Invitational Online Teaching Assessment (IOTA)
User Manual

July 2014

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The concept of Invitational Education first postulated by William Purkey in 1970 and further developed by William Purkey and John Novak in 1978 and 1984, requires a holistic mentality that encompasses everybody and everything. Human potential can best be realized by places, policies, processes, and programs specifically designed to invite development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others. These five Ps provide a framework to collaboratively address, evaluate, modify, and sustain a positive total school environment. What we are attempting to do is focus on the individual online instructor. In 1933, Dewey stated, “Everything the teacher does, as well as the manner in which he does it, incites the child to respond in some way or another and each response tends to set the child’s attitude in some way or another.” While this is directed at children, recent research on instructor immediacy (Bailie, 2012) also points to the importance of instructor behaviors on student affective outcomes, as well as academic outcomes, regardless of the age of the learner.

Invitational Education is a model of the education process consisting of five value-based assumptions about the nature of people and their potential. The inviting educator is intentionally and consistently trustworthy, respectful, optimistic and caring.

- Intentionality: A belief underlying behavior with a purposeful direction and aim.
- Trust: Thoughts, behaviors and beliefs based on reliability, consistency, personal authenticity, and honesty.
- Respect: A belief that all people are valuable, able and responsible and should be treated accordingly.
- Optimism: An expectation of positive, realistic outcomes for self and others.
- Care: To demonstrate concern by sharing warmth, empathy, positive regard, and interest in others, specifically with the intention to help them reach their potential.

This perspective allows the educator to assume an “inviting stance,” which is a focused framework for sustained action (Purkey & Novak, 2008, pg. 13).

The current Invitational Teaching Survey (ITS) developed by Amos (1985) was designed specifically for face-to-face teaching and was not appropriate for an online instructor nor could it be administered to students over the Internet. The Invitational Online Teaching Assessment (IOTA) was developed as an alternative to the ITS to address the need for an instrument for online instructors to use with their classes to assess their teaching behaviors. In their book, Invitational Teaching, Learning, and Living, Purkey and Stanley (1991) explained the five powerful P’s of invitational education in the classroom: people, places, policies, programs, and processes. The first P is for the teacher in the classroom and research has shown that teachers who establish and maintain a warm, understanding, and supportive climate in which students feel comfortable are successful (p. 68). Successful teachers are those who are intentionally
inviting with themselves and others. This instrument will allow online instructors to assess their personally and professionally inviting behaviors and develop performance goals to address any areas that are either intentionally or unintentionally disinviting.

**Invitational Online Teaching Assessment**

The Invitational Online Teaching Assessment is an assessment designed for online teachers to use with their students to evaluate their invitational teaching behaviors, both personal and professional. The IOTA as developed and field tested with 448 online students from different schools enrolled at an online university. This non-random sample was used to identify the behaviors that they feel are inviting. Of those 448 students, 342 or 76% were female and 55% were between the ages of 31 and 50. These demographics closely match the overall demographics for many online universities. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents had taken more than six previous online courses so it may be assumed that their assessments of teaching behavior are reliable and valid.

**How to Use the IOTA**

The IOTA is meant to be used as:

- a measure to help online teachers identify practices that are their strengths and practices that need improvement
- a basis for planning an individual program for improvement
- an evaluation tool to assess how often students perceive certain behaviors in teaching
- a pre-post measure for teachers who are implementing a plan to improve their teaching practices.

**Description of IOTA Dimensions and Subscales**

The IOTA has five component scales: Commitment, Consideration, Coordination, Proficiency, and Expectation. Commitment and Consideration comprise the **Personally inviting dimension** and Coordination, Proficiency, and Expectation comprise the **Professionally inviting dimension**. The personally inviting dimension measures the teacher’s ability to encourage students to feel good about themselves and their abilities in general. The professionally inviting dimension measures the teacher’s ability to encourage students to learn and appreciate course content.

Each dimension includes subscales or clusters as follows:

**Commitment**—the teacher’s resolve to promote student social and emotional health includes three subscales: Supporting, Disclosing, and Investing.

**Consideration**—the teacher’s ability to communicate caring for the student as a unique individual includes three subscales: Affirming, Attending, and Cheering.
**Coordination**—the teacher’s preparation planning through combinations of instructional strategies that create and maintain a superior academic climate includes two subscales: Clarifying and Informing.

**Proficiency**—the teacher’s ability to demonstrate competency in specialty area and exhibit efficient management of the learning environment includes Relying and Managing.

**Expectation**—the teacher’s ability to project high expectations for students’ academic success is a single item subscale.

These dimensions and subscales are consistent with the dimensions and subscales of the ITS (Amos, 1985).

**Reliability**

The reliability of the IOTA was established using Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha. Table 1 shows the internal consistency estimates for each of the five dimensions, with and without the synchronous component, as appropriate.

Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha for IOTA by Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personally Inviting Dimensions</th>
<th>Without Synchronous</th>
<th>With Synchronous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration</td>
<td>.875</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionally Inviting Dimensions</th>
<th>Without Synchronous</th>
<th>With Synchronous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td>.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation (single item)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall IOTA</td>
<td>.945</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Validity**

The content validity of the IOTA was based on the validation of the ITS and by a review of the additional 21 items created for the synchronous component by a panel of expert online instructors. Based on these reviews the 86 items included in the field test were deemed to reflect inviting behaviors in an online classroom. Construct validity
(convergent validity) was established by correlating the total IOTA scores with the SAOM scores, the same procedure used in the validation of the ITS. The correlation reported between the ITS and the SAOM was .72 and between the IOTA and the SAOM was .69. With such similar results it is assumed that the IOTA is measuring the affective component of the online classroom as does the ITS.

**Administration and Scoring**

To administer the IOTA to your students, you will send them the following link: [www.InvitationalEdOnline.com](http://www.InvitationalEdOnline.com). On this website the student will learn about invitational education and be able to access the survey. The instructor should direct the student to click on the tab called “Access IOTA System.” The student will then indicate that they are a student and will enter the instructor’s email address. The students can then complete the IOTA. If their online class has a synchronous component the students will need to indicate that by clicking “Yes” when prompted and then complete the remaining items related to the synchronous component or live event. You may you’re your students as much time as you feel needed to complete the assessment.

When you are ready to retrieve the results you will go to: [www.InvitationalEdOnline.com](http://www.InvitationalEdOnline.com) and navigate to the Access IOTA System tab. You will indicate that you are an instructor, enter your email address and whether your course has a synchronous component. When you click Submit it will end your session and you will receive a score report at the email address you provided. Note, the email address you gave students to use and the email you enter to get your score report must be the same. **Also, please note that the generation of the report only takes a few minutes and if you have not gotten your report in a timely manner please check your Spam folder to make sure that your report was not placed there.**

If you want to do a self-assessment, the IOTA System can be used. However, you will have to access the IOTA system twice. First, you will access it as a student and complete the survey rating yourself. After you complete the assessment as a student you must go back into the IOTA system a second time. This time you will select Instructor; being sure you use the same email address that you did when the student path was taken. After you press Submit, your score report will be sent to you via email.

**Score Report**

The IOTA is scored on a scale from 1 – 5 and negatively worded items are converted before the score is generated. Therefore, the larger the score for any dimension or subscale the more invitational your students believe you are.

To more fully understand the IOTA report and your assessment, the report provides your mean or average score and then the first quartile or 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, the median or 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, and the third quartile or 75<sup>th</sup> percentile based on the 448 students
participating in the field test. It is important to remember that the data reported are percentiles and the total scores for each subscale and cluster are not the sums of the percentiles for the items comprising the subscale or cluster. A sample of the report format is provided below.

Email Address: username@anywhereU.edu
Date: 6/30/2014 12:06:42
Number of Students: 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personally Inviting Scores</th>
<th>Your Scores</th>
<th>Comparison 25th</th>
<th>Comparison 50th</th>
<th>Comparison 75th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosing</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirming</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheering</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personally Inviting Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>XXX</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionally Inviting Scores</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relying</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Professionally Inviting Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>XXX</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total IOTA Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>XXX</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your score on any subscale or cluster is low and you want to see what you might do to improve those invitational behaviors the items used to assess each dimension and subscale are also provided.
**Personally Inviting Practices**

**Commitment**

**Cluster A - Supporting**
- Show respect for diversity
- Work to encourage student self-esteem
- Exhibit an acceptance of students' views
- Sensitive to the needs of students

**Cluster B - Disclosing**
- Use personal examples to encourage students to share their own experiences
- Exhibit an appropriate sense of humor
- Share authentic experiences with students

**Cluster C - Investing**
- Willing to accommodate and modify class assignments and/or requirements to meet student special needs or situations
- Inviting and supportive in interactions with students
- Make an effort to use students' preferred names
- Positively acknowledge students as they log into the live event*
- Take time to talk with students about their out-of-class activities before starting the live event*
- Present smooth transitions from one topic to another*

**Consideration**

**Cluster A - Affirming**
- Encourage informal peer-to-peer coaching
- Provide specific and/or appropriate praise for student work
- Clearly answer student questions

**Cluster B - Attending**
- Promote a class atmosphere that is trusting and safe for questioning or discussing difficult, complex or controversial topics
- Demonstrate a personal interest in each student
- Address students by name
- Polite to students

**Cluster C - Cheering**
- Express enthusiasm about the course content
Professionally Inviting Practices

Coordination
Cluster A - Clarifying

- Actively engage students on the discussion board
- Ask a lot of questions on the discussion board
- Facilitate the discussion board with skill
- Summarize the subject matter in the discussion board
- Use drawings, slides, or screen shots to explain concepts*
- Provide a recording of the live event following the actual event*
- Provide preliminary overview of each live event using PowerPoint or online review and summary or advance organizers*
- Provide material (e.g., PowerPoint presentations) before conducting the live event*

Cluster B - Informing

- Offer constructive criticism
- Evaluate students' work fairly
- Include facts and ideas from other fields
- Willing to express a lack of knowledge on a particular subject
- Provide individualized assignment feedback

Proficiency
Cluster A - Relying

- Have the course ready for instruction
- Provide prompt feedback on assignments
- Respond to student emails in a timely manner
- Prompt in evaluating the work of students
- Follow the course syllabus*
- On time for the live event*
- Allow wait time (a pause of several seconds) after asking a question*
- Prepared for the live event*

Cluster B - Managing

- Clearly explain grading procedures using rubrics and exemplars
- Use fair assessments to evaluate performance objectives
- Present clear class objectives
- Have up-to-date knowledge of course content
• Demonstrate a strong knowledge of the course content
• Speak with enthusiasm*
• Easy to understand or hear*
• Present course content in an organized manner*

Expectation
• Expect high academic performance from students

* These items are only for online classes with a synchronous component

We appreciate your interest in invitational education and to learn more please go to the International Alliance for Invitational Education at http://www.invitationaleducation.net/

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