

Senior Actives Newsletter

IAIE



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Senior Actives Committee:

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Dr. Eddie Collins shares secrets of the “contented” retired

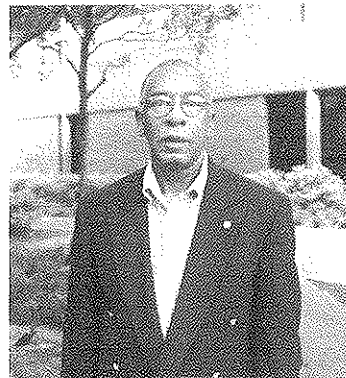
In 2007, after 35 years at the University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida; 3 years at Clark College (Clark-Atlanta University), Atlanta, Georgia; 3 visiting professorships, several adjunct positions and a host of seminars, workshops and related activities at various levels, I too, count myself among the “contented” retired.

Retirement is a goal which we (some) look forward to, yet when it comes, a wide range of emotions set in. The closest analogy that comes to mind is my recollection of elderly acquaintances from childhood memories, who often spoke of looking forward to going to heaven after death but who always put up a fight when death came knocking.

I now have a better understanding of what these elder statesmen really were attempting to articulate. They were really saying, they hoped to enter heaven when they died, but were in no hurry to die.

After the final weeks of congratulations from colleagues, students and friends, I finally accepted the finality of retirement and stopped wondering whether people were happy for me or happy to get rid of me. I concluded that it really didn't matter what they thought and that I had been the greatest gift and resource ever to teach at that university and therefore was irreplaceable, none the less I would move on.

I finally packed my books, notes, pictures and other affects and planned my grand exit with my old hand-held school bell. Moving slowly down the hall from my second floor office, I began to ring my bell. Surely there would be many heads peeking into the hallway to see what this unusual noise was about. To my surprise, I had chosen the



Dr. Eddie Collins

worst day to make my departure. It happened to be the end of the school year and most faculty and students had left town. Feeling somewhat miffed, I none the less made my rounds through the building. The several heads that did appear in the various doorways were people I did not know well or at all; or people for whom I did not stage my performance in the first place.

Not to be outdone, I was determined to have the last laugh. I drove home, unpacked my stuff and began planning my own celebration.

In September, following my July retirement, I invited 200 friends, colleagues, students and family to my retirement party at the University. The celebrations consisted of a sit down dinner, bar and the University Jazz Band. During the dinner I announced the establishment of the Eddie Collins Endowed Scholarship in the Department of Sociology. I also took the time to acknowledge the successes of every student present and thanked my colleagues and friends for their many years of support.

A year later, I have settled into a more inviting perspective of retirement, which consists of spending more time with my wife, children, grandchildren and friends. I have been invited back to the university to teach a course in the fall of 2008, “told you they could not do without me!”

I continue to fancy myself as an antique (junk) dealer and gardener—I got over “it” yes William Purkey, I now have a better understanding of what retirement really means.

I just needed to share these “Retirement Emotions” and I feel that there should be a segment within the Alliance devoted to “Retirement” and I have much more to share.

Thanks to William and Betty and a host of others in the Alliance who helped make my professional and personal life a great ride.

Spotlight on Seniors

Dr. Doris Henderson

Dr. Doris Henderson retired from service in public education in 2004, after many years of service. She was a "long marcher" who was involved in Invitational Education for 25 years, and found the basic principles a guiding light in her professional and personal life. She credits Dr. William Purkey and the Alliance with much of her career success.

Upon retirement in 2004, Dr. Henderson accepted a full-time position (without pay) on the ministerial staff of her church, Friendly Avenue Baptist. In this position, she has worked to incorporate Dr. Purkey's teachings in creating a more inviting environment in her church community with particular attention to greeting and welcoming visitors and new members. She feels that her work extends beyond just putting members at ease; it also includes getting them actively involved in the various ministries and leadership roles at all levels of the church.

Dr. Henderson states that "Invitational Education has become a way of life for me. It works in church just as well as in school." She is starting a Discovery Class for prospective and new members. "We do everything imaginable to help those attending the class feel "invited" to get involved in our church." She also writes a weekly bulletin. "When people do things to benefit our church or others, I write about their work, so that they feel appreciated."

Dr. J. Foster Watkins

Once is not enough: In most baseball games, one is given three strikes at bat, however, Professor J. Foster Watkins could not resist requesting a fourth pitch. Dr. Watkins spent ten years at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. As professor of educational leadership, he worked with over 400 students at both the masters and doctoral levels. Upon retirement from that position in 2004, he took a position at Gainesville State College as interim president and later joined Betty Siegel at Kennesaw State University in the Bagwell College of Education. He was very involved in IAIE activities at KSU and the metro Atlanta area, including visiting teachers from Hong Kong. Following a three year stint at Kennesaw, Dr. Watkins has retired and moved into his fourth professional endeavor, real estate, with his wife in Atlanta, Georgia. Having passed the state real estate exam on his first try, we expect him to make the million dollar sales team early on.

Dr. Watkins continues to maintain a close relationship with his colleagues and students at all previous institutions. He credits his successful professional and personal success to having met William and Betty early in his educational journey and his having embraced the theory and practices of IAIE.

We salute you, Dr. Watkins, for your contributions and service to education!

Dr. Eddie Collins, Jr.

Greetings from the new editor of the Senior Actives Newsletter!

I am pleased to have been invited to serve as editor of the Senior Actives Newsletter for the next year. I will work hard to continue its tradition of bringing you Senior Success Stories and other news that might interest you.

The Senior Actives Committee got off to a great start in Chicago at our World Conference in September. We all gathered in the lobby of the hotel and proceeded to the assigned meeting room. Upon reaching the designated site, we discovered that the room was locked. When we did get in, we discovered it was a regular guest room furnished only with an oversized bed and two chairs. With no place for most members to sit, one "maverick," took a spot in the middle of the oversized bed and was immediately followed by several others, whose names will not be mentioned.

Suffice it to say that the meeting was a "senior's delight." I hope that this news does not get to Harvey Smith.

Many great ideas on how Seniors might continue their engagement in the Alliance and communities after retirement were discussed and will be shared in the next newsletter.

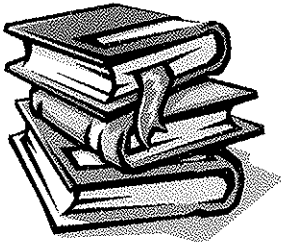
I would also like to thank Dr. Charlotte Reed and staff, along with all others who helped to make our annual conference such a success.

An Invitation to Contribute to the Newsletter

If you are a member of the Alliance and are a Senior Active member, we would like to hear from you! Let us know what you're doing and how being "Invitational" has influenced your life by contributing an article for the newsletter.

You can e-mail your articles to: Dr. Eddie Collins at ecollins20@yahoo.com, or mail them to him at 1714 Forest Avenue, Neptune Beach, FL 32266. Photos are a nice addition. We will scan them and return them to you if you cannot send them electronically in a jpeg format.

Book Review by Frank Charles Winstead



Bridging the Chasm Between Research and Practice: A Guide to Major Educational Research by Royal Van Horn.

In his book, Professor Horn has presented research findings that ought to be made known to all classroom teachers to guide and reinforce their practices. The book itself with its precepts based on persuasive research should be in the hands of every status school leader (our school principals and superintendents) and every policy maker (school board members and legislators) to guide them in their decisions about children and their schooling.

Those of us who are veterans of service in the public schools will find very few surprises in the research findings reported by Professor Horn. Through my experiences as a classroom teacher, school principal, district level administrator, and more recently as a consultant and motivational speaker for groups of educators, I have, along with the very great majority of practicing teachers and school principals I have met, come to “know” intuitively much of what the research reported by Professor Horn demonstrates so convincingly. The enduring challenge has been, and is, to communicate and then incorporate the practices that have been urged by the research. That we have not done so is an indictment of our profession and of those who make educational policy.

Throughout his book, Horn enlists directly the researchers by highlighting their key statements and conclusions. He signals the reader to those passages with the heading: **WORDS ON FIRE**. In Chapter 2, “Flunking Kids/Grade Retention” the research findings evidence include these two “**WORDS ON FIRE**”: *The weight of empirical evidences argues*

against retention. (Holmes 1989, 28) and *Thus, the results yielded from recent reviews and meta-analysis provide convincing prima fascia evidence suggesting a strong case could be made for grade retention as “educational malpractice” given that research has failed to demonstrate the effectiveness of grade retention as an academic intervention.* (Jimerson 2004, in Walberg 2004, 82). Horn adds several other research reports challenging the wisdom of the practice of retention and concludes: “...it is safe to say that retention is, in large part, caused by the fact that children start kindergarten with radically different early-life experiences.”

The concern of Professor Horn for early-life experiences led him to collect research in Chapter 3, “Radical Differences in the Early Lives of Children,” on several variables. Drawing on all the research Horn observes it is “clear that many children are at risk of academic failure.” He draws on the work of Frymier (1992) to emphasize that there are four other risk categories besides academic failure. They are family instability, family socioeconomic situation (income), family tragedy, and personal paid (e.g., the child was abused or attempted suicide). Horn closes this chapter with **WORDS ON FIRE** from Frymier: “Children who fail, often fail in everything they do.”

Horn offers some hope through “Safety Nets and Remedial Programs,” in his fourth chapter. His analysis of the research led him to several generalizations, but two trump all others. First, he says: “Direct instruction by a qualified teacher or trained adult is the approach of choice (for remediation)” He defines “direct instruction” as one teacher working directly with

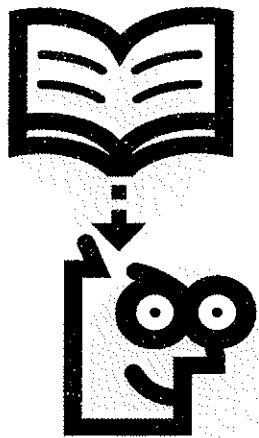
children on the content of the lesson at the appropriate level of difficulty. Secondly, he reports that one-to-one teaching with children “is a proven intervention that can bring a child up to grade level in as little as one semester’s time.” The research suggests that remediation is less than effective with a student group that includes more than three members.

Arguably, the most contentious issue in educational practice today is considered in Chapter 6: “Assessment and High-Stakes Testing.” The research reported by Professor Horn is less than encouraging. He concludes: “High stakes testing programs are in place in the hope that they will improve educational achievement, but the evidence shows that they do not.”

In his final chapter, “Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations,” however, Horn fails to demonstrate the interconnected nature of the research he promised, and many of his assertions and suggestions have little if any foundation in the research he has carefully presented in the previous chapters.

Horn’s mix of personal opinion and hopes for American education, however noble, inspired, and even on-target, when offered on the same platform with actual research findings make for confusing guidance for novice readers—those educators Horn says “know very little of the research.”

The educators I know will be well served by this work by Professor Horn. I hope each of my professional friends will get her/his on copy, make copies available to teachers in her/his charge, and “chisel out time” for teacher and administrator groups to discuss the findings of the research.



Invitational Education — Pass it on! Gift memberships are only \$20

Dirt Roads

What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved.

There's not a problem in America today, crime, drugs, education, divorce, delinquency that wouldn't be remedied, if we just had more Dirt Roads, because Dirt Roads give character. People that live at the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride. That it can jar you right down to your teeth sometimes, but it's worth it, if at the end is home...a loving spouse, happy kids and a dog.

We wouldn't have near the trouble with our educational system if our kids got their exercise walking a Dirt Road with other kids, from whom they learn how to get along.

There was less crime in our streets before they were paved. Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape, if they knew they'd be welcomed by 5 barking dogs and a double barrel shotgun. And there were no drive-by shootings.

Our values were better when our roads were worse! People did not worship their cars more than their kids, and motorists were more courteous, they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust and bust your windshield with rocks. Dirt Roads taught patience.

Dirt Roads were environmentally friendly, you didn't hop in the car for a gallon of milk; you walked to the barn for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mail box. What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out? That was the best part, then you stayed home and had some family time, roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn and pony rode on Daddy's shoulders and made prettier quilts than anybody. At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap.

Most paved roads lead to trouble. Dirt Roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole. The only time we locked our car was in August, because if we didn't, some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini.

At the end of a Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income, from when city dudes would get stuck, you'd have to hitch up a team and pull them out. Usually you got a dollar...always you got a new friend...at the end of a Dirt Road.

Contributed by Eddie Collins

Some Perks of Being Over 60

1. Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
2. There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
3. Things you buy now won't wear out.
4. You can live without sex but not your glasses.
5. Your eyes won't get much worse.
6. You quit trying to hold your stomach in no matter who walks into the room.
7. Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
8. Your supply of brain cells is finally down to manageable size.