

Being Professionally Inviting with Oneself

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of being active in one's own professional development. The educator who does not invite himself or herself to grow professionally runs the risk of becoming obsolete. Teachers should continue to be actively engaged in upgrading their skills and knowledge and working to sustain their professional enthusiasm.

Teachers can grow professionally in many ways. Especially challenging is to develop a model of teaching as advocated by Goodman (1988) and Pajares (1992). Teachers can get locked into a certain style of teaching, especially if they have experienced some success with it. Being in a rut, even a successful one, narrows perspective and diminishes professional vitality. The following list represents suggestions for discovering new approaches to being professionally inviting with yourself:

Participate in programs. In addition to typical academic courses, programs, and degrees, special conferences and workshops can provide exciting ways to sharpen skills, learn techniques, and develop new

understandings. Attending such professional activities will help upgrade skills and knowledge. You can often find funds to attend developmental activities by contacting PTAs, governmental agencies, business partners, and philanthropic foundations.

Spend time reading. Countless professional books, journals, magazine articles, newsletters, monographs, and the like are expressly written to help educators develop professionally. Finding some time each day to read is an excellent way to stay abreast.

Join professional groups. Be active in professional societies. Working within these organizations to ensure that they maintain high professional quality is important in strengthening yourself professionally as well as aiding the profession.

Conduct projects. Some educators might assume that research should be left to scientists in laboratories, surrounded by computers and data sheets. But bigger is not necessarily better. A teacher's quiet investigation of some question can have a long-range influence on life in and around schools.

Write papers. A valuable way to invite yourself professionally is to write for professional publication. Not everything written must appear in national journals. Numerous local, state, and regional newsletters, journals, and related publications welcome contributions from educators in the field.

Arrange a date. Are there people in your professional world who you admire and would like to know better? If so, be brave! Invite them to lunch. If you invite, they may accept. If you don't, they can't.

Seek feedback. At regular intervals and at the end of each semester seek suggestions from students or others who may be familiar with your work. Find out how they evaluate your teaching and what you might do to make it better. This way you can be showing respect for the opinions of others while strengthening yourself professionally.

Personal and professional growth ultimately culminates in being better able to be professionally inviting with others.