



Connect Collaborate Innovate

A Newsletter From The Provost's Office

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Vice Provost, Student Affairs

Setting the Stage for Epiphany



Like most young people, I experienced the many ups and downs that came with transitioning into adulthood. Developing into an adult, or “adulting” can simply be depicted through the well-known symbols of mythology used in ancient Greek theater: the masks of comedy and tragedy. Human emotions can continue to duel through the maturation process or until we learn how to manage them.

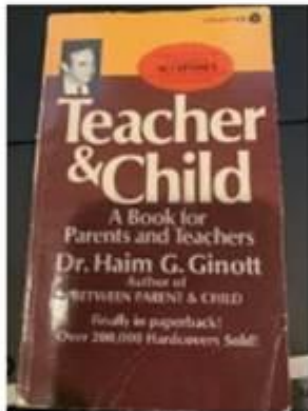
And sometimes, after the dueling, an epiphany occurs.

One such epiphany occurred for me in my junior year in college. It happened while I was a new AA transfer from Central Florida Community College while sitting in a dusty, dark Stetson University

classroom. I worried about my tuition bills, homesickness and finding “my people” after graduating from a tight-knit group at the College.

But in one classroom, things were different. Every single time I entered Dr. Anderson’s class I felt that I belonged there. He made each of his students feel this way. He would look straight into our eyes and exclaim a special greeting as we entered the room. His eyes squeezed shut under his gold rims and his head would tilt toward you like a Genie casting a quick spell. I know it must sound strange as I describe it, but trust me, his body language punctuated seeming joy to be with a class of us awkward young adults. It pulled me right in. **What a profound feeling to know that you matter.**

As a result, I began reading (instead of skimming) the textbook. We would get there early to sit in the front row eager to listen and



Original copy of a book from Dr. Anderson's Education Foundations course. To the right is the last page of the book underlined by my then 20 year old self.

learn. We developed a camaraderie in class that felt safe to interact and even prompted us to check up on each other if someone was missing.

Over the course of the semester, Dr. Anderson deftly guided us through the fundamental skills of teaching. The value added was that he modeled

every concept that he taught.

Then it happened...my epiphany.

Derived from the very last page of a small paperback text called *Teacher and Child* by Dr. Haim Ginott and through Dr. Anderson's artful teaching, I was changed forever.

Israeli educational psychologist Haim Ginott wrote about a letter that teachers would receive from their principal each year. Dr. Anderson explained to us that on the first day of the new school year, all the teachers in the school

received the following note from their school principal:

Dear Teacher,

*I am a survivor of a concentration camp.
My eyes saw what no man should witness:*

*Gas chambers built by learned engineers.
Children poisoned by educated physicians.
Infants killed by trained nurses.
Women and babies shot and burned by
high school and college graduates.*

So, I am suspicious of education.

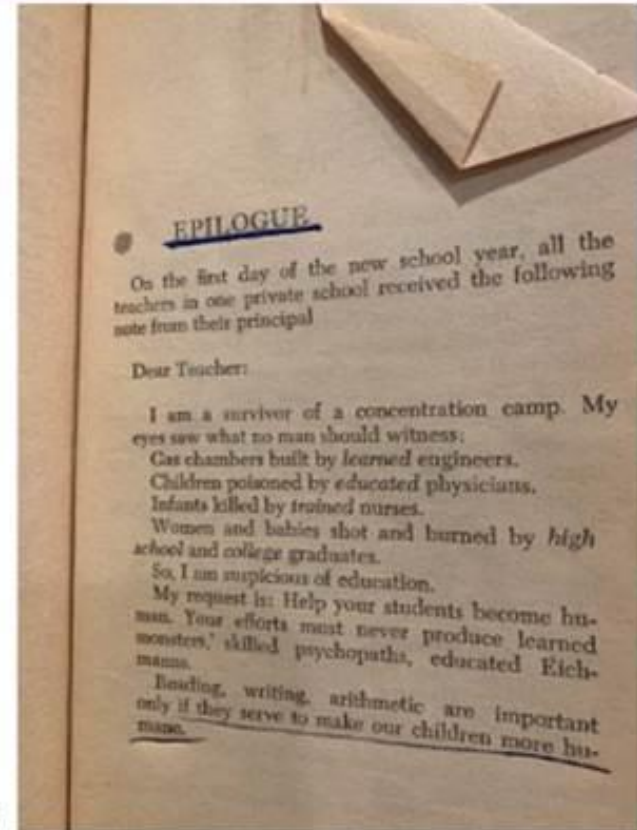
*My request is: Help your students become
human.*

*Your efforts must never produce
learned monsters, skilled psychopaths,
educated Eichmanns.*

*Reading, writing, and arithmetic are
important only if they serve to make our
children more humane.*

With sudden insight prompted by my professor, I made meaning of the term "educated." My 20-year-old self's assumption had been that if you are educated, you have insight and are good. Not so at all.

Many years ago, the impact of engagement with my professor and the lessons he conveyed are still with me as I have aged and matured. Of course, there are still comedies and



tragedies, but the stage has been set allowing for deep learning and openness for epiphany.

Creating the environment to encourage a student's epiphany, is I guess, what we strive for as educators.

Openness, safety, and consistency are environmental conditions that an effective institution creates for its students both inside and outside the classroom. With instructive skills and some luck, this intentional environment results in sudden insight, or the “slow-burn” of perspective that comes sooner or later in most students.

Today is my 100th work day as Vice Provost at FSW. I am reflecting on last week's tradition of the Dr. Talbot Spivak **Holocaust Memorial Week**. And I'm thinking of the way Dr. Anderson made me feel 36 years ago. This helps me power-through the ups and downs of 2020 and focus on the important stuff on my to do list:

remove barriers to student success;

build solid infrastructures for exceptional student affairs delivery;

provide co-curricular learning experiences on all campuses that result in students' growth.

And yes, “encourage an epiphany,” is on that list too.

Big Ideas!

Congratulations to the **IDEA Committee** on an impactful start this fall at FSW. The inaugural work team recently received \$10,000 from the President and Provost to further their initiatives at the College.

Mission and Commitment Statement of IDEA

The **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Committee** works to create a campus environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive to all of our students, administrators, faculty and staff. We view differences (e.g. nationality, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, physical ability, learning styles, perspectives, etc.) not as obstacles to be overcome but as rich opportunities for understanding, learning, and growth. This group serves as the advisory group to the College's submission of the Annual Equity Update Report that is approved by the College's Board of Trustees.

Members 2020-2021

Dr. Rebecca Gubitti - Professor, Math (Lee)
(Co-Chair)

Dr. Sholondo Campbell - Director, Student Engagement
(Co-Chair)

Gaby Cordon - Coordinator, Student Engagement (Collier)

Dr. Mark Bukowski - Dean of Students

Dr. Jacquelyn Davis - Professor, Psychology (Collier)

Angela Hartsell - Director, Adaptive Services

Kathleen Hayes - HR Manager, Talent Acquisition

Dr. Brandon Jett - Professor, History (H/G Center)

Terrace Myles - Videographer, designer, Marketing and Media

Heather Olson - Professor, Student Life Skills (Lee)

Jana Sabo - HR Manager, Title IX Coordinator/Equity Officer

Dr. Russell Swanson - Professor, Philosophy (Lee)

Ashleigh Valero - Academic Advisor (H/G Center)

Maureen Barisonek, Note taker



Please follow our Instagram social media!

- FSW Student Engagement: **fswstudents**
- FSW Campus Recreation:**fswcampusrec**
- FSW Athletics: **fswbucs**
- BUCS C.A.R.E: **fswbucscare**

Great opportunities for extra credit and activities that enhance student retention:

<https://www.fsw.edu/studentengagement>



Thank you for taking the extra few minutes next week to encourage your students to stay on the path towards degree completion.

Spring registration is open!

I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the amazing Student Affairs team at FSW as we support and guide our students on their educational journey.



If you read this far in the newsletter, and are so inclined, email me and I'll treat you to a socially distanced lunch on campus!

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Reach out via email: Michele.Yovanovich@fsw.edu

Florida SouthWestern State College, an equal access institution, prohibits discrimination in its employment, programs and activities based on race, sex, gender identity, age, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, genetic information or veteran status. Questions pertaining to educational equity, equal access or equal opportunity should be addressed to the College's Title IX Coordinator/Equity Officer/504 Coordinator: Jana Sabo; Room S-213; 8099 College Parkway SW, Fort Myers, FL 33919; (239)489-9051; Jana.sabo@fsw.edu. FSW online anonymous reporting www.fsw.edu/report. Inquiries/complaints can be filed with the Title IX Coordinator/Equity Officer online, in person, via mail, via email, or with the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Atlanta Office: 61 Forsyth St. SW Suite 19T70, Atlanta, GA 30303-8927.

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