

Health, Wellness, and Education: Introduction to the Special Issue

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When I initially proposed “health, wellness, and education” as a topic for this issue of *Antistasis*, I had in mind Myers and Sweeney’s (2005) holistic model of health and wellness. Their model of wellness simultaneously proposes an “indivisible self” where all parts of our lives are interconnected and cannot be separated, and that there are various aspects of the self that represent various aspects of our lives, such as the “physical self” and the “social self.” Within this framework, it seemed evident to me that, although health and wellness are distinct from education, the concepts are absolutely interconnected, and worth thinking about in relation to each other. The submissions that we received for this special issue confirm that I am not the only one who sees health and education as being so closely connected.

First, we received an overwhelming number of submissions, suggesting that many people are concerned about the connections between these aspects of our lives. From among these submissions, we used a blind peer-review process to select the best ones for publication and, even then, there were so many high quality articles that we needed to spread them across two issues of the journal. Consequently, the six articles that you will read in this issue represent only half of what we have selected for

publication in the special issue. The remaining articles will be published in the next issue of *Antistasis*, as Part 2 of the special issue.

Second, even though I came to this topic with a broad understanding of both health/wellness and education, I was still pleasantly surprised by the variety of ways that the authors have framed the issue, and the many different aspects of health, wellness, and education. Some of the ideas that are discussed in the articles that form Part 1 and Part 2 of the special issue will be familiar to many people, but I am hoping that others will challenge your preconceptions, or present new ideas that you have not previously encountered. The articles have certainly engaged my curiosity about the many different ways that education can be connected to health and wellness.

In the first article of Part 1 of the special issue, Charlene Shannon-McCallum discusses the idea that what we do with our leisure time is an important contributor to our health and wellness, and proposes that it is beneficial to education people, from children through to older adults, about leisure.

In the second article, Scott Hughes introduces the idea that a happy classroom has a particular ton or “hum,” and that the hum of a happy elementary classroom is not only an indicator of students’ well-being, but also has positive benefits for their motivation and learning.

Building on this idea of happiness as a reflection of wellness, in the third article Karma Drupka and Ken Brien describe a novel paradigm for education that is being implemented in Bhutan: Educating for Gross National Happiness. The idea of designing educational curriculum and

policies to promote the happiness and well-being of young citizens is an intriguing one that may be important for education systems across the globe to consider.

Shifting focus to graduate education, Helena Dayal discusses the specific problem of how students in Counsellor Education programs can struggle to obtain assistance for mental health difficulties. Her suggestions for how to address this problem are important for any counselor educator or university administration personnel to consider. The experiences that she identifies are probably experienced by other kinds of students as well, and are worth considering for anyone with an interest in post-secondary education.

In the fifth article, David Costello uses the concept of student health and wellness to frame an argument against narrow, standardized testing-oriented educational curricula. Specifically, he presents several arguments for why this narrow, impoverished perspective on education is problematic for student engagement, identity, and ultimately their well-being. Intriguingly, his arguments dovetail well with the second and third articles of this special issue, which present the benefits of attending to student happiness in education.

The final article in this issue is the first of two articles by Lynn Randall, discussing physical education as an important contributor to both the health and the academic performance of children. In this article, she provides an overview of the health of Canadian children and argues that, as a country, we are experiencing a health crisis that physical education has the potential to ameliorate. She elaborates on these arguments in the lead article of Part 2 of this special issue.

The remaining articles that have been accepted for this special issue on Health, Wellness, and Education will be published in the forthcoming *Antistasis* volume 4, issue 1. Together the ideas presented in these two issues of the journal demonstrate just how broad and how deep are the connections between education and health/wellness.

References

Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (2005). The indivisible self: An evidence-based model of wellness (reprint). *Journal of Individual Psychology, 61*, 269-279.

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