create positive conditions for learning and happiness. Both inviting theory and Buddhist psychology place great emphasis on adding to the goodness of the world and avoiding any harm. However, there is a significant difference: In the Buddhist perspective, living an ethical and helpful life is not likely to affect the happiness of others.

Figure 1.

Four Noble Truths

1. Suffering exists
2. Suffering is caused by attachment
3. Suffering ceases when attachment ceases
4. Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Eightfold Path

Eightfold Path

Right View
Right Thought
Right Speech
Right Action
Right Livelihood
Right Effort
Right Mindfulness
Right Concentration

Three Qualities

Wisdom (panna)

Morality (sila)

Meditation (samadhi)

Three Characteristics of Existence

1. Impermanence (anicca)
2. Sorrow (dukkha)
3. Selflessness (anatta)

Friends to Freedom

1. Loving kindness
2. Compassion
3. Sympathetic joy
4. Equanimity

Things that hinder and restrict freedom

1. Self-delusion
2. Doubt
3. Clinging to ritual
4. Sensuous lust
5. Ill will
6. Greed for material existence
7. Greed for immaterial existence
8. Conceit
9. Restlessness
10. Ignorance

The Ten Perfections

1. Generosity (dana)
2. Morality (sila)
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma)
4. Wisdom (panna)
5. Energy (viriya)
6. Patience (khanti)
7. Truthfulness (sacca)
8. Resolution (adhitthana)
9. Loving kindness (metta)
10. Equanimity (upekkha)

The Five Precepts

I undertake the training of precept of refraining from…

1. harming living beings by practicing loving kindness
2. taking the non-given by practicing generosity
3. committing sexual misconduct by practicing contentment
4. false speech by practicing truthfulness
5. intoxicants by practicing mindfulness

Apparent Truths

1. Everyone must die…
2. The remainder of our life span is decreasing continually.
3. Death will come regardless of whether or not we have made time to practice the dharma.
4. Human life expectancy is uncertain
5. There are many causes of death.
6. The human body is very fragile.
7. Our wealth cannot help us.
8. Our loved ones cannot help.
9. Our body cannot help.

Each person's happiness if self-determined. The following Buddhist teaching illustrates

> *In some way, invitational theory wants to cover the world with leather. That is, the world should be made a better place for each and every one of us. Buddhist psychology tends to be more specific and pragmatic on this point: Deal with the here-and-now of one's own feet. Once that is done, help others do the same.*

In Invitational Education all individuals have value and are valuable. One individual is not put on earth to serve another. Instead, all are considered equal in their pursuit of the happy and satisfying life. The centrality of the value of the individual also is reflected in Buddhist psychology where each individual contains "Buddha nature" or the potential for consummate kindness and wisdom. The unlimited potential of each individual for goodness is an inviolable principle.

Invitational Education places great importance on the development of skills that assist the individual in understanding self and developing appropriate strategies, actions, and understandings of the world. This perspective is a product of the western viewpoint owing much to the ideas of William James (consciousness), George Herbert Mead (social nature of perception), Art Combs and Donald Snygg (perceptual psychology), Carl Rogers' (becoming), and Albert Bandura (social cognitive theory) and should be familiar. (Purkey & Siegel, 2003) If reading from the western point of view, invitational theory is a natural progression of viewing self as an individual, complete, enduring, and sufficient in its own right. Invitational theory extends the individuality of self to include consideration of the perceptions and interpretations of self as being a form of reality, at least to the individual holding them. In contrast, Buddhists do not doubt the apparent nature of an individual self, but counter that this self exists only in relative reality and is a delusion blocking our understanding of ultimate reality; a reality where there is no permanent unchanging self. The basics of Buddhist conceptualizations of the mind differ from most of the west on this point. The view of "no self" is usually unfamiliar in the west and frequently is viewed as paradoxical and difficult to understand. It is sufficient for our present purpose; however, to point out that the western view of an independent self can be logically and rationally challenged.

The Perspective from Buddhist Psychology

Most readers will be familiar with Buddhism as a religion and may find the current view of Buddhism as a psychology to be confusing. Various scholars, both east and west, study Buddhism from various perspectives including religion, ethics, logic, and psychology. (Mon, 1995; Thera, 1976; Tsering, 2006) There are a number of reasons for viewing Buddhism from various perspectives although each method has limitations. For example, viewing Buddhism as a religion is difficult in that Buddhism has

no god, no cosmology, and discourages faith while demanding active use of reason. The Buddhist dependence on reason, practice, observation, and outcomes more closely matches western psychology than religion. Reason is central to Buddhist thought but only has value if it is used to direct practice. In establishing day-to-day practice, all things in Buddhist thought are subject to question and, indeed, if not questioned, then perpetual happiness and the accompanying enlightenment cannot be obtained.

The distrust of faith and the dependence on reason is illustrated best by the Kalama Sutra, a teaching by the Buddha encouraging questioning and doubt. He admonishes his students not to believe in anything simply because it has been said. He cautioned not to believe in traditions, the teaching of elders, or the authority of teachers without subjecting them to intense questioning and thought. Only when these lessons agree with reason and after observation and analysis are found to be conducive to the good and the benefit of all is a teaching to be accepted and practiced.

Knowledge is important but only insofar as it remains practical and guides practice. Any benefit in following a Buddhist path comes from the practice of being a caring and kind person. The Buddha historically rejected speculation about such matters as God, the nature of the universe, and the afterlife (Hagen, 1997; Rahula, 1959; Trainor, 2001) where the nature of the problem limits the utility of knowledge and reason. Buddha instead urged his followers to focus on the Four Noble Truths (see Table 1) by which they can free themselves from suffering.

As psychology, Buddhism employs reason applied to the study of apparent reality, that is, that which is around and inside us, which in turn leads us to understand the more subtle ultimate or true reality. The first conclusion of reason applied to reality is undisputed observation that no matter whom one is, what one has, where one lives…everyone is subject to suffering. Everyone get sick, gets old, and eventually dies. This "unsatisfactoriness" of life (*dukkha*) is first of three basic facts of existence. The second is impermanence (*annica*) of all material things. The third is the complex concept of "no self" previously mentioned. This is the fact of egolessness (*anatta*), or the lack of an eternal, unchanging, and independent self. *Anatta* is a challenging concept, particularly from the west. In brief, "no self" means the self is ever-changing and dependent upon the conditions of the moment. An unchanging, permanent, and fixed self does not exist. *Anatta* is controversial yet its unique perspective has a potential contribution to invitational learning discussed later in this paper.

In Buddhist psychology the primary purpose of life is to be happy and end suffering. Although the pain of existence may be external, suffering, however, is internal; suffering exists only in the mind. The Buddha taught that humans suffer because we continually strive after things that do not give lasting happiness. We desperately try to hold on to things…friends, health, material things…that do not last, and cannot last. All things change and are impermanent. Attaching oneself to a specific view of how things "ought to be" is the cause of sorrow.

To try to provide the apparent self with the things and activities it desires for pleasure is condemned at the outset as an approach to happiness. This process only creates the desire for "more" and obtaining "more" only

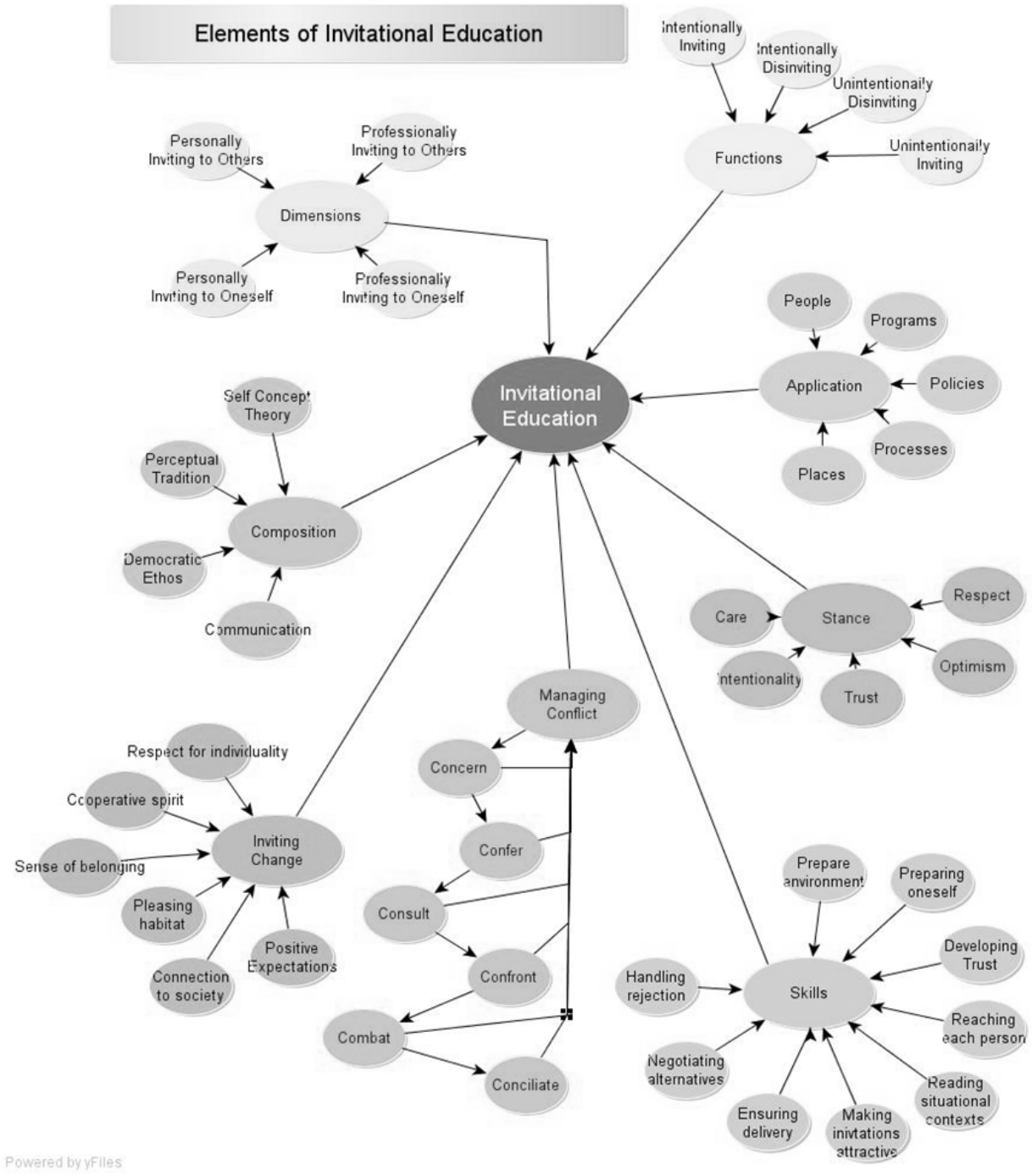

Figure 1. Elements of Invitational Education.

results in more suffering when these things pass. Freeing oneself from attachment to specific views, desires, or things is the avenue to the highest happiness. This is perhaps the premiere psychological challenge: Detaching from things, both material and ideas, lessens suffering.

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path

The psychological outlook of Buddhism is formed by four progressive premises described above and collectively are known as The Four Noble Truths:

1. All of life is marked by suffering.
2. Suffering is caused by desire and attachment.
3. Suffering can be stopped.
4. There is a way to end suffering.

According to the Fourth Noble Truth, one can permanently escape suffering by following eight basic ethical principles known as The Eightfold Path. Basic Buddhist principles are not typically well understood in the west and therefore a brief introduction is provided here to ground the comparison to invitational learning. The following is a compilation from Bhikku (1997; Gnanarama (2000), Hagen (1997), Rahula (1959), Thera (1976), and Thich Nhat Hanh (1998) and reference to any one of these sources will provide a comprehensive and comprehensible introduction. The Eightfold Path is rich in teachings, theory, practice, and pragmatic strategies that offer a rich source of thought for invitational theory.

1. Right Understanding refers to the study and understanding of the existence, creation, and cessation of suffering.
2. Right Determination requires the individual to give up what is wrong and evil; to undertake what is good; and to abandon thoughts that have to do with bringing suffering to any conscious being. In general one's duty is to cultivate thoughts and acts of loving kindness by attending to others' suffering and sharing a sympathetic joy in the happiness of others.
3. Right Speech outlines appropriate ways of communicating with others. It includes abstaining from deceiving others; avoiding talk that brings harm, embarrassment, or hurt to others; and abstaining from harsh, rude, impolite, malicious or abusive language.
4. Right Action requires abstinence from taking life, theft, and misappropriation. Right action is peaceful, honorable conduct; abstaining from dishonest dealings; and fostering what is good. In short, doing things that alleviate suffering while avoiding things that create suffering.
5. Right Livelihood encourages work that does not cause harm to people, animals, or the environment.
6. Right Effort is preventing "the arising of unwholesome thoughts that have not yet risen, to abandon unwholesome thoughts that have already risen; to develop wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen; and to maintain wholesome thoughts that have already arisen." (Gnanarama, 2000, p. 87).

7. Right Mindfulness consists of being in the "here-and-now," not "adding" interpretations to the experiences, and avoiding judgments (that is, place on the experience attachments to what "should" or "ought" to be.) Mindfulness, however, is somewhat complex to encapsulate in a summary, yet may have the greatest contribution to invitational practice. My personal example of experiencing mindfulness is the experience of reclining on a grassy lawn on a spring day feeling the sun on my skin, smelling the crispness of the air tinged with the smells of spring; hearing the sounds of wind and bird. I do not think, "the sun is hot; the birds are singing; the air is sweet" or "it is three o'clock and 74 degrees; the bird songs are from mating magpies, and the air quality index is 'moderate'." Rather I just experience it without processing it in any way. In fact, I don't even think, "This is pleasant; I like this." Rather I just experience the moment.
8. Right Concentration is the state of thought where the mind is disciplined and focused only on the intended object. While mindfulness includes awareness of all experiences, right concentration excludes attention except to the thing intended. The most familiar form of right concentration combined with mindfulness is *anapanasati* meditation where the meditator sits cross-legged in a lotus position and concentrates on the process of breathing in and breathing out. There are many other types of meditations, some done while walking, or sitting, or doing work. A general understanding of right concentration would be the state of mind where the other seven of the eightfold path are practiced, in invitational terms, with intentionality.

Invitations, Self Concept, and *Anatta*

William Purkey, one of the founders of inviting theory, demonstrates self-concept as a spiral. In the very center is the "I" which is the very essence of who we are. Along the spiral at various distances from the "I" are circles which represent circles of existence. These he calls "Me's". There are many "Me's" such as scholar, father, friend, basketball player, and so on. Not all of these "Me's" are as important to the "I" as others. These "Me's" are a relational existence; that is, these "Me's" are dependent upon the situations, the context, and others involved. Yet, it is evident that the "Me" isn't the "I".

Both invitational theory and Buddhist psychology have elements of dependent selves and both generally agree that these "Me's" are more of an illusion of reality rather than representative of one's total being. At question is the nature of the total being. In Buddhist psychology the central "I" is not an individual; rather, once one understands the central "I" is understood it fades as awareness of the unity of all things becomes apparent.

This is a wide deviation from invitational theory. We are familiar with the Decartian proof of existence commonly translated, somewhat inaccurately, as "I think therefore I am." From the Buddhist psychological perspective, the saying would be "I think therefore I am deluded." As introduced

earlier, the primary delusion is that of the "I" or independent self. While the substance of the "I" differs greatly from invitational theory and Buddhist psychology, the substance of the "Me's" are quite similar. The key to the use of the "Me's" is to help self and other's realize the transitory and relational nature of existence.

As an exercise, try imagining yourself from the beginning of your existence to the present moment as existing in a space that contains nothing; no light, heat, matter, sound, thing, bird , fish, or fowl…absolutely nothing. If you are like most, such an existence is not conceivable; we exist in a world where other things exist therefore our concept of existence (feeling, smelling, touching, communicating, etc.) is in *relationship* with other people and other things. Your existence is conceived in relationship to the other; existence of the "I" is *dependent* on something else, "the other."

Whether or not the final "I" is relational and changing as are the "Me's" is a matter for each individual to determine. What both invitational theory and Buddhist psychology have to offer us, however, is that they demonstrate that we tend to identify ourselves only in relationships to external things. We are tall or short only in relationship to a comparison to other people. We are hot only in relationship to our experiences of being cooler. Everything we *think* is in relationship to something else. Our existence is composed totally as one relationship or another. But this need not be the case. We do not need to be trapped by our environment.

Anatta is obviously in conflict with self-concept theory and is very difficult for those reared in a culture of individualism to understand and accept. However, the comparison between inviting theory's "I" and *anatta* is worth the effort regardless of one's conclusion as to the validity of either position. By examining these commonalities and differences, we can gain a great deal of insight into the relationship of "self" to "other" and possibly to a number of hypotheses that potentially can advance invitational theory.

One of the more instructive hypotheses that can be constructed by unifying the two views addresses the role of invitations in developing self concept, the type of communication that would compose the most effective invitation, and how students can be taught to be inviting to themselves as opposed to being dependent upon an environment structured by others.

According to invitational theory, self is primarily conceived in terms of messages received from others and the environment. "Blue" or positive messages and experiences enhance the value of self while "orange" or negative messages and experiences detract from self. In invitational theory, the caregiver or helping professional is to provide an environment with an ever increasing number of blue cards (positive experiences). In the Buddhist perspective, the provision of inviting theory to provide more messages to counter negative ones and attempting to flood the students' environment with only the positive would be right action and right effort. However, at best, these efforts are only temporary,

ephemeral, and will not have an enduring presence in the long term.

Buddhist psychology would suggest a more substantive way by providing instruction in "seeing things as they are" and recognizing that the momentary perceptions are only comparative. In short, they are just thoughts and as such, can be set aside with mental discipline. In short, blue cards as well as orange cards are only thoughts. We can learn to set them aside. This "setting aside" of thoughts and seeing things as they are paves the way to self understanding as opposed to relying on encouragement of others.

Providing a plethora of blue cards to students who are experiencing hardship, we only encourage more and more *attachment* to blue cards and *aversion* to orange cards and run the risk of communicating that happiness is a collection of joyous moments, strung together by interactions with a cooperative and nurturing environment.

Buddhist psychology would suggest that heaping ever increasing amounts of pleasurable sensation on a self that can never be satisfied is futile. The self will only want more, crave more, and demand more pleasure for the future. This process, ironically, results in suffering since ultimately, the very nature of life cannot provide pleasure endlessly. Also, since all things are impermanent, the blue cards must come to an end sometime. Hence, ultimately the sending of blue cards results in *samara*, or the process of suffering: wanting more and more, never being satisfied, and at the same time growing older, getting sick, and eventually passing from this earth.

The Buddhist psychological solution can be instructive: Messages, be they blue or orange, are just messages. Messages are nothing more and nothing less than thoughts. Thoughts are mental formations and as such can be controlled by us. A negative message is negative because, using invitation theory's language, our *perception and interpretation* gives them their orange cast. If we can see messages as they truly are (for example, an attempt to demean an accomplishment as a result of unproductive envy), accept them for what they are (the unhappiness of another), then we will be saved suffering.

An example of "seeing things as they are" is found in Haim Ginott's (Ginott & Goddard, 2003) *Parent and Child* when he discusses communication strategies parents use with children. When the child comes home and complains, "The teacher hates me; she thinks I'm stupid," Ginott would have us see the comment for what it is. The congruent response is, "You're upset because the teacher said things you didn't like." The teacher said something. The child did not like it. The child is upset. While the comment does not remove the teacher's words and acts nor the hurt they cause, it does convey to the child that someone understands and cares. It also clearly states "what is" without misleading interpretations.

Ginott argues that the child will find solace and will be better able to deal with his or her feelings of the actual event if given support to see the experience for what it is, not for what emotion can make of it. Attempting to tell the child the teacher isn't mean is confrontational to the child and adds to suffering. To counter with an assertion, "I

think you are smart" only perpetuates the child's dependence of the perceptions of others. Trying to analyze the event while the child is angry or hurt will not work because the child's emotional state is not conducive to rational analysis. Giving the child compliments to "override" the teacher's comments only contributes to the child's need for external validation or, in Buddhist's words, more craving. "Seeing things for what they are" is a skill of infinite utility and should be considered as an alternative to "sending blue." "Seeing things as they are" is known as mindfulness and is of critical importance in maturity, and assists each of us in forming a view of self based not on the views of others, but on our own thoughts and actions. "Seeing things for what they are, " or mindfulness also has contributions to other areas of inviting theory such as the employment of the perceptual tradition.

The Perceptual Tradition and Mindfulness

Another conceptual modification that might advance invitational theory comes from comparing invitational learning's perceptual tradition and the Buddhist psychology's mindfulness training. The perceptual tradition plays a large role in invitational theory. Purkey and Siegel (2003) write:

> *The perceptual tradition is a way of understanding human behavior that includes all the ways we as humans are viewed as we normally view ourselves. The term perceptual refers not only to the senses but also to meanings--the personal significance of an event for the person experiences it. These meanings extend far beyond sensory receptors to include such personal experiences as feelings, desires, aspirations, hopes, as well as opinions about ourselves, others, and the world (p.27).*

Inviting theory argues that "we are conscious agents in the process of our own development." (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p. 27) In this view of the perceptual process, perception includes all that we experience, interpret, construct, decide, and act. This is in contrast to Buddhist psychology where perception is but only one of several processes involved in interacting with the other. For example, prior to perception there is consciousness, that is, a state where information can be received. Then there is awareness, a state where the information is experienced and is actually incorporated. Awareness does not interpret, it is simply the function of mind that prepares us to receive information. It is, at least in part, a precognitive function. Note that without consciousness and awareness any event in the environment is a "non-event" to the individual in that without consciousness and awareness, no perception could occur.

Third in the string would be perception where the mind writes a transcript of the attributes of the event that the mind can engage. In Buddhist psychology, perception, like awareness, does not interpret; rather it is like a recording of the external event converted to a vehicle the mind can encounter. Interpretations, such as overlaying concepts or labels, establishing meaning, relating this to that, and so on, are to be avoided at this stage. Avoiding

"overlaying" meaning is a practice of mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a critical element in Buddhist psychology in that it is our interpretations that distort reality and overlay attributes that are not there when we are mindful. These interpretations and judgments of how we feel things *ought to be* give rise to suffering: In our quest to understand, to attach to those sensations, we apply meanings and interpretations that ultimately are not the thing itself and leads to delusion which, in turn, leads to unsatisfactoriness. We have attached meanings to things that do not have that meaning and we cling to those meanings as if they are real. This misinterpretation of things gives rise to confusion, disappointment, inappropriate expectations, and a whole host of states that bring on disquiet and suffering.

Invitational theory is in stark contrast at this point with Buddhist psychology. In invitational theory "Behavior is understood as a product of the way we see ourselves and the situations in which we find ourselves." (Purkey & Siegel, 2003) Perception includes the interpretations, generalizations, and reference to the image of self. Buddhist psychology would not contest that individuals perform in this manner. The Buddhist view would simply counter that making life's decisions in such a manner gives rise to suffering. Attaching meaning to past events and hanging on to those interpretations of events to relate to future ones simply compounds the attachment. We begin to interpret events and ideas as we believe things *ought* to be instead of the way things are. The key element to keep in mind is to avoid unneeded judgments and endeavor to practice mindfulness in order to try to see things as they.

An example might help here: Consider the event presented earlier of the child coming home from school angry at the teacher. We need to seriously consider if the anger is caused by the actions of the teacher or is the anger caused by the interpretation of the child? Invitational theory proponents would more frequently view the teacher as the culprit for sending the negative message. Those employing the perspectives of Buddhist psychology would say the suffering is caused by the student. The cause, however, would not be in the poor study habits per se, it is because the student has added so many interpretations and expectations to the event. The Buddhist view would find both the teacher's talk and the student's unsuccessful study habits regrettable, and teacher and student should consider the consequences and alternatives. However, the student's anguish and suffering is caused by the student because of a lack of mindfulness.

In mindfulness, we experience the thing but we do not add or take away by interpretation. Typical of this type of event, the unmindful child would think, "The teacher was mean to me. She said I wasn't smart enough to do the work without studying. And I studied, I did…a whole hour. I know it was an hour because I watched a Star Trek episode. She says I can't do it, I'm dumb." The child's thinking is consistent with the perceptual tradition in that the meanings and interpretation have a life of their own. If we, as helpers, choose to

focus on the acts of the teacher it does not ease the child's suffering. Perhaps action on our part may prevent such acts in the future; perhaps not. Perhaps the teacher was too blunt and to the point, but if she was accurate, what then?

If we focus primarily on changing the environment to foster changes in student activity, we would probably work in two areas: changing the speech patterns of the teacher and changing the study habits of the child. These are, of course, both reasonable strategies and fit the Eightfold Path well. However, neither will ease the student's current suffering. However, if we add mindfulness to the equation, we would work on helping the child see things without addition. The child's thoughts might be different: "The work I did was not acceptable to the teacher. She feels I do not make adequate effort. I think I made adequate effort but I did share my study time with television watching. I did not like today's class because my work was rejected by the teacher." This type of mindful thinking can prove very helpful to each of us. By not adding interpretations, not including an image of how I see myself, not imposing a moral judgment of "right or wrong" on the situation, we can see things more clearly and as a result, the course of action to less suffering is much easier to discern. In fact, by not clinging to the notions about the self ("I'm smart enough to do my homework and watch TV at the same time") and of others ("You cannot say things to me that I do not like") much suffering is averted.

There is nothing in invitational theory that would contradict the veracity of mindfulness and making students aware of distorted messages. However, if mindfulness were a major tenet of invitational theory, there would be much less focus on altering the environment, sending invitations, and otherwise attempting to make the external environment "satisfactory" to each individual. Much of this effort would be on providing teachings assisting the individual to be mindful or "to see things as they are." However, this formula is analogous to our earlier reference to the rules of weight loss. Just because it will help does not mean they we are willing to employ it. Do we enjoy our misery too much?

One of the difficult parts of perception is the experience of the pain of hurt feelings, disappointment, anxiety, and other emotional states that cause suffering. "The first step to destroy such suffering is to accept the reality of it, not as blind faith but as a fact of existence that one realizes through careful examination and investigation" (Abeysekera, 2002, p. 147). Buddhists do not attempt to gloss over this hurt. Instead, it is to be examined and studied. Even so, continued work on mindfulness and experiencing things as they are continues: "…everything within the Buddhist canon is meant to help us relieve suffering and achieve happiness, and that only happens through the mind. Medicine can cure the body, but that in itself cannot make us happy." (Tsering, 2006, p. 1).

Conclusion

While a belief in continual examination of our values is a natural conclusion reached by

reason from the tenets espoused by each viewpoint, it is actually rare in society. At large, great effort is exerted for individuals to conform in all types of social organizations…from family units, to schools, to the workplace, and even nations to have the "right" view where "right" is provided prepackaged and not subject to inquiry. Both invitational education and Buddhism reject this imposed believing outright. The individual is sacrosanct.

> *Rather than relying on one program, one policy, or one process, Invitational Education addresses the total zeitgeist, the spirit within a school. It has a wider focus of application than traditional efforts to make schools safe. It is concerned with more than grades, attendance, academic achievement, discipline, test scores, and even student self-esteem. It is concerned with the skills of becoming a decent and productive citizen in a democratic society (Purkey, 2009)*

> *An invitation is not a sugar-coated demand. It is a cordial summons to consider something beneficial for acceptance or rejection. True commitment cannot be forced, only volunteered…Ends do not justify the means.* (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, p. 11)

One important similarity between Invitational Education and Buddhism is the respect given to the independence of thought of each individual. No coercion or enforcement may be used in the teaching of Buddhist views of mind and thought. In sending invitations we must use the right action and right effort. Inviting theory calls this being inviting to oneself. Indeed, although each of us is filled with shortcomings, each perspective wishes us to be gentle to others, but also to be gentle to ourselves. "Knowing that the only person one can change is oneself, should we not then be spending more time where we can have some effect? We know now where we must concentrate. We must eradicate greed, hate, and delusion." (Abeysekera, 2002, p. 159).

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Re-adjusting the Kaleidoscope: The Basic Tenants of Invitational Theory and Practice

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Abstract

Given the variance in the literature regarding definitions of terms and elements of Invitational Theory and Practice, this article proposes the adoption of a standard terminology for the foundational principles and elements unique to this theory. The major concepts are presented herein as an attempt to set the standardization for future use.

The purpose of this paper is to examine and discuss the basic tenants of Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) in a way that becomes the accepted standard for use of the various concepts and terminologies used to describe and or explain ITP.

The intention is that this document be seen not as a rebuttal of the past descriptors and various explanations of ITP, but more as an attempt to make ITP's terminologies and descriptions of the fundamental precepts more stable thus strengthening the theory for empirical research, decreasing confusion, reducing inconsistencies, and furthering its acceptance for the continued evolution and implementation of ITP in areas other than just education.

A review of ITP literature reveals the use of labels, phrases, wordings, definitions, and titles of the major ITP principles appearing in an inconsistent and oft times confusing or contradictory manner. We suggest that the core principles/elements/concepts be modified only to achieve greater standardization and specificity in definition, and reconfigured to achieve greater clarity. We propose that ITP begin to employ standard labels and definitions of its basic elements of the theory and use this terminology in a consistent manner.

Hopefully this modification and reconfiguration will promote a higher level of consistency, reliability, and measurability

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thus broadening the understanding of the foundational beliefs, attitudes, values, and authentic behaviors of the practitioner of ITP. In doing so, it is hypothesized that the result will be an increased acceptance of ITP as a valued theory of practice. (J. M. Novak & W. W. Purkey, personal communication, October 5, 2010). The term Invitational Theory is used here instead of Invitational Education as we hope to stimulate the growth and application of ITP in a broader sense specifically personal integration and its application in venues other than just education.

Basic Concepts of Invitational Theory

Invitational Theory is a set of congruent suppositions about constructive human thinking and behavior that when applied across a multitude of human endeavors increases the probability for positive outcomes. Moreover, when applied reliably, consistently, and authentically, the positive human potential of those it impacts will significantly increase (Purkey & Novak, 2008, Purkey & Siegel, 2003, Shaw, 2004).

Foundations of Invitational Theory

Democratic Ethos

Purkey and Novak described the democratic ethos best in "Fundamentals of Invitational Education" (2009). They state:

> Democracy is a social ideal based on the conviction that all people matter and can grow through participation in self-governance. Invitational Education reflects this democratic ethos by emphasizing deliberative dialogue, mutual respect, and the importance of shared activities. The goal of the inviting approach is to have people work together to construct the ethical character, social practices, and educational institutions that promote a fulfilling shared life. Implied here is a respect for people and their abilities to articulate their concerns as they act responsibly on issues that impact their lives. Deeply embedded in this respect for persons is a commitment to the ideal that people who are affected by decisions should have a say in formulating those decisions.

The ideal of democracy is based on a "doing with" as opposed to a "doing to" approach to relating to people. Being "done to" is to be seen as an underling or a vessel to be filled and to be demeaned of inherent dignity and imaginative potential. Being "done with" is to be seen as an active participant in a meaningful process. In addition, participating in democratic practices is vital because it is the deepest way to teach democratic values. Viewed this way, democracy is an educative process, a social way of coming together to enjoy, reflect, and act responsibly.

Perceptual Tradition

ITP has as its foundation the tenants of a variety of congruent psychological and philosophical schools of thought. ITP literature refers to these as "The Perceptual Tradition". The viewpoints of many writers, such as George Kelly, Gordon Allport, Sidney Jourard, Kurt Lewin, Abraham Maslow, Art Combs, Carl Rogers, and many others have been consolidated into a singular and congruent framework termed the perceptual tradition.

In essence the perceptual tradition postulates that all behavior, without exception, is completely determined by the perceptual field of the behaving organism. This means that how a person chooses to behave depends upon how they view the world and themselves in it. Each of us has our own reality built not only upon the present but our past experiences as well. Invitational Theory relies heavily upon this perspective for understanding self and others (Combs, Richards, and Richards, 1976, Jourard, 1971).

Self-concept Theory

There are numerous self-concept theorists whose works have contributed to the development and evolution of ITP. Closely tied to the perceptual tradition, the learned beliefs that an individual holds true about themselves lies at the core of understanding human behavior. Of central importance is the view that the maintenance, protection, and enhancement of the perceived self are the basic motivations behind all human behavior. Thus, ITP strives to enhance the self-concepts of others, as one's self-concept drives behavior and thus significantly influences what one is capable of doing.

The Four Basic Assumptions of ITP

ITP is founded on a set of beliefs about the inherent nature of individuals from an external viewpoint (Purkey, & Novak 1984).

1. People are able, valuable, and capable of self-direction, and should be treated accordingly.
2. Helping is a cooperative, collaborative alliance in which process is as important as product.
3. People possess relatively untapped potential in all areas of human development.
4. This potential can best be realized by places, policies, and programs that are intentionally designed to invite development, and by people who consistently seek to realize this potential in themselves and others, personally and professionally.

These four assumptions are based on variety of congruent psychological and philosophical schools of thought that emphasize the positive development of all individuals. These four basic assumptions are viewed as interdependent, thus forming a slightly larger more complex perspective of individual behaviors.

Values

Optimism. Is a viewpoint individuals choose to take of the world and others based on the wish or hope for positive outcomes.

Trust. From the ITP perspective, the concept of trust is a multidimensional element that includes, thinking, behaving, and beliefs. It involves hope for the future and behaviors based on reliability, consistency, dependability, personal authenticity, and truthfulness.

Respect. Simply put it is a belief that people are valuable, able, responsible, and should be treated accordingly.

Care. Care is concern expressed warmly in the welfare for others.

Intentionality. Intentionality is the vehicle upon which the robust values of Optimism, Trust, Respect, and Care are propelled and applied. Intentionality is a belief, underlying behavior with a purposeful direction and aim.

Invitation

An invitation is an intentional and caring act of communication, by which the sender seeks to enroll the receiver in the positive vision of the receiver set forth in the communication. It offers something beneficial for consideration.

Levels of Functioning (AKA The Ladder)

The four hierarchical levels of human behavior that involve both the concepts of intentionality and invitations are as follows:

Intentionally Disinviting. This is the purposeful act of behaving in ways that seek to injure or disrupt the positive nature/potential of others or processes that impede beneficial outcomes.

Unintentionally Disinviting. This is the act of accidental or unplanned behaviors that injure or disrupt the positive nature/potential of others or processes that impede beneficial outcomes.

Unintentionally Inviting. This is the accidental or unplanned act of behaving in ways that seek to enhance the positive nature/potential of others or processes that facilitate beneficial outcomes.

Intentionally Inviting. This is the purposeful act of behaving in ways that seek to enhance the positive nature/potential of others or processes that facilitate beneficial outcomes.

Application Processes (AKA Four Corner Press)

Application process describe an invitational act purposely directed at oneself or others in the either the domain of one personal life or ones professional endeavors.

Being Personally Inviting With Oneself.

Being Personally Inviting With Others.

Being Professionally Inviting With Oneself.

Being Professionally Inviting With Others.

Domains (AKA The 5 P's)

The areas of focus for inviting behavior are:

People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes.

Sending Choices

In the process of invitational behavior it is acknowledged that individuals have choices regarding the sending or not sending invitations.

Styles

The process of behaving invitingly or uninvitingly is describe in four distinct styles or manners. They are:

Visibly Inappropriate. This is the purposeful and overt act of being disinviting.

Invisibly Inappropriate. This is the purposeful and covert act of being disinviting.

Visibly Appropriate. This is the purposeful and overt act of being inviting.

Invisibly Appropriate. This is the purposeful and covert act of being inviting.

Accepting Choices

Invitational theory acknowledges that individuals have choices regarding the accepting or not accepting invitations.

Outcomes

Inviting or disinviting behaviors have two potential outcomes respectively termed, a beneficial presence or lethal presence.

Plus Factor

At its best, invitational theory becomes "invisible" because it becomes a means of addressing humanity. When one has developed the ability to be skillfully inviting even in the most difficult of situations, this is termed, the plus factor.

The Inviting Stance

The phrase, "Inviting Stance" is used to describe a way of thinking and behaving that results in positive outcomes. Assuming this stance involves several levels of thinking and behaving with self and others. The first is the understanding of the foundations of ITP. Specifically, Democratic Ethos, Perceptual Tradition, and Self-concept Theory. The second is the acceptance of the four basic assumptions. Third is the authentic, reliable and consistent use of the five values, optimism, trust, respect, care, and intentionality. Lastly, the stance is operationalized by individuals being intentionally inviting.

The Helix

As illustrated in Figure 1, "The Helix" is a graphical way to show the developmental aspect of the adoption and application of ITP (Purkey and Novak 2008). Initially with occasional one spirals upward to a fuller understanding of ITP with a more systematic application.

Conclusion

Invitational Theory is a useful and powerful tool to understand and positively shape the lives of others. Having a standardization of ITP's basic terms and concepts is essential for the long-term growth and acceptance of this theory. We hope that those who adopt this theory also choose to accept the standardized terminology and definitions of outline heretofore in their practice, writing, and research concerning Invitational Theory. In an attempt to visually illustrate the process, concept and terms of ITP we refer the reader to Figure 2.

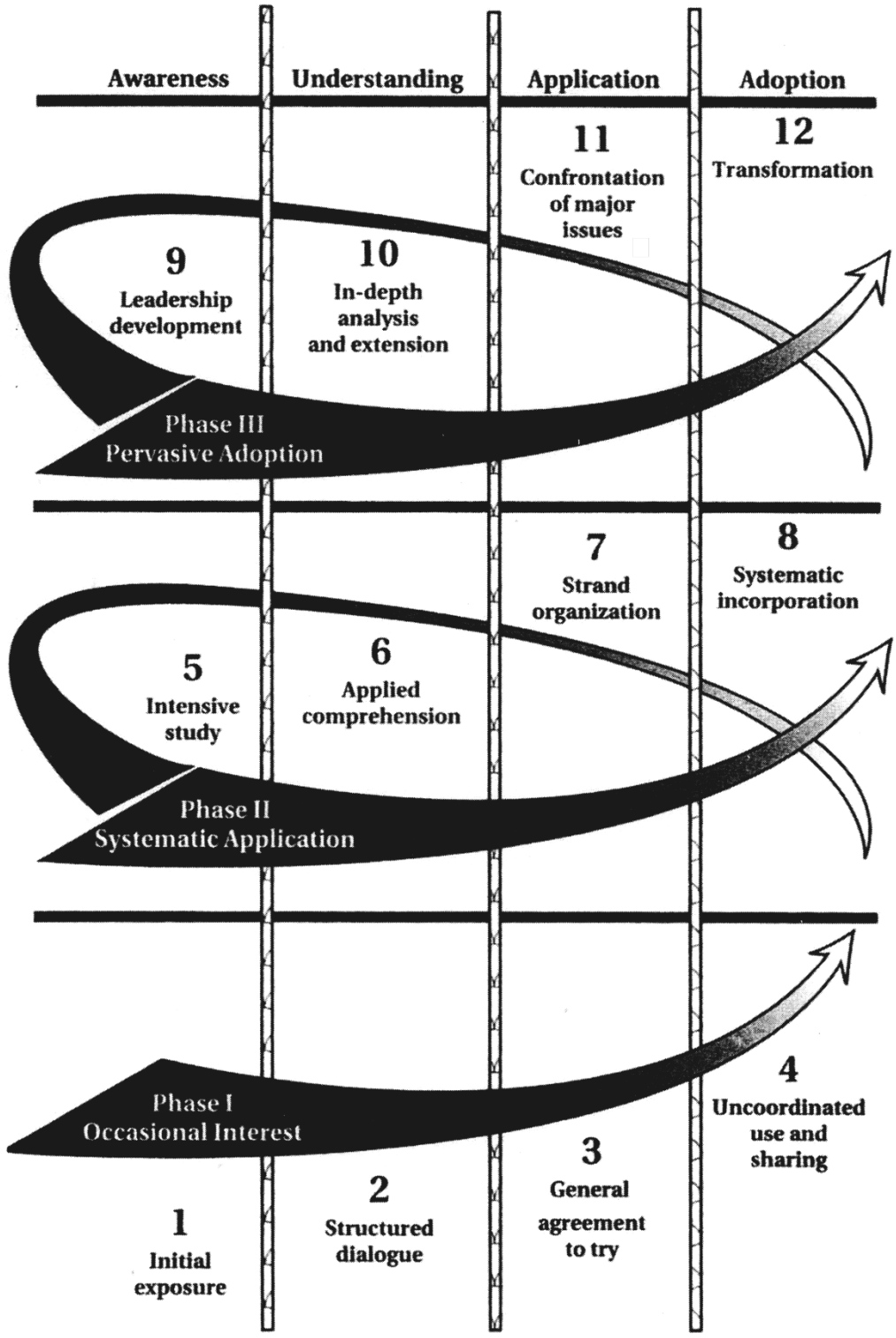

Figure 2 The Helix

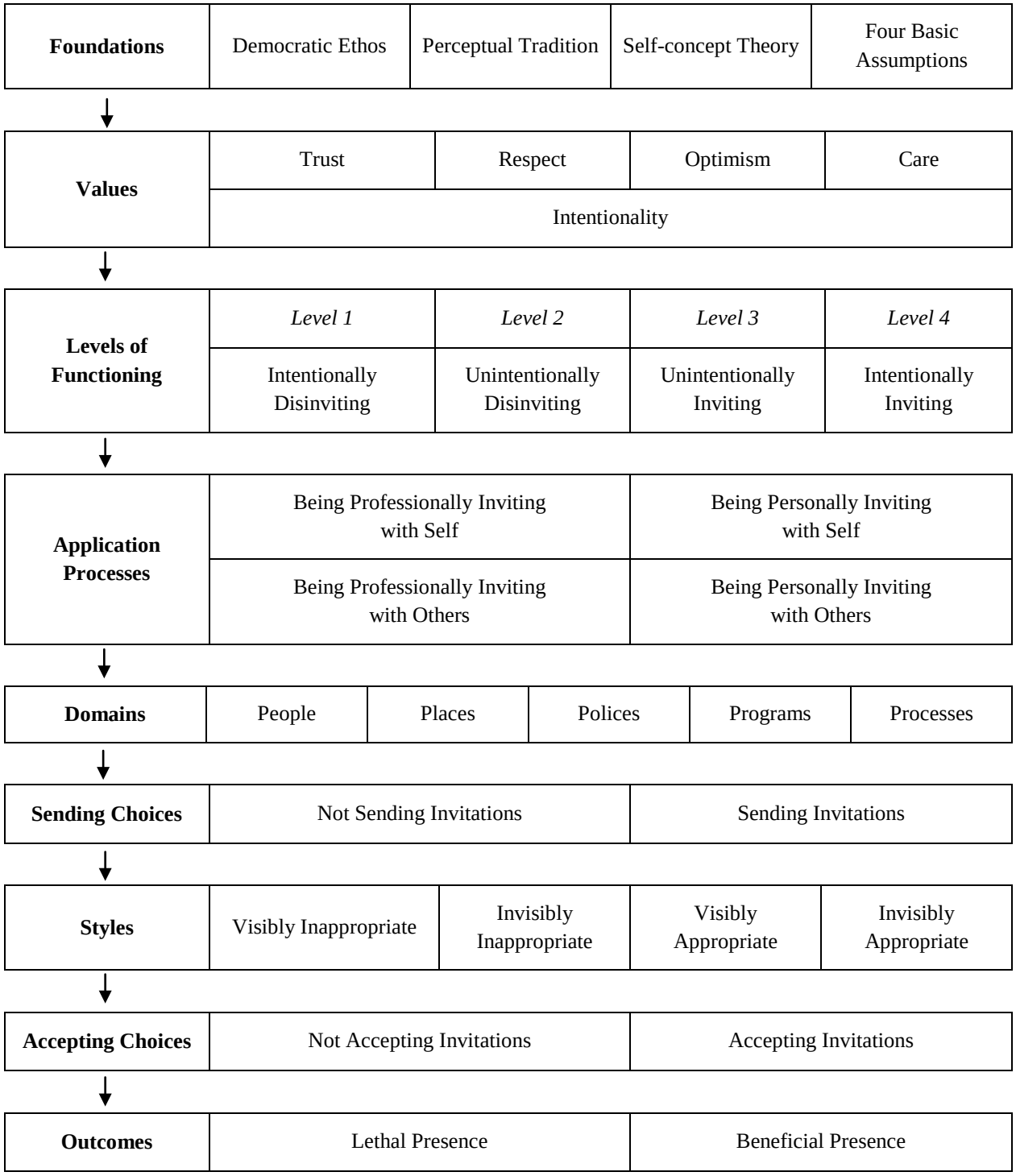

Figure 2 **The Model of Invitational Theory and Practice** This diagram illustrates the Model of the Invitational Theory and Practice. It begins with identifying the foundations of Invitational Theory and proceeds stepwise through the various elements that culminate in the stated outcomes.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Inviting Students to Learn: 100 Tips for Talking Effectively with Your Students

by Jenny Edwards, Ph.D.

ASCD, Alexandria, VA; ©2010
170 pp, paperback, US $23.95

In her book, Inviting Students to Learn: 100 Tips for Talking Effectively with Your Students, Jenny Edwards helps educators send inviting messages to their students so they can be successful in the learning process. The strategies are embedded in the Invitational Education theory to invite students into the learning process to help them realize that they are capable and that they can learn. Jenny Edwards effectively communicates to educators 100 different strategies that they can use with their students so that they can be successful.

Every educator asks, how can I effectively engage my students so they can learn? In this book, Edwards invites students into the learning process by giving educators practical ways to communicate with their students. Throughout this book, Edwards encourages educators to explore what they believe about their students and the learning process. She invites educators to reflect about what they believe about their students. She gives excellent strategies to communicate to their students. These strategies give educators the tools that they need to reach the potential of their students.

Edwards provides excellent examples for using her strategies by connecting them to invitational theory, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), and efficacy literature. Edwards grounds these strategies in theory by connecting intentional language, presuppositions, visualizations, and communication strategies to the teaching process. She makes the readers believe that they can make a difference in the lives of their students. By using intentional language, the readers believe that they can successfully teach their students.

Edwards uses personal examples and experiences to create a reflective practice. She retells stories from her teaching experiences to connect to the different strategies. She uses many teaching experiences to illustrate ways to implement the strategies. These illustrations give vivid pictures about how the readers can visualize using these strategies with their students. By personally reflecting throughout the book, Edwards personally commits to the learning process. She demonstrates her own belief that these strategies are important to create a learning experience for students.

I have found this book to be extremely motivating as I work with preservice teacher in an urban education program. The first question I have learned to ask myself before I begin a semester is, what do I truly believe about my students? I know that I believe in my students and that they will grow to be excellent teachers. I need to express that I believe in my students by talking to them, answering their questions, and listening to their problems. I have found that once they know that I believe in them, they can hear the positive language that I use with them. They believe that they are going to be successful because I believe in them.

The strategies in this book are straightforward and simple to use. The readers can begin using these strategies immediately. They can also explore these concepts even deeper and become master communicators with their students. When educators read this book, they will believe that they can use inviting messages to help their students realize that they are capable and can learn. They will become master communicators with their students just as Jenny Edwards is a master communicator in this book.

Guidelines for Authors

The ***Journal for Invitational Theory and Practice*** (JITP) (ISSN-1060-6041) publishes once a year and promotes the tenets of invitational learning, self-concept theory, and perceptual psychology. Articles that examine and expand the theory of invitational learning and development, investigate the efficacy of invitational practices, and relate these beliefs and findings to other theories of human development and behavior are encouraged. The JITP accepts articles for submission year round; however the **submission deadline for each issue is August 1st.**

The Journal uses a blind review of articles and final decisions regarding publication are made by the Editor. On publication, authors will receive two copies of the Journal. Authors are asked to use the following guidelines when submitting articles for publication:

1. **Prepare manuscripts in APA style. Refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition (2010).**
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3. Please include your home and business phone numbers so that the editor may contact you quickly.
4. Although most document file types can be read, Microsoft Word® format is the preferred file type. Please remove embedded comments, tracked changes, and hidden personal data in your file.
5. Double space the entire document (including references and quotations) using Times New Roman 12 point font. Use one inch margins on each side, top, and bottom.
6. Place authors' names, positions, titles, mailing addresses, and email addresses on the cover page only.
7. Beginning on the second page, include the title and an abstract of 150 - 250 words. Do not include author's names on this page.
8. Use tables (created with Microsoft Word® table function only) and figures sparingly. Place them on separate pages at the end of the document indicating the preferred placement in the manuscript. All artwork and diagrams should be black and white, included as separate digital graphic files, preferably TIFF (*.tif).
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