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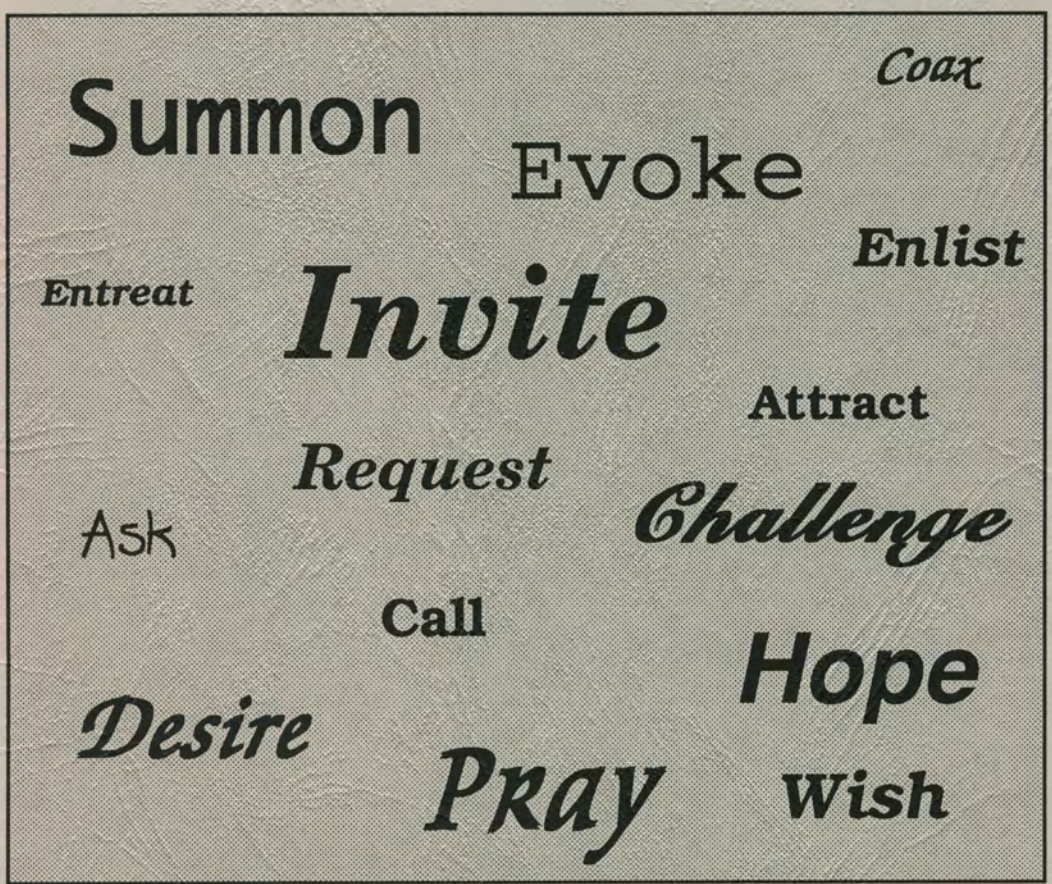

The International Alliance for Invitational Education

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The Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice promotes the study and research of invitational theory and application. It publishes articles to advance invitational learning and living and the foundations that support this theory of practice. particularly self-concept theory and perceptual psychology. Authors should submit manuscripts in duplicate to the editor. Guidelines for Authors are found in the journal.

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Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice

Volume 5, Number 2, 1998

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The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

What is Invitational Theory?

Invitational Theory is a view of professional practice that addresses the total environment and all relationships formed in educational and other human service organizations. It is a process for communicating caring and appropriate messages intended to summon forth the realization of human potential as well as for identifying and changing those institutional and relational forces that defeat and destroy potential.

The four qualities of Invitational Theory are respect, trust, opti-mism, and intentionality:

1. *Respect*. People are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly.
2. *Trust*. Educational and other helping relationships should be cooperative, collaborative activities where process is as important as product.
3. *Optimism*. People possess untapped potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor.
4. *Intentionality*. Human potential can best be realized by creating and maintaining *places, policies, process, and programs,* specifically designed to invite development, and by *people* who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally.

Invitational Theory asserts that every person and everything in and around schools, colleges, and other human service organizations adds to, or subtracts from, the process of being a beneficial presence in the lives of clients, colleagues, and customers. Ideally, the factors of *people, places, policies, programs, and processes* should be so intentionally inviting as to create an environment in which every person is cordially summoned to develop intellectually, socially, physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Editorial—

Off and Running

We are at the starting gate and ready to run with the 16th Annual Conference for the International Alliance for Invitational Education. "Inspiriting Education Start to Finish," the conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Lexington in Lexington, Kentucky October 15-18. The conference promises interesting and provocative programs with an outstanding array of speakers. If this issue of the JITP makes it out of the starting gate on time, the can serve as a last minute reminder to come and join with and share with your colleagues in Lexington.

This issue of the JITP offers an assortment of topics quite relevant to invitational education. David and Cheryl Aspy's article, "The Self According to Allan Bloom and Charles Reich" examines the concept of self outside the normal parameters of theoreticians with whom we are more familiar. Bloom and Reich make social observations of forces which help shape who we are and who we become. This seems particularly apt at a time when some are beginning to raise questions about the oversimplification of self-concept theory that is becoming increasingly prevalent in much of the popular press. You probably will not find many answers in this thought provoking article, but it will challenge your thinking.

Closely related to the Aspys' article is a contribution by Flora Roebuck, Gene Russell and Mack Wedel. In their presentation, "A Suggestion for Restoring Public Support for Public Schools: Learn to Invite Patrons", the authors characterize schools as being not too different from many other bureaucracies in our culture which get caught up in their own agendas and become disinviting to those they would serve. The article is strong and poignant with a

riveting case example which will certainly make many pause and reflect.

Dawn Walker offers an observation of her own journey, personally and professionally, as an individual and as a teacher. She especially calls attention to the reciprocal effects of teachers on students, teachers on teachers, and students on teachers. Many of her observations, perhaps, will evoke the response, "Yes, I have been there as well" in many of our readers.

James Mahoney, a practicing school superintendent, makes a case for effective leadership in order to achieve more inviting schools. Not surprisingly, Mahoney recognizes the school superintendent leads, in part, by example in his contribution, "The Inviting School Superintendent." Mahoney draws of his own experiences as a school superintendent presenting some suggestions of how the superintendent can be more inviting and in the process help to make the school a more inviting environment.

Jack Schmidt and Christy Shields provide a follow-up of an earlier article by Schmidt, Shields and Ciechalski dealing with the Inviting-Disinviting Index. In their earlier article (Volume 5, Number 1, pp 31-42) they examined the validity and reliability of the Inviting-Disinviting Index. In "Integration of Guidance Lessons Using Invitational Concepts in a Friendship Curriculum," they describe a guidance program conducted by classroom teachers. The program utilizes invitational concepts to help students learn how to make and keep friends, and in this study with fifth-grade stud-ents Schmidt and Shields measured pre- and post-test results of the students with the Inviting-Disinviting Index.

We are in the starting gate and are ready to run. We hope to see you in Lexington in October. In the meantime, enjoy this issue of the JITP.

William B. Stafford
Editor

The Self According to Allan Bloom and Charles Reich

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Invitational theory is derived from self-theory as promulgated primarily by Combs, Richards, and Richards (1988), Kelley (1962), Maslow (1968), and Rogers (1983). Two other writers, Charles Reich (1970) and Allan Bloom (1987), have contributed to the dialogue of self-theory as it is applied in our culture. Reich believed that the self was the essence of humanity and that it was being abused by the corporate state. Bloom believed the focus on the self contributed to cultural relativism that lowered standards. These views have helped to shape current social and political debates. It is our responsibility to extend self-theory to insure that its cultural role is clearly interpreted and applied.

Introduction

Invitational theory is a derivative of self-theory (Purkey & Schmidt, 1990) and invitationalists tend to trace their roots to prominent self-theorists such as Combs, Richards, and Richards (1988), Kelley (1962), Maslow (1968), and Rogers (1983). Fortunately, people outside this cluster of high profile self-theorists have written about the self and it is both interesting and informative to explore what they have had to say. Specifically, in his provocative treatise, *The Greening of America*, Reich (1970) wrote about "The Lost Self" and almost two decades later Bloom (1987) discussed "The Self" in his challenging text, *The Closing of the American Mind*. Since these two books have played significant

roles in the American conversation, it is appropriate to review the authors' comments and to glean relevant information from them.

Reich's "The Lost Self"

Reich asserted that depriving a person of her or his self begins with public school training. He declared that the object of that training was to reduce individuals to the functions they perform and, in the process, to cause them to lose sight of self as the sum of integrated thinking, questioning, feeling, and loving. He held that two main means were employed: consumer training and job training.

Consumer training prevented the formation of individual consciousness, taste, aesthetic standards, self-knowledge, and the ability to create one's own satisfactions. Solitude was not permitted and, "The child is taught to depend on the fun of cheering for the basketball team, rather than spending the same two hours searching for some individual interest" (p. 130).

Reich contended that children were taught to make a substitute self. In this process students learned a role in which they judged themselves and others by standard ways of dressing, talking, behaving, and even having fun. But most of all, students were punished for thinking. Reich wrote, ". . . in most school and college classes, thinking for oneself is penalized, and the student learns the value of repeating what he is told" (p. 131).

Authoritarian control has been the hallmark of most schools (Aspy & Roebuck, 1985). In this connection Reich(1970) commented, "The student is trained away from democracy; instead he is most elaborately trained in joining a hierarchy" (p. 132). This school environment was dominated by indoctrination which was intended to compel students to learn someone else's ideas, someone else's version of the facts.

Reich was harsh on high schools. He maintained that these institutions savaged an adolescent's developing self by depriving

it of its need for privacy and liberty. He stated, "The school is a brutal machine for destruction of the self, controlling it, heckling it, hassling it, into busy tasks, a thousand noisy groups, never giving it a moment to establish a knowledge within" (p. 137).

Reich graphically presented the pain of the loss of self. His image was that of "real" persons locked within themselves while watching their role-self interact with the world. It was as if human beings were forced to be a spectator to their own lethal charade.

The prisoner metaphor was extended by Reich's discussion of character which he defined as "the individual's personality, habits, friends, activities, politics, opinions, associations, and disciplinary and police records" (pp. 142-43). He contended that "good' character meant five things:

1. The individual was never violated, or been accused of violating, any laws, regulations, or rules of any private organization.
2. The individual is not rebellious against the Corporate State.
3. The individual is a team person.
4. The individual is emotionally reliable.
5. The individual has commended himself to his superiors (p.143).

Reich lamented that character boiled down to these few judgmental traits and closed his statement by saying, ". . . character-on-file takes on an independent existence that may have an ever more remote relationship to the real individual, assuming it ever did resemble him" (p. 144).

Reich's indignation over the loss of self is summarized in this statement:

> High school, the office, and the factory prepare bleak fate for our youth. Indeed, the saddest thing of all in America is probably the fate of most teen agers. For at sixteen or seventeen, no matter how oppressive the Corporate State,

> there is still a moment when life is within their grasp. There are a few years when they pulse to music, know beaches and the sea, value what is raunchy, wear clothes that express their bodies, flare against authority, seek new experience, know how to play, laugh, and feel, and to cherish one another. But it is a short, short road from Teensville to Squarestown; soon their sense have been dulled. (p. 156)

Thus, in the 1970s Reich viewed the American culture as deadly to the healthy development of self. One has to wonder if his assessment of the late 1990s would be different.

Bloom's "The Self"

Bloom (1987) asserted that we are unique selves and that everything we do is intended to fulfill our selves. He equated self with "me" and attributed certain characteristics to it: mysterious, ineffable, indefinable, unlimited, creative, and known only by its deeds. He noted that the self is the modern substitute for the soul and that self is more affect than cognition. Bloom offered a vivid image of how one is to get in touch with a self:

> . . . imagine how you feel when another person holds a gun to your temple and threatens to shoot you. That concentrates all of the self in a single point, tells what counts. At that moment one is real self, not a false consciousness, not alienated by opinions of the church, the state or the public. This experience helps much more to 'set priorities' than does any knowledge of the soul or any of its alleged emanations such as conscience. (p. 174)

Bloom (1987) believed that John Locke invented the true self by substituting the rational and industrious person for a virtuous one. Within that format Locke spoke of a "natural person" with enlightened selfishness or self-interest. But Locke contended that beneath the surface such people believed that their selfishness was conducive to more good than was moralism.

In Bloom's discussion, Locke's views are contrasted to those of Rousseau. He contended that Locke invented "natural people" to fit the needs of his other formulations. Bloom said, "Locke appears to have invented the self to provide unity in continuity for the ceaseless temporal succession of sense impressions that would disappear into nothingness if there were no place to hold them" (p. 177). Bloom asked, "Man is self...but what is self" (p. 178). By contrast, Bloom said that Rousseau dealt with the true complexity of humankind. He wrote, "Rousseau founded modern psychology of the self in its fullness, with an unending search for what is really underneath the surface of rationality and civility" (p 177).

Bloom summarized the effect of the invention of the term "self" by contrasting two ideas. He wrote, "The great change is that a good person used to be the one who cared for others, as opposed to the person who cared exclusively for himself. *Now*, the good person is the one who knows how to care for himself, as opposed to the person who does not" (p. 178). This stance is a thinly veiled reference to what is widely labeled the emergence of the "me generation."

Bloom offered four key propositions about self-psychology. He believed that self-psychology only distinguished between good and bad forms of selfishness and that the most revealing and delightful distinction was between inner-directed and other-directed, with the former taken to be unqualifiedly good. We are told that the healthy inner-directed person will *really* care for others. To Bloom, this contention was unbelievable.

His third concept was that the psychology of self has succeeded so well that it is now the instinct of most of us to turn for a cure for our ills back within ourselves rather than to the nature of things. Fourthly, he believed that modern psychology has self-love in common with what was always a popular opinion fathered by Machiavelli—that selfishness is somehow good. "Since humankind is self, then the self must be selfish" (p. 178).

Bloom concluded, "What is new [about psychology] is that we are told to look more completely into the self, that we assumed too easily that we knew it and have access to it" (p. 178). This statement is consistent with the notion that the construct self has been taken too lightly. One prominent psychologist seriously conjectured that self-psychologists were attracted to that construct because of their inability to comprehend the higher order cognitive machinations of psychoanalytic theorists. Certainly, self lends itself readily to simplistic explanations of complex phenomena and thus too easily becomes the language of pseudo-psychologists who prostitute its profundity. Indeed, there is a need for more depthful investigations of the self as well as more rigorous instruction about its components. If this does not happen, the self will become an interesting relic rather than a viable theoretical construct.

Summary

The self is accepted as a given by most invitationalists but it is important to look at self-theory through outsiders' eyes. One such perspective is presented by writers who use personality theories only as vehicles for communicating other ideas. They can choose any of the available personality theories to convey their message so when they select self-theory they are indicating its preferability over its competitors. In a sense, the views of such writers lend a fresh approach to the issues that are the primary concerns of psychologists and educators.

Reich (1970) wanted to spark a cultural revolution in the early 1970s and as a part of his message he needed a model of human personality that would communicate effectively with his predominantly younger audience. He selected the self and wrote about how the essence of humanity was being abused by the emerging cultural conditions engendered by the corporate state. For him, the self was a meaningful metaphor that spoke effectively to the younger generation.

On the other hand, Bloom (1987) wanted to arouse the

American college community to the danger that it was being eroded by an invasion of cultural relativism which lowered standards. To him, the self was one of the components of the invasion and while it had communicative value it was being prostituted by those who failed to understand and respect its profound dynamics and implications. In a sense, Bloom called for a reinvigoration of self-theory by those who realized its immense possibilities.

Perhaps one of the main implications of the work of both of these writers is that they paid tribute to the powerful communicability of the self by using it to speak to broad audiences. The message to current proponents of self-theory is that there is much work to do in order to take full advantage of the head start afforded by the understandability of self-theory. Many of the great issues being raised by the Information Age require metaphors that can be understood readily by extended audiences and the self appears to meet that requirement. However, as those challenges increase self-theory must be expanded both in depth and breadth to meet them. For instance, who will step forward to answer the most important question facing self-theorists: What changes will self-theory require in order to meet the opportunities afforded by the Information Age? Said differently, what will self-theory look like in 2050?

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Announcing

2nd Annual
1999 Invitational Education Leadership Institute

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On October 8-10, 1999, the International Alliance for Invitational Education will present the 2nd Annual Leadership Institute designed to provide in-depth training in Invitational Leadership for those who are already, or who desire to be, leaders and consultants in Invitational Education.

The Institutes dates will be from Noon on Friday, October 8, 1999 until Noon on Sunday, October 10, 1999. The meeting will take place in beautiful Ottawa, Ontario, Canada at the Citadel Ottawa Hotel and Convention Center. The hotel is located close to shopping centers, the Parliament Building, the Rideau Canal, and many other attractions.

Trainers for the institute will include the co-founders of Invitational Education, Betty Siegel and William Purkey, Who will be assisted by some of the most experienced leaders in Invitational Leadership. Program topics will include:

- The Act of Encouragement
- Creating Inviting Schools
- Applying Invitational Leadership in Difficult Situations
- Presenting Winning Workshops and Powerful Programs
- Understanding the Philosophy of Invitational Education
- Providing Invitational Leadership for Diverse Populations
- How to Lead When the Power Goes Out.

The Institute will limit enrollment to 60 people. The registration fee is $195.00 (U.S. Funds) and a special rate for students of $95.00 (U.S. Funds). Please make checks payable to: IAIE/Leadership Institute and send to Harvey Smith, Director, Leadership Institute. The cost for lodging (2-night package) will be $132.50 single; $82.50 double (CANADIAN). It will be convenient making travel arrangements since there is an airport and a train station minutes from the hotel.

To guarantee your space, please send your registration fee of $195.00 to: Dr. Harvey A. Smith, Director, Leadership Institute, 198 Cottage Road, Colton, NY 13625.

If you need further information, Please contact Harvey at (315) 262-2348; e-mail—smithml@potsdam.edu; or fax—(315)267-2115. We look forward to seeing you in 1999 at the 2nd Annual Leadership Institute.

A Suggestion for Restoring Public Support for Public Schools: Learn to Invite Patrons

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Former Secretary of Education David Matthews (1996) and others have noted that public education is in danger of losing public support which is critical to its quality and survival. Suggested causes for declining public enthusiasm range from apathy to financial shifts in the culture. This article proposes that the increasing disavowal of public schools results from experience with day-by-day disinviting behaviors. The suggested remedy is for educators to evaluate their on-the-job responses to their patrons. Wherever subminimal interpersonal conditions are identified, participants should learn how to invite people to education.

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in: to bind up the nation's wounds.
>
> Abraham Lincoln

In his book, *Is There a Public for Public Schools?*, David Matthews (1996), former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and

Welfare and currently president of the Kettering Foundation, commented, "Unhappily, many Americans no longer believe public schools are their schools" (p. 2). Unfortunately, there is a large number of patrons who support Matthews' stance. Why would some clients of public schools generate a stream of negativism about those institutions? As painful as it may seem to educators, there must be some credible evidence underlying their critics' claims. Educators may benefit from accepting the challenge to explore the issues raised by their critics.

Traditionally, educational analysts have been inclined to focus on major outcome indexes such as test results, drop-out rates, and behavioral patterns which have yielded interesting data. But, few of them have produced significant improvements in those schools which continue to manifest alarming difficulties. This suggests that some of the major reasons for the public's alleged lack of support for public schools may lie in the interpersonal domain. Writing in the December 1996 edition of *Phi Delta Kappan*, Parish and Aquila said:

> Even when national priorities were clearly stated and significant funding for reform was available, America's urban schools remained essentially unchanged . . . data also show that transformed schools do not have long lifespans. They appear on the scene, bloom, and rather quickly revert to the old school culture. (p. 303)

It is interesting that in his response to Parish and Aquila, Marshall (1996), principal of Mather Elementary School in Boston, said:

> I share with Parish and Aquila the sense that schools fail to change the pattern of inequality of their entering students. In fact, as they progress through most schools, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. (p. 307)

It is reasonable to contend that the barriers between education and some of its patrons are erected by minuscule day-

by-day failures to respond effectively to requests for help by patrons who come to view schools as insensitive bureaucracies. In those instances, the school's inadequate responses generate a latent backlog of resentment which later is expressed in resistance to public school initiatives such as taxes and curriculum changes.

The contention that public schools are disinviting to many of their patrons is not an unrealistic notion. Serious investigators of school climates have concluded that education ignores substantial amounts of cognitive and emotional input from students. Darling-Hammond (1996) wrote, "teachers and administrators often find it difficult to develop settings that are both learning-centered . . . and learner-centered—that is, attentive to the need and interests of individual learners" (p. 9). Clinchy (1996) said, "these lower-school people ask, why is it that we are still being required to teach an outmoded, essentially 19th Century, almost entirely academic curriculum?" (p. 269). In 1990, Lounsbury and Clark reported that, in the typical middle-school classroom, "passive learning prevails" (p. 130).

In psychological terms, public schools may well be experiencing the effects of the public's *retroactive inhibition* against education. For example, when a former student mentions "going back to school," some of them immediately recall painful memories of past school experiences (John Doble Research Associates, 1995). These recollections render them unable to respond facilitatively to schools. In short, if public education is to enhance its level of public support, it will be well advised to at least consider conducting a wholesale reconciliation with its patrons in order to cure those past slights. This is not to demean schools but rather to suggest one path to educational progress is through better human relations.

Therefore, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "With malice toward none and charity toward all," the remainder of this statement asks the readers to pause and to enter sensitively the real world of education in the 1998-99 school year to review one of the

"smaller," but prototypic, incidents that can germinate into a substantial core of disinvitation to public education. The following story moves the reader through the tedious experiential details that are necessary to understand the real flesh and bones of the disinvitations that too often remain unremediated. It asks inviters to be patient enough to grasp the meaning of the experience to the participants.

A True Tale about a Disinviting School Experience

The main character of this story is a 13-year-old young lady whose average grade is 96% across 8 years of schooling. Teachers never have made a single negative comment about her school behavior on any of her report cards. On Parent Nights, teachers have nothing but praise for this girl. In short, she is what most of us would call a top notch student. In fact, that is exactly what her current principal said about this person we will call Anne.

The teacher is Mr. Fox, a middle-school instructor. Anne is one of his students who also participated on the Quick Recall team coached by Mr. Fox. This is her third year on such teams for whom she has been a successful and enthusiastic member. She usually is 1 of 4 members her coaches have selected to open the competition. She's a first stringer.

Anne has enjoyed her Quick Recall activities immensely and has attended practices faithfully for the entire time she has been a member of those teams. Anne is a serious academic student with hopes of attending an Ivy League type college, and eventually, of becoming a physician.

In preparation for the Quick Recall matches, Mr. Fox conducted motivational sessions where he urged the members to win. The atmosphere was similar to an athletic pep rally, and Anne liked the enthusiasm and high expectations.

Mr. Fox appointed Anne co-captain of the 8th-grade team, and she entered the year's first match with considerable resolve to win. However, the team lost badly which upset Anne who thought her teammates did not make a full effort. Additionally, she believed the coach was remiss in allowing members to "volunteer" for various events. As a result, Anne was unable to participate in her stronger areas while others also were competing outside their strengths. In short, Anne was embarrassed by the team's poor performance. She believed they could and should have done better.

The lopsided loss depressed Ann who made it known primarily via nonverbal behavior such as sitting alone and being silent during the bus ride home. She didn't feel she could express her anger and disappointment to anyone without suffering undue recrimination. Her loneliness was palpable.

Immediately after the match, Mr. Fox noticed Anne's "down" attitude and reported that he patted her on the shoulder during the award ceremony adding, "We'll get 'em next time." Some of Anne's teammates later told her that, after the match, Mr. Fox advised them he was going to "talk" with Anne about her "attitude." But, he did not tell Anne of his intentions.

The match took place on Saturday, and Mr. Fox made no attempt to contact Anne's parents during the weekend. Monday morning, Anne attended Fox's class where he made no comments to her until she was ready to move to her next assignment. At that time, Fox told Anne he wanted to see her after school that day. Since he gave no reason for the conference, Anne assumed it was a routine matter.

As agreed, Anne reported to Mr. Fox's room at 2:30PM at which time he asked her to have a seat. Unexpectedly, he announced they would be joined by Mr. Wolf, the school counselor. Fox started the conference by telling Anne he was concerned about her excessive distress over losing the match and indicated that she had a situation serious enough for the school's

counselor to be included in the meeting. Thus, without warning and alone, Anne was confronted by two male school officials who indicated she had a "personality problem" that needed professional help.

Anne resented the implications of the accusations made by both Fox and Wolf but felt afraid to express them for fear of reprisal. She started to cry—not out of intimidation or even sadness, but as the only acceptable outlet for her fury at what she saw as a grossly unjust circumstance.

Meanwhile, Anne's father waited for her in the school's parking lot. He had met her there regularly for several years, and she never was more than 5 to 10 minutes late and that only rarely. The father had not been notified about Anne's conference with Mr. Fox and Mr. Wolf although he had been home all day where he could easily have been contacted.

The father waited for 20 minutes with mounting concern in light of the numerous national reports of crimes committed against teenage girls. Finally, after 20 minutes, he went to the school's administrative office where he told the school's receptionist that he was concerned about his daughter and asked her to make a general announcement to call Anne to the office. The receptionist complied immediately.

Anne did not come to the office where her father waited 5 more minutes. Finally, Fox called the school office to say that Anne was with him and that she would be coming to the office soon. Anne's father waited 5 more minutes outside the office and, when Anne did not show, he went to the receptionist to tell her to inform Mr. Fox he wanted to see Anne "immediately."

Five minutes later, Anne came walking down the hallway very distraught—crying uncontrollably and somewhat incoherent. Her father took her to his car to comfort her before driving home where mother, father, and daughter spoke about the afternoon's events. The father called the school to speak to Mr. Fox, but he

had left the building. The father immediately called the school a second time to tell Mr. Wolf that Anne's parents wanted to speak to both Mr. Fox and him as soon as possible. Wolf scheduled a conference for Thursday with Mr. Fox and himself.

At the Thursday conference, Anne was represented only by her mother, a professional educator. After the usual greetings, Anne's mother ask Fox if there were objections to her tape recording the meeting. He responded, "Yes! And I resent the implications of such a request." Anne's mother made it clear she only wanted to clarify the facts about the incident under question.

When Anne's mother asked a series of prepared questions about the incident, Fox became very emotional and stood while yelling at the visiting parent. Wolf made no attempt to restrain Fox. After a short time, Fox precipitously dashed across the hall to get the school's principal to "help" with the conference. Soon, Anne's mother found herself in conference with *three* school officials—the ratio was 3 to 1.

The principal, somewhat surprised, listened to the details of the conference while Fox continued to make very emotional responses such as telling Anne's mother that she didn't really care about her daughter. Finally, Fox left to teach his next class, and the principal and the counselor remained to negotiate the issues that had been raised.

Anne's mother presented a prepared statement that contained three specific conditions she wanted addressed: (a) Anne was to have no more after-school conferences unless her parents had prior notice; (b) Anne was to have no more conferences with two school officials, especially males, without prior notice to her parents; and (c) There were to be no recriminations against Anne because of this incident. The principal readily agreed to all three points.

The principal asked Anne's mother if she could think of other things that might be appropriate for this situation. The mother replied that an apology from Mr. Fox to Anne would be fitting. Both the counselor and principal rolled their eyes at the very thought that Fox would even consider such a thing. Without further discussion, Anne's mother shook hands with the two school officials and left.

One would suppose that the incident is over, but that hardly fits the realities of the situation. First, even though she enjoyed the Quick Recall team immensely, Anne resigned from it because she didn't want to risk having Fox hassle her further. Second, Fox has not apologized to the father, the mother, or Anne. Third, so far as any of them know, Fox has not been censured by the school.

What more can the parents do? If they press the school for further action, they run the possibility of becoming involved in a long and expensive legal battle in which the staff probably would be represented by attorneys from both the union and the board of education. At the informal level, Anne, who is a logical candidate for honors, could become the subject of "faculty lounge conversations" that could diminish her chances for awards.

The main point is this: Patrons who approach a school to address issues of justice are confronted by a huge bureaucracy with a multitude of resources for absorbing their inquiries. To be sure, patrons may achieve some success if they "pay the price" just as the father who waited anxiously for Anne; the mother who was insulted by Mr. Fox; and Anne who was both "ambushed" by an accusation and deprived of the joy of participating on the Quick Recall team. By contrast, Mr. Fox who precipitated the difficulties has yet to recognize any responsibility.

Conclusion

There is reason to believe that the supposed lack of public support for public schools is partially attributable to a residue of

disinviting behaviors that various patrons have incurred during their long-term association with schools. The majority of those negative learnings are outcomes of seemingly small incidents in which the school is not fully responsive to the patrons' needs (Aspy & Roebuck, 1996). This chain of circumstances generates an effect similar to retroactive inhibition in which a number of relatively insignificant insults (invitationalists call them oranges) accumulate and finally emerge spontaneously as disruptive acts that are either openly hostile or passively aggressive. Simply put, schools can create their own detractors by being disinviting to their patrons (clients) in a variety of small, apparently minor, ways. Governmental bureaucracies are notorious for generating client hostility via insensitive responding. In medicine, they call it the "white coat syndrome" which causes patients to display symptoms of anxiety when they enter a physician's office. If these situational responses are not remediated, then patients may well avoid essential, even life-saving, treatment.

A solution to the problem could follow a three-step approach. First, (confession) schools could acknowledge that some of their actions, however well-intended, are not fully responsive to patrons' needs. Second, (change) schools could stop issuing disinvitations to their patrons. Third, (growth) schools could learn how to invite their patrons (Purkey & Schmidt, 1990). This process is predicated on the assumption that educators have a sufficiently high level of professionalism to facilitate the positive growth of an endangered, but essential, relationship with their patrons.

In brief, schools and their patrons need at least a quasi-therapeutic relationship because in certain instances the ongoing disinvitations are producing negative outcomes. In real life, educational gridlock is non-productive for everyone. As Wadsworth (1997) said so well, "The public's fears are fundamental; [but] at the core are very real concerns about the future of the children they love" (p. 48). Educators can be curative by tapping into the reservoir of patrons' positive feelings by rigorously inviting them into schools.

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Kaleidoscopic Reflections: A Story of Self-Concept and Invitations

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Witherell and Noddings (1991) contended that, "Stories invite us to come to know the world and our place in it . . . stories call us to consider what we know, how we know, and what and whom we care about" (p. 13). This article is a story about invitations. It is a personal reflective narrative that highlights how the acceptance and application of the theory of invitational education empowers both personal and professional change.

Red, yellow, green, blue—colors and shapes becoming a myriad of patterns, intertwining, ever changing. With each turn of the kaleidoscope dial the light is filtered, the colors blend, the patterns change and endless possibilities are waiting to emerge. In our lives, both personally and professionally, the patterns of the past blend to shape the designs of the future. Even when we are not consciously turning the kaleidoscope dial, our experiences are constantly changing the patterns of our lives, defining our sense of self, shaping who we are and what we become.

Carl Rogers (1961) indicated that the process of becoming is a lifetime journey. For a teacher, the process involves becoming a reflective educator who understands how professional definitions of knowledge and perceptions of self-effect pedagogy. Hamachek (1971) noted that "we teach what we are, not just what we say. We teach our own self-concepts far more often than we teach our subject matter" (p.208). Our students' definitions of self are constructed from their actual opinions about self and their perceived appraisals from significant others (Trent, Cooney, Russell, &

Warton, 1996). Studies have indicated that there is a positive correlation between how teachers view themselves and how they view their students (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Realizing that they are significant others, successful teachers determine who they are and how their concepts of self effect the lives of all students. One way to make this determination is to search, to reconstruct one's past, to examine life's experiences, and to examine one's past self. Makler (1991) described the search as " a search for a story to tell" (p. 45). Witherell and Noddings (1991) contended that, "Stories invite us to come to know the world and our place in it . . . stories call us to consider what we know, how we know, and what and whom we care about" (p. 13).

This article is the story of my acceptance of an invitation to know the world and my place in it. It is also a journey back in time to help me more clearly define who I am and to illustrate how my self-concept effected my classroom teaching and my professional development.

The Journey Begins

When I began my teaching career I had a passion for learning, for caring, for exploring, and for going beyond. I believed in myself and my ability to make a difference, or at least in retrospect I think I did. My first teaching assignment was in a small rural school in the mountains of North Carolina. As I look back, it is still easy to visualize the faces of the children who were in my classroom that first year. I remember the hours of planning and preparation. I remember the excitement and the optimism I felt as I worked to make learning "fun" for my students. But most of all, I remember Josh (pseudonym). The first time I saw Josh, he was standing outside my classroom door with his shoulders slumped and his head lowered. He was hesitating to enter the classroom. As I started toward the doorway, I heard my teacher aide comment, "Oh no! Not another one of those Carver children. If this one is like the rest, he won't be able to do anything." Josh had not even crossed the threshold of the schoolroom and already he had a label. An adult, a

significant other in this school setting, looked at Josh and labeled him a failure. As a new beginning teacher, I did not have any past experiences with the Carver children, therefore when I looked at Josh I saw a confused, anxious, and lonely six year old who needed help to grow and to become. I spent many hours that first year devoting energy and effort in helping Josh learn to read. The process was not an easy one, but I believed in Josh's potential and in my ability to make a difference. As the year progressed and Josh accomplished academic tasks successfully, he began to believe in his abilities as a student. At the end of the year with his head high and his shoulders straight, Josh stood in front of an audience of parents to read a story he had written. He had succeeded and, as a teacher, I had made a difference.

The Journey Falters

I would like to say that I continued to be that kind of teacher, but I was not. Somewhere along the way, I became unable to look at the world from multiple vantage points. Over the years, the patterns of my teaching changed. The year I saw Michael's name on my class role it was not a teacher aide's voice I heard saying "Oh no, not Michael", it was my voice. As I looked at the list of names, I remembered every comment the previous teacher had uttered, and I saw a child who was a discipline problem and an unsuccessful student. I labeled Michael as a failure. During that school year, Michael saw my impatience and my attitude, and he added further verification to his belief that he was a person "who impressed disgust and weariness" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 24).

I know now that it was not Michael who failed during that school year, instead I am the one who faltered because I failed to make a difference. I had internalized a negative concept of myself as a teacher. At some point, I put the kaleidoscope down not realizing that the colors and shapes had a momentum of their own. Other forces turned the kaleidoscope dial, creating new patterns in my life.

I cannot look back and cite specific events that caused the changes to occur. The changes occurred when I began to play a role rather than be true to myself and to my students. It is difficult to determine when one begins to play a role. It happens slowly, almost imperceptibly. In order to validate myself and my teaching, I attempted to fit into the pattern of the dominant school discourse. A discourse is a way of belonging in the world, an "identity kit" that enables one to take on a particular social role in order to belong to a particular social group (Gee, 1990). How one defines self is basic to determining one's identity in a discourse. In order to belong to the dominant discourse of my school, I tried to assume and to learn the identity role that I felt was needed. Over a period of years, I allowed the existing system to define and to shape my teaching. In the process I became disconnected from myself and I began to psychologically distance myself from my students. I was experiencing feelings of failure and exhaustion often associated with burnout (Trent, 1997).

As a teacher, I alternately was unintentionally inviting or unintentionally disinviting (Purkey & Novak, 1984). An unintentionally inviting teacher can be effective, but is not consistent. I was not consistent in the relationships established in my classroom. As a result of this inconsistency, my classroom manner conveyed an attitude of disinterest and insensitivity. I did not believe in myself, so I did not attempt to create classroom dynamics that would encourage children to reach their maximum potential. I became enmeshed in "the 'cotton wool' of habit, of mere routine, of automatism" (Greene, 1988, p. 2).

Unable to see a way to change, I began to consider leaving the classroom and possibly leaving the teaching profession. Feeling the discontent, I began an outward journey, not realizing that ultimately I needed to begin to look inward. It was the outward search that encouraged me to enroll in a graduate program of studies and led to the first invitation.

The Journey Resumed

Invitations and the concepts of invitational education play an important role in my story. "Invitational education is the process by which people are cordially summoned to realize their relatively boundless potential" (Purkey & Novak, 1984, p. 3). One of the tenants of invitational education states that one way this potential is realized is "by people who are personally and professionally inviting to themselves and others" (Purkey & Novak, 1984, p. 2). My graduate advisor was such a person. She painted a picture of a different future in education. She believed that educators can and do make a positive difference in the lives of students. She attempted to make such a difference by encouraging me to continue my education, to enter a doctoral program, and to prepare for a position in higher education. Even though I caught a different glimpse of myself through her eyes, the invitation went unaccepted. The risk, the fear of failure, or maybe even the fear of success, and the lack of my ability to envision the difference between the actual and the possible, created a "wall" (Greene, 1988, p. 5) blocking my ability to bring something new into existence. Yet, the seed was planted and it lay dormant, just waiting to grow.

Later that year at a professional meeting another invitation was issued. As the speaker discussed self-concept research and the theory of invitational education, I found myself wanting to know more. I felt a need to remain after the meeting to further discuss aspects of teaching and self-concept theory. The speaker was an educator who operates at the highest level of invitational functioning - intentionally inviting. Educators who function at the intentionally-inviting level believe people are "valuable, capable, and responsible and...intentionally invite them to share in these beliefs" (Purkey & Novak, 1984, 1984, p. 20). As we talked, he issued an invitation to participate in a project involving self-concept research. I accepted the invitation and the seed that had been lying dormant began to take root and to grow.

Over the next few months as I read and we dialogued, I began to see myself through the eyes of a caring educator who believed in my abilities and who encouraged me to reach my potential. I

also began to spend time in self-reflection and self-dialogue. I began to ask myself questions that Smyth (1989) posed in critical reflection. "Who am I? What do I do? What does this mean? How did I come to be this way? How can I do things differently?" (p. 2).

This self-reflection and dialogue with others helped me to reveal and to name the "wall" that interfered with my ability to change. The wall was my lack of a belief in myself and in my ability to make a difference in the dominant discourse of my school community. As I recognized the obstacle and I began to interact with professionals who viewed walls as challenges rather than obstacles, I was able to take action and to re-create a more positive image of myself as a person and as a teacher. I began to consciously turn the dial of the kaleidoscope in order to shape and form the patterns of my personal and professional life.

The development and changes in my self-concept did not occur quickly. The self-concept is consistent and difficult to change because it requires change in a whole system of beliefs about one's self. Some of these beliefs are close to the center of the self and difficult to change, but other more peripheral beliefs are more acquiescent to change. The self is unique and each belief also has its own positive or negative value, as well as, its own cognizance of success or failure. The uniquely organized self is our basic frame of reference, thus maintaining and enhancing self-concept is a prime motivator for our behavior (Purkey, 1970). John Dewey described the self as being "in continuous formation through choice of action" (cited in Greene, 1988, p. 22). I had started a process of change by accepting invitations to new courses of action. My choices of action formulated and are continuing to formulate a more positive image of self.

Our perceptions of self are established as we interact with significant others in our environment. Parents, teachers, and peers in the role of significant others can have both positive and negative influences on self-concept and development. Two caring educators had played a significant role in helping me to reformulate a more positive self-image. As a result of their invitations to

grow personally and professionally, I began to see myself in a different light. I also began to wonder if, as a teacher, I could invite my students to form more positive concepts of self, especially their concept of self as a learner.

New Directions

Self-concept forms early in life, but when children enter school an academic part of self-concept, self-concept-as-learner is acquired (Purkey, 1970). Self-concept-as-learner is "that part of a person's 'global self' - all the attitudes, opinions and beliefs that a person holds to be true of his/her personal existence - that relates most directly to school achievement" (Purkey, Raheim, & Cage, 1983, p. 53). Educators and researchers have pointed out that a relationship exists between academic achievement and a student's self-concept (Beane, Lipka, & Ludewig, 1980; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Walberg, 1984; Purkey, 1970; Silvernail, 1981; Wylie, 1974, 1979, 1989). Recent studies indicated that self-esteem is not a precondition for student success in academic, social, and moral areas, but is a product of this success (Bunker, 1991; Cohen & Westhues, 1995; Mone, Baker, Douglas, & Jefferies, 1995; Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenbeerg, 1995). Investigations have shown that some students acquire a more negative self-image with each additional year in school and that negative attitudes increase as the end of the school year approaches (Edeburn & Landry, 1974; Harper, 1989; Silvernail, 1981). Some research has indicated a positive relationship between teacher self-concept and student self-concept (Curtis & Altman, 1977; Edeburn & Landry, 1974) and that a curriculum based on the tenets of invitational education positively impacts learning experiences (Maaka & Lipka, 1996).

As I began a new school year, I wanted to discover for myself if the difference in my self-concept would have a positive affect on my students' self-concepts. The first step became the creation of an inviting classroom atmosphere conducive to enhancing self-images. To create such an atmosphere, I started by making changes in the physical appearance of my classroom. I added plants, a large rug, and pillows to provide inviting nooks for reading and working. I created and maintained bulletin boards to highlight each student's interests and accomplishments. I also attempted to establish an atmosphere of warmth, respect, security, acceptance, and encouragement that is necessary for

children to build a positive sense of self. I wanted children to express their ideas and take risks that would enable them to experience the possibility for success. To provide such an atmosphere it was necessary for me to maintain an inviting stance and accept each student as a unique individual.

As a new group of second graders entered my classroom, I set about making sure that each one felt accepted. I greeted each child at the door every morning. I established procedures for daily, weekly, and monthly recognition of individual success and uniqueness. Activities, such as positive affirmations that illustrated each child's special contributions to the class, were used to enhance feelings of self-worth. In the fall, I used the Florida Key Self-Concept Scale (Purkey, Cage, & Fahey, 1986) to gain insights into my students' perceptions of themselves. The Florida Key Self-Concept Scale was designed to measure self-concept of the learner, as well as the perceived self-concept of the learner by the teacher. A student who has a high score on the Florida Key is assumed to possess a positive self-concept-as-learner and a low score indicates a negative self-concept-as-learner (High: 81-115; Moderate: 35-80; Low: 0-34).

Throughout the school year, I incorporated self-concept activities into my classroom curriculum. Through classroom sharing during activities such as "What's My Bag" (Canfield & Wells, 1976), in which students decorate and fill an ordinary paper bag with objects to describe themselves as unique persons, the students were more able to appreciate individual likenesses and differences. In collaboration with a colleague, a cross-grade reading program was established that enabled students to spend time each week reading to preschool handicapped children. The caring relationships that developed were invaluable in helping the students to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Positive feelings of self are also enhanced through positive and safe touch (McCarty, 1990). Therefore, I gave my students many opportunities to experience legitimate touch in the form of handshakes, hugs, and high five's.

I encouraged my students to express their own ideas and opinions and to realize that it is all right to make mistakes. I provided many opportunities for cooperative learning, for exploring and for experiencing success. Since clearly defined limits add to a child's sense of security and esteem (Coopersmith, 1967), established classroom standards were reasonably and consistently enforced. As I incorporated ideas and activities to create an inviting classroom environment, I was cognizant that activities alone are not effective in enhancing self-worth. Although self-concept activities play a role in helping create situations that help children develop a positive self-image, it is the teacher's inviting stance, both verbally and non verbally, which plays a larger role in the process.

Through an inviting stance I portrayed my belief in the uniqueness and potential of my students. As they began to see themselves through my eyes, many of my students began to formulate more positive conceptions of self. In the spring semester, I again used the Florida Key to measure self-concept-as-learner. In the fall six students scored high, fourteen moderate, and two low. The mean of the fall test was 63.4 with a standard deviation of 28.13. In the spring administration thirteen students scored high, eight moderate, and one low. The spring mean was 81.81 with a standard deviation of 19.52. Although the results were not statistically significant, results indicated increases in total self-concept-as-learner scores for all but one student, indicating that, as a group, the students' positive self-images as learners had shown some growth during the school year.

The student's individual stories provided demonstrations of their growth. Their stories are unique—separate from mine, yet connected. There was Mark, a child who once said, "I can't" to every writing assignment, yet he began to enjoy writing his own stories and to envision himself as becoming an author. Ben, a child who cried over mistakes, started to accept his mistakes as a part of the learning process. Martha, whose perfectionism had already caused an ulcer at her young age, demonstrated that the

process of cooperative learning is fun and that acceptance within a group does not depend on perfection. Matthew, whose reading problems had caused him to develop a negative view of himself as a reader, developed a more positive self-image as he read each week to a preschool handicapped child. I saw so many changes in my students, but I also saw myself as I began to "teach from the heart" (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991; Purkey, 1990). In teaching from the heart, I was creating an inviting environment which enabled a transcendent relationship to occur (O'Hara & Radd, 1994). A transcendent teacher-learner relationship is one that goes beyond traditional roles of interaction and results in turning point encounters for one or both participants. As a teacher, I believed in myself and my students, I was making a difference and thus I was opening spaces for turning point encounters to occur in my classroom.

I was issuing invitations to my students and to myself. By inviting myself, I continued to turn the kaleidoscope dial to formulate my own patterns of development. After attending the first Virginia State Conference on Self-Esteem, I established my own professional self-concept workshop for classroom teachers. During the school year, I presented at local, regional, and state conferences. I became more involved in professional organizations and submitted a work for publication in a professional journal.

As I attempted to form the patterns of my professional growth, I was involved in taking risks. Any growth-producing situation involves taking risks. As I attempted to change life patterns, I was risking censure, disapproval, errors in judgment, failure, and my self-concept. As a person experiences repeated failure, self-concept is negatively affected, and there is a tendency to withdraw from risk-taking situations (Canfield & Wells, 1976). As I began to experience success, my sense of self-worth was positively enhanced, and I continued to take risks in order to bring about changes.

Others also began to notice the changes that were occurring in my classroom. My colleagues recognized the differences in my teaching and I was chosen to represent my school, my county, and my region as the 1992 Virginia Region VII Teacher of the Year. Each of these events added to my feelings of competence and success as a teacher.

A New Journey

Changes had evolved in my classroom, but changes were also evolving within me. As I again reflected and dialogued, I began to realize that it was time to accept a previously rejected invitation. In order to bring something new into existence in terms of my own professional growth, I had to open up a space between what was and what could become. It was time to accept the invitation to return to the classroom not as a teacher, but as a student.

With the acceptance of that invitation, I began a new journey as a doctoral student. The journey led to this point of reflection, and the reflection led to the continuance of the journey. My self-reflections generated self-dialogue and caused me to formulate new questions. How do other teachers see themselves? How are teacher education programs helping young professionals to become reflective practitioners and teacher/researchers? How does a cooperating teacher's sense of self, as a teacher, affect a student teacher's self-concept? What happens when we, as teachers, "bring our real selves to school" (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991, p. 305)? The dissertation process began, and I sought answers to questions about the identities of pre-service teachers and young children.

The Journey Continues

When the dissertation (Walker, 1994) and degree were completed , a space opened to bring a new career into existence, and I became an assistant professor of education. As I continue to engage in self-reflection and self-dialogue, I have learned that pos-

sibilities always exist. I can make a difference in the lives of my students by inviting them to establish classroom practices based on invitational theory. When these invitations are accepted future educators are empowered to bring something new into existence. I have also learned that in order to continue my own journey I must pick up the kaleidoscope, turn the dial, and watch the patterns merge and change as invitations are issued, rejected and accepted. Just as the past defined the present, the present will shape the possibilities of the future—red, yellow, green, blue—colors and shapes forming patterns, intertwining, ever changing.

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