

Editorial

Where we are? Where we want to go?

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Welcome to the 20th volume of the Journal for Invitation Theory and Practice! Having served as editor for nine years and associate editor for one, the honor of introducing our newest editor has been awarded to me. It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you Professor Sheila Therese Gregory as the new editor of JITP, who oversaw the publication of this, the 20th volume.

Sheila is imminently qualified for the job. An author of seven books and over thirty peer-refereed journal articles, Sheila is especially suited for the task. Sheila is also recipient of numerous grants and awards, including the *Distinguished Scholar Award*, from the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (previously known as American Association for Higher Education, Black Caucus).

While the scholarship honors speak for themselves, it is important to remember that editors engage many very different people in assembling a journal. Each potential author has a point of view to be shared and those views often clash with mainstream thought. It is the editor's job to give the mainstream and those that advocate new paths, a voice by publishing in the journal. It is a difficult task to choose among those voices and to trim the content so it best fits the needs of the readers. In order to provide readers with the highest quality, editors must suggest changes, make critiques and mentor novice authors. Always behind these communications, editors must also make a decision to reject or to accept and publish a manuscript.

In working with Sheila this year, I can attest that she possesses all the qualities one could hope for in an editor of a scholarly journal. I believe a few of these traits stand out for particular mention, especially if you find yourself as an author submitting a paper for consideration. Sheila offers the journal and its people extraordinary patience, an exquisite general and technical knowledge in writing for publication, and an ethic of care for her authors and for her readers. Her talents will serve authors and readers well.

Sheila will be facing some major challenges afforded the Alliance and JITP in the next ten-year stretch. Invitational Education is only a small voice for research on self-efficacy, what it is, and how it can be nurtured. At the same time, the literature on self-awareness is blossoming. Here is a sampling of that work.

Those of you who like a word that brings a new concept to the forefront will like the research on anosognosia. Anosognosia is an impairment in the brain's ability to perceive one's own flaws or illness. Anosognosia results from anatomical damage in the brain and has numerous etiologies. For example, about 50% of those with bipolar disorder suffer anosognosia, which offers a partial explanation of why these patients do not take their medications. This is especially troubling when everyone around them can easily perceive the benefits of the drugs. However, those benefits are not evident to the sufferer. This

concept and many others, such as compassion, anxiety, and mindfulness have been studied by neuroscientists, with humbling results.

When we send an invitation, some individuals cannot accept, simply because they cannot identify the invitation as advantageous or addressing problem behaviors and thoughts; nor can they recognize the invitation's purpose. This presents a significant problem for those inviting individuals with neurological impairments.

Psychology has long explained the effect of repeated stimuli losing effect by the process of satiation. These studies indicate that with repeated exposure, newer more stimulating objects, events, or actions must be used to substitute for the satiated one. The result is a continual "raising of the bar." Logically, if we improve the policies, procedures, programs, places, and people's actions, this new heightened stimuli may get the desired effects, but will also soon lose its appeal. Thus, the old problem behaviors resulting from boredom, lack of a sense of belonging, and frustration reappear in an ever-upward spiral. Our technological society is a stunning example of this. Those of you who are baby boomers remember when as a student, a private telephone line with an extra-long extension cord was an unimaginable luxury. Compare that to the omnipresent smartphones of today given to children, sometimes even before they start school. There is a dissatisfaction inherent in our use. We desire better connections, more diversions, and new features and functionality. Consider the long line forming for the introduction of the Apple iPhone 6. All this behavior is not a condemnation of current practices (iPhone 5s are still highly regarded), but for most of us seeking out newer, richer stimulation is inherent in being human.

These psychological and neurological findings challenge Invitational Education to expand its concepts from manipulating the 5 P's, toward giving students experiences that enable them to empower and change themselves. Two examples of this are mindfulness training led by researchers, such as Jon Kabat-Zinn, to the more demanding samatha (calm abiding) and vipassana (insight) meditation. Neurological devices such as the fMRI have definitively shown benefits from these ancient traditional approaches that are not yet widely understood or practiced. My own experience with these practices have led me to the analogy that meditation is to the brain, as the toothbrush is to our teeth: essential.

Sheila's task before her will be to encourage and foster researchers, both the academic and the teacher practitioner, to expand the inviting concept with more complex explanations of human behavior and additionally, more complex ways to enhance self-awareness and self-esteem. I hope each of you will support Sheila and the JITP in a systematic self-reflection of current practices, as well as controlled studies using enhanced models of inviting theory, putting thought to pen and submitting to the journal in order to share and enrich the organization.

The 20th volume of JITP makes several steps in those directions. In our first piece, Gabriela Welch and Ken Smith look at the employment of invitational theory in non-school environments and conclude that to be optimal, inviting methods need to be combined with other approaches, such as those from cognitive, social, and behavior research findings.

The second piece is offered by Madalina Tanase and myself, and demonstrates how mindfulness meditation approaches can enhance student feelings of wellbeing. There is little time for additional subjects in the curriculum, so the authors devised ways to teach meditation, via the samatha tradition of very short, but intensely frequent practices and how to adapt them to the classroom environment. These approaches have the potential of employing time typically wasted during classroom transitions, to focus children's minds on the present purposes and how to enhance their "calm-abiding" emotional control.

The third piece by Scott Robinson continues this theme by looking at the use of written self-affirmations during induction into the classroom environment and their effects on teacher thinking, teacher behavior, and actual outcomes. Among the many results, Scott examines one that is of special note: This is the finding that written self-affirmations bolster inductee resilience to events, that might otherwise marginalize teacher effectiveness as a result of heightened stress.

The fourth piece by Judith MacDonnall is an intense case study analysis of the interaction between perceptions of Canadian health care provided and their effects on the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered population. The perceptual tradition of invitational theory holds that for each individual, his or her perceptions form reality, and that reality may be quite different from others. Judith exhaustively examines the aspects of health care availability, via the perceptions of a lesbian couple seeking to have a baby of their own.

The final piece by Sean Schat is a comprehensive and insightful review of social and emotional learning, as presented in Humphrey's book *Social and Emotional Learning: A Critical Appraisal*. In this review, Sean, as do other authors in this volume, compares and contrasts the efficacy of additional approaches to enhance the lives of our students, clients, friends, and colleagues.

I hope you will find this volume both interesting and useful, and I invite you to congratulate the authors and Sheila for their continued commitment to IAIE, JITP, and the greater good.

Phil Riner
Associate Editor