

JITP

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

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

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THE JOURNAL OF INVITATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

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The Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice

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Editorial

Humbly seeking to continue the legacy of our founders, the 2021 Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice (JITP) promotes the tenets of Invitational Education (IE). The research and documented practices within the 2021 JITP exhibit how the interdependent IE framework addresses “the total culture or ecosystem of almost any organization” ([Purkey and Siegel, 2013, p. 104](#)). Given there is no quick fix for educational problems, the IE framework encourages ongoing vigilance before affirming sustained change (Purkey & Siegel, 2013; Strahan & Purkey, 1992). Vigilance is required because changing how a school operates requires transforming its people (Asbill, 1994). School reform requires systemic change: A metamorphosis, based on systemic analysis of the people, places, policies, programs, and processes (the Five Ps). This structural analysis of school climate discerns whether any part of the whole is disinviting (Purkey & Siegel, 2013).

As proponents of IE theory, we know others are better served by empowering opportunities for achieving one’s human potential. Therefore, we encourage dialogue that promotes critical thinking and open-mindedness. We reject any exhibition of contempt because it merely destroys motivation and incites further division. As champions of IE theory and practices we endeavor to always promote intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) in all our educational, leadership, and interpersonal opportunities.

Our endeavor during 2022 must be omnipresent through our modeling and nurturing an intentionally inviting stance. We must promote IE theory and practice in our demonstrated efforts to encourage the learning for all mission. We can no longer wait to be recognized but rather we must lead others in the “direction and purpose for all Invitational thought and action” (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p 11). Through this intentional invitation, we are provided the opportunity to sustain our successful educational practices through our actions. These right actions will allow IE theory and practice to strengthen minds, free spirits, and enrich societies.

The JITP editor welcomes all opportunities to promote the study, application, and research of Invitational Education theory and practice. You and your colleagues are invited to submit scholarly papers that identify how Invitational Education theory and practice guides reform, sustains success, or reinforces best practices through research. To advance Invitational Education theory and practice to an international audience, scholarly articles within the JITP come from global sources, educational practitioners, organizational leaders, and multidisciplinary researchers. Prospective authors may email manuscripts to: JITPeditor@invitationaleducation.net Authors must [follow specific guidelines](#) (p.51) when submitting manuscripts for publication consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris James Anderson, Ed.D.

Editor of the 2021 Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice

Using Metaphorical Metacognition and Invitational Education Theory to Enhance Teacher-Candidates' Learning

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Abstract

Invitational Education theory and metaphorical metacognition were synthesized in this longitudinal qualitative study as students explored the impact of experiential learning. During university literacy courses for pre-service teachers, multimodal instruction was used to augment the impact of metaphorical metacognition. Participants discussed their insights from designing book talks and digital stories in discovery circles to introduce their strategic literacy lesson plans. Through provision of an intentionally inviting environment pre-service teachers collaborated while preparing multimodal projects for personalized learning experiences with students from kindergarten to second grade and avatars representing students in this age range. Utilization of metaphorical metacognition to reflect upon class sessions and field experiences produced results confirming the study's efficacy and alignment with the overarching goals, elements, and domains of Invitational Education theory and practice.

Keywords: Invitational Education, Invitational Theory and Practice, Metaphorical Metacognition, Personalized Learning, Digital Stories, Multimodal Instruction.

Introduction

Teachers around the world promote learning with reflective activities for all ages. It is usual for elementary students to complete exit slips and for university students to share their insights on discussion boards during face-to-face or online classes. Utilization of Invitational Education theory and metaphorical metacognition practices take all these reflective experiences to the next level by intentionally inviting students into positive learning experiences and opportunities by exploring the significance of conceptual insights from multiple perspectives. Multimodal projects empower students to capture ideas through cinematography and invite children to experience innovative learning activities.

During this study pre-service teachers began intentionally inviting children to experience these compelling and innovative multimodal learning activities. Then the pre-service teachers became more aware of the significance of those learning experiences through metaphorical metacognition. As the pre-service teachers realized the value of their own reflections, they invited children to reflect on their learning and take their *own* learning to the next level. This study focused on university literacy classes in which pre-service teachers used Aesop's fables as catalysts for creating book talks and digital stories in discovery circles and prepared multimodal projects for personalized instruction with avatars and students in kindergarten to second grade. In this university, administrators and faculty members have worked for many years to provide programs and policies to invite students to enjoy higher levels of learning and innovative academic success. The programs and policies of this major southeastern university are intentionally designed to align with the overarching goals, elements, and domains of Invitational Theory and Practice (Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey, Novak, & Fretz, 2020; Shaw & Siegel, 2010; Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013).

Review of the Literature

Invitational schools encourage students to experience innovation and develop leadership skills in student-centered educational environments. Metaphorical metacognition and multimodal projects give students the opportunities to make choices and experience higher levels of learning through engagement and active participation in the learning process. Invitational Education (IE) focuses on the positive aspects of learning and the affective side of the people, places, policies, programs, and processes in education (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Purkey, Novak, & Fretz, 2020; Shaw & Siegel, 2010; Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013). This study's approach aligns well with multimodal projects that combine the power of a story, one of the most meaningful educational tools for generations, and technology, one of our main tools for collaborative communication.

Multimodal Projects

Multimodal literacy combines two or more modes of meaning. Due to advances in technology, multimodal texts have become part of our lives (Mills & Unsworth, 2017). A review of the literature demonstrates the remarkable success and the benefits of multimodal projects. Since language is fundamentally multimodal, we communicate through many modalities each day (Frohlich, et al., 2019). Multimodal instruction equips students to capture the essence and the dynamic qualities of learning experiences across the disciplines (Hill, 2014). The meaning-making process inherent in multimodal projects emerged from the sociocultural constructivism of Vygotsky (1978) and social semiotics theory (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress, 2010). The multiple literacies or modes of these projects add the spark of ingenuity to uniquely and effectively convey messages. Researchers use scaffolding (Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, et al., 1976) with multimodal opportunities to promote discovery learning and sequential conceptual development (Magana, et al., 2019).

The research literature provides many examples of the impact of multimodal projects in a wide range of contexts. At the university level, researchers (Brenner, et al., 2004; Wang, 2009) have explored the use of multimodal projects for articulation of identity. Based on the collaboration

of two third-grade teachers and university researchers, Ntelioglou et al. (2014) noted the ways an urban multimodal inquiry project increased multilingual students' literacy investment, literacy engagement, and learning. Smith (2019) considered ways to leverage students' multimodal collaborative composing for their academic benefit in the classroom. Additionally, Hafner (2013) described the ways undergraduate students in a university English class in Hong Kong were able to access positions of expertise as they wrote for authentic purposes and used multimodal projects as digital ensembles to appeal to an audience. Invitational Education promotes this type of expertise in the classroom.

Invitational Education

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

Invitational Theory and Practice

Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) “is the overarching theory of Invitational Education (IE)” (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 30). Invitational Theory and Practice (ITP) “addresses the total culture/environment of an organization to provide a more welcoming, satisfying, and enriching experience for all involved” (p. 34). Invitational Theory and Practice aligns directly with the comments of pre-service teachers during interviews and focus groups in this study. Throughout their multimodal projects and reflections using metaphorical metacognition, the course instructor and technology coach used the principles of ITP. Invitational Education theory and practices intentionally encourage students to actualize their potential in creative and meaningful ways.

Metaphorical Metacognition

For this study, metaphorical metacognition refers to the use of metaphors, or comparisons, to illustrate and clarify the process of metacognition, or thinking about thinking (Kuhn & Dean Jr., 2004). This approach synthesizes Invitational Educational theory and practice, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, or Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT), which emphasizes metaphors to clarify conceptual understanding. Scholars, who emphasized the ways metaphors shape our thinking processes, developed CMT (Zhang, 2021) after the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's landmark book, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). As Lakoff and Johnson assert, “[The essence] of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another” (p. 3).

Throughout this study, the researcher invited exploration of a variety of metaphors that were paired with metacognitive activities to encourage preservice teachers to reflect more deeply. Metacognition, which can promote mindful, insightful reflection and problem solving, is a skill that is often neglected (Fogarty & Pete, 2020). When students connect this skill with metaphorical

analysis, a thinking classroom would encourage students of all ages to reflect more deeply, master concepts more effectively, and enhance their learning. An emphasis on metaphors enables students to use these metaphors as power tools to connect abstract concepts with concrete terms and optimize stimulating learning opportunities (Wormeli, 2009). The metacognitive activities invite insightful, reflective self-analysis. Thus, metaphorical metacognition empowers students to gain wisdom as they learn from the past, develop conceptual insights, and look toward future opportunities.

Methodology

This qualitative interview study was designed to determine the impact of creating multimodal projects and using metaphorical metacognition with groups of pre-service teachers in a university emphasizing Invitational Education. Interviews, focus groups, reflections using metaphorical metacognition, class activities, book talks, digital stories were the primary means of data collection, and typological data analysis (Hatch, 2002) was used to codify the overarching themes over these semester-long experiences.

Participants

Pre-service teachers who participated in the project shared their experiences and insights during the interviews and focus groups for this study. The course instructor provided ongoing support and guidance throughout the project, and the technology coach added her expertise. Multimodal projects were completed as part of the university literacy courses, which are part of a degree program to prepare university students to teach students from birth through grade five. As pre-service teachers were taking these courses, they completed field experiences and participated in courses emphasizing instruction in various disciplines from birth to second grade.

For clarity throughout our subsequent discussion, the degree-seeking pre-service teachers will be referred to as teacher-candidates. The teacher educator and technology coach guiding the teacher-candidates applied the principles of Invitational Education throughout the program and emphasized the importance of providing a positive nurturing environment for their subsequent students.

Procedures

During the preparatory stage, teacher-candidates discussed research-based literacy strategies and the essence of quality lesson planning as they explored Aesop's fables and participated in discovery circles. The instructor modeled multimodal procedures for effective lesson planning and guided students as they designed book talks. As they collaborated on multimodal projects, teacher-candidates created storyboards for book talks and digital stories in discovery circles, prepared lesson plans, and captured the results of their collaboration with metaphorical metacognition.

In class sessions, teacher-candidates used insights from fables and various examples of quality literature to explore the components of effective stories. They synthesized the ideas they gleaned with graphic organizers, such as story maps and storyboards, to create book talks and digital stories to introduce strategic lesson plans. They used the insights from this collaboration to

personalize lesson plans for avatars and kindergarten to grade two students during field experiences.

The teacher educator designed the multimodal project so that teacher-candidates could make their own choices, enjoy the process, and experience success. She gave them a rubric for major expectations and left aspects of the project open-ended. This gave the teacher-candidates a sense of freedom and autonomy as they created their own digital stories, book talks, and lesson plans. Then they relaxed and enjoyed the process rather than feeling like they had to just complete a checklist of requirements. Although they were well prepared for the experience, the innovative technology was new to them, and they gained new confidence as they experienced success with the process.

Teacher-candidates designed their multimodal projects in the classroom and online sessions. As they collaborated, they extended their vision of what was possible and experimented as makers of technology rather than just consumers of technology. As teacher-candidates created multimodal projects, they used metaphorical metacognition to reflect on what they learned in order to be prepared to share tips with others and consider procedures for their own future classrooms.

Data Collection

Interview questions and focus group questions served as the basis for data collection. They were designed to encourage teacher-candidates to freely express their perceptions and feelings about the experience of participating in discovery circles, creating multimodal projects, and using metaphorical metacognition. Interviews and focus groups progressed from general “grand tour questions” (Spradley, 2016), such as a description of a typical day to more specific questions about their experiences. Open-ended questions gave teacher-candidates opportunities to share their feelings in their own words. Focus group questions were designed to corroborate statements from interviews to invite opportunities to elaborate on certain issues that were emphasized during interviews.

The semi-structured format provided the opportunity to follow leads from statements made by the participating teacher-candidates (Van Manen, 1990). These follow-up questions elicited rich descriptions and provided a more complete picture of the lived experiences of the teacher-candidates.

Data Analysis

Hatch’s typological model (2002) provided the framework for data analysis from multiple perspectives (Glesne, 2015; Patton, 2014). Initial categorization of the data into typologies was followed by repeated readings, line-by-line analysis, and color-coding of the data using *Microsoft Word*. This analysis was ongoing and utilized the nine steps for data analysis designed by Hatch (2002). According to Hatch, typological analysis should only be used if the categories for analysis are evident. At the beginning of data analysis, it became evident that the data aligned with the assumptions, five elements, and five domains of Invitational Education theory and practice (Purkey & Novak, 2016).

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

Color-coded *Post-it flags* were used to label the patterns within the typologies as they were recorded in relation to the specific codes for the participants. While recording integrating concepts that ran through all of the data, stars were used to highlight powerful quotes to facilitate the selection of specific data to support generalizations from these patterns. Throughout these steps the typological model designed by Hatch (2002) continued to provide the framework that illuminated and ensured efficacy during the data analysis process.

Discussion and Findings

The findings of this qualitative study illustrate the ways that the teacher educator and technology coach intentionally invited students to experience success, prepared the process, and guided the teacher-candidates by providing scaffolding throughout the process. These teacher-candidates conducted their project in a university that emphasized the principles of Invitational Education. Teacher educators and colleagues nurtured and cared for them, and this was reflected in their multimodal projects and reflections using metaphorical metacognition.

Invitational Education (IE) emphasizes the ways “everyone has the ability and responsibility to function in a personally and professionally inviting manner” (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 23). The intentionally inviting level of functioning created a dependable stance that helped teacher-candidates feel secure; thereby increasing the likelihood that they would consistently accept and act upon the cordial invitation to pursue an inviting educational experience (Purkey & Novak, 2016).

For decades, Drs. Purkey, Novak, and Siegel consistently promoted Invitational Theory and Practice as a way of life (Purkey & Siegel, 2003, 2013). As a result, they made a difference in so many lives. They emphasized the IE Domains, or powerful ‘5 Ps,’ to promote a warm and inviting atmosphere (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Shaw & Siegel, 2010). In Invitational Education theory, the starfish is emphasized to metaphorically illustrate these domains. The starfish metaphor illustrates how the domains of IE theory: People, places, policies, programs, and processes (The 5 Ps), work together to overcome systemic challenges and make a difference in any organization and, by extension, potentially the world. This starfish metaphor clarifies the meaning and impact of the concepts of Invitational Education. The effectiveness of the starfish metaphor, depicting the components of Invitational Education, models the potential for reflections using metaphorical metacognition, or reflections based on a specific metaphor designed to guide higher-order thinking.

Of course, the IE starfish metaphor for overcoming challenges to promote a positive environment aligns well with “The Starfish Story,” originally written by Loren Eiseley (1978). The original story and its many versions have touched the hearts of people all over the world. To

paraphrase: A man sees a little boy throwing starfish back into the water. Then he asks the boy what he is doing. The boy tells the man he is saving starfish, so they will not dry out in the sun. Then the man laughs and tells him there is no way he can save so many starfish. After listening, the boy tosses another back into the sea and politely says, “It made a difference to that one.” This story is often shared to demonstrate the difference one caring person can make. The teacher-candidates in this study followed the principles, which are metaphorically illustrated by the starfish story, by intentionally designing lesson plans to match the interests and meet the needs of individual elementary students during field experiences in literacy classes.

Invitational Education theory and practice emphasizes the importance of each person. Within any group, whenever everyone values each individual, the power and impact of one person is multiplied in amazing ways. (Purkey & Siegel, 2013). As Margaret Mead stated, “a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world” (Lutkehaus, 2008, p. 261).

The starfish metaphor exemplifies how Invitational Education theory and practice encourages development of a healthy climate that optimizes human potential. IE-driven leaders provide a safe, secure environment whereby people can flourish. Thereafter, intentional invitations provide the opportunities for sustaining success. In each scenario, the leader provides a meaningful environment where the learning process is appealing, and students have opportunities to choose paths to optimal learning. As Fretz (2015) noted, “Invitational Education provides educators with a systematic way of communicating positive messages that develop potential as well as identifying and changing those forces that defeat and destroy potential” (p. 28). “This understanding of the depth and breadth of messages is used to develop environments and ways of life that are anchored in attitudes of respect, care, and civility and that encourage the realization of democratic goals” (Purkey & Novak, 1996, p. 4). When individuals are deeply appreciated and inclusiveness as well as collaboration is promoted, the entire system is influenced, and learning is maximized. Thus, systemic metaphors provide a common symbol for communicating expectations for effective instruction and optimal growth.

As teacher-candidates in literacy classes demonstrated caring attitudes that aligned with Invitational Education, they exhibited ways this positive approach can enhance learning. When they noted the value of these experiences, they shared insights in collaborative discovery circles in the classroom through metaphorical metacognition, and the metaphors used in these activities provided a common language for sharing. Then the teacher-candidates were encouraged to invite their elementary students to reflect upon what they learned from the tutorial sessions during the field experience. Later, they shared the results with fellow teacher-candidates during discovery circles. This ongoing cycle of analysis and sharing reinforced the value of the entire experience through an intentional professional learning community.

The legacy of Drs. Purkey, Siegel, and Novak, as expressed through IE theory, continues to benefit all educators and students. The teacher-candidates in this study benefited from tenets and assumptions of IE theory as emphasized, promoted, and influenced by Dr. Betty Siegel, who promoted and modeled Invitational Education theory throughout her presidency of the university. Subsequently, IE-theory and practices continues to influence the university’s 5Ps, consistently touching the lives of students, faculty, and stakeholders in meaningful ways. Her ongoing legacy

remains the mindset that emphasizes invitations to optimize human potential. Driving the analysis and endeavor to improve upon each of the 5Ps of IE: People, places, policies, programs, and processes, should be a mindset that exhibits intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) that can “systemically transform the whole school” (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 22). The results of this study were validated through consistent exhibition of practices aligned with the domains and elements of Invitational Education theory and practice. The primary investigators, serving as the teacher educator and the technology coach, endeavored to ensure the participating teacher-candidates’ comfort, appropriate challenges, and engagement with multimodal projects as they consistently and intentionally invited optimal human potential. Thereafter, the teacher-candidates used reflective metaphorical metacognition to analyze the impact of their instruction.

Results of the Study

This section describes the specific ways in which the utilization of collaborative multimodal projects, participating in metaphorical metacognition practices, and adherence to the Invitational Education theory and practice (Purkey, & Novak, 2016; Shaw & Siegel, 2010; Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013), optimized teacher-candidates’ experiences and opportunities for learning at a major southeastern university. These results reflect patterns identified across the study’s interviews and focus group sessions. The interviews and focus groups of this study consistently demonstrated the ways teacher-candidates designed multimodal projects that reflected their experiences in a welcoming, supportive environment. Invitational Theory and Practice “focuses on increasing the authentically personal and professional verbal and non-verbal messages that seek to bring forth the best of human potential through, trust, respect, optimism, care, and intentionality” (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 34). Throughout the interviews of this study there were many links between these elements of Invitational Education and the comments made by students as they discussed their collaborative multimodal projects and participation in reflective metaphorical metacognition.

Implementation of Invitational Education Theory and Practice

Invitational Education theory and practice authentically creates and sustains welcoming learning environments. IE theory advances five basic tenets: intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust [I-CORT] to optimize personally and professionally inviting behaviors (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Anderson, 2019). The goal is to promote “increased learning outcomes and personal growth” (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 33). During their IAIE e-Conference keynote presentation, “Flourishing with Invitational Education: Ready, Set, S.W.I.N.G.!” Drs. Novak, DiPetta, and Kumar (2021) aligned I-CORT and S.W.I.N.G. mnemonics advocating for “Moving beyond getting ready with the three foundations, and getting set with the I-CORT stance, it is time to get into the S.W.I.N.G. of positive possibilities with Sincerity, Wisdom, Ingenuity, Negotiation, and Glee. Remember, “it don’t mean a thing if you don’t take that S.W.I.N.G.” In describing the results of this study, the following sections include quotes from students, who participated in activities featuring metaphorical metacognition using the S.W.I.N.G. mnemonic and the demonstrated alignment with I-CORT.

When analyzing the results of this study, it should be highly evident that the approach of the teacher educator and the technology coach who investigated this project emphasized the alignment with Invitational Education theory and practice. They collaborated carefully and consistently to guide and encourage teacher-candidates as they completed multimodal projects, featuring digital stories. They shared innovations to enhance success as they invited opportunities within and beyond the classroom, which aligned with S.W.I.N.G. and I-CORT.

The results of this study demonstrated the impact of metaphorical metacognition and multimodal projects that combine the power of a story with technology as well as the alignment between experiences of teacher-candidates in discovery circles and IE theory and practice. The elements of Invitational Education intensify the power and significance of each domain (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013). Before teacher-candidates completed reflections in relation to S.W.I.N.G. and I-CORT, the teacher educator discussed multiple meanings for the word “swing” and highlighted a multimodal presentation with the class, featuring three variations and the metaphorical messages they conveyed.

First, they viewed photos of the life and accomplishments of Ella Fitzgerald as they listened to her music. Then they considered the meaning of S.W.I.N.G. in relation to giving teaching “everything you’ve got.” This aligned with *sincerity* and *wisdom*.

Second, they considered S.W.I.N.G. in relation to a swing on a playground with the realization that the swing lifts one into the air and inspires the imagination and *ingenuity*. Children rush to the swings on a playground, and teacher-candidates considered the joys of creativity in the classroom.

Third, they considered S.W.I.N.G. in the context of baseball. This led to exploration of the *negotiation* and *glee* elements. Teacher-candidates *negotiated* during their discovery circles to ensure every voice was heard and every viewpoint was represented while planning lessons and creating digital stories for their sessions with elementary students and avatars. Then they experienced *glee* when they saw the impact of their multimodal instruction and engaged in reflections using metaphorical metacognition. The metaphorical connection to baseball and the glee element was driven home as teacher-candidates celebrated a victory by their local Atlanta Braves. This was a double celebration as headlines proclaimed the Braves as the World Series Champions and Soler as the World Series Most Valuable Player (MVP). The world was amazed by the power of Soler’s swing when he hit an astronomical home run out of the ballpark. Fans were filled with glee because this was one of three homeruns, which gave him a place in baseball history (Baer, 2021; Fagan, 2021; Gaydos, 2021).

The next sections highlight the results of the study and discusses the impact of alignment between S.W.I.N.G. and I-CORT through implementation of Invitational Education theory and practice. The following quotes from teacher-candidates participating in the study demonstrate the powerful potential when intentionally seeking to align one’s I-CORT mindset with the sincerity, wisdom, ingenuity, negotiation, and glee elements of S.W.I.N.G.

Intentionality and Sincerity

“Intentionality is the keyword of Invitational Theory” (Haigh, 2011, p. 300). Invitational environments are both created and sustained through intentionality. As a process for defining school climate, Invitational Education encourages a Democratic Ethos to feature “collaborative and cooperative procedures and continuous networking stakeholders” (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 22). Intentionality in the design of these processes emphasizes the value and boundless potential of individuals (Novak, Rocca, & DiBiase, 2006).

Systemic processes intentionally reflect care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) to actualize the fullest potential of a collaborative atmosphere. These intentional processes encourage ongoing development of cooperative procedures with reciprocal benefits. The teacher educator worked intentionally with the technology coach to provide relevant and meaningful experiences within the teacher-candidates’ comfort zone, thereby promoting success without undue stress (Vygotsky, 1978). She used multimodal projects, featuring book talks and digital stories in discovery circles, strategic innovative lesson planning, and reflection through metaphorical metacognition to make reading an adventure for her students. Teacher-candidates reflected on the ways they demonstrated genuineness, shared heartfelt comments, and demonstrated authenticity when they shared their lesson plans with elementary students and avatars. A teacher-candidate stated:

I demonstrated sincerity by being kind, genuine, and authentic in all of my assignments. In my tutoring session and my discovery circle I always put my best effort in. I wanted my group members and reading buddy to be able to see that I always tried my best and was willing to listen and talk with them.

The multimodal projects in these literacy courses were intentionally designed to provide students with tools to increase enthusiasm for learning. A student noted:

Having S.W.I.N.G. means teaching with all your “might” to give students those engaging and authentic learning experiences.... From the pre-assessments, I was able to learn what my student’s strengths are and what I could do to enhance those strengths to help her move to the next level. My student really enjoyed the digital story, which made her want to strive to become a better writer and to create something like that.

Care and Wisdom

Invitational Education theory and practice focuses on people and the importance of each individual for a successful educational experience (Purkey & Novak, 2016). Teacher-candidates in this study chose specific fables as the inspiration for their book talks and digital stories at the beginning of the project. The education program is designed to help teacher-candidates maximize their cultural awareness, connect with various cultures, and develop empathy in meaningful ways. At the end of the project, teacher-candidates said they were more aware of the importance of cultural connections and books that promote cultural insights. They used the wisdom of fables that have withstood the test of time to emphasize wisdom, practical applications, and cultural connections in their own teaching. They used reflective metaphorical metacognition with these stories to demonstrate their ability to learn from the past and continue a reflective stance for greater success in the future, demonstrating care for others. A teacher-candidate commented: “In the

tutorial process I made sure to give the student caring comments every time we worked together.” Another teacher-candidate described the ways she created a caring and comfortable learning environment for her reading buddy:

I provided a comfortable learning environment with a lot of support. I demonstrated wisdom when I was scaffolding my student. I would guide her towards the right answer and come up with questions that made her think more deeply about a topic. I also learned new things after performing each of my lessons. I learned ways I can improve my lessons, and I made adjustments throughout the semester.

Class sessions emphasized the importance of each individual, and teacher-candidates prepared lessons with differentiated instruction to personalize the learning experience. A student commented, “I am in teaching to show children love and build relationships, along with giving them the power of education.” A student noted: “I have shown wisdom through reflecting on past lessons in order to make the more recent ones more effective and successful.” Another teacher-candidate described what she has learned about using care and wisdom to personalize instruction through multimodal projects in discovery circles and her field experience:

I demonstrated wisdom by making changes to my assignments and teaching practices as needed. For example, there were many times in my discovery group where we edited our script, book talk, and lesson to make it the best it could be. I also did this with my lessons. I would make changes based on my reading buddy's needs to provide scaffolding and extensions.

Optimism and Ingenuity

The optimism of everyone helps to make a school inviting as it encourages everyone involved. Programs that embrace Invitational Education theory and practice can be “formal or informal, curricular, or extra-curricular. It is important for educators to ensure that all of the school’s programs work for the benefit of everyone and that they encourage active engagement with significant content” (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 21).

Optimism and enthusiasm were highly evident during this project. The teacher educator, technology coach, and teacher-candidates in the literacy classes consistently conveyed an optimistic perspective. When teacher-candidates discussed plans and chose roles for the multimodal project in their collaboration, they considered the assets of each other and promoted the development of those assets using creativity and attention to details.

As a teacher educator taught these literacy courses, she provided scaffolding to promote confidence and optimism when they began the multimodal projects. After analyzing quality literature, creating storyboards with ideas for book talks, and discussing possibilities collaboratively in discovery circles, teacher-candidates gained more confidence in teaching. A teacher-candidate described her collaborative experiences:

I think during the fable lesson plan is when I demonstrated the most ingenuity. When we went to the TRAC Center and Innovation Lab, I had the idea to create our animal characters out of die cuts and take photos of the cutouts in my backyard, which is

forested. . . . I was very excited to show my students the fable we created. I had never used Adobe Spark before, and it was really satisfying to see our polished final product with nice transitions, images, and audio.

Teacher-candidates used metaphorical metacognition to describe the ways they demonstrated innovation, insight, and creativity. As the result of preparing to teach more creatively and based on their experiences, these comments reflected the views of many teacher-candidates:

- “I feel like I have really developed my creativity when it comes to lesson planning.”
- “I used creativity while coming up with lesson plans that were engaging as well as informative.”
- “When teaching lessons, I can think of ways to differentiate on the spot, if needed.”
- “I think that the further that we got into the semester the more creative and innovative I became with lesson planning or working with my discovery group on class activities.”

Respect and Negotiation

Invitational Education emphasizes the importance of documenting policies and emphasizing consistency for the benefit of everyone in the program. Purkey and Novak (2016) described policies as “critical semantic webs that influence the deep-seated structure of any school” (p. 21). Teacher-candidates in the literacy classes were collaborating in a university in which those “critical semantic webs” reflected the structure of a respectful environment in which their ideas were honored and appreciated by their colleagues and teacher educators. Policies and procedures were intentionally designed to promote respect, and meaningful collaboration was valued for promotion and tenure. Teacher-candidates collaborated effectively in discovery circles and with their reading buddies. A student commented: “My CT and I worked closely. When I ran into a problem during a lesson, she and I brainstormed a way to fix it.”

Teacher-candidates also worked in respectful ways with their friends in discovery circles. They chose roles at the beginning of the semester to distribute components of the project. A teacher-candidate described her collaborative experiences:

When working with my group, we had good communication. We discussed the different roles that we needed to complete and split the work evenly among ourselves. We supported one another when we needed it, and we weren't afraid to ask each other questions. If someone in the group needed extra support one week, we would all help and make sure we got everything done. I enjoyed our collaboration and was able to learn a lot from my group.

Teacher-candidates used metaphorical metacognition to discuss the ways they showed respect for each other and found ways to resolve any concerns and collaborate effectively in their discovery circles as they prepared their projects. A teacher-candidate stated: “I negotiated with my group as we wrote our digital story. We all brought a piece to the project that made it whole.” Another teacher-candidate reflected: “I demonstrated negotiation by being flexible when

working with others. My discovery group was very good at taking all opinions into account and discussing concerns.”

Another teacher-candidate shared collaborative experiences:

In our discovery circle, we always found ways to resolve any concerns within our group. We each brought different insights into our group, and it worked out great. We collaborated in class and through a group message. Any time we had any concerns we could always reach out to one another and work it out together.

Trust and Glee

Invitational Education highlights the importance of providing a pleasant, comfortable, and aesthetic learning environment which nurtures growth and promotes trust (Purkey & Novak, 2016). When leaders establish trustworthy patterns of interaction, schools augment the benefits of this pleasant environment. Reliability, genuineness, truthfulness, competence, and knowledge are keys for establishing this type of environment (Arceneaux, 1994; Purkey & Novak, 2016). The teacher educator and technology coach worked from the beginning to establish trust and a pleasant rapport with teacher-candidates. The university itself is a safe, pleasant, and caring environment in which teacher-candidates feel comfortable. The education program is an extension of that atmosphere of trust, extending the basic needs for a safe and caring environment to the next level (Maslow, 1943).

The literacy courses were intentionally planned to build trust and help teacher-candidates feel that they were in a comfort zone. Class sessions were designed to provide encouragement, and teacher-candidates were able to thrive in a nurturing environment. Teacher-candidates reflected on their joy and feelings of satisfaction, which resulted from seeing plans and dreams become reality. A teacher-candidate commented: “The connections I made this semester have been so rewarding, and it makes me so excited for the future.” Another teacher-candidate commented:

This entire tutoring process was a joyful experience. I loved when my reading buddy would ask me, “Are we working together today?” It made me feel special, and it made me feel like he truly enjoyed the time we got to spend together.

A teacher-candidate reflected:

I felt satisfaction when I saw the end result of my work with my reading buddy. He grew tremendously over the semester. I compared his work from the beginning to the end of the semester, and you could see his confidence grow in writing as we worked together.

Many teacher-candidates indicated that seeing their digital stories become reality was a highlight of the experience. They also enjoyed seeing elementary students’ eyes light up when they shared digital stories with them during their lessons. Teacher-candidates built trusting relationships in their discovery circles as they created multimodal projects with book talks and digital stories. They consistently commented on the encouragement they experienced through these close relationships. Teacher-candidates emphasized the ways they were able to depend on each other as

they divided up sections of assignments and discussed their multimodal projects. Their collaboration took their learning to the next level, particularly as they saw how much could be accomplished collaboratively. A teacher-candidate noted:

It brought me great joy to see my student interested and light up when we did some of the lessons because I wanted to make sure the lessons matched his interests or try to connect them to what he knows. I was very happy near the end of my field experience because I was able to see my student grow, be more confident in his writing skills, and try his best.

Overarching Comments

Teacher-candidates consistently said they would use discovery circles and multimodal projects with their own classes. They were quite pleased with their accomplishments. Teacher-candidates noted that this project made them want to be more creative in their own classrooms. As they summarized the experience, a teacher-candidate shared the ways she would demonstrate that S.W.I.N.G. in her future classroom:

- **Sincerity** - I will make sure my students feel loved and valued in my classroom.
- **Wisdom** - I will make sure to tap into my students' prior knowledge to help them in the learning process.
- **Ingenuity** - I will do many hands-on projects to help students show creativity and have fun learning experiences.
- **Negotiation** - I will work with my students and make sure to hear them out when expressing concerns/questions.
- **Glee** - I will make sure my classroom is a happy and fun-loving environment where students feel welcomed and free of judgement.

When teacher-candidates described the benefits of their collaborative experiences and multimodal projects, they mentioned the ways they would use these projects to inspire their own students and spark their imaginations in creative ways. A teacher-candidate commented:

I feel joy and satisfaction by completing the course this semester and the relationships I built with the people in this class. I am also happy because I know that I really love and have a passion for teaching. I want to share the joy I have for teaching with all of the students I teach.

Teacher-candidates were enthusiastic about the knowledge they gained from their class sessions and multimodal projects. These projects made teacher-candidates more aware of the kaleidoscope of possibilities for creating adventures and inviting their own students to explore literacy with innovations that promote exuberance for learning. A teacher-candidate reflected:

It was so joyful and rewarding to see my reading buddy excited to learn. Throughout the semester, she got more and more excited to read and write with me. I felt encouraged when she began to understand new topics or concepts. I was able to see her progress, and my collaborating teacher also noticed all the progress she was making.

When she would get a question right or write a sentence correctly, she would always smile so big, and this brought me so much joy. I could tell that she started to believe in herself more and began to enjoy learning. It was rewarding to see this.

Many teacher-candidates noted that these class experiences made them more excited about teaching and confirmed that they were in the right profession. These comments were typical of the comments made by many teacher-candidates:

- “Working with my students this semester reminded me why I wanted to pursue this career, and I couldn't be more excited.”
- “I always feel so fulfilled when I leave the classroom. I find joy in watching students learn!”
- “I am very satisfied with the experience that I have gained, and I am excited that I am one step closer to becoming a teacher, which has always been my plan and dream.”

Another teacher-candidate, who made a caring comment in each tutorial session, also emphasized the value of reflection with his reading buddy. He commented:

I made sure to reflect with my student on every assignment we did so my student would be able to both remember what we specifically did in each lesson as well as achieve a higher understanding of the content we went over.

When he concluded the tutorial process, he experienced the rewards of that reflective process as his reading buddy shared the benefits and the joys he experienced from their collaboration. The teacher-candidate reflected:

I felt the most glee in the semester as my final tutorial session came to an end, and my reading buddy told me he wanted me to be his teacher in the future. He said one reason was that I was a fun teacher, and he also said he wanted me to be his teacher because I taught him a lot and spent time with him.

Conclusion

The teacher-candidates participating in this study experienced the value of Invitational Education theory and reflective metaphorical metacognition practices as intentionally presented within the university classroom. The teacher-candidates were able to then generalize these approaches with a kindergarten-grade two reading buddy. Notably, reflections about course experiences confirmed plans to become a teacher. Thus, exhibition of IE theory, utilization of multimodal instruction, and opportunities for reflective metaphorical metacognition, optimized the teacher-candidates' learning and teaching experiences. For these teacher-candidates, this was much more than an assignment. It provided the teacher-candidates with opportunities to optimize their potential while reflecting upon the positive role they will play in their young students' lives.

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Implementing Invitational Education Theory to Address the Unique Needs of Children from Military Families

by

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Abstract

Children from military families comprise nearly 4% of the entire school-age population of the United States. Of those children, approximately 90% attend public schools serving both military and nonmilitary student populations (Ruff and Keim, 2014). Previous literature established some understanding regarding this population's emotional and academic challenges (i.e., Berg, 2008; Esqueda, Astor, and De Pedro 2012; Ruff et al., 2014; and Cole, 2016). However, there is limited empirical scholarship examining how to address the unique social-emotional needs of students from military families. Through an examination of ethical, servant, and democratic leadership approaches and invitational education theory, the purpose of this practice-based study was twofold: (a) to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social-emotional needs of children from military families attending public school systems that serve students from both military and nonmilitary families, and; (b) to discuss ways that educators could effectively respond to these unique social-emotional challenges by establishing an intentionally inviting school environment emphasizing the individual's opportunity for optimal growth. Overall, regardless if students were from military or nonmilitary families, educators within the participating public schools should be encouraged to nurture the various needs of *all* students), recognize their human potential, and optimally enhance the students' development.

Keywords: military and nonmilitary communities, education, social-emotional well-being, servant leadership, ethical leadership, democratic ethos , invitational education theory and practice

Introduction

According to a report from the United States Department of Defense (DoD, 2018), there are 2,101,134 military personnel with 2,627,805 family members that includes spouses, children, and adult dependents. Overall, 41.2 percent of military personnel have children. There are 1,650,464 children from military families. According to the DoD (2018) report, school-aged children from military families are likely to experience frequent school transitions. Military students' transience is associated primarily with nonvoluntary school changes resulting from forced transitions, which often occur with less than 30 days' notice (Gomez & Yabenitz, 2012). Berg (2008) asserts that "unlike most of our citizens, military families have no choice in where they live, work, and raise their families" (p.41). Military transience is clearly defined by a parent transferring from one duty station to another, and the military personnel's dependents relocating with the active military parent. It should be noted that the newly assigned duty station can be in different states or even overseas. For students from military families, the frequency of transitions can average three times more than children from a non-military family, thereby children resulting in attendance at six to nine schools during their K-12 school years (Berg (2008). Transience among children from military families originates primarily from the military system's deployment requirements and training programs for its active military personnel.

Challenges for Students from Military Families

Students from military families face multiple challenges. Some of the associated struggles result from (a) inconsistent academic standards and curriculum; (b) parent absence due to deployment; and (c) social challenges. Children from military families experience a distinctive set of challenges resulting from multiple school transitions and the subsequent educational, emotional, and social struggles accompanying these relocations.

School transitions involve adjusting to different school cultures, sociocultural contexts, or different academic requirements and curricula. Research by Sundhinaraset, Mmari and Blum, (2010) explored the different academic requirements and curricula across various states that influenced educational gaps for military children. An example would be missing core curricular themes such as multiplication and fractions that increased the likelihood that a student would repeat a grade.

Children from military families also experience limited access to extracurricular activities. When involved in sports, students from military families who relocate throughout the school year may miss their tryouts for teams or the new school may simply not offer the same extracurricular programs (Ruff and Keim, 2014). Furthermore, Ruff et al. (2014) also found another factor that limits access to extracurricular activities, stating that "new military students may find that student government elections happened before they entered to school" (p. 105). Overall, children from military families may experience educational and academic gaps as well as limited access to extracurricular school activities due to their distinctive life circumstances, resulting in feelings of frustration and a sense of social isolation based on a lack of access to opportunities and activities that would provide interaction with their nonmilitary peers.

Deployment of a parent is another major difficulty. Studies (Ruff et al., 2014, Cole, 2016) indicate that parental deployment has a negative impact on children from military families. Cole (2016) found that separation from a deployed parent and either living in a single-parent home or with a guardian may: (a) increase misbehavior and aggression issues in the classroom; (b) increase personal anxiety and stress; and (c) result in risk-taking behaviors including self-injury and sexual promiscuity. Aronson and Perkins (2012) underscored this struggle, stating that "studies have

found that children and youth do more poorly in school and have decreased social functioning during parental deployment” (p. 516).

Following each school transition, children from military backgrounds must cope with the stress of establishing new social interactions “and figure how to fit in” (Ruff et al, 2014, p.105) while grieving friends left behind. Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, and Blum (2010) examined stressors affecting children from military families during their transitions into a new school environment and found that a crucial struggle related to frequent relocations is the “challenge of initiating and sustaining close friends” (p. 91). These children also reported how difficult it was for them to separate from their long-term friends and stated how their friends would pull away from them in preparation for an upcoming moving. Students from military families also described how challenging it was for them to integrate into the “well-established” social groups that consisted of only children from nonmilitary families who knew each other from kindergarten age (Ruff et al. 2014). This condition often leads military students to feel a lack “of connectedness with others in their new school, which in turn may lead to maladjustment in the transition” (Ruff et al., 2014, p.105).

Students from military families also mentioned some social challenges integrating with established school sports teams. Researchers reported that children from military families “can have difficulty breaking into established athletic programs and teams....they struggled to bond with their new teammates especially if a military student’s new position on the team resulted in an established teammate losing a starting position” (Ruff et al. 2014, p.105). Further than that, students from military families also reported how some” athletic coaches were reluctant to put military students on teams or in starting positions, as doing so could disrupt the team dynamics” (Mmari et al., as cited in Ruff et al p. 105).

Some children from military families revealed some sense of social division between: (a) the “well established” nonmilitary student group (Ruff et al, 2014); and (b) the military student group which consisted of children from military families attending the school for a short period of time. The literature indicates that some military group members experienced challenges integrating into the social fabric and establishing new relationships with students from nonmilitary backgrounds. These social challenges may provide insights into the necessity to intentionally create and implement conditions intended to enable the social-emotional growth of children from both military and nonmilitary backgrounds. These suggested conditions and interventions will be described later in this report.

Educational Opportunities for Children from Military Families

Children from military families have opportunities to live in several areas around the country or even around the world. Transitions exposes them to various circumstances that increases stressors. Depending on various conditions, children in the military families may participate in one of three different educational frameworks: (a) Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Schools which are located on military bases and serve only students from military families; (b) the Military Homeschooling Program; and (c) public schools, which are administrated by and under the control of local and federal educational authorities and serve students from both military and nonmilitary families. The majority of students from military families (approximately 90%) attend public schools (Ruff et al., 2014) that serve children from both military and nonmilitary populations. Notably, public schools serving children from military families receive Federal Impact Aid provided by the Department of Education; earmarked for the children of active-duty military. Studies on the transience of children from military families by

Berg (2008); Ruff et al (2014); and Cole (2016) focused on the atypical life conditions and the struggles faced by students from military families.

Literature Addressing Leadership Approaches and Invitational Education Theory

Over the last four decades, leadership theories have become more prominent in the fields of social science and education. Ethical, servant, and democratic leadership theories focus upon inclusion, social interaction, trust, respect, and connectedness and therefore may be especially helpful in understanding the complexity of life circumstances faced by children from military families. Application of these leadership theories may also increase the importance of public-school systems that serve students from both military and nonmilitary families in developing and sustaining an inclusive and welcoming school environment.

Ethical Leadership Approach

This approach describes relationships that are based on the moral values of human dignity, diversity, and inclusion (Preedy, Bennett & Wise, 2002). Scholars such as *Eranil* and *Özbilen* (2017) further suggested that ethical leadership reflects a view of the world based on equity, social justice, fairness, and a sense of obligation to others' backgrounds and the public good. Shields and Sayani (2005) proposed that leadership may be instrumental for bridging the divide between diverse values, beliefs, and needs held by members of the school community and the practices of the school. Leadership may create a culture that "eschews binaries—we, you, they, us, other—and one that is careful not to essentialize the very complex, always dynamic lived realities of individuals and groups" (p. 395).

Gerstl and Aiken (2009) further claimed that school leaders' ethical values should be the foundation for bringing various backgrounds and social voices together. Overall, school leaders should be clear about their values for equity, social justice, inclusion, trust, and fairness. Leaders should also critically reflect on the best means through which to convey these ethical ideas to the members of their school communities through collaborative engagement and shared vision.

Servant Leadership Approach

Greenleaf (1977) coined the term servant leadership approach and argued that servant leaders regard the needs of others first and ensure that "other people's highest priority needs are being served" (p.13). Similarly, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) suggested that a servant leader is not positioned at the top of a hierarchy but rather is situated at the center of the organization and interacts with individuals from all levels of the organization. "...The central dynamic of servant leadership is nurturing those within the organization and understanding their personal needs" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p.17). Further elaborating upon Greenleaf's theory, Spears (2010) explained that a servant leader is deeply committed to the development of every individual within the organization. "...A servant leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything in his or her power to nurture the personal and professional growth of employees and colleagues" (Spears, 2010, p.29).

Regarding schools and invitational educational leadership practices, servant leadership has been researched as a variable. For instance, Cerit (2010) argued that educational leaders should intentionally tend to focus on the organization's members, emphasizing caring for them and serving their personal needs. According to Cerit (2010), servant leaders should deliberately strive to foster a nurturing educational setting that promotes an individual's growth.

Overall, in the context of educational settings, the servant leadership approach emphasizes the needs of parents, students, school personnel, and community members before the needs of the leader. In particular, servant leadership may be very relevant to educational settings that serve students from various social backgrounds and life experiences including but not limited to public school systems consisting of student populations from both military and nonmilitary families. The following section addresses ideas of the democratic ethos exhibited by leadership that, like servant leadership, promotes ethical values.

Democratic Leadership Approach

Leaders promoting a democratic ethos considers ideas of inclusion, collaboration, shared vision, diversity of views and backgrounds, as well as empowers all voices in the decision-making process (Kilicoglu, 2018). Woods (2005) elaborated upon this ethos; stating that “democratic leadership aims to create an environment in which people are active contributors to the creation of the institutions, culture, and relationships they inhabit” (p. xvi). He also demonstrates that this nature of leadership considers ideas of inclusion, “respect for diversity, and acts to reduce cultural and material inequalities (p. xvi)

Furthermore, Woods (2005) advocated for committing to principles of inclusion, social justice, diversity, collective responsibility, trust, respect, and connectedness between people and described the leaders’ responsibilities in bringing diverse social voices together in a shared space. According to Woods, leaders that value a exhibit a democratic ethos build conditions for democratic processes and participation within the organization by striving to develop conditions that facilitate social interaction between the various individuals and bringing their voices together. Leaders who employ approaches intentionally exhibiting a democratic ethos aspire to utilize a diversity of values, experiences, and backgrounds as a resource to benefit the organization and its nature. Notably, these leaders would strive to consciously foster a setting that promotes trust and dialogue between various voices towards the enhancement of the group and its moral quality.

This section reviewed diverse leadership approaches impacting the field of education during the last fifty years. The cited sources emphasized the obligation of educational leaders to intentionally bring diverse social conditions, experiences, beliefs, and backgrounds together in a particular common space. This responsibility should include intentional efforts by school leaders to affirm moral values and utilize diverse voices and experiences towards the enhancement of the public good, as should be expected in a democratic society. The most positive attributions of these reviewed leadership approaches are found in Invitational Education theory and practices, which will be discussed next.

Invitational Education Theory and Practices

During the last four decades, Invitational Education (IE) theory and practice has become more prominent in addressing school climate intended to optimize human potential within learning communities. In his introduction to the theory, Purkey (1991) noted “invitational education is a theory of practice to create a total school environment that intentionally summons people in schools to realize their relatively boundless potential” (p.2). The five domains of Invitational Education theory and practice are known as the 5-Ps: People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes (Schmidt, 2007; Smith, 2015).

Elaborating upon the five domains (5Ps): People refer to human beings. Places are associated with the physical environment in which people typically interact. Policies refer to the

rules and codes used to regulate the ongoing functions of organizations. Programs are linked to organized activities with a specific purpose. Processes relate to a systematic series of intentional actions directed to some end. In other words, Invitational Education (IE) theory and practice emphasizes and assesses these five factors; perceiving them inter-dependently as means to intentionally focus on all students' social, emotional, and academic development.

IE theory advances five basic tenets: intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust [I-CORT] to optimize personally and professionally inviting behaviors (Purkey & Novak, 2016; Anderson, 2019). IE theory assumes an intentionally inviting teacher understands that some students may accept the teacher's invitation while others may decline it. Teachers invite autonomy as an inclusive practice. IE theory supports autonomy as an "ethical" approach used by inviting teachers to share the responsibility of learning (Purkey & Novak, 2016, p. 8). Trust is associated with thoughts, behaviors, and beliefs based on consistency and reliability. Respect is linked to the belief that all people are valuable, able, and responsible and should be treated accordingly. Optimism relates to the expectation of positive, realistic outcomes for self and others, and intentionality is a belief underlying behavior with a purposeful direction and aim. It is important to note that additional assumptions contribute to Invitational Theory, these elements are critical components in moving from theory to practice.

Elaborating upon the ethical aspect of IE Berg (2008); Novak, Armstrong and Browne (2014); and Shawa, Siegel, and Schoenlein (2013) explained that IE is an ethical way of creating welcoming learning environment based on trust, respect, optimism, care and intentionality. IE theory and practice has "its philosophical/theoretical roots arising from a variety of humanistic models of human behavior" (Shawa. et al , 2013, p.30). These include but are not limited to John Dewey and Abraham Maslow. IE theory and practice "draws from John Dewey's democratic ethos. Carl Rogers' client centered psychotherapy, Sidney Jourard's self-disclosure, Albert Bandura's self-efficacy and Martin Seligman's learned optimism" (Berg, 2008, p.47).

IE is a theory that aims to deliberately establish and foster a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful learning environment that highlights the importance of the individual (Purkey & Novak, 1996, 2016; Berg, 2008; Novak, Armstrong & Browne, 2014; Shawa, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013). I-CORT minded educators within an IE setting exhibits a moral responsibility towards the students and willingly considers their diverse needs, values, and opinions by intentionally inviting optimal human potential. Therefore, by assessing the 5Ps: People, places, policies, programs, and processes, the I-CORT minded educator intentionally creates conditions that promote each individual's emotional, social, and academic growth, through democratic and ethical invitations to realize her or his potential. The individual must have an equal opportunity to contribute to the shared space, and all individuals should be considered capable of engaging with a variety of ideas and activities (Purkey & Novak, 2016).

The basic assumptions of IE theory and practice is associated with the core ideals held by ethical, servant, and democratic leadership approaches. For instance, both IE theory and ethical leadership approaches share a philosophy emphasizing the concept of acting ethically in the human realm while reflecting a view of the organization based on moral values of trust, respect, empathy, equity, fairness, and a sense of obligation to others' needs. Both IE theory and the servant leadership approach centers on empowering the organization's stakeholders, members, or students, understanding their personal needs, and optimally enhancing their growth. Specific to an educational framework, both IE theory and servant leadership approaches support the premise that

servant leaders and educators should be committed to intentionally serving the needs *of all* students while fostering a nurturing, caring, and supportive educational setting that promotes the individual's growth,

Likewise, both IE and democratic leadership approaches are grounded in ideas of inclusion, fairness, collaboration, shared vision, and equity. They both perceive the individual as an active agent who could contribute to the shared sphere and enhance the common good. Clearly, IE theory and practices and democratic leadership approaches both advocate for democratic values but they also describe the responsibility of democratic leaders and educators to intentionally build conditions empowering a democratic ethos through processes and participation at all levels of the organization or school. These leaders and educators strive to consciously foster a setting that promotes a respectful dialogue between the individuals towards the enhancement of the individual and the group. Both IE theory and democratic leadership approaches provide theoretical roots for practical application, suggesting strategies for moving from theory to practice. Evaluation of the 5Ps, utilization of an I-CORT mindset, and empowerment of a democratic ethos would be applicable to public school systems serving students from both military and nonmilitary families. These opportunities will be further described next.

Applying Invitational Education Theory and Practices to Support the Social-Emotional and Academic Needs of Students from Military Families in Public School

Given the review of the literature noted above, this advocate further directly examined reports on children from military families (Ruff et al. 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2010). This process clearly identified a need to consider the factors and conditions associated with the social needs of children from military backgrounds who attend public schools serving students from both military and nonmilitary families. Particularly, it became evident that it is not enough to just bring individuals from various backgrounds into a shared geographical or physical space and expect success or attainment of the learning for all mission. By contrast, there is a need to actively support the social-emotional needs of all students, including the unique needs of children from military families.

Given the opportunity to implement ethical, servant, and democratic leadership approaches through Invitational Education (IE) theory and practice, the distinctive social blend of public schools serving students from both military and nonmilitary families, there is a need to intentionally empower and expect exhibition of ethical values of inclusion, care, optimism, respect, and trust in the pursuit of equity and fairness. I-CORT minded educators should perceive their role in terms of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977, Cerit, 2010); seeking to intentionally serve and respond to the social-emotional needs of both student groups. There should be an urgency to intentionally adjust the school's 5Ps: People, places, policies, programs, and processes to ensure conscious support for the social-emotional needs of students from military families. Thereby creating an intentional inviting, welcoming, and inclusive school environment. I-CORT minded educators are also encouraged to establish and sustain conditions to develop effective social interactions between students from military and nonmilitary families. The following paragraphs offer practical guidance for educators to support the social needs of students from military families.

Educational practitioners should initiate and facilitate a viable partnership between the school's military and nonmilitary families. All stakeholders should collectively be empowered to contribute to a shared school vision. This endeavor should focus upon establishing and maintaining a social and civic dialogue between individuals from both military and nonmilitary

backgrounds while emphasizing democratic and ethical ideals of inclusion, care, optimism, respect, and trust in the pursuit of equity and fairness. These intentional actions should create a school climate that actively and continuously brings diverse voices together to enhance social and civic development.

Also, educators working in schools requiring improved social and civic dialogue between individuals from both military and nonmilitary backgrounds should collectively develop community norms and “habits,” providing conditions for individuals to engage with one another (Woods, 2005). To sustain systems’ change, school leaders need to comprehend and understand their school’s climate, to effectively lead a group of diverse stakeholders to understand and acknowledge how things are done and how students and teachers perceive these things (Marzano & Waters, 2009). For instance, I-CORT minded educators should initiate and sustain ongoing school discussions between stakeholder groups by conducting civic forums and focus groups consisting of families from both military and nonmilitary backgrounds. Such intentional opportunities for dialogue provide opportunities to address school community issues and provide networks for establishing and sustaining social relationships.

Another opportunity to address the social-emotional needs of students from military families is to conduct some social-focused extra-curricular activities, which might include but not be limited to bowling leagues, food festivals, book clubs, Play Station tournaments, intermural sports activities, and movie nights. These events may serve as an opportunity to develop and sustain social interactions between students from the two unique groups. Furthermore, educators in this kind of school could ensure that roles and positions within community boards such as the Chamber of Commerce are available for military and nonmilitary individuals. The goal should be to make stakeholders from both groups feel fairly included, adequately heard, and equitably empowered to contribute with any decision-making processes involving school decisions or other social-civic organizations. These efforts underscore the ideal that diversity within their community boards and organizations is fundamental for building an inclusive experience for all stakeholders.

In addition, due to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the population of students from military families in the public school, there are good reasons for educators to establish more systematic practices for assisting entering and exiting students from military families. For instance, practitioners could institute more thorough procedures for welcoming students and expediting the manner whereby teachers and other staff members become acquainted with each student’s background. Thus, teachers and staff would be able to prepare for the reception of new students, including those from military families, and assist them with the distinctive emotional, social, and academic needs during the student’s time of transition. As part of this process, educators could develop policies and practices for learning the new student’s prior academic achievements with the goal to create academic continuity based on prior experiences. Proactively responsive and inclusive approaches to transitioning students may assist with mitigating social, emotional, and academic stressors caused by the relocation.

Most educators teaching in public schools have not served in the military system. Thus, the established school culture does not have staff with the personal experiences and familiarity with circumstances created by military transitions (Risberg, Curtis, and Shivers, 2014). To address this disparity, it is recommended that the school personnel organize and attend professional development workshops on the nature of military life, frequent transitions faced by related students, and the dynamics involving school personnel, military compared to nonmilitary families,

and the need for leadership councils within both groups to create a unified community. As aligned with the IE theory and practices, the goals of such professional development should be to intentionally invite: (a) Enhanced awareness of the nonmilitary population regarding the military population's distinctive life experiences and atypical emotional, social, and academic needs; and (b) Established, detailed, and shared plans for assisting the needs of all the students within the educational system.

Additional practical, research-based suggestions are associated with curricular and extracurricular aspects of school life. It is critically important to intentionally create opportunities for students from military and nonmilitary families to engage with each other. Educators should ensure that the seating groups in lunchtime and classrooms consist of students from both groups enabling them to establish and optimize social interactions and mitigate cliques. I-CORT minded leaders and educators should ensure that extracurricular activities include more than school athletic teams and student government, but provides activities notes above, thereby enabling inclusion from students that may transition after the school year has begun.

Finally, another intentional IE practice addressing the social-emotional needs of students from military families is establishing a mentorship program. Mentorship programs can connect new students from military families with current students from nonmilitary families, provide consistency through regularly scheduled meetings, increase awareness of small group social activities, and empower towards planning subsequent monthly social events. Student-to-student interactions may provide an opportunity to intentionally promote a school environment that supports all students' emotional and social well-being. These practical ways for intentionally inviting others exhibit the cornerstones of IE theory and practices. They address all domains of the school's 5Ps: People, places, policies, programs, and processes to enhance all students' potential. Crucially, these steps advance the central ideals of ethical, servant, and democratic leadership approaches.

Conclusion

Approximately 90% of children from military families attend public schools that serve both military and nonmilitary student populations. Due to dynamics unique to the military culture such as multiple relocations, parental deployment, and social struggles to establish and sustain social relationships with their nonmilitary peers, children from military families experience atypical life circumstances, stressors, and challenges. The reviewed literature indicates that some challenges associated with frequent school transitions include (a) inconsistent academic standards and curriculum between schools; (b) limited access to extracurricular activities; (c) social challenges integrating into the established social fabric familiar to the student from nonmilitary families; and (d) and lack empowered of connectedness to the school's social setting (Berg, 2008; Ruff et al, 2014; and Cole, 2016).

Most of the reviewed literature involving the challenges faced by children from military families in public school clearly established the negative affect upon theses students' academic achievements and social-emotional well-being. Research suggested that a welcoming and inclusive school environment would be effective, regardless if students were from military or nonmilitary families. Yet, it is clear students from military families are inherently more at risk and

therefore would benefit from a proven set of practices to cope with their unique social, emotional, and academic struggles. It is well-established that educators play an essential role in meeting all students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Through this discussion of previous research, public school leaders and educators should now be more aware of the distinctive social, emotional, and academic needs of children from military families and the value of implementing Invitational Education theory and practice in response to these needs. Just as military personnel serve our country, it is our responsibility to serve the particular social, emotional, and academic needs of the children from military families and promote their social integration with students from nonmilitary families. Given the suggestions set forth in this paper, you have been intentionally invited to effectively respond to this distinctive social reality whenever called upon.

Further studies should continue to explore the unique needs and social dynamics that confront children from military families. Further qualitative research might focus on the possible impact of the child's age upon the nature of the social dynamics or the need to examine the nature of social conditions presented by adults of students from both military and nonmilitary families. Another important qualitative study would be an investigation of the nature of the social circumstances faced by students from military families specifically during the time a parent is deployed and therefore away from the family for an extended period.

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Developing Your Students' Emotional Intelligence and Philosophical Perspective Begins With I-CORT

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Abstract

A mixed methods study analyzed responses from a target population of teacher-candidates based on completion of pre-and post-instructional surveys and reflective written responses. Results identified a relationship between the instructor's demonstrated intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) to invite personal and professional development and the teacher-candidates' emotional intelligence subskills and embrace of an educational theory that promotes equity and social justice. Implications suggest educational leaders seeking to improve Educator Preparation Programs should ensure curriculum explicitly expects teacher-candidates are able to demonstrate high emotional intelligence skills, tenets of Invitational Education theory, and dispositions that promote equity and social justice.

Keywords: Teacher-candidate's Demonstrated Emotional Intelligence, Adoption of Student-centered Approaches, Invitational Education Theory, I-CORT

Introduction

Whenever a learner operates outside of her or his zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1933), uncertainty creates a conflict cycle and thereby ineffective education. Borne from not knowing how to ask the better question, the result can be frustration, anxiety, or tension. Often the negative behaviors exhibited by students, customers, clients, or stakeholders are the result of feeling lost rather than empowered to exhibit more effective communication skills. Proponents of formative assessment recognize the communication loop as essential when assessing FOR learning. Advocates of Invitational Education theory and practice know others are better served by intentionally inviting and modeling questions that promotes dialogue. However, given people are unable to "accept invitations they have never received" (Purkey & Novak, 1996, p.75), this study will investigate the influence of the teacher-candidate's level of emotional intelligence upon the ability to recognize an invitation as a professional learning opportunity?

Significance of the Study

Previous research identified a need to further study the relationship between an instructor's intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (Anderson, 2019) and a teacher candidate's level of emotional intelligence (EI) and the impact of EI subskills upon the teacher- candidate's ability to recognize and intentional invitation as a personal and professional opportunity. Previous research indicated supportive climates potentially influence attitudes, practices, and relationships,

thereby making a major difference in student achievement (Bear, Yang, et al., 2014; Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007; Cuthrell, Stapelton, & Ledford, 2010). As described by Marzano and Waters (2009), defined autonomy optimizes innovation and best practices while maximizing the achievement toward specific goals.

By contrast, any processes or hidden curriculum promoting lower expectations reduces opportunities and allows undeveloped skills to become the norm. Effective educator preparation programs should never defer to a teacher-candidate's belief that his or her unrealized lack of self-management and social awareness EI skills justify the exhibition of inappropriate interactions, lack of professionalism, or unpreparedness. Complacency, contempt, or low expectations is the enemy of reform efforts or any desire to promote sustained success.

It was also unknown whether the teacher candidate's subsequent increased EI correlated to a greater willingness to embrace educational theories that promote equity and social justice. Addressing this gap in knowledge would be valuable to establish the extent to which a learning objective's relevance must first be embraced by a teacher candidate. While establishing relevance is always considered good teaching, at what point of professional development should a teacher candidate's emotional intelligence be deemed sufficiently high so that teaching and learning becomes more about promoting equity and social justice and less about the teacher candidate's interests?

Review of the Literature

Accreditation Council's Assessment of Professional Dispositions

For the purpose of accreditation more than 900 educator preparation providers (EPPs) were initially accredited by either the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) or the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC, 2014). In 2013 NCATE and TEAC became subsidiaries of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). While NCATE and TEAC maintained their recognition by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), reaccreditation was under CAEP, effectively phasing out the subsidiary councils over time (CAEP, 2016).

Recently the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), has finalized a process by which the quality of educator preparation providers (EPPs) will be reviewed. AAQEP began partnering with several state departments of education in 2018 for the purpose of streamlining and codifying expectations for program quality. AAQEP is also now recognized by CHEA (2020).

Quality educators typically exhibit qualitative characteristics. Specifically, an educator's intuitive dispositions correlate student actions to effective, proactive teacher reactions or responses. This requires teacher-candidates to know about children, pedagogy, and curriculum; thereby making these elements effectively, efficiently, and logically, interact (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

However, there is a distinct reason why measurement of teacher performance remains difficult. Teacher dispositions identified with highly-qualified teachers include collegiality, self-reflection, collaboration, interactive skills, and reflective adjustment to personal and professional

practice (Miller & Davidson, 2006). These characteristics were correlated to promoting the defined autonomy and effective collaboration evidenced within highly effective schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Yet, an obvious problem is these qualitative characteristics are often difficult to quantify, thereby confounding the reliability of their evaluation.

Based on accreditation and certification requirements (AAQEP, 2021; CAEP, 2022), informal and formal assessment of these dispositions during teacher-candidate and educational leadership preparation programs will continue. However, the Accreditation Councils need to be clear on what is expected. They need to require educator preparation providers (EPPs) have data based on measurable observation of these exhibited dispositions. Perhaps then EPPs would consistently promote direct, explicit instruction related to the development of the teacher candidates and educational leaders' demonstrated emotional intelligence and quantifiably observable professional dispositions that includes an embrace for equity and social justice.

Invitational Education Theory

Invitational Education theory and practice shifted a model of leadership “from emphasizing control and dominance to one that focuses on connectedness, cooperation, and communication” (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, p.1). In 2003, Egley found “research on the effects of Invitational Education Theory in the educational administrative process is relatively new as compared to other theories pertaining to leadership” (p.57). Later, Burns and Martin (2010) believed their literature review, which included analysis of Aldridge, (2003); Jennings, (2003); Penner, (1981); Shapiro, (1990); and Stillion & Siegel, (2005), reinforced their premise that “contemporary leaders in education must face a new day requiring skills and knowledge beyond what needed to be exhibited by previous leaders” (p. 30). By blending leadership qualities, values, and principles, Purkey and Siegel developed the Invitational Leadership model that invited success from all interested stakeholders whereby “Invitational leadership was created based upon four basic assumptions exemplifying invitational leaders: optimism, respect, trust, and intentionality” (Burns & Martin, 2010, p.31).

It is now recognized that intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT) should be the Invitational Education leader's consistent mindset (Anderson, 2019) in order to exhibit the personally and professionally inviting behaviors (Purkey & Novak, 2016) that promote “increased learning outcomes and personal growth” (Shaw, Siegel, & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 33). I-CORT must be omnipresent through the five powerful factors: people, places, policies, programs, and processes, which Purkey and Siegel call the “five P's” (p. 104). Being interdependent, each factor has separate and combined influence on an organization's culture and potential sustainability of success initiatives. Therefore, interdependent consideration of these five P's and an exhibition of I-CORT when dealing with each factor provides limitless opportunities because the results can positively impact the total culture of nearly every organization.

Invitational Education theory seeks to promote trust, collaboration, and purposeful inclusion (Purkey & Novak, 2008; Purkey & Siegel, 2013). However, “People cannot accept invitations they have never received” (Purkey & Novak, 1996, p.75). To be dependably inviting, effective leaders need to check for receipt and seek acknowledgement of their invitations for

personal and professional development. Is there an adverse influence of a teacher candidate's low emotional intelligence upon the ability to recognize intentional invitation as an opportunity?

Emotional Intelligence

Analysis of results from a study of typically demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors (Anderson, 2019) found novice teachers considered their leader's Emotional Self-Awareness [$\beta = -0.172$, $t(74) = -0.816$, $p = 0.420$] to be strongly related in the negative direction between all five *Inviting School Survey-Revised* (Smith, 2015) dimensions known as People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes. The awareness and management of emotions, as well as perception of emotions by others, provide critical elements for success as a leader (Cherniss, 2010). Educators trained to develop emotional intelligence as part of their professional leadership repertoire can proactively utilize both their cognitive and metacognitive skills (Brackett & Katulak, 2007).

While Salovey and Mayer (1990) initially posited emotional intelligence (EI) as the ability for a person to monitor his or her own and others' feelings and emotions. EI allows people to discriminate among their feelings and emotions and to use this information to guide thinking and action. While there have subsequently been numerous systematic studies of emotional intelligence, this study addressed the EI concept and identified specific emotional intelligence skills as presented by Bradberry and Greaves (2009). These researchers considered EI to comprise the following four competency areas:

1. **Self-awareness**- recognizing one's own emotions and their impact upon decisions;
2. **Self-management**- controlling one's own emotions and impulses when adapting to changing circumstances;
3. **Social awareness**- sensing, understanding, and reacting to others' emotions when seeking to comprehend social networks;
4. **Relationship management**- inspiring, influencing, and developing others when seeking to manage conflict.

The ability to quickly assess situations and move accordingly for the benefit of the group is what Roach, Wyman, et al. (1999) called "wisdom in spontaneity" (p. 17). Emotional Intelligence theorists such as Bradberry and Greaves (2009) call such abilities social awareness and relationship management. Crucially, Bradberry and Su (2006) found the relationship management sub-skill of emotional intelligence was the strongest predictor of leadership job performance. An investigation between various factors, including emotional intelligence, found the perception of others' emotions strongly predicted the ability to build effective working relationships (Chehrazai, Hoseini Shakib & Askari Azad, 2014; Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi, 2000; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005).

Within the context of emotional intelligence, there are at least two possible perspectives: maximal emotional intelligence performance and typical emotional intelligence performance (Gignac, 2010). Typical performance is a more reliable indicator of actual behavior (Sackett, Zedeck, & Fogli, 1988) because emotional intelligence is purely relevant to the demonstration of

emotional intelligence behaviors (Gignac, 2010; Palmer, Stough, et al., 2009). Therefore, the EI theoretical framework for this study was typical emotional intelligence performance (Gignac, 2010).

Educational Theories

Platonic Idealism embraces the search for truth and therefore the dialectical approach to problems is crucial to this school of philosophy. Idealists such as Descartes, Emerson, Kant, Hegel, and Thoreau would argue that the aim of education is to develop students' intellectual capacity by increasing appreciation for broad, enduring principles and ideas. Based on the philosophy of Idealism, perennialists believe the aim of education is to help students internalize ideas and values that are considered to be universal and lasting. Therefore, the focus should be on knowledge that is perennial based on ideas and ideals that have endured through time. To perennialist-minded educators, the role of schools is to train the next group of intellectual elites based on the classics and traditions of the community. Their charge is to pass these ideas, beliefs, and values onto the next generation of learners (Tan, 2006).

Essentialism, which is also rooted in the philosophies of Idealism as well as Realism shares a number of similarities with perennialism. Both emphasize the importance of teaching essential and enduring knowledge that was accumulated through the ages. Essentialism grounds teaching in the great works of art, music, and literature. For the essentialist-minded teacher, who is considered an expert in his or her subject and an exemplar of intellectual pursuit and moral character, the function of schools is to transmit cultural and historical heritage to students. Given the emphasis upon the appropriate skills, attitudes and values, the essentialist's Realist philosophical influence is seen in the need to focus upon mastery of facts and concepts so students can understand the surrounding physical world (Tan, 2006).

Driven by proponents that included Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, progressivism is an American educational philosophy that also grounds a theory seeking to meet the needs and challenges especially considered germane to the late 19th and early 20th century United States educational system. The emphasis was on preparing students for active participation in a liberal democratic system. As such, progressivists intended to offer an alternative approach to the prevailing schooling that was deemed too teacher-centered and requiring students study organized subjects that lacked relevance to students. The progressive teacher embraces a Pragmatist philosophy whereby acting as a facilitator, he or she guides students in their problem-solving by using a repertoire of learning activities. The progressivist teacher plans the curriculum based on the students' interests and needs rather than on a determined list of great works or classics, thereby creating a flexible, student-centered experience and creative environment that emphasizes collaboration rather than competition (Tan, 2006).

Similar to progressivist teachers, a reconstructionist teacher's goal is to nurture students who are concerned with personal and global problems, educated and ready to change society. A reconstructionist teacher adopts a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary curriculum that references history, politics, economics, and science. As a social activist, the reconstructionist teacher is internationally oriented with a humanitarian outlook. Logically, a teacher is far less

likely to intentionally invite students into a debate about which little is known. Strong self- and social awareness provides the reconstructionist teacher with the confidence to engage students in diverse action projects. Therefore, a reconstructionist teacher motivates students to not only investigate current, controversial issues, and community projects but also encourages identification of potential solutions or alternatives to the status quo.

Being rooted in the philosophies of Existentialism and Postmodernism, critical theorists oppose the transmission of a fixed body of traditional knowledge, ideas, and values, which strengthens a hidden curriculum that reinforces the values, behavior, and attitudes imposed upon students through the expectations and practices of schooling in a capitalist-oriented, consumer-driven society. Critical theory is predicated on the premise that human history exhibits a struggle for economic and social control whereby educational institutions are used by powerful groups to control those who lack power. Rather than dismissing critical theory due to this Marxist perspective, let's recognize other critical theorists, including Henry A. Giroux and Paulo Freire who viewed critical theory as being critical because it encourages analysis of social and educational conditions in schools and society, thereby making exploitative power relationships more transparent. Crucially, critical theory seeks to introduce reforms that will produce equality, fairness, and justice (Gutek, 2004). As also expressed by postmodernists, critical theorists suggest any struggle for control over curriculum and teaching approaches should be based on the need to elevate the status of marginalized groups. Furthermore, both critical theorists and reconstructionists believe schools can be centers of social change. Critical theory's Existentialist philosophical influence is evident in the emphasis upon the students' own experiences, history, and Funds of Identity (Moll, González, & Amanti, 2009; Roe, 2019).

The student's Funds of Identity contributes to the teacher's Funds of Knowledge that can be utilized through a mindset of intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (ICORT) to optimize an institution's people, places, policies, programs, and processes (5Ps) to create a climate that results in sustained academic success leading to the fullest development of human potential. Critical theorists believe a multidisciplinary curriculum that seeks to elevate social justice empowers the viewpoints of all groups, especially neglected groups. Thus, a plurality of voices is encouraged from students whose different ethnic, language, class, and gender groups offer diverse perspectives. Critical theorists guide their students' exploration of various constructions of knowledge from varied perspectives, thereby intentionally inviting students to achieve their own identity while promoting greater equality and justice for all.

Previous research by Roe (2019) proved consistent utilization of Funds of Knowledge aligned with an ICORT mindset empowers students and improves programs. Teacher-candidates should be intentionally invited to embrace the obvious parallels within the IE and Funds of Knowledge conceptual frameworks to enrich our pedagogical practices. This is especially important for English-language Learners and at-risk populations without losing sight that good pedagogical practices generalize to all students. Simply put, the utilization of IE theory and practices to support student assets through respect for their Funds of Knowledge demonstrates an educational climate graced by intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust!

Methodology

The planning for this study's methodology considered the review of the literature, the validity and reliability of the selected instruments, the three stated hypotheses, and the available population. Given these considerations, a mixed methods methodology was selected to address the investigation of the relationship of the identified variables within the timeframe set for this study.

A mixed methods design produced more in-depth responses from individual teacher-candidates, although the sample size is insufficient to derive generalized conclusions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The mixed methods (qualitative-quantitative) design provided face-to-face interviews of teacher-candidates regarding their emotional intelligence behaviors and quantitative survey instruments to identify the teacher candidates' perceptions of educational theories. The mixed methods design (Lieber & Weisner, 2010) was beneficial for developing a composite view of the teacher candidate's self-concept of his or her emotional intelligence competencies and quantitative numerical data to produce detailed conclusions from the population of teacher-candidates. However, the teacher-candidates presented possible problems resulting from socially desirable responding (SDR) or a lack of self-awareness (Vogt & Colvin, 2005). Crucially, in studies relying upon self-reported emotional intelligence behaviors, the literature reports a lack of clarity regarding the correlation between variables (Maulding et al., 2012; Maulding et al., 2010; and Sanders, 2010). Either socially desirable responding (SDR) or a lack of self-awareness may skew results of the quantitative educational theories survey. Again, even with high response rates the small sample of teacher-candidates completing the quantitative survey adversely influences the generalizability of any analysis (Baruch & Holtom, 2008).

Utilization of digital surveys sought to optimize collection of the desired information based on the identified variables and ensured anonymity and confidentiality of responses. Written responses provided further reflections based on the study's variables. Each instrument's design encouraged digital transmission. Respondents needed to complete pre- and post-instruction digital surveys. Relationships between variables were investigated based on responses gathered from the two instruments. Each instrument measured a different variable.

Data Analysis Procedures

Several levels of analysis tested the three research questions:

- R₁: Did the instructor's exhibition of I-CORT based on Invitational Education theory influence the teacher-candidates' Emotional Intelligence development?
- R₂: Did the teacher-candidates' Emotional Intelligence development correlate with increased verbal and non-verbal communication skills?
- R₃: Did the instructor's exhibition of I-CORT based on Invitational Education theory influence the teacher-candidates' self-rated embrace of educational theories promoting equity and social justice?

The analysis of results explored the complexity of relationship identified by the three research questions. Data for the study were obtained via pre- and post-instruction digital self-

rating surveys and voluntary teacher-candidates' reflective responses. Data analytical procedures tested the three research questions.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

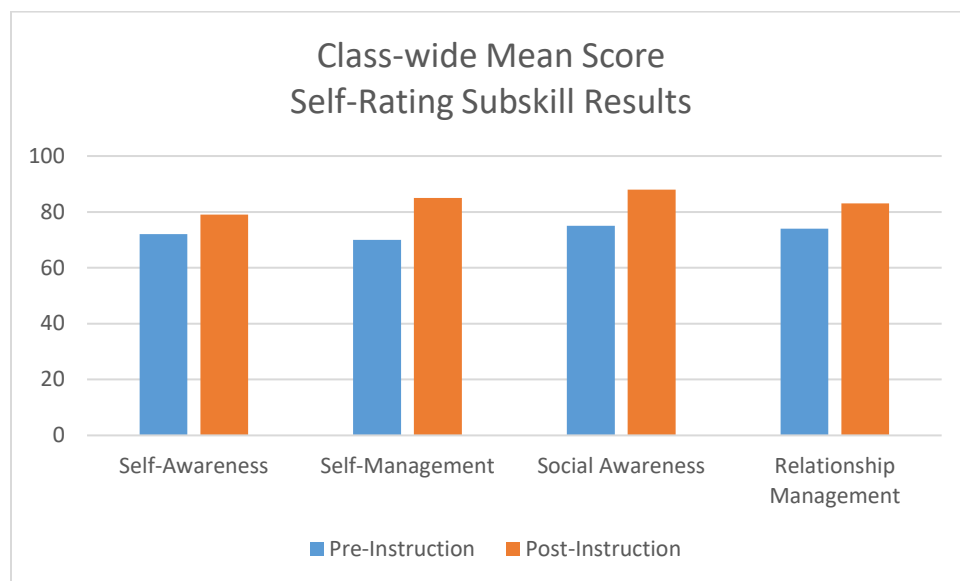


Chart 1: Pre- and Post-Instruction Self-Rating Score of EI Subskills

At the onset of this study, 90% of the students' Bradberry and Greaves Self-Appraisal results indicated emotional self-management as the area in need of focused EI development. Ten percent of the students' results indicated emotional self-awareness as the area in need of focused development. Thereafter, given direct instruction exhibiting I-CORT that also reviewed strategies apropos for the other EI subskills, students received daily invitations to implement and practice their specified EI strategies for developing the identified EI subskill. Students were also encouraged to work with an identified EI mentor of their choice to remain accountable. As noted in Chart 1 above, students exhibited significant EI growth in self-management. The mean growth in self-awareness was 21.4%. While the mean growth in overall EI was statistically significant, of further importance is the mean increase in social awareness. Although social awareness was not the specified area of focus for EI growth, it would seem the students' growth in emotional self-management positively impacted their growth in emotional social awareness as noted by the 17.3% mean growth.

Open-ended, reflective comments included:

"The EI strategy I utilized the most to positively impact my self-awareness, was to keep a writing journal to write my emotions and feelings to help me be more aware of myself."

“The non-verbal skill or strategy I learned was to take a break and breathe. Learning this skill helped me not only in school but most likely saved my job too. If I haven't learned to take a break and breathe before commenting to my customers, I wouldn't have my job right now.”

“During this semester, I've primarily utilized the EI Strategy: Take Feedback Well to improve my self-management abilities. By using the strategy, I was able to learn that feedback is not meant to harm but to improve....”

“The EI strategy that I used the most was "breathe right". I used this strategy the most because it allowed me to calm down, take a step back, and think about my emotions when needed. Additionally, I used the strategy the most because it is important that the brain gets the oxygen it needs in order to control emotions (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Overall, the "breathe right" strategy was the most useful in improving my self-management. “

“The EI strategy I utilized the most to positively impact my self-management is visualizing myself succeeding. I chose this specific skill as it helped me face through tough and challenging situations that I have faced throughout this whole journey. By visualizing my success, I was able to turn those moments into reality by believing in myself and calibrating my mindset into a complete new one, along with my emotions and behavior.”

“A strategy I practiced with self-awareness was keeping a journal. Keeping a journal lets me get all my feelings off my chest. At one point, I just kept writing and writing until I realized thirty minutes had passed. I felt as though weight had been lifted off my shoulders; a feeling of relief. Keeping a journal also let me reflect back on my emotions. Sometimes there are bad days and I just wanted to feel what I felt, write it down, and move on. But the whole point isn't to just write how I feel and move on. it is to go back, read it over, reflect, and understanding what I was feeling and why....”

“The EI strategy that I utilized the most to positively impact my self-management is putting a mental recharge into my station. I utilized this strategy to improve my self-management because, in order to better manage my emotions and myself, I needed to take a break from everything first. Putting a mental recharge into my station helped me to relieve stress from certain situations that dealt with my emotions, take a breather, and be able to sleep in certain situations. Overall, this helped me to first breathe and relax before reacting or dealing with my emotion. The EI strategy that I utilized the most to impact my social awareness is stepping into their shoes. I utilized this strategy to improve my social awareness because, in order to better understand other people and how my emotions affect them, I must step into their shoes first so that I can understand them. Stepping into other people's shoes will give me insight on how they feel and why they act/react in a certain way.”

Results indicate the direct, I-CORT-minded instruction was received as a personal and professional invitation. Furthermore, results also indicate the teacher-candidates’ increased EI may influence one’s worldview. Therefore, between the survey results and voluntary open-ended questions above, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis for research questions 1 and 2.

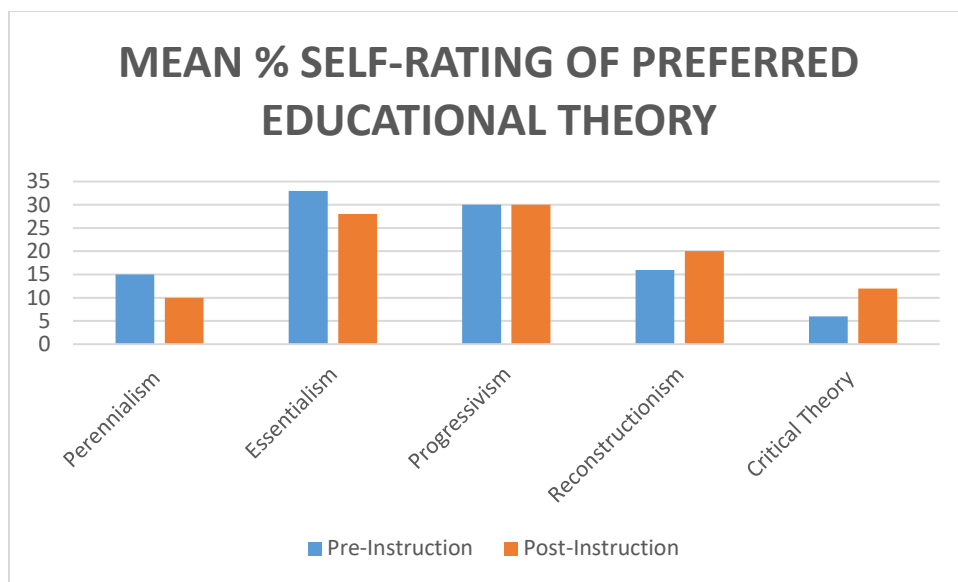


Chart 2: Mean Percentage of Self-Rating of Preferred Educational Theory

At the onset of this study, 48% of the teacher-candidates' identified with teacher-centered Perennialism and Essentialism approaches to teaching and learning. Only six percent of the students' results indicated Critical Theory as their preference. Students identifying Progressivism as their preferred educational approach remained consistent with their preference for this student-centered approach as noted by the before and after instruction responses that was steady at a 30% rate of preference. Direct instruction on Invitational Education theory and practice that modeled and exhibited I-CORT arguably influenced the exhibited increase in the students' preference for a student-centered approach that emphasizes equity and social justice

Open-ended, reflective comments included:

"Both Progressivism and Existentialism are the major aspects of my educational philosophy because they are both student-centered. It is important in diverse classrooms to ensure that all students have a sense of freedom and a curriculum that focuses on them and their interests."

"At the heart of my educational philosophy is a desire to transform the educational experience for all students through the power of art. I have experienced the transformative powers of art within my own educational experience....When I practice my teaching philosophy, I utilize Universal Design for Learning guidelines to establish a supportive environment where every student's needs are met....My educational philosophy exists through my acknowledgment of growth and existentialist values; allowing students to assign meanings to their lives."

"Anderson (2020) encourages 'personal and professional opportunities to be intentionally caring, optimistic, respectful, and trusting (I-CORT) toward others' pursuit of their human potential.' Integrating these values in every classroom and every student's education will allow students to feel respected, cared, and comfortable in their learning environment..."The two major philosophies of education that I agree with most are progressivism and existentialism (Parkay &

Stanford, 2010). One of the main objectives in a progressivist approach is to educate the “whole child” - physical, emotional, and intellectual growth....”

“The initial survey resulted in the higher score under existentialism...In the second survey...I received the highest score under progressivism, which I believe works well with existentialism as both focuses on the child rather than the subject (Parkay, 2010). Students express themselves based upon their personal experiences and as teachers we can take relevant information and integrate this into the curriculum...”

“I would consider the professor's manner of teaching a strength in this course. I appreciated his efforts to encourage student participation, and the class didn't feel boring.”

“Class discussions were very effective and I think they helped students understand homework and become more motivated to move forward in the course.”

“The course taught me so much about being more comfortable while talking in front of people. It allowed me to come out of my shell and get a hint of what teaching feels like.”

“This course has definitely laid the foundation for me to become a successful teacher. I have learned so much about Education and overall myself. The course material on Brightspace was presented clearly, the professor explained all material well, and provided a safe learning environment for us.”

“The course had a lot of learning supports and is well organized.”

As noted in Chart 2 above, students' post-instruction self-survey results exhibited a 45% shift in their preferred educational theory for teaching and learning. This indicates the direct, I-CORT-minded instruction was not only received as a personal and professional invitation but also influenced many teacher-candidate's perspective regarding the need for student-centered instruction that emphasizes equity and social justice. Thus, between the survey results noted above and voluntary open-ended questions below, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis for research question 3.

Practical and future implications.

Given the established importance of the influential link between emotions, thinking, and one's planning (Izard, 2001), the results of this study identified the degree to which a teacher-candidate's demonstrated emotional intelligence behaviors correlate with dimensions of Invitational Education (IE) theory. Additional analysis identified the statistical strength of potential correlations between demonstrated emotional intelligence sub-skills and potential influence upon one's worldview and preferred educational theory. The awareness and management of emotions, as well as perception of emotions by others, provide critical elements to promote success (Cherniss, 2010). Teacher-candidates trained to develop emotional intelligence as part of their professional development repertoire can proactively utilize both their cognitive and metacognitive skills (Brackett & Katulak, 2007). Invitational Education (IE) theory contributes to school effectiveness by the way that its stakeholders demonstrate care for, and support of, the efforts of others (Halpin, 2003; Purkey & Siegel, 2013).

Recommendations for future practice.

Currently, explicit course work in both emotional intelligence behaviors within the workplace and demonstrated professional dispositions that integrates educational approaches promoting equity and social justice is missing from many Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). Future teacher-candidates would therefore benefit from EPPs that identify expectations for skill development aligned with emotional intelligence competencies and advancement of equity and social justice. Previous studies by Rojas (2012) and Anderson (2016) asserted three needs for optimal emotional intelligence development among teacher-candidates:

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

Adopting the linear change process entailing awareness, acceptance, and action (Anderson, 2016) will be beneficial for all Educator Preparation Programs. This research supports the benefit of optimizing a teacher-candidate's demonstrated emotional intelligence to promote equity and social justice. However, when seeking reform, it is not enough to want to change or need to change. To be effective, stakeholders of EPPs must experience change after first becoming aware of the need for change. Only then will there be consistent acceptance of the need for change. Only then will relevant and effective actions be undertaken. This study identified the benefits of intentionally inviting development of demonstrated emotional intelligence skills. These skills can be professionally developed. Demonstration of emotional intelligence skills could be influential for mitigating stress, improving job satisfaction, and optimizing school climate that contributes to school success. Therefore, the findings of this study should influence Educator Preparation Programs in their preparation and training of future teacher-candidates and educational leaders.

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

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

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

1. Prepare manuscripts in APA style. Refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition (2019).
2. Submit manuscripts as email attachments to: JITPeditor@invitationaleducation.net
 - a. All submissions will be acknowledged by return email to the originating email address.
 - b. Questions about submissions should be emailed to the editor, Chris James Anderson: JITPeditor@invitationaleducation.net; ucan@rcn.com
3. Include your home and business phone numbers.
 - a. This will allow the editor to quickly contact you if necessary.
4. Create all manuscripts as Microsoft Word® documents.
 - a. Please remove embedded comments, tracked changes, and hidden personal data in the file.
5. Submit two copies of the manuscript – one with your identifying information and one without your identifying information
 - a. The anonymous copy is sent for blind review.
6. Limit manuscripts to less than 10,000 words, double spaced (including references and quotations)
 - a. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, with one-inch margins on each side, top, and bottom.
7. Format (APA, 2019) the cover page with the author's or authors' names, institutional affiliation(s), and title of the manuscript.

8. On the second page, include the title and an abstract of 150 - 250 words.
9. For the blind copy, do not include authors' names on this or subsequent pages. The author(s)' name(s) should not appear anywhere in the blind copy of the manuscript.
 - a. If the author(s)' own research is used, insert the word Author for all within manuscript citations and all References. For the Reference Page, include only Author (year) for each citation – do not include the name of the article/book, etc.
10. Include tables: created with MS Word table function only, and figures sparingly. These must be formatted per APA (2019) style.
 - a. All tables and figures should be placed (embedded) within the document.
 - b. Any artwork and diagrams should be included as separate digital graphic files, .tif, .gif, or .jpg.
11. Quotations must follow APA (2019) style.
 - a. Lengthy quotations require written permission from the copyright holder for reproduction.
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12. Reviews of manuscripts typically take approximately eight weeks.
 - a. Manuscripts are reviewed by two members of the Editorial Review Board
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 - c. Patience is appreciated but author(s) can contact the JITP editor at any time for a status report.
13. Notification regarding publication will presented to the author(s) from the editor.
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14. For accepted manuscripts requiring revisions, the author(s) MUST use the Review>Track Changes function within MS Word.
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