

## *An Expanded Vision*

The theory proposed and promoted in this journal was first named and is commonly referred to as invitational education. This designation was created when William Purkey and Betty Siegel, founders of this movement, first focused attention on schools, the teaching process, and student learning. Primarily, their aim was to encourage educators to establish relationships that valued students and viewed all students as capable of learning. Invitational education was a natural description for this mission. In the years following the early workshops arranged and led by Drs. Purkey and Siegel, many people from varied professions and around the world attended invitational conferences. As the audience expanded, a broader perspective developed for applying the invitational approach in a variety of institutions and organizations beyond the school setting. Professions such as nursing, business, counseling, and others are now represented among the Alliance membership, and in the process people have expanded the vision for invitational theory and practice.

With this outlook we begin the second volume of our journal. The articles in this issue illustrate not only an expanded vision for invitational theory and practice, but also the international scope of the Alliance for Invitational Education. Three authors are from South Africa, a country whose world-wide notoriety may seem incompatible with the tenets of invitational thought. Indeed, it is revealing that these three educators have embraced this humanistic model as a way of encouraging their countrymen to move the nation forward educationally, politically, and socially. By sharing their research and perspectives in this issue, they enlighten all of us.

In the first article of this issue Cheryl and David Aspy set the tone for an expanded vision by predicting the emergence of the Human Age. They describe the Human Age as a period of evolution when people, institutions, and organizations begin to focus on the tremendous potential of human beings to create beneficial relationships in schools and other settings. During this Human Age, the primary aim is to cultivate relationships and nurture environments in which emerge the higher order behaviors of loving, thinking, and sound physical health.

The second article by Jacobus Kok of Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa explores the relationship between the characteristics of adulthood and the assumptions of invitational theory. Dr. Kok presents an optimistic view of the role invitational education can play for a country attempting to move toward an egalitarian stance for the betterment of all peoples.

In her article about inviting schools in the USA, Trudie Steyn offers a visitor's observations of some common characteristics found among these schools. Also from South Africa, Dr. Steyn summarizes the various roles that administrators, teachers, students, parents, and communities adopt in ensuring that invitational beliefs are reflected in the actions of the school. Her findings have implications for other schools in other places.

A third South African, Patsy Paxton was a visiting scholar at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro this past year. She compares the beliefs of invitational theory with the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). As she points out, TQM is a model adopted by business and industry through the work and writing of W. Edwards Deming. Now this approach is being acknowledged by educators for its promise in restructuring and reforming schools in the United States. Dr. Paxton's comparison of these two perspectives illustrates the compatibility of the invitational model with other approaches that advocate human worth, dignity, and responsibility.

Carolyn Dickman's article addresses the issue of gender stereotyping and encourages teachers at all levels of education to design strategies that would correct these behaviors. As an inclusive model, invitational education seems an appropriate approach to use in training teachers, parents, and students to avoid discrimination or stereotypical behavior.

In the last article, Henry Peel and Elizabeth Foster emphasize parental involvement in middle schools. Readers who are familiar with recent research on student success are aware of the findings related to parental involvement. Drs. Peel and Foster address this topic in the context of the middle school; a transition period they believe is crucial in the decline of parental involvement in schools. They suggest the invitational model is well suited to help schools design and implement strategies and programs to encourage cooperation and collaboration with parents.

While addressing essentially educational issues, each of these articles contributes to a wider vision for invitational theory by expanding the focus beyond student-teacher relationships. The Human Age in Education, for example, advocates better human relations in all life's endeavors. Likewise, gender issues, goals of adulthood, roles that various populations play in school development, and the effect parental involvement has on student success all propose an expanded frame to encompass the invitational perspective. The potential of the invitational model to provide an understandable structure gives it wide appeal, which makes the mission of this journal all the more important. Clarification of the theory and reports of its application will legitimize the invitational approach and strengthen its usefulness across many settings and varied relationships.

John J. Schmidt, Editor