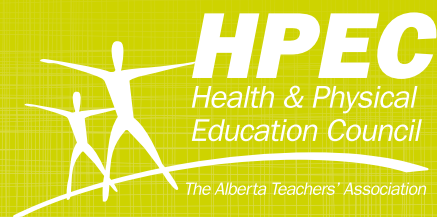


Volume 53, Number 1, 2022

Runner



The Journal of the Health and Physical Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association



Segregation
Versus Integration/
Inclusion

Adult Recess

Movement
Education: Delivering
Physical Literacy

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

Runner

Volume 53, Number 1, 2022

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Editor's Message

Lisa Taylor

Welcome! Thank you for reading the 53rd volume of the *Runner*. The articles herein focus on the theme “Caring for Ourselves and Our Practice.” While the *Runner* has always worked to offer expertise that aims to inform physical and health education (PHE) teacher practice, this volume focuses on care—care for PHE teacher practice and PHE teacher well-being.

Caring for PHE Teacher Well-Being

You will find a great deal of encouragement in this volume of the *Runner*: encouragement to pause, reflect, invest in yourself and lead on. Let us be reminded of the multiple dimensions of our wellness: physical, emotional, social, environmental, intellectual, spiritual, occupational and financial (Montoya and Summers 2021)—all of which interconnect and influence our overall state of being. Let us acknowledge each wellness dimension, identify where we are strong and celebrate those strengths! Let us also acknowledge where we might need some extra love and keep those dimensions in mind as we move forward, helping us to recognize opportunities to invest in ourselves when they come along. My hope is that you will find the expertise and strategies communicated in this *Runner* volume useful—that this information can contribute to your overall well-being. Investing in ourselves is critical to be our best selves for ourselves, our families and our school communities.

Furthermore, you will see vulnerability communicated in many of the articles you will read here. Alongside the theory that informs practice, you will also find stories and experiences that offer powerful messages that I hope you will find empowering.

Caring for PHE Teacher Practice

This volume of the *Runner* also offers expertise in caring for PHE teacher practice—a labour of love, dedicated to students. As you read along, I invite you to explore



ideas with an open mind. I encourage you to think critically about approach and the *why* behind some of the norms we encounter. I encourage you to reflect, share conversation with members of your school community and consider what meaningful tweaks might further strengthen your practice in your specific context.

Closing Thoughts

On behalf of the Health and Physical Education Council, thank you. Thank you to all of you for your ongoing efforts to support our students through quality physical and health education programs. Thank you for being there for our children, our colleagues and our communities.

As you read along, if you find yourself thinking about the meaningful work you do as an educator, or perhaps your strengths, lessons you would like to share or stories regarding how you have empowered your school community, please connect with me! The *Runner* welcomes

your voice, connecting theory and practice, regardless of where you are in your journey in teaching physical and health education; please email me at lisamarie.taylor@ucalgary.ca.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to those who shared their voices and expertise in this volume of the *Runner*; our community is stronger for your courage and dedication to sharing. Additionally, thank you to the peer reviewers who contributed their expertise and feedback to further strengthen the messages you will read here.

Wishing you well on the journey!

Lisa

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President's Message

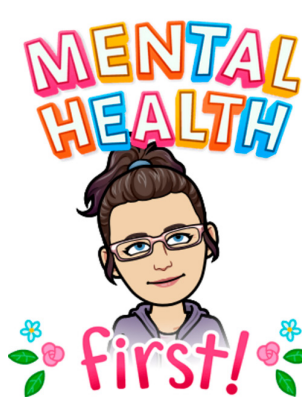
Jodi Harding-Kuriger

We all have wellness stories. Each one is unique and inspiring. Wellness stories come in all shapes and sizes, on a variety of topics, in big and small actions. You may reflect on the eight dimensions of wellness: social, emotional, intellectual, physical, occupational, spiritual, financial and environmental (Stoewen 2017). Or perhaps you ponder wellness as the balance of mental, physical, spiritual and social health within a four-part person (Elder Bob Cardinal, personal communication 2018).

In this issue of the *Runner*, I humbly share with you my social, spiritual, physical and emotional wellness story—a love affair with health and physical education (HPE). I loved being a health and physical education teacher, until my demanding schedule caused me to fall out of love with it. I had my son, Aidan, when I was 10 years into my teaching career. He came with me to the majority of the school teams' practices, games and tournaments; he was the proverbial gym rat. Then we had our girls—Teegan, in 2013, and Karlin, 18 months later. Being a wife/mom/teacher/coach wasn't going to work for our family any more. But if I wasn't a health and physical education teacher-coach, then who was I?

Teaching and coaching provided time with students and other like-minded teachers. Teaching and coaching brought me into the Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) family. Teaching and coaching was all I thought I could be professionally, but I was struggling to be a great wife, mom and teacher. I felt I was only just "good enough." I did not know how to separate my school self from my family self. At home, my mind was still at school. I was constantly thinking about HPE lessons and coaching. I was annoyed by the family-life demands of a young family and home. The breaking point came in January of 2016, as I struggled with postpartum depression and the demands of a teacher-coach life. And so, I broke up with teaching and coaching. I left the profession.

At the time, I thought this meant that I was leaving my social circle of teacher friends. I thought it meant I



When you *share* a story, you *spark* a story!

was losing my opportunity to be physically active with my students. I thought it meant that I was spiritually losing my school faith family. I thought I was losing myself entirely.

It has taken nearly five years for me to find my wellness balance again. I have come to accept that I could not teach full-time and have a family. To all of you who do this on a daily basis, you are my superheroes! I am in awe of you each and every day. It is possible—lots of incredible teachers do it. Thankfully, I have come to realize that an education degree also opens up many opportunities for part-time, consulting and research work. It is equally acceptable for our careers to shift and change with family and personal changes.

I have come to find mental and cognitive health through graduate studies, teaching preservice teachers and doing research as service. Spiritually, I feel well when I am outside, listening and learning with the miyowâyâwin team in Kitaskinaw (Enoch), or walking and talking with my own family. Physically, I am renewing my love of movement and finding alternative ways to stay active after having kids and while no longer teaching HPE. Ever Active Schools (EAS), the University of Alberta Faculty of Education and HPEC have continued to grow my social

circles and provide the right balance of social time and family time.

It is my hope that sharing my wellness story with you will help you make time to consider your own wellness story and compose future chapters that are fulfilling and meaningful.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- What makes you feel great at work and at home?
- Who helps sustain you (Schaefer and Clandinin 2019) at home and at work?
- What habits help you maintain your well-being?
- How do you define happiness?

If you are willing to share your wellness stories with us, or if you would like to chat further about your personal and professional wellness, I am here to listen. Please e-mail me at jodi.harding@gmail.com.

Wishing you wellness,
Jodi

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Segregation Versus Integration/Inclusion: A Focus on Physical Education Programming

Karly Scott and David Chorney

Over the past few decades, options for physical activity, recreation, sport and physical education (PE) have changed for individuals with developmental impairments (IWDI). Historically, segregated programs were the only option; however, programming has grown to include integrated and inclusive programs. *Segregation* is most simply understood as being placed in a separate setting, disconnected from peers. In adapted physical activity, individuals are in an isolated environment where they participate in adapted and modified skills that best meet their needs. Roth and Columna (2012) provide examples of segregation, including small groups, one on one, reverse mainstreaming, and home or hospital.

The Steadward Centre, at the University of Alberta, is an organization that delivers segregated programs. During my undergraduate studies, I had the opportunity to volunteer one on one with an individual in a physical activity setting to improve coordination and fundamental movements. In contrast with segregation, *integration* means placing IWDI into mainstream physical activity, recreation, sport and PE programs with peers who are developmentally similar. Haegele (2019) describes integration as “a placement, where all students, regardless of learning style or unique educational needs, are educated in the same setting” (p 388), whereas *inclusion* focuses on much more than a placement or setting. It is a philosophy that is challenging to implement. Inclusive programs ensure that all students can achieve success and reach their full potential through appropriate curriculum and teaching, management and the physical environment (Haegele 2019).

It is important to recognize the difference between integration and inclusion; “physical co-presence is not tantamount to communicate participation” (Michailakis and Reich 2009, 29). Specifically, in inclusive PE classes, “educational needs of students with disabilities are fully supported and fully accepted” (Ruscitti, Thomas and Bentley 2017, 246). Although there are varying opinions on segregated and integrated programs for IWDI, we will explore the benefits of both types of program and demonstrate how it is essential to select a program that best meets the needs of the individual. As a physical education teacher, I have focused on literature regarding PE programs in schools, but have also reflected on my individual experiences that support the literature.

Benefits of Segregated Programming

While there has been a major shift away from segregation, it is important to acknowledge the benefits and advantages that segregated programs offer IWDI, most of which they will not receive in integrated settings. Segregated physical education programs provide IWDI emotional security and individualized instruction, and offer a more appropriate, noncompetitive environment.

Emotional security is essential for learning; students need to feel safe and accepted in their learning environment. Physical education programs are a vulnerable environment where students can easily be perceived as different due to the setting and nature of activities. Integrated PE programs place IWDI in an environment where their competence can easily be questioned; most often they will not meet a standard of performance

according to their typically developing peers, thereby bringing their disability into light (Goodwin and Watkinson 2000). This can lead to social isolation, where IWDI are rejected and receive a lack of attention, ultimately leading to emotional insecurity. For example, according to Goodwin and Watkinson (2000), individuals who use a wheelchair are often stared at or overlooked, being perceived as an object in their class. These negative peer influences can further lead to bullying and teasing or more indirect forms like vandalizing the washroom for individuals with disabilities (Ruscitti, Thomas and Bentley 2017).

In segregated PE programs, IWDI would be able to develop further because their differences in ability are no longer an issue. They would be more emotionally secure since they are more accepted by peers who have disabilities (Pitt and Curtin 2004).

In addition to providing IWDI with emotional security, segregated PE programs also ensure that IWDI receive the individualized instruction they need to succeed. Segregated programs offer IWDI more support by having instructors with more training and experience in the adapted physical activity field.

Although there are no credentials for an adapted physical activity specialist, experience and knowledge in this field are essential for success in teaching physical education and motor performance. For example, trained individuals will have experience and knowledge regarding cueing, feedback, physical assistance and task analysis (Block and Obrusnikova 2007). Furthermore, the variety of ways they can present material, implement modifications and adaptations and provide physical help to suit individual needs is support that is not easily accessible in integrated classes (Pitt and Curtin 2004).

Moreover, segregated classes are often smaller in size and have access to more equipment and technology to support individual needs. In comparison, many barriers exist in integrated programs that result in general instruction for all students, ultimately restricting participation and holding back IWDI. Some of these barriers include class size, inadequate resources, and a lack of teacher training and preparedness. Larger class sizes do not give the teacher the opportunity to pay attention and spend more time on challenging tasks, making individualized instruction difficult.

Additionally, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) examined how many teachers hold negative beliefs about inclusion, especially toward individuals with severe disabilities, consequently resulting in unmotivated teachers who do not accommodate and create learning opportunities for each individual student. These attitudes may result in teachers assigning IWDI tasks such as pumping up balls when everyone else is playing volleyball, which is far too often a reality of integrated programs (Goodwin and Watkinson 2000).

It is evident that segregated PE programs provide students and teachers with an ideal environment for individualized instruction. As a volunteer/leader of the Free2Be program at the Steadward Centre, working one on one with an individual, I was able to plan and create specific lessons and activities for my participant's needs. I am confident that the individual was receiving more direct, individualized instruction compared to his participation in school. His father reaffirmed this by saying, "Even though he is behind compared to his peers, he doesn't get the opportunity to work on his individual needs such as coordination and kicking."

Furthermore, teaching physical education with large class sizes reaffirms the difficulty and immense planning that must go into the lessons to ensure that suitable adaptations and modifications are in place. This can result in stressful environments for physical educators, because many may not have the experience, training or cooperation from other students to successfully deliver individualized instruction in inclusive settings.

Finally, segregated PE programs offer a more appropriate, noncompetitive environment that ensures that negative attitudes towards IWDI are not encouraged. As discussed above, it is essential that teachers individualize instruction and modify components of games and skills to ensure participation and success. However, if the rules of games "change the nature of the game or slow it down too much" (Block and Obrusnikova 2007, 110), problems are presented for typically developing students; one individual expressed his feelings as "frustrated if a disabled teammate let the team down in an important moment" (Ruscitti, Thomas and Bentley 2017, 253). Segregated programs are less competitive, creating a safe environment in which IWDI feel emotionally secure and have a fair opportunity to achieve success, and preventing negative attitudes from typically developing peers.

There are many advantages to segregated PE programs; however, I will also examine why fully inclusive PE programs are beneficial, which will help explain society's recent push toward inclusion.

Benefits of Inclusive Programming

Fully inclusive PE programs are crucial for participation in other systems, promote respect through social interactions and encourage positive self-concept. If we continue to segregate IWDI in the education system, we are further contributing to the discourse of society that labels IWDI as abnormal and incapable; "organizational segregation of intellectually disabled children co-constitutes their identity as intellectually disabled children" (Michailakis and Reich 2009, 36).

When IWDI are in segregated PE programs, they are excluded from learning certain skills and knowledge that are useful for participation and success in society, some of which include social skills, fitness and sport skills, and general knowledge regarding a healthy lifestyle. Inclusive programs are crucial to provide IWDI the same opportunity to be "exposed to normal subject matters and normal secondary socialization" (Michailakis and Reich 2009, 41).

Furthermore, we must acknowledge the discourse of society and recognize that it is beneficial for IWDI to experience inclusion to prepare them for realities of the wider community. Inclusive PE programs may pose some challenges for IWDI, such as physical accessibility challenges and negative treatment from other individuals (Pitt and Curtin 2004).

As there are similar challenges in society, if we begin to include IWDI in the education system, more specifically PE, we will also see inclusion involving physical activities in the wider community. Furthermore, the frequent interactions that occur in inclusive programs between typically developing individuals and IWDI will help promote mutual respect. The attitudes of typically developing individuals are an important aspect of inclusion. Most often, these attitudes are influenced by social expectations; however, over time, with more frequent interactions, typically developing peers will begin to appreciate and have more intentions to accept differences between individuals (Block and Obrusnikova 2007). These attitudes, which can be developed through interactions in inclusive PE programs, can lead to broader means of acceptance. Note: there are many activities that can be implemented in PE to promote

acceptance and inclusion of IWDI (Ruscitti, Thomas and Bentley 2017).

Individuals who have developmental impairments will also develop a sense of belonging when they have the opportunity to play games and interact with typically developing peers who provide them with support and positive interactions (Goodwin and Watkinson 2000). Through these positive social interactions and acceptance from peers in inclusive PE programs, IWDI will be able to develop a positive self-concept and have increased self-esteem. The students will no longer feel out of place or different from their typically developing peers as they would in a segregated environment (Ruscitti, Thomas and Bentley 2017). Students will be able to develop friendships with typically developing peers and share the benefits that PE has to offer, such as strength, fitness, skill development and knowledge acquisition, all of which contribute to a positive self-concept (Goodwin and Watkinson 2000).

I observed an example of a positive self-concept developing through interactions with typically developing peers during a community swimming lesson. As the instructor, I ensured that the IWDI was included in the activities; however, it was also enlightening to see how the other children talked to him and included him in everything they were doing. Furthermore, his mother expressed how much fun her son was having and how good he felt about himself compared to his classes at schools where he was separated from his brother and other students his age. This is reassuring and demonstrates how inclusion is beneficial to promoting positive feelings and improved self-concept.

Final Thoughts

It is evident that there are many different perspectives regarding PE for IWDI, depending on the individual's values and beliefs. Therefore, it is a decision for the individual and their family based on the strengths, weaknesses and circumstances of the individual. It is important to determine the goals of the individual and then evaluate which program will best meet their needs. Furthermore, additional education, resources and support are essential for physical educators so that individuals who are placed in an integrated setting can truly experience an inclusive environment, as this is often overlooked in the school system.

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Karly Scott received her BKin and BEd (secondary) from the University of Alberta in 2018, majoring in physical education and minoring in biological sciences. Currently teaching with the Edmonton Catholic School Division, Karly has a passion for physical education and enjoys supporting students to lead healthy, active lifestyles. During her first year as a teacher, Karly was nominated for the Edwin Parr Teacher Award. Karly is currently enrolled in a master of education program in the Department of Secondary Education under the supervision of David Chorney. She intends to research pedagogical strategies that promote diverse programming in the health and physical education curriculums to foster student development.



David Chorney, PhD, is a full professor in the Department of Secondary Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. He has been working in postsecondary education for over 20 years. His active research program focuses on physical education teacher education (PETE), curriculum theorizing in physical education and technology integration in the teaching of physical and health education.

Making Well-Being a Priority: Reflections from the Field

Genevieve Montemurro, Kate Storey, Ray Hoppins and Aaryn Manning

The importance of well-being as a personal, collective and organizational priority in K-12 education has come into sharp focus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Much energy has been dedicated tirelessly by educators, administrators and school system leaders to ensure that our school communities are protected from the immediate threat of illness. Many jurisdictions have also endeavoured to support well-being more broadly, connecting staff, students and families with additional resources and supports. While the threat of viral transmission continues to rank high in our collective well-being consciousness, we know that being *well* comprises so much more. Wellness is holistic, encompassing many dimensions. The World Health Organization defines *wellness* as not just the absence of disease or infirmity, but rather a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (World Health Organization 2005). Addressing well-being in K-12 education is known to have multiple individual and societal benefits. These include supporting positive physical and mental health for students and staff, quality of life, improved academic achievement, increased graduation and employment rates, reduced staff turnover and illness leave, and reduced healthcare costs (Storey, Montemurro and McArthur 2020; McConnell Foundation 2020).

Given our growing need and appreciation for well-being in K-12 education, there is great interest in understanding how school authorities (that is, divisions, districts, jurisdictions) can sustainably embed a well-being focus among school communities. This mounting interest was a driver for our recent case study research, which aimed to understand *how* and *why* six school authorities in western Canada have been able to prioritize well-being and shift culture.

Below, we highlight some of our study findings with examples from well-being prioritization in one of the participating case districts, the Chinook's Edge School Division (CESD). Together, we have summarized some key reflections, with attention to how inservice teachers and staff can be supported in their teaching and with their

own wellness. These real-life examples offer meaningful insight to support educators and school and system leaders, to bolster comprehensive school health efforts and to deepen well-being prioritization in K-12 education.

Well-Being Is Holistic and Requires Balance

Individual and collective well-being are necessary to build resilience and support overall flourishing. Optimal well-being looks different for everyone. Within CESD, well-being is supported through division-level, school-level and personal strategies that aim to achieve the CESD 5 Es: Educate, Encourage, Engage, Embed and Empower. Creating a shared understanding (and lexicon) for well-being is important to build awareness and garner support for change. School and district champions can start by

- creating opportunities for school- and district-level conversation about well-being and how it is understood and valued,
- using frameworks such as comprehensive school health (<https://education.alberta.ca/comprehensive-school-health/?searchMode=3>) that acknowledge and describe multiple well-being domains,
- looking to existing organizations such as the Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance (www.healthyschoolsalliance.ca/en/resources) for resources to help build and maintain healthy school communities, and
- considering your own personal wellness values and needs—in what domains (social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, other) do you need additional support?

Tipping Points for Action

Often, the need for a more deepened focus on well-being may follow heightened staff and student needs related to their mental and physical health. Burnout and

job dissatisfaction in the teaching profession are well recognized (Brasfield, Lancaster and Xu 2019; Kutsyuruba et al 2018). Viewing individual and organizational challenges as an opportunity for growth can go a long way in shifting practice. Within CESD, district acknowledgment of a need for additional staff health and wellness support was an essential early step in prioritizing well-being. Consider the following:

- Formally recognizing a need for change to support well-being, with collective input, can be helpful in gathering support and understanding what next steps are required.
- Take a strengths-based approach to change. Build on what is working, with a focus on making it better.

A quote from a teacher who participated in the study:

Our slogan is “Chinook’s Edge, where students come first.” We’ve talked a lot about how if we want to put our students first, we have to think about ourselves as well. I think with the increased learning around emotional health that we’ve done with students, it’s become more obvious that we were really needing to look at our health as well.

Organizational Leadership Sustains Implementation

School and school system leaders set the tone when it comes to personal and professional prioritization of well-being. Strong organizational leadership and coordinated action are crucial in supporting and sustaining well-being efforts. Within CESD, having superintendents who openly communicate and model the value of well-being, alongside the dedication of time and resources to support action, is key to making and sustaining change. For CESD, this includes a district staff wellness worker and shared leadership through school and district well-being champions. Even without funding for a district-level position, impactful change can occur. We all have an opportunity to act as wellness leaders, regardless of our job titles or roles. Consider small actions that can have a big impact:

- Make your personal vision and valuing of well-being a part of your leadership/collegial/pedagogical approach, whatever your role. This helps normalize and encourage it as a district and school priority, raising awareness and reducing stigma.

- Communicate an intention to support collective and individual well-being, with transparency that change is a process, not an end result. Where possible, provide support to sustain this work (for example, staffing, funds, time), or ask for support where it is needed.

Connection and Voice as a Catalyst for Well-Being

Opportunities for connection can foster a sense of belonging and create space for conversations about well-being. These informal or formal opportunities help build positive collaborative working and learning environments, increase social cohesion and engage school community members. A *culture of listening* adopted within CESD helped to create connection among students, staff and families. This involved the establishment of specific “Matters” committees (Teachers Matter, Support Staff Matter, Parents Matter, Students Matter), which provide a forum for connection and direct conversation with district leaders. Superintendents are responsive and accountable to these committees, which often include an anonymous question box and open Q&A with district leaders, increasing decision-making transparency.

- Create space for social connection in the workday. This practice helps to build trust, promotes collaboration and group cohesion, and enhances well-being.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful engagement within well-being initiatives, including input in early development and adaptation, and leadership growth.

Building Capacity to Support Well-Being Action

Every task requires the right tools to support the work, including those in the well-being realm. Building individual and collective capacity through ongoing professional development and learning is needed to support well-being initiatives. Resources related to well-being and skills-building opportunities can help to apply and sustain new knowledge and coordinate action across schools. Within CESD, direct support is provided to wellness champions, to the wellness steering committee and through professional learning sessions. These sessions are often delivered in partnership

with external partners (for example, other school jurisdictions, provincial organizations and service providers). Building capacity isn't something that happens in isolation. Start with what is working and build it out from there:

- Identify allies with knowledge, expertise and resources to support your school or district well-being goals (for example, professional development, community engagement, evaluation).
- Integrate a well-being focus into existing professional development and learning, with mechanisms to help share and apply knowledge more broadly, and promote shared leadership.
- If you've learned or read something interesting, share it! It's likely that someone else will appreciate it too. Sharing can create opportunity for conversation and energy to move ideas into action.

Charting and Recharting a Course

Strategic planning helps give direction to well-being initiatives. Having a map can promote alignment within and across schools, setting a wellness course based on school community strengths and needs. Incorporating existing processes and knowledge (for example, committees, survey data, occupational health and safety statistics, student and staff voice) can help identify where attention is required. The CESD Steering Committee for Staff Health and Wellness guides wellness planning for the division. The goal of the committee is to develop strategies to improve staff health and wellness, with representation from administrators, teachers, school staff, district staff and partner organizations. A variety of information sources are used to identify new wellness avenues and opportunities, including surveys, aggregate data from the division employee and family assistance program, and wellness topics identified across other division committees.

- Create and use a common language for well-being to help frame strategic district priorities plans, with clear goals and opportunities for input from all school community members.
- When planning school or district initiatives, convene a group with diverse perspectives. This can help to guide implementation and build a strong foundation, with engagement and support to adapt plans where needed.

- Youth are powerful change makers. Their voices bring enthusiasm and creativity to inspire and engage others. Where possible, include students in the well-being conversation through curricula and planning processes.

These study findings and suggestions provide examples to help educators and school system leaders to deepen well-being prioritization in their own practice and support ongoing comprehensive school health efforts. We recognize that districts and schools have unique strengths, opportunities and challenges when it comes to well-being. Collective identification of these factors can help to shape and tailor well-being strategies to find a best fit for individual contexts. To hear directly from participating case districts about their well-being prioritization, including staff and students at CESD, view our video series (available at www.youtube.com/channel/UCTn8zdaQjSN1WZxDtd7ong/featured). To learn more about this research and other related research, visit www.katestorey.com.

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Masculinities in Physical Education: Keeping the Boys Engaged

Chris Borduas

Throughout my life, the one place that I have always felt the most comfortable is in physical education (PE). As a student, a teacher and an education researcher, my natural and almost instinctual gravitation toward physical activity and sport seemed nothing more than second nature to my identity. While these feelings of enjoyment and comfort may be ingrained in my being, these feelings are not necessarily shared by all boys, or even most boys, for that matter. As noted by Monaghan and Atkinson (2016), in a Canadian national study of boy's involvement in PE, there is a growing attrition rate in PE involvement and a definite increase in "anti-sport and PE attitudes" among young men. What is more shocking is the number in which boys are leaving or, arguably, avoiding PE spaces. According to Monaghan and Atkinson (2016), boys are choosing to withdraw from PE as soon as they are institutionally allowed in provinces like Ontario (between Grades 9 and 10) at a dropout rate that often eclipses 90 per cent; educators, researchers and administrators find this number concerning.

From a young age, boys learn and identify ways of acting, thinking and feeling that are *acceptable* and differentiated between men and women through the influences of dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity (Tremblay and L'Heureux 2012). While patterns in masculinity are both created and contested as individuals develop in their social environments (Connell 1995), the ongoing process of gender relations allows for the process of reformulation of what we know as "appropriate" (Burns and Kehler 2014). Physical education classrooms are positioned in young men's social, physical and educational spheres and offer a possibility to broaden the way boys and men think about their masculinity in relation to everyday social positions (Wellard 2009). This makes for an environment that has a drastic influence on the ideologies that young men hold on health, masculinity and physical activity.

Drawing from the research in the field, scholars of masculinity and PE have examined the social construction of gender, shaped by discourses of "acceptable" masculinity in spaces such as physical education (Azzarito 2009; Hauge and Haavind 2011; Kehler and Atkinson 2010, 2015; Atkinson and Kehler 2012; Norman 2011; Paechter 2007, 2019; Swain 2003), media (Lafrance, Lafrance and Norman 2015; Monaghan and Hardey 2009) and sport (Gard and Meyenn 2000; Light and Kirk 2000; Pringle and Hickey 2010). The role that physical culture plays in these masculinized spaces is seen as crucial because it is integral to how masculinities are perceived, performed and lived. As suggested in recent literature, young men are feeling pressure to subscribe to dominant discourses of body projections adjacent to a stylized body, one that is lean, muscular and sculpted (Drummond and Drummond 2015; Gill, Henwood and McLean 2011; Hauge and Haavind 2005; Atkinson and Kehler 2012; Kehler and Atkinson 2010; Norman 2011, 2013; Swain 2003). As a result, we are seeing a decline in physical education enrolment past the required years, and anti-PE sentiments from students who feel as though they don't fit in or who don't feel safe in these spaces.

According to Bramham (2003), "PE remains one of the few areas of the national curriculum where boys are expected to achieve standards" (p 57). As a result, the preconceived notion that there is a need for a certain physicality is reiterating the need to display the "hegemonic" masculine. This is resulting in physical education perpetually being pedagogically developed within a discourse of denial and exclusion (Kehler and Borduas 2021). If PE does not take into consideration those who don't fit the "norm" (Paechter 2019; Waling 2017), students may never feel comfortable in PE, and elective enrolment and participation will continue to decline. Given the low rate of retention in voluntary participation, the anti-PE and exercise sentiments, and negative experiences in PE, there is a necessity for consciousness raising in how we are engaging young men in physical education and adapting

current pedagogical practices to provide inclusive and safe classes. In part of disrupting and (re)imagining masculinities, I suggest four areas of consideration for implementation, as well as areas for continued research.

1. Rethinking engagement

Built on the backbone of hegemonic masculinity and physical culture, physical education was born on rewarding the most physically gifted and gender-conforming students. According to Horton (2021), we need to engage in conversations with our students about their engagement in PE and what that looks like. Horton (2021) discusses how PE educators need to adapt their pedagogy to ensure that all learners *feel* welcome. We need to discuss with students aspects of inclusivity, collaboration, teamwork and enjoyment, and let them know that playing sport is actually just one aspect of PE.

This is further discussed by critical PE scholars (Oliver and Kirk 2017; Tinning 2017; Tolgfors 2019) who assert that there is a need to develop and implement transformative discussions and assessment in PE. According to Oliver and Kirk (2017, 314), PE teachers need to advocate for “initiatives which challenge body culture in PE, similarly require the construction of new and creative alternatives to traditional practices and imagine new possibilities.” This will be further discussed in the following section.

2. Start implementing transformative pedagogies

As discussed above, the use of standardized curricula privileges some students and discriminates against others (Azzarito 2017; Lynch and Curtner-Smith 2019; Oliver and Kirk 2017; Ovens 2017; Tolgfors 2019); there is a need to rethink how we implement equal learning opportunities in the classroom. To engage more learners, there needs to be an understanding of inclusion and equality. With a growing diversity of learners in the classroom, we need to take approaches that contribute to a wider understanding of others. There is a difference between supporting and implementing a transformative approach. In *implementing* a transformative approach, we need to take advantage of the opportunities to construct teachable moments in the classroom and make ourselves and our students aware of critical perspectives (inequalities and injustices) in our own classrooms.

According to Walton-Fisette et al (2018), one way that

we can engage our students is to have “a program-wide approach to social justice that starts with both PETE [physical education teacher education] faculty and students exploring their own biographies to identify one’s own social identity, biases, and the ways in which you might be privileged or oppressed” (p 507). By implementing critical sociocultural perspectives, along with negotiated and student-centred approaches, these efforts allow students to develop ownership and responsibility for their learning in social justice. By furthering critical understandings, particularly the male perspective in PE, there is potential for inclusivity and continued participation. While Ovens (2017) and Tinning (2017) have discussed how this approach may be highly contested in policy, this can be encouraged in alternative pedagogies. These will be discussed below.

3. Introduce alternative physical education pedagogies

Research in alternative pedagogical approaches to teaching PE has begun to study hegemony in non-sports-based models of PE. Previous research studies have examined teacher pedagogy in narrowing inequitable gender relations through alternative PE pedagogies such as dance (Gard 2001, 2003, 2008), adventure PE (Tischler and McCaughtry 2014) and rugby (Gard and Meyenn 2000; Light and Kirk 2000). In a recent study with middle school boys (Borduas 2021), the participants (middle school students and their teacher) showed that a positive and safe learning environment was created through a diversity of alternative learning activities. As noted by Monaghan and Atkinson (2016), alternative streams straying from normative traditional multi-sport physical education are essentially nonexistent and unavailable for boys. When alternative PE is offered, it opens the door to new possibilities for the students. The boys in this particular study (Borduas 2021) recalled the ingrained inequalities and normative learning that happened in past traditional sport-based PE and spoke of how an alternative pedagogical approach to PE changed their perceptions of PE. Additionally, boys reiterated feelings that “levelling the playing field” by incorporating nontraditional games that most students had never played created an inclusive and fun atmosphere. Students liked how they were not only participating in traditional sport but were given the opportunity to gain new experi-

ences in a variety of activities. The results from this study suggest that alternative approaches to teaching and learning in PE can enhance participation and engagement with physical activity in school and should be examined further.

4. Take bodies off display

Surveillance and knowing how to manage physical spaces to deflect the unwanted gaze of others is one lesson—one “rule”—that young boys and men learn about locker-room spaces in relation to their own bodies. In schools, “boys’ sexual bodies are both everywhere, and nowhere” (Allen 2013, 348). This disturbingly present-but-absent paradox raises significant questions about schooling and the health and well-being of young men. With growing concern over men’s body image issues and overly apparent physical culture (Borduas 2021; Jachyra 2016; Kehler 2007; Kehler and Atkinson 2010; Kehler and Borduas 2021; Wagner 2016), we are seeing a competing healthist discourse that is resulting in the rise of body image issues, body shaming, bullying and restraint from physical activity due to fear. While not wanting to capitulate to the healthist discourse, our goal as PE educators is to create atmospheres that promote positive experiences with health and physical activity. In these spaces, we can challenge the healthist discourse and normativity through intentional action by including features like alternative PE to instill a lifelong love for physical activity and health without fear or intimidation. However, not addressing these discourses head on creates the possibility of further feelings of exclusion due to the unacceptability of masculinities and bodies (Sykes and McPhail 2008). We also need to be aware and engage in conversations that make the “hidden” space of the locker room a safe space for all of our students.

The aim of these suggestions is to be able to elicit thought regarding critically responsive and transformative pedagogies in PE. With the growing rates of PE dropout and anti-PE sentiments in boys, our current approach needs to be reconsidered in how we support all learners. By taking the time to understand and recognize inequalities in the classroom, we have the potential to engage more students in PE and in safe, inclusive, healthy active living. Raising awareness in masculinities, social justice and inclusive PE is an area that we should be striving for as researchers and educators.

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Creating Healthy School Environments That Support Teacher Well-Being

Heather Callum

Education systems across Canada are being called on to attend to employee well-being as a core strategic direction (College of Alberta School Superintendents [CASS] 2021; EdCan 2017b). The question is, how can school districts and administrators respond effectively to this call, within the context of the complex and often competing priorities that exist for teachers?

The social and financial returns on investing in teacher well-being provide a compelling case for increased focus in this area. Research shows that student well-being, engagement and academic success are all linked to teacher well-being (British Columbia School Centred Mental Health Coalition [BCSCMHC] 2020).

On the other hand, high levels of stress in teaching environments not only lead to negative impacts for students, they create a culture that undermines well-being and leads to negative health impacts for teachers.

We know that teachers' reports of higher levels of stress are related to higher levels of stress among primary school students, and that higher levels of teacher stress are connected to lower achievement and academic disengagement for students. (Arens and Morin 2016)

School systems are working to address multiple priorities within a context of limited resources and increasing student needs, especially as they relate to mental health concerns and complex behavioural challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has also added multiple barriers and restrictions to an already challenging landscape for educators and education leaders alike.

Teachers are balancing teaching roles with meeting student needs that have increased in frequency and intensity in many school districts across the country. This is in addition to adapting teaching methods to respond to public health measures in response to COVID-19, leaving little time or energy to focus on personal well-being or work-life balance.

Teacher stress translates to negative financial impacts for education systems through increased employee absences, disability claims and costly turnover (BCSCMHC

2021), resulting in the loss of highly qualified teachers from the profession (EdCan 2017a). According to research conducted by EdCan, 58 per cent of Canadian teachers reported feeling stressed “all the time,” compared with only 36 per cent of the overall Canadian workforce (EdCan 2017b). Compounding this challenge, Black educators report additional, intersecting stresses in their roles, such as isolation and marginalization (Ontario Association of Black School Educators 2015). Clearly, change is needed in the Canadian education system.

Focusing on Teacher Well-Being Through Healthy Schools Approaches

To be sure, a concerted and collaborative effort on the part of multiple system players, with strong system leadership and sustainable resources attached, is needed to make broad shifts within the Canadian education system in order to create an environment that supports teacher well-being.

School districts are increasingly focusing on strategies to improve teacher/staff well-being. The Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance (CHSA) offers another entry point to staff well-being through Healthy Schools—an established, evidence-based approach—to complement and bolster a chorus of actions within education systems aimed at creating healthy school environments for all school community members. The Canadian Healthy School Standards were launched in July 2021, to help create a tipping point where school communities come together to elevate well-being in schools. One of the subtle but meaningful shifts included in the standards is an explicit focus on teacher/educator well-being, positioning it as an *essential condition* for any healthy school (CHSA 2021).

To read the Canadian Healthy School Standards, visit healthyschoolsalliance.ca/ca-healthy-school-standards.

Creating the Organizational Conditions to Support Teacher Well-Being

How can inservice PHE teachers be supported in their teaching and in their own wellness, and what can the Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance contribute? The Canadian Healthy School Standards advocate for creating environments, or whole school climates, that support well-being for all members of the school community. Rather than one-time health-related interventions, the standards guide healthy schools to take a strengths-based and systems thinking approach to creating a healthy school.

What does this look like on the ground, in real terms? How can a healthy schools approach support teachers in their own well-being? The standards, and the related Toolkit for Healthy Schools Leadership, encourage schools to include the following elements in their healthy schools work.

To read the Toolkit for Healthy Schools Leadership, visit healthyschoolsalliance.ca/ca-healthy-school-standards/toolkit

1. Create the organizational conditions for thriving

School system leaders (for example, superintendents, directors of education, trustees, mental health leads) have a key role to play in creating the organizational conditions that can either overload teachers, or support and build them up. Organizational conditions can include policies, processes and investments that promote well-being for all members of the school community. CHSA is advocating through policy tools aimed at school system leaders to invest energy in the following areas:

- Provide system leadership for healthy schools: ensure that a leader(s) at the district level has set a clear vision, shared by their administration team, with trustee endorsement, that every school is a healthy school, in order to provide clear direction and support to in-school teams focusing on healthy school development.
- Embed well-being in decision making across the school district, using it as a lens through which options are weighed and policies are created. Create accountability for the healthy school vision by including healthy schools in board improvement plans and operational plans.

- Include meaningful staff well-being components in improvement plans, implement meaningful practices, reflect and share what works well.
- Ensure that policies related to school health and well-being are paired with sustainable investments and resources, and that schools are investing in both short-term commitments and longer-term, sustainable changes. Create a budget line that includes teacher release time, to provide dedicated time for teachers to work on healthy schools activities.
- Trouble-shoot and open doors for teachers and in-school teams working on healthy school plans, to ensure that they feel supported.
- Connect teachers with local partners working to promote school health, such as public health units, social service, sport and recreation organizations, and provincial physical and health education resources (for example, Ever Active Schools, Alberta Health Services) to build on the expertise and resources they can offer, rather than asking teachers to reinvent the wheel in every school.
- Create healthy physical spaces in and around schools to support well-being for students and staff. Funds are often limited, but leaders can be proactive in considering how to embed wellness in any renovations, expansions or upgrades to indoor or outdoor spaces. Leaders can take inspiration from programs that focus on merging wellness into the design of built environments and facilities.
- School system leaders are called on to model well-being practices to validate the importance of teachers prioritizing their own well-being.

2. Ensure that healthy schools activities aren't overloading the healthy schools champion

The standards recommend aligning healthy school planning with existing work within a school and considering multiple, interconnected actions that support well-being for all school community members. When schools take a systems approach to creating an environment of well-being, they increase the impact of their activities, address the broader environment of the school that will facilitate or hinder health promotion and well-being initiatives, and minimize teacher and administrator workloads by reducing duplication in in-school and district-level initiatives. This can provide a supportive team for the healthy school champion to work alongside, and boost

the impact and visibility of healthy school actions by pairing them with other strategic actions (for example, strategies related to staff well-being, mental health, Indigenous education, equity and inclusive education, student voice, safe and accepting schools, and positive school climate).

Teachers can be supported in their healthy schools work by ensuring that they are given access to job-embedded, quality professional learning opportunities related to healthy schools, as well as equity, diversity, inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation. Leaders are also being encouraged to look at what can be taken off a teacher's plate before healthy school activities are added on.

3. Focus on and invest in teacher well-being alongside student well-being

Plain and simple—consider teacher well-being to be an important element of any healthy school plan! As noted, the Canadian Healthy School Standards advocate for teacher and school leader well-being to be a key part of any healthy school activities. CHSA is seeing more and more schools include teacher well-being activities in their healthy school plans, and celebrates this type of whole-school thinking.

4. Centre equity, diversity and inclusion, and act on Truth and Reconciliation

We know that racism and discrimination have significant negative impacts for teachers and students alike. Systemic racism in school settings manifests in increased teacher stress, a decreased sense of safety, and increased turnover for Black, Indigenous and racialized teachers (PHE Canada 2021). This not only affects the well-being of these educators, but also impacts student well-being and success and the ability of school districts to retain highly skilled staff.

It impacts their sense of belonging, sense of safety, mental health and opportunities for promotion. This can lead to increased stress and anxiety, which can negatively impact teacher performance. Teachers who are under chronic stress have been shown to have less effective classroom management strategies, lack clear teaching instruction for students and have a lower ability to create safe and nurturing classrooms for their students. Teachers and educators who experience racism in the workplace have the stress that comes with being a teacher and the additional stress and anxiety of

having to cope with racism in the workplace. (Rohan Thompson, quoted in PHE Canada 2021).

The standards centre equity, diversity and inclusion, and truth and reconciliation as key foundations for any action aimed at systemwide well-being, recognizing that we cannot have healthy teachers or students without creating healthy school environments that consider power and control within the education system and society at large. They call on school systems to champion the diversity within schools and communities as a strength, asking ourselves how our school systems have contributed to equity, inclusion and anti-oppression; and consulting, engaging and sharing power with Black, racialized and Indigenous students, family members and community members.

5. Share what works in school settings across Canada

CHSA supports schools in creating healthy workplaces by sharing successes from across Canada, making it easier for teachers and other healthy school champions to borrow or adapt effective strategies from other schools or regions. Success stories are shared in the Canadian Healthy School Standards (CHSA 2021) and on the CHSA website (www.healthyschoolsalliance.ca/) to help save time for educators—time that they can invest instead in personal or school well-being.

The Path Forward

Will these interconnected actions immediately resolve teacher stress or shift longstanding and deeply ingrained organizational cultures across a large and complex system? Undoubtedly, this is only a starting point, and just one puzzle piece in a broad system transformation that is needed across education systems in Canada. Change is a process, and we need to keep moving forward. CHSA offers a path forward for healthy schools in Canada, acting as a key convenor and catalyst bringing individuals, organizations and communities from across the country together to create and sustain the healthy schools vision.

The stewarding organizations have been working together using a collective impact approach to identify the key points where action can drive broad change to spread healthy schools models to all schools in Canada. The timing for this work is optimal: more school districts, teacher associations, school system administrator associations and education ministries across Canada are calling for systemwide well-being strategies that promote well-being for students, staff and school system leaders alike.

To teach well, you need to *be* well. While this is a simple statement, the journey to ensuring the well-being of educators is complex and rooted in deep-seated values. It is an exciting time indeed, as school districts start to dig in to the work needed to redesign education systems to be equitable and focused on health and well-being for all.

For more information on the Canadian Healthy Schools Alliance, visit www.healthyschoolsalliance.ca.

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Heather Callum has spent the past 20-plus years working alongside health, social service, municipal government, postsecondary and community-based organizations, and currently leads engagement and knowledge mobilization with Physical and Health Education Canada (<https://phecanada.ca/>). She completed a master's degree in community development in Waterloo, Ontario, and uses her skills as a social researcher, strategic planner, program evaluator and health promoter to help communities and organizations get to better. Heather's passion is bringing together people, information and ideas to identify needs and implement strategies to enhance the health and well-being of children, youth, families and communities.

Protecting the “Heartwork” of Physical and Health Education Teachers

Astrid Kendrick

For the past two years, I have been working in partnership with the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) and the Alberta School Employee Benefits Plan to investigate the scope and experience of compassion fatigue and burnout in education workers. A shocking 57.8 per cent of respondents who identified as teachers (3,112 of survey participants) felt compassion fatigue, and 87 per cent felt two or more symptoms of burnout. These statistics are problematic and indicative of a profession experiencing an occupational health crisis (Kendrick 2020, 2021).

I have had the pleasure of working with both preservice and inservice physical and health education (PHE) teachers for several years, and while my research did not look at the rates of compassion fatigue and burnout as related to specific teaching assignments, I have some insights from my teaching practice into how HEARTcare can be used to protect PHE teachers’ passion for health and well-being.

In my experience as a PHE teacher over 19 years in five different schools and as a university instructor at the Werklund School of Education, I have observed that PHE teachers are the first to volunteer for extracurricular coaching, will organize large school events, and take personal care to promote healthy eating and physical activity habits for the entire school community. In their desire to be a health champion for others, they often sacrifice their own physical activity, sleep and healthy eating.

In my doctoral dissertation (Kendrick 2018), I looked specifically into the emotional labour of health champions. My participants expressed to me that they felt a personal disappointment when the health initiatives they champion are greeted with cynicism or fail to be sustained over time. Providing the emotional labour to be the healthy, energetic, enthusiastic, joyful school leader can be enormously draining and, over time, can lead to burnout.

Additionally, PHE teachers, in their role as coaches and health teachers, often form close, professional relationships with their students and become a natural

sounding board for students who have experienced a traumatic event, leaving them potentially exposed to compassion stress (secondary traumatic stress) and compassion fatigue (secondary traumatic stress disorder).

So, What Can We Do?

Without question, interventions need to be implemented to ensure the occupational health of the teaching profession. But simply asking teachers to do more self-care and take personal responsibility for their distress is not enough. Compassion fatigue and burnout are workplace hazards, which requires a workplace intervention.



HEARTcare planning involves investigating and implementing a variety of interventions to improve the collective well-being of education workers in a school setting. Education workers such as teachers provide unique emotional labour to ensure safe and caring classrooms for their students. Thus, to maintain their occupational health requires targeted interventions that account for the unique characteristics of the educational workplace.

Self-Care as a Pathway to Collective Well-Being

Compassion fatigue and burnout occur as a result of workplace conditions, and can be prevented through thoughtful leadership, education, and accessing the many supports and resources available to education workers. Physical and health education teachers are a natural fit to promote collective well-being at their workplace through taking a comprehensive school health approach to creating a positive school culture, or encouraging healthy staff behaviours by modelling easy-to-implement self-care strategies.

How Can You Get Started?

As a result of this research study, the three research partners have designed a website (www.heartcareeducators.ca) that can help guide teachers and other education workers through their potential sources of stress and distress at the workplace, and help them investigate potential supports and resources that they can use if they begin to feel the symptoms of compassion fatigue or burnout.

This website includes a free downloadable digital workbook, templates for HEARTcare planning, links to further reading, and a link to an assessment tool to help people understand their workplace mental health.

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Before taking on her current role as director of field experience (community-based pathway) at the Werklund School of Education, Astrid Kendrick, EdD, was a K-12 classroom teacher for 19 years, specializing in physical education and English/language arts. Her current research focus is on compassion fatigue, burnout and emotional labour in Alberta education workers and improving online learning through integrating podcasts. She is a member of the advisory circle for the Alberta Teachers' Association Women in Leadership committee and is the cochair of the Health Promoting Schools Collaborative for the southern Alberta region. She was also the editor of *Runner*, the journal of the ATA's Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC), for three years.

1000 Hours Outside: Invest in Your Wellness

Shannon Kell

As the world quickly closed around us in March 2020, and then continued to open and close like unstoppable, depressing jaws, my family and I attached ourselves to the only consistent lifeline—the outdoors. If you similarly felt the uncertainty, frustration and roller coaster of ongoing COVID-19 waves, regulations and politics, it's likely you can relate to this narrative.

It was still pre-COVID-19 when I came across the 1000 Hours Outside Challenge (www.1000hoursoutside.com/), which was started by a mother who was searching for something more than endless screen time for her children. The premise was that our children spend roughly 1,000 hours per year on screens, perhaps more, and that something needs to be done to combat this trend. A person with little outdoor experience or knowledge, she began to attempt to match her children's screen hours with outdoor hours. Her journey is well documented through her blog and social media; their adventures were not mind blowing, which is why I believe so many people related to her story. The challenge took off, and now thousands of families around the world are taking part in this informal, light-hearted, life-changing experience.

Life-changing, you ask? You're skeptical, and I can understand why.

I printed off the 1,000-hour tracking sheet on a cold December 31, 2019 afternoon; it was a blank and intimidating sheet of empty dots to be coloured in. I had few—actually no—expectations as I taped it on the pantry door and walked away without a second thought. I had no idea how this simple challenge would shape my family's attitude, behaviour and future together simply by creating a reminder to step out the door.

We know that nature offers many benefits (Berto 2014; Capaldi et al 2015; Kaplan 1995) to our well-being. This is true for all ages, and particularly vital for young children who are learning to communicate, regulate their emotions, solve problems and find their physical boundaries (Gruno and Gibbons 2020). We also know that taking time in nature helps lower our stress levels; helps recharge our cognitive functions, such as concentration

and inhibitions; and can provide much-needed breaks from screens, technology and the indoor settings in which we spend most of our daytime hours (Jiang, Schmillen and Sullivan 2019). Apparently, the magic time frame for stress reduction and optimal benefits is around the 20-minute mark (Hunter, Gillespie and Chan 2019).

As a parent, I began to see these benefits manifest in my own children. Flash forward a few hundred hours on our tracking sheet: they argued less, and they started to problem solve together rather than push each other. They stayed outside progressively longer without asking to come inside (which was invaluable during the days of working from home while schools and daycares were closed), and they stopped asking for cartoons as often. Instead, they happily put on their boots to go out and create their imaginary restaurant in the snow or see who could jump off the highest stairs on the deck. I, myself, also felt the benefits of ensuring that I stepped out the door every single day. Although I didn't earn nearly as many hours as the children, I always made a conscious effort to join them for at least one [hour] each day.



The motivation and momentum built as our little team reminded each other that we hadn't been outside yet or that we didn't really need to go in yet. We started to explore simple questions, such as why does the water flow down the street and where does it go? Or we noticed how the tree on our lawn changes with the seasons. We talked about bugs and bites and how sunscreen works (had to YouTube this one!). We sketched, painted, walked and wondered. As an educator, I saw the curricular connections and immense potential, so I began to share this excitement with colleagues and friends. I casually posted our experiences on social media and noticed others beginning to dabble in the practice of "just going outside." Suddenly, folks were messaging me with words of encouragement, sharing their adventures proudly and hashtagging #1000hoursoutside.

Don't get me wrong—it wasn't all sunshine and laughter. Some of those initial days of dark, after-work, presupper outdoor hours were a struggle in February during frigid temperatures. It took convincing, begging and bribery. I questioned why we had even started this silly thing in the first place. We tried to average an hour per day. However, as COVID-19 began to close up the world around us in March, the 1000 Hours Outside Challenge became our constant. Suddenly, what we had struggled with became the easiest part of our daily life. Outside was our staple. The benefits nature provided emerged as twofold: we needed something to do and we needed a mental health strategy that was accessible. These benefits were immensely vital as the news on television became more and more grim, playgrounds and schools closed, and uncertainty took hold.

Even my four-year-old agreed that lying outside in the snow while looking up at the floating clouds was "a nice way to relax." I would add that lying on the ground certainly didn't solve the world's problems (far from it!)—but this simple practice, along with countless hours outside, offered each of us a lifelong tool to manage and navigate the most complex issues we could and will ever face. The bonus was that we did it together.

What was also an unintended outcome of our 1000 Hours Outside Challenge, but has turned out to be one of the largest impacts, was how my children's day home began to buy in to sending the children outside. Every day. No matter the weather. At pickup time we chatted about the 1000 Hours tracking sheet, and each day I received a proud report of how many hours they had played outside. As it caught on, the day home mom and

dad observed that the children came back inside more relaxed and happier, and started to get along better after working through conflict outside through play and engagement together.

You get the idea. Spending time outside has had an immense impact on my family, and it all began with such a simple idea. The point in sharing this is that *you* can do it too. You *should* do it too. I would even venture to say that you can do this with your students, colleagues, families and friends. The beauty of the 1000 Hours Outside Challenge is that there are no rules. How you choose to take up the challenge is entirely up to you. Create your own challenge among classes, grades or schools. Design your own tracking sheets. Do things outside that you'd normally engage in at desks. Create small and large adventures, inquiries or projects that require students to step outside. Listen to each other's wonders and questions, then follow them.

I am proud of the proclamation my six-year-old son recently made: "We have spent so many hours outside that we have lost track." And isn't that just the point? Create a habit that feels ingrained in your daily life. Invest in your wellness and teach our children about a tool they can carry with them for life.

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Play the Long Game: How to Sustain Your Passion for School Health

The Alberta Health Services School Health and Wellness Promotion Team



**HEALTHIER
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If you're a loyal reader of the *Runner*, it's almost certain that you're a school health champion at heart. By this, we mean that you likely

- care deeply about making schools healthy places for students to learn, work, play and grow;
- are often the driving force behind health-related school activities and events;
- work hard to grow and sustain support for healthy living among your colleagues;
- help students raise their voices and lead school health projects; and
- are a change-maker, influencer and all-around amazing human.

We see you, health champion! We know and value the work that you do every day. It means so much to your students, colleagues, and whole school community. It makes a difference.

But we worry about you, too. We know that the lion's share of school health can fall to you, and that you sometimes feel like you need to do it all.

So before you find yourself fizzling out, please remember: school health is not a solo effort, a passion project or something you do in your "spare time." It needs people, plans and support to grow. It needs time and opportunity to flourish.

Play the long game. Here's how.

Build Your Roster

Surround yourself with people who can share the load. Without a doubt, it's tough to prioritize team building when you're busy. Connect with others who share your passion for health. Look for support in all corners of the school community—keen and competent souls often lurk in the shadows, wanting to help but not knowing how. Students, for example, can turn ideas into action with their unparalleled creativity and refreshing optimism. Invest in relationships with parents, Elders and peer mentors. A strong team gives you breathing room, space to refocus and, eventually, a bit more time to unleash the full potential of your high-level skill set.

Harness Existing Knowledge

Don't start from scratch. When it comes to school health promotion, learn what works and build on it. Look to schools.healthiertogether.ca for science-based ideas and practical resources.

Seek local perspectives and traditional wisdom. Find out what has worked in the past. Take stock of wellness plans, frameworks and pockets of interest in your school community—ideas gain traction and momentum when they align with existing priorities.

Top Up the Think Tank

Alberta Health Services offers a variety of learning opportunities geared to teachers, like open conversations, round tables and virtual sessions. Find out how your AHS health promotion facilitator is supporting health in your school authority. Not sure how to reach your health

promotion facilitator? E-mail schoolhealthandwellness@ahs.ca and we'll connect you.

Light the Fuse

It's okay to start small. Focus on getting the right people, plans and supports in place. You can be the spark—and that's enough.

The Alberta Health Services school health and wellness promotion team uses the comprehensive school health framework to improve healthy eating, active living and positive mental health among children and youth. We partner with school authorities across Alberta to facilitate school health assessments, action planning, policy development and implementation, professional learning, and evidence-informed school health initiatives. To connect with our team, e-mail schoolhealthandwellness@ahs.ca.

Take a Breath: Student and Teacher Perceptions of 15-Minute Daily Outdoor Walking Breaks Across the Curriculum

Anne Robillard

High School Students' Risky Path Toward Health and Well-Being Concerns

As secondary physical education (PE) teachers, you are often active outdoors, embracing the fresh air with your students. What about implementing this in other subjects that we teach? I advocate that there are profound benefits to embedding daily 15-minute outdoor walking breaks into all secondary classes.

I recently conducted a qualitative research project as partial fulfillment of my master of education degree through the University of British Columbia's curriculum studies program in health, outdoor and physical experiential education (HOPE 2). I chose to explore how participation in a daily 15-minute outdoor walking break, during subject discipline learning, shaped high school student and teacher perceptions of their health and well-being.

High school students in Alberta and British Columbia are at risk for health and well-being concerns because their school day limits opportunities for physical activity (PA) and promotes sedentary behaviour with prolonged, indoor sitting. These factors may contribute to weight gain, depression and anxiety (Beauchamp, Ruterma and Lubens 2018; Levine 2014; ParticipACTION 2018) (see Figure 1).

In general, high schools have limited opportunities for students to meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Youth (12-17 years) in conjunction with the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Youth (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology 2012). Physical inactivity is further entrenched, as Grades 11 and 12 physical education (PE) in Alberta and physical and health education (PHE) in British Columbia are optional. Unlike elementary and junior high schools, the daily physical activity (DPA) policies in Alberta and British Columbia exclude opportunities during the school day in Grades 11 and 12 (Alberta Education 2019; British Columbia Ministry of Education 2018).

Method Design Footprint

Following is a brief description of my method design in relation to participants, activity description and rationale, data collection, and thematic analysis.

There were two high school participant groups: teachers and students. Two non-PE/PHE teachers, one in Calgary, Alberta, and one in Richmond, British Columbia, were recruited, along with a total of 38 students, from both provinces.

The activity consisted of daily 15-minute outdoor walking breaks embedded into Grade 10 science and Grade 12



Figure 1. High school students at risk for health and well-being concerns

social studies classes. These walks were self-paced, with all students invited alongside their teacher, between November and December 2020. The number of walks was limited to a maximum of 10 per student and teacher, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *whys* behind the walking breaks were guided by the research literature.

- Why walking?

Brustio et al (2018, 2) reported that “Walking is one of the most natural forms of physical activity movement. It is easy to perform and requires less skill than other activities and sports.” Walking is inclusive and cost free, does not require extra or special training or equipment, and is easy to organize for teachers.

- Why outdoors?

Being outside in nature has positive effects on physical and mental health, social relationships, stress management, and well-being (Capaldi et al 2015; Ryan et al 2010; Thompson Coon et al 2011). Greenwood and Gatersleben (2016) stated that “a short break in an environment ... [that] contains elements of nature, can restore attention fatigue more effectively than a break in an indoor environment” (p 138).

- Why 15 minutes?

Several studies in Europe saw elementary and middle-school students participating in 15 minutes of outdoor physical activity as part of their school curriculum. These daily opportunities included a walking activity in Italy (Brustio et al 2018), a walking/running activity called “The Daily Mile” in the United Kingdom (Malden and Doi 2019; Marchant et al 2020) and a self-paced run/walk activity in the United Kingdom (Booth et al 2020).

I used three data collection instruments: pre- and post-walking break Zoom teacher interviews, post-walking break online student questionnaires, and researcher field notes. COVID-19 limited the recruitment and data collection to online only.

Qualitative thematic analysis led to one overarching theme and five subthemes (see Figure 2). The overarching theme from the data was *student and teacher perceptions of their health and well-being*; the five sub-themes were *outdoors*, *minds*, *bodies*, *relationships*, and *feelings*.

Trail to Discoveries

Both students and teachers testified that daily outdoor walking breaks had a positive impact on their mental, physical, social, and emotional health and well-being. Ninety-seven per cent of students and 100 per cent of teachers reported enjoying these daily outdoor walking breaks, and 92 per cent of students and 100 per cent of teachers wanted to continue them. Students’ top perception of their enjoyment of the daily outdoor walking breaks was related to the outdoors and specifically linked to *fresh air*. I share some of the student and teacher responses in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, both students and teachers expressed benefits of the daily outdoor walking breaks as significantly enhancing their mental, social, emotional and physical health and well-being.

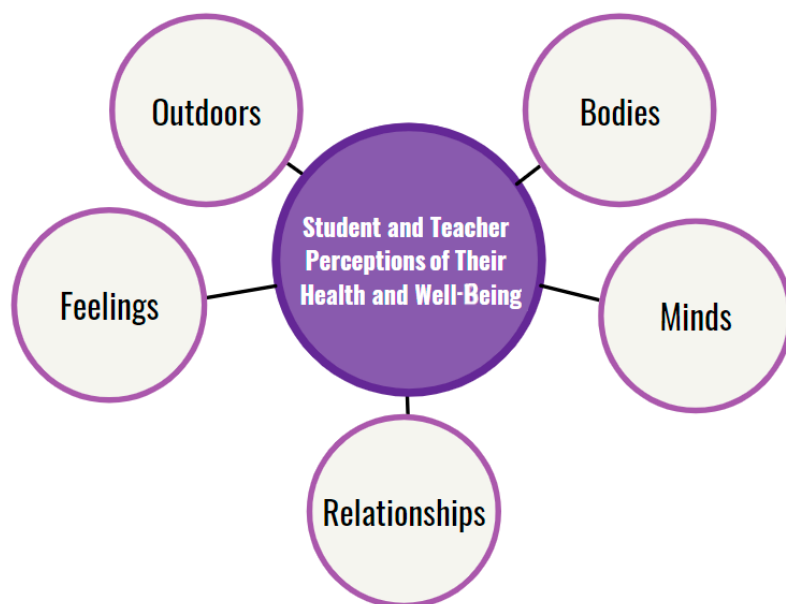


Figure 2. Thematic data analysis map showing one overarching theme and five subthemes

Table 1. Student and teacher responses in relation to the five subthemes

SUBTHEME	STUDENT RESPONSES	TEACHER RESPONSES
OUTDOORS	<p>Getting fresh air during class was refreshing.</p> <p>I enjoyed having the opportunity to get fresh air, especially since we wear masks all day.</p>	<p>Who wouldn't want to go outside for a walk just to even, you know, for the selfish reasons of a teacher wanting to get a little air and refresh?</p>
MINDS	<p>It allowed me to just take a breather for a few minutes and not have to worry about school, if only for a few minutes.</p> <p>I was able to focus a lot better in class, in comparison to my other classes where we had no breaks at all.</p> <p>I definitely felt an improvement in my mental health. Spending time outside allowed me to refocus my thoughts and come back to class ready to work.</p>	<p>I think the break just separates so naturally and perfectly—kind of a refresh for that second half. It's just sort of recalibration.</p> <p>I think it rejuvenates me.</p> <p>I saw them being more attentive in class ... more energetic to some of the learning that we were doing ... engaged with what we were trying to learn.</p>
RELATIONSHIPS	<p>The walking breaks allowed me to have conversations with my teacher one on one and with classmates that I otherwise wouldn't have really talked to. What was nice is we didn't really talk about school, we talked about other topics.</p> <p>Learned a lot more about my teacher and my classmates, created good connections with them.</p> <p>More of a collaborative workspace.</p>	<p>With every single break that I went on I had a student beside me. We would chat for longer than I would ever chat with them in a classroom. It was often different students, and sometimes very, very unexpected students.</p> <p>They'd open up and it often turned into really, really nice conversations. And so I feel I got to know them more than ever.</p> <p>The social health was huge, absolutely massive in my classes. To bring students closer together and also bringing students close together with me.</p>
FEELINGS	<p>The breaks calm me down if I feel stressed or tired in class; the fresh air really helps.</p> <p>It is much better for me personally because I get to relax and not think about all the homework and assignments I have and just be free.</p> <p>It makes me feel more happy and relaxed.</p>	<p>I instantly can feel the change in myself if I'm tense or anxious or nervous about meeting a schedule or an outcome or worried about the performance of the class. That evaporates within a few minutes of walking outside.</p> <p>I feel a kind of release ... It's like a release from that kind of stringent adherence to a logical linear set of outcomes and it's more of a creative relaxing with no particular outcome in mind. Letting go of a particular outcome, just random thoughts, random thinking and random observation. I find that relaxing. It's a calming in my mind.</p> <p>I feel happier when I come back.</p>
BODIES	<p>It was a good stretch and stress reliever.</p> <p>I'm more awake after taking walking breaks.</p> <p>Moving after hours of sitting.</p>	<p>Some of the students mentioned that's a reason that they want to do it (outdoor walking break) because they feel very stiff throughout the day when sitting in a chair for an hour at a time.</p> <p>I find sitting for too long is challenging for me, so I liked kinaesthetically getting out and just moving.</p>

Hike Toward Future Considerations

Data indicated that daily outdoor walking breaks, embedded within high school classes (excluding PE/PHE), offered students and teachers significant health and well-being benefits. Six future considerations are offered below.

Feed Two Birds with One Scone

The meaning of *feed two birds with one scone* is the accomplishment of two things with one action, as demonstrated by these brief daily outdoor walking breaks. This dynamic duo of PA and being outdoors in nature provided high school students and teachers with an efficient and effective health and well-being pedagogy with minimal impact on the curriculum. A teacher said, “I’m a huge fan of being outdoors. I’m a huge fan of moving and, especially in a school setting, being able to do both of those things in the middle of a class is super important to me.”

Human Connection Was Vital During COVID-19

It was evident that both students and teachers highly valued the connection among their peers and between students and teachers with these daily outdoor walking breaks. In speaking about these daily outdoor walks, both teachers revealed the power of the walks in terms of *connection, freedom, humanity and community*.

- *Connection*
One teacher affirmed the need for connection following months of disconnection with online school due to COVID-19; they stated, “These kids have been so disconnected from each other for so long ... the number one thing in their interest is to be at school and reconnect with each other.”
- *Freedom*
A teacher revealed that outdoors in nature was a neutral place for teachers and students to coevolve, stating that “It helps to neutralize the playing field and treat them like adults and give them the freedom when you’re not kind of prescribing it all or giving them lead questions, but rather it is truly free.”
- *Humanity*
This outdoor space allowed for teachers to give up their authority, because nature belonged to everyone,

making it inclusive. The outdoor walking breaks also provided teachers with different humanitarian perceptions of their students; one stated, “It was learning about my students in a non kind of categorized traditional academic way—[instead] of seeing them as somebody who requires writing support or someone who’s at a 67 per cent, I think, relating on a more humanity kind of basis where I’ve gained insight into who they are as a person first.”

- *Community*

The walking breaks also strengthened the whole class community; as expressed by a teacher, “Not only did the social connections strengthen between individuals, but they strengthened the whole classroom community.”

Step Away from the Curriculum Pressures

Despite the pressures to learn and teach a heavy curriculum load within an even shorter period of time due to COVID-19, high school students and teachers welcomed the opportunity to take these daily walking breaks. It allowed them to step away from the busyness and stress of the classroom for reprieve and decompression. A teacher stated

When they’re asked to sit down for a long period of time and really focus on challenging material, then they get quite emotionally frustrated sometimes, even shutting down to it. This is kind of a reset button. I think for a lot of students, [when] you’re forced to breathe maybe more deeply and step away from the challenges of the classroom, [they benefit when they] ... get out and [are] mentally unoccupied for 15 minutes or so, before they come back to try again.

Importance of Teachers as Role Models

Both teacher participants identified the value of teacher role models to participate in these daily outdoor walks:

I think it’s important for students to see what their teachers value ... and what has been beneficial in my own life ... to model healthy habits and commit to that ... I can model asking good questions, modelling the enjoyment of being outside, the modelling of being interested in the world, and the compassionate modelling of listening.

Student participants also voiced the value of their teachers participating alongside them. One student affirmed, “I got a chance to socialize with my teacher ... to catch up with how they’re doing.”

Weather

Surprisingly, the majority of students joined along with their teachers in cold and/or wet weather. One student declared their enjoyment with the outdoor walks as “walking in the rain.” Students appreciated having the choice to walk or stay indoors if the weather was too wet or cold; one student asserted, “I think they should be optional because sometimes when it’s really cold outside ... making us go on a walk makes it feel like a chore.” I value the weather wisdom in the Norwegian motto that avows, “There is no bad weather, only bad clothes” (McGowan 2020). Teaching about and using proper clothing and footwear, along with added preparation time, may increase teacher and student buy-in.

Name Change from Break to Refreshment Time

One teacher recommended a name change from *break* to *refreshment time*:

... they (students) think a break from school [is] a break from learning. ... Some of the most important learning happens on the walking breaks. ... Refreshment time is a nice way of looking at it ... the product is refreshing students ... sounding like still part of the school day.

I think this new name better describes the value of these daily outdoor walks in nourishing participants’ health and well-being.

Trajectory to Final Aspirations

Embedding a 15-minute refreshment time of daily outdoor walks within the high school curriculum should be considered by students, teachers, school administrators and policy makers. One teacher declared, “I think it is absolutely worth its weight in curriculum in those 15 minutes.” Although PE/PHE teachers take their students outdoors for PE/PHE classes, they could consider integrating daily outdoor walks into their non-PE/PHE subjects.

These daily outdoor walks could be a comprehensive school health initiative to combat health and well-being concerns among high school students and staff. One

teacher confirmed the importance of student voices as change agents:

I think the students are the advocates for it [daily outdoor walking breaks] ... If you hear it from a student voice, there is so much more force behind it ... letting the students’ voices do the talking.

On a grander scale, changes to the DPA policies in Alberta and British Columbia should incorporate DPA into the high school curriculum, just like all the other grades. A teacher stated, “If it’s valuable for kids from Grades 1 to 9, I can’t see it why suddenly it wouldn’t be for kids Grade 10 and up and adults.” Another teacher believed that

Some of them [students] are going to learn that there is health and well-being to be found outdoors, even if it is on a 15-minute walking break in the middle of science class, and I hope they make that connection ... if they don’t make that connection right now, it’s still something that I hope they can remember in two, three, ten years down the road ... those walking breaks I took in my Grade 10 science class, they’re very similar to the walking I do now as an adult ... and I find a lot of benefit in that.

I highly encourage the allocation of 15-minute refreshment time of daily outdoor walks for high school students and teachers. This breath of fresh air offers a reset, human and nature connection, and lifelong health and well-being.

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Anne Robillard has enjoyed working for 20-plus years as a school occupational therapist, combining her BScOT and BA (PE) degrees. She is excited to be travelling on a new career path that incorporates her recent MEd in curriculum studies in health, outdoor and physical experiential education (HOPE 2) from UBC. Anne is passionate about promoting lifelong health and well-being with students, especially through outdoor physical activity. When she is not living and working in Calgary, she flees to the mountains for active, outdoor adventures with her family and friends.

Fresh Air: Opening Doors to Uncertainty

Hartley Banack, Anne Robillard, Claire Robson and Gerald Tembrevilla

Physical education (PE) and physical and health education (PHE) teachers alike innately use the outdoors for classes; now we invite you to take a breather to ponder the air outdoors. What might *fresh air* mean? What might it mean in PE/PHE and other learning contexts? This article invites consideration of the construct *fresh air* based on the findings from two recently completed studies that explored perceptions of outdoor learning. In both studies, the notion of *fresh air* was not introduced by researchers, yet it was ubiquitous in the responses of participants. In this reflection, we engage in meta-analysis of *fresh air*, inviting theory to offer insight into how we, as educators, particularly as PE/PHE educators, might understand fresh air and why students, preservice teachers and inservice teachers all reported on the value of fresh air in their learning experiences.

... the open world that people inhabit is not prepared for them in advance. It is continually coming into being around them.

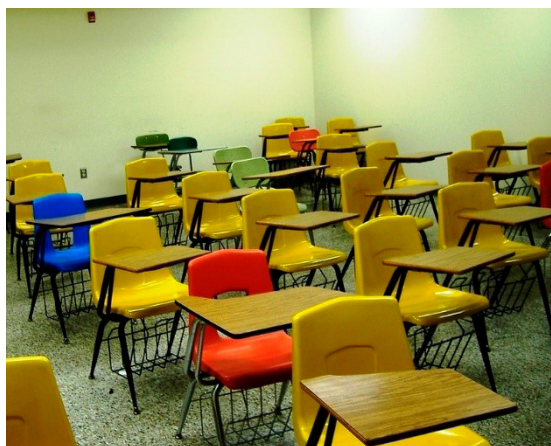
—Ingold 2007, S28

Introduction: The Open World

These words from Ingold (2007) are central to our thinking in this article, in which we invite you to join us in a vision of the world as dynamic through formative and transformative processes. As we consider the implications of this vision for education, particularly physical and health education, we return to Ingold (2007, S28): “To understand how people can inhabit this world means attending to the dynamic processes of world-formation in which both perceivers and the phenomena they perceive are necessarily immersed.” What we are advocating here is a kind of immersion, where teachers and students venture outdoors together into the complex, unpredictable, uncertain fresh air.

The Controlled Classroom

Consider: What might the architecture of this classroom teach us? What does it mean to be a good learner in this room?



Controlled classroom¹

MacLure (2003) suggested that in classroom contexts, good students sit quietly at their desks, facing forward so they can pay maximum attention to the teacher. The structure of the classroom prescribes the way learners learn. There are no windows to distract, and students sit separated from each other, for the same reason. The conveniently located armrests suggest that learners should write down what the teacher tells them to learn, because this is how they will be able to achieve satisfactory grades. A chalkboard stands ready to summarize key points and set out assignments such as readings, tests and homework.

Air moves slowly in this classroom. Students must raise their hands to ask permission to move.

A Spider's Demise

Our late colleague and physical educator/researcher, Joy Butler, liked to share a story of an observation she conducted in a classroom. A preservice teacher she was mentoring was on practicum in a Boston public school. The students were seated quietly in rows as the preservice



Child at desk²

teacher spoke to them, and the regular classroom teacher watched vigilantly, no doubt hoping that they would “behave,” especially in front of a university professor.

As Joy sat quietly at the back of the elementary school classroom, observation pad open on her knees, she noticed that one of the students had become interested in a spider that was wandering around on the floor. Intrigued, the student did everything he could to watch the spider, without leaving the confines of his desk. Joy watched in admiration as he wrapped himself up like a pretzel, coiling his legs onto his chair and poking his head under the desk to keep the spider in view. Technically, he was not in violation of the classroom code, but the classroom teacher was not mollified.

Instead, the classroom teacher marched up to the spider, raised her foot, and stamped it flat. “That’s the end of *that!*” she announced. The preservice teacher, though a little shocked, carried on with the lesson.

What might the teacher have done if this situation had occurred in another of the subject areas of instruction? Might she have written on her board about how interesting the natural world is, and offered some information about spiders? Might she have reminded the students that they should respect all forms of life? In a physical education class, might she have complimented the student on his flexibility and creativity in movement?

The spider had crept in from outside of the classroom to reach an untimely demise. The learning: only what is invited into the classroom by the teacher may exist; all else is eliminated.

Messy Learning Outdoors

Fresh air invites you to step outside the classroom and consider the rich possibilities of learning outdoors—a messy place of dizzying excitement in which anything might happen, and many creatures from different species

learn to bump along together. This transition to the outdoors does not happen without a cost to the teacher; that cost is certainty and control.

Once we depart the jurisdiction of the school building, we educators are unable to predict learning outcomes. Air, as wind, moves freely about, bringing both uncer-



Outdoor classroom³

tainty and vigour to learning.

We cannot easily measure what our students have learned, or even who their teachers were, at least in the ways we’ve become accustomed to, such as tests and worksheets.

The Good, School Assessment, and High Performance



Checklist⁴

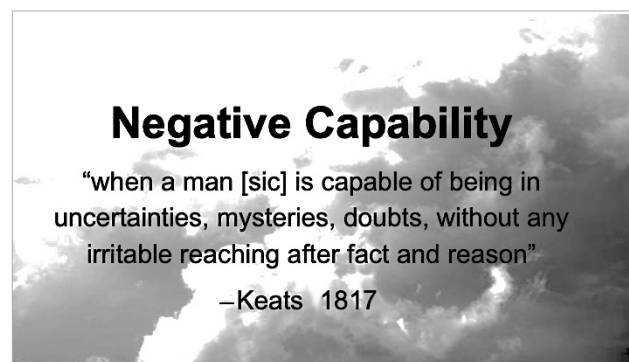
Assessment Contradictions

In his 2017 article for *Atlantic*, “The Contradictions of Good Teaching,” Barnum explored research findings that showed that “many educators who succeed at raising test scores also fail at keeping students fulfilled.” Holistic learning cannot align with learning that only focuses on controlled and certain outcomes. School often places emphasis on “good work” for aspirations of excellence

and perfection, which seems to leave learners who do not achieve disinterested, if not disenfranchised.

The authors' experiences lead them to suggest that when we concentrate on outcomes, then so do our students, who become anxious when they do not attain high grades. Focus then turns toward fixing the grade rather than appreciating and enjoying the learning. We offer *fresh air* both as a physically necessary good and as a good inherent to our actions and choices (Murdoch 2013). Consider an ethics of interbeing that is otherwise—in which the spider becomes a welcome visitor. Bai and Banack (2006) take us toward this vision: “All we see, hear, and touch reminds us that we are, the whole world is, intricate and complex variations of the same theme: Life. Snowflakes falling through calm of night and resting ever so briefly upon warm skin reminds us of our interbeing with air, water, clouds, sky, other sentient beings' breaths, in short, everything around us. Immersing deeply in, becoming one with, such experience takes us to participatory knowing: snowflakes are us” (p 15).

When we are infused with fresh air, we are present, immersed in our lived realities and not focused on another's imagined destination.



Negative Capability

There are precedents for unlearning human practices that have become habituated. The Romantic poets completed their best work outdoors, and Keats (1817) theorized emergent creative processes through his notion of *negative capability*, defined in the image above. When we experience negative capability, we are curious, creative and open to fresh ideas—a fruitful constitution for learning.

Negative capability gestures to the vision of the world we are offering in this article—a world that questions the centrality of the human intellect, and a world in which

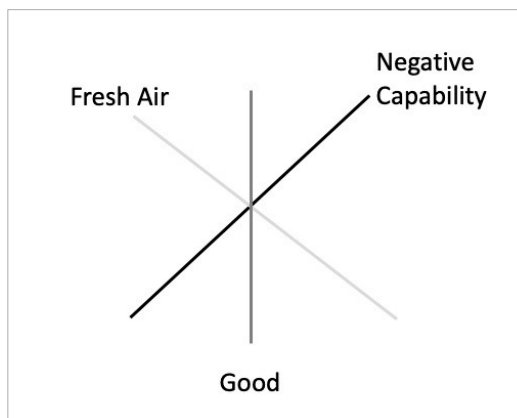
we acknowledge that not everything can be explained or measured. Negative capability requires that students retain qualities of childhood that schooling all too often trains them out of—curiosity, wandering attention, playfulness, and a reluctance to categorize and judge this against that. We instruct students to be afraid of uncertainty and difference, to rush to answer and to choose the safe path.

Our article opens the classroom door and introduces a breath of fresh air to the stale classroom and the over-worked curriculum.

Theoretical Confluence

Let us return to the tale of the spider as we stress the importance of harnessing students' creativity instead of stamping it out. Ken Robinson (2006) emphatically stated that “schools kill creativity, and that has to change.” Fresh air, necessary to life itself, seems to offer change. Banack, Broom and Bai (2007, 32) have equated over-structuralization of the curriculum with death: “In terms of the juxtaposition between, perhaps, biophilia and necrophilia, a sense of death seems to be connected to overstructuralization of perception and experience. We see this often in education. As we continue to structuralize curriculum, we believe in curriculum that is fundamentally fixed and rigid. Thus, we move towards necrophilia, death and love of death, where we interact with things in a way as if they were ‘still life.’”

For us, the presence of fresh air (actually being outdoors or speaking of fresh air) indicates that our learning stance is good and that negative capability abounds with potentiality. That is to say, by breathing in (inspiring) fresh air, we are able to engage (conspire) in good learning, opening to transcendence and possibility.



Theoretical confluence

Shifting from Solid to Fluid

We are not claiming that schools do not have fresh air; it leaks in despite closed windows and drawn blinds. However, schools are edifices, intentionally structured to formalize certain beliefs. Over time, school practices create a sedimented culture of individual student learning through grades and subject disciplines. The physical walls keep air out of the school so that the building can be climate controlled, and the conceptual walls limit action, inhibit creativity and stifle relationality. What if, instead of the school building, we acknowledged *fresh air* as the envelope in which we learn?



"...we must shift our attention from the congealed substance of the world, and the solid surfaces they present, to the media in which they take shape and in which they may also be dissolved."

Ingold 2007, S28

*Solid to fluid classroom*⁵

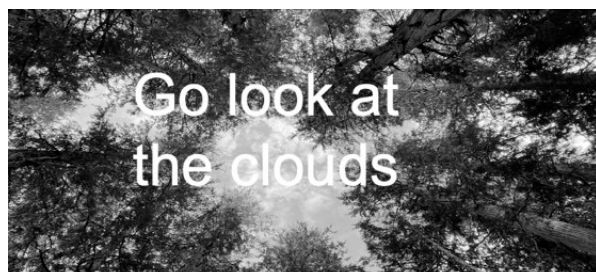


Photo: Hart Banack

Cloud Gazing

We invite you stop reading now.

Head outside into the fresh air and find a comfortable place to lie back and gaze up at the sky. Watch the sky's movements for a few moments (you will know when you are ready to come back to this article).

As you watch the clouds roll by, exhibit yourself, leaving behind your known walls and habits in order to rest in Keats's "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts."

Data

Ingold (2007) mused, "Perhaps it is because we generally think and write indoors that we have such difficulty in imagining how any world [we] inhabit could be other than a furnished room, or how, cast out from this interior space, we could be anything other than exhabitants" (p S29). We explored Ingold's proposition through two research projects that created outdoor learning experiences.

The two studies were independently conducted in two western Canadian cities between 2018 and 2020. Participants in the first study were preservice teachers in physical and health and science education method courses (Banack and Tembrevilla, forthcoming), and in the second, they were Grade 10 science and Grade 12 social studies students and their subject teachers (Robillard 2021). Both studies received ethics clearances from the same university.

A meta-pattern presented in both projects: there were repeated references to *fresh air*—not a term used in any of the questions or the materials given to participants. Our



It is one thing, I surmised to think about land and weather; quite another to think in them.

Ingold 2007, S29

Photo: Reuters 2021

findings offered what MacLure (2013) has described as "data with a glow"—mysterious, unexpected and highly intriguing. We were perplexed, and began questioning what *fresh air* might mean to these students and teachers.

The pattern of *fresh air* reminded us that teaching and learning flow across physical and conceptual borders, just as air and sky do. In learning outdoors, connections, entanglements and curiosity develop that bind teaching to learning, through exhibited experiences on the land, in meaningful ways.

Study One's Revelations

In study one, 90 reflection outputs were gathered from preservice teachers during three mandatory methods courses between September 2018 and April 2019. The outputs invited reflections on outdoor teaching and learning interventions that the preservice teachers were exposed to. As the data was analyzed, the expression fresh air was present across the responses:

- “The fresh air, the nature, the peace and quiet.”
- “Fresh air that gives energy, the warmth of the sun, the sights (mountains, ocean, etc), feeling freer to move with more choices (pace, direction, taking up space), excitement.”
- “I enjoy the fresh air the most, my brain feels calm and refreshed whenever I am outside. I appreciate my surroundings more when I am outside versus inside.”
- “I love the fresh air, and the feeling of connection to nature.”
- “Being out in the fresh air makes the time just fly by.”
- “It was also helpful doing this activity outside. I saw a lot of people looking around for inspiration, and it was lovely to breathe fresh air after being inside all day.”

In their paper (Banack and Tembrevilla, forthcoming), wrote, “It seems that for reanimation of education to happen ... teachers may need to forge relationships outdoors through diverse exposures during teacher training to land and sky.”



Study One: A case study of preservice teachers' perceptions and practice of outdoor learning.

(Banack and Tembrevilla, forthcoming)



Study Two's Discoveries

In study two, Grade 10 science and Grade 12 social studies students, along with their teachers, participated in daily 15-minute outdoor walking breaks that were embedded into their classes. The word cloud on the left on page 39 was generated from 38 students who were asked “What did you find enjoyable with these outdoor walking breaks?” They overwhelmingly reported fresh air as their top perception:

- “Getting fresh air during class was refreshing.”
- “It allowed me to take time away from work outside with the fresh air.”
- “Fresh air, interact with students and the teacher, clears my mind.”

Like their students, two teachers reported similar value for fresh air. A teacher reported “Who wouldn't want to go outside for a walk ... for the selfish reasons of a teacher wanting to get a little air and refresh.”

A second word cloud from study two depicts students' responses to the following question: “How did the walking breaks change your relationships with your teacher and/or your classmates?” Eighty-six per cent of students reported positive changes in their relationships with both their teachers and their peers. Students testified that the ability to talk and socialize was the greatest positive change during the intervention, followed by increased learning and connection.

For example,

- “I had time to talk to friends and breathe fresh air.”
- “The walking breaks allowed me to have conversations with my teacher one on one and with classmates that I otherwise wouldn't have really talked to.”

Teachers viewed improved relationships as the most important health and well-being benefit from the walking breaks, amid COVID-19, for themselves and their students. A teacher stated, “I think the walks offered an opportunity for them to connect and they were very eager to do so. They would quickly connect into groups and even move between groups during the chats or during the walks.”

Through outdoor walking breaks, participants moved and interacted freely, just like fresh air—a conduit for connection.



Study Two: Fresh air: Exploring perceptions of high school student and teacher participation in daily outdoor walking breaks for health and well-being

(Robillard 2021)

In/Tensions

As we gazed at the findings of these two research projects, the following tensions emerged for us. They are not prescriptive, as if handed down by the gods. These images illustrate tensions we saw when we looked at the clouds.

Certainty vs Doubt

Imprisoned vs Free

We're in a kind of ultraviolet environment with the prison windows. I think the four walls of a classroom can be very suffocating for every student.

—Teacher

Hierarchy vs Democracy

Getting outside is a totally different environment that I might refer to as neutral. The inside of the classroom is not neutral, it's a position of authority. The outside belongs to everyone.

—Teacher

Stasis vs Movement

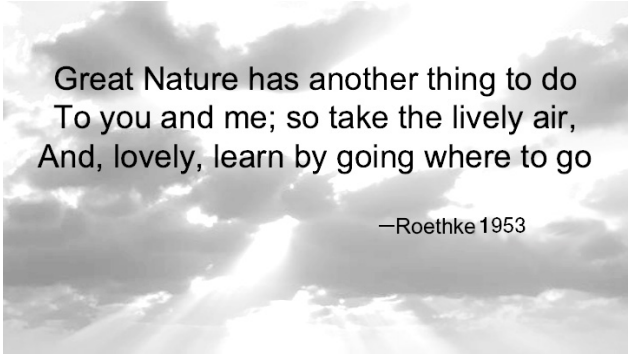
Moving after hours of sitting.

—Student

Indoors vs Outdoors

It was a nice change of scenery going from a darker, condensed space to a bright, natural environment

—Student



Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, lovely, learn by going where to go

—Roethke 1953

Great Nature's Plan

Often, teachers and education stakeholders attempt to shape learning experiences through curriculum decisions, pedagogy that focuses on individuals, and locations chosen consciously to eliminate “distractions,” such as the spider. Our research findings contest notions that we are able to control learning and that controlled learning is healthy and useful for learners. By exiting the school, we encounter fresh air (or fresh air encounters us). Without knocking first, fresh air infuses into us lessons and learning, oblivious to human demands for control or prescribed destinations. Educators might take to the lively air themselves to recollect how it feels, and teach by listening to fresh air's calling.

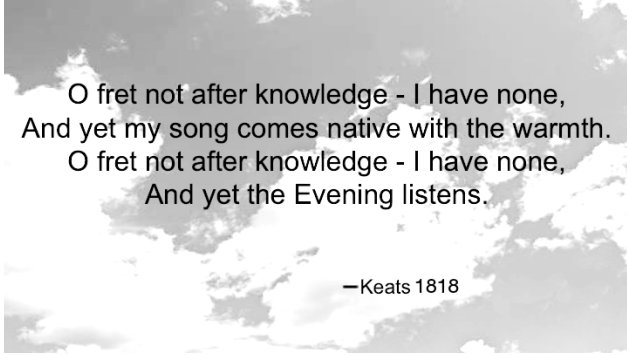
Conclusion: The Evening Listens

While set curricula and predetermined outcomes may seem easy to assess, they do sideline, ignore or leave to chance good endeavours that *fresh air* reminds us are important for learners, such as connection, fairness and the humility that goes along with “mysteries and doubts.”

*There is a possibility that
something might happen but at
the same time carries the certainty
that it might not happen at all.*

—Biesta 2013, 22

The formal classroom forefronts the authority of the teacher, who directs and structures learning from the head of the class. We found it striking, and sad, to read students' critical comments about their classrooms. For teachers and students alike, fresh air was felt as a break from prison, from stagnancy and staleness, from



O fret not after knowledge - I have none,
And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
O fret not after knowledge - I have none,
And yet the Evening listens.

—Keats 1818

suffocation. Being and transcending in and through fresh air opened up a stuffy education to negative capability, lofted with risk and goodness, where “anything can arrive [happen]” (Biesta 2013, 23).

For us, fresh air blows away the cobwebs from the habituated structures of our practices, challenging the certainties of what we know and teach. What might fresh air mean to you?

Editor's note: photographs of cloud images in this article are from <https://unsplash.com/images/nature/cloud>.

Notes

1. Photo by Emory Maiden. Available at www.flickr.com/photos/44551921@N04/6240707542 (accessed March 18, 2022). <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>
2. Photo from wecometolearn. Available at www.flickr.com/photos/69124018@N03/8066863117 (accessed March 18, 2022). <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>. Spider image added by author.
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5. Image by Philippe Du Berger: “Montréal 1890. Victoria School, boul de Maisonneuve Ouest.” Available at www.flickr.com/photos/45172261@N05/6728832007 (accessed March 18, 2022). <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>

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Anne Robillard has enjoyed working for 20-plus years as a school occupational therapist, combining her BScOT and BA (PE) degrees. She is excited to be travelling on a new career path that incorporates her recent MEd in curriculum studies in health, outdoor and physical experiential education (HOPE 2) from the University of British Columbia. Anne is passionate about promoting lifelong health and well-being with students, especially through outdoor physical activity. When she is not living and working in Calgary, she flees to the mountains for active, outdoor adventures with her family and friends.



Claire Robson, PhD, is a writer, researcher and arts activist. Her federally funded postdoctoral research at Simon Fraser University investigated the potential of arts-engaged community practices. A widely published writer of fiction, memoir and poetry, Claire’s most recent book, *Writing Beyond Recognition: Queer Restorying for Social Change* (2020), shows how collective memoir writing can effect social change. Her awards include Xtra West Writer of the Year; the Joseph Katz Memorial Scholarship, for her contributions to social justice; and the Lynch History Prize, for her contributions to better understanding of gender and sexual minorities.



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The Road Less Travelled

Court Rustemeyer

Sometimes the road less travelled sounds like a great idea, but when the reality of the journey sets in, that same road can look daunting or impossible to navigate. To say these past few years have been a difficult road for most educators and students would be a huge understatement. A year of so many outside factors having a say on what the classroom can or should look like has really tested and worn down many incredible schools and programs. We all want what is best for kids, and many want to go that extra mile to ensure their success. I really hope that when we look back on these years, we don't see that we went through all of this just to end up in the same spot as before, with no knowledge gained or no different outlooks on what is important. For educators and students that were able to enjoy the outdoors years ago, as a place of solitude, wisdom, serenity, joy or adventure, I truly hope your journey these past few years has had the guidance of Mother Nature as well.

Outdoor education has always been more than just a class for so many people, young and old. I don't know where I would be if I had not been able to be outside with my students almost daily during these past few years. The connections and sense of community gained from an experiential or outdoor education class are something you will just not find in any other subject. I have spent many years involved with sports teams and clubs, but they still don't bring the same sense of belonging as a group of youth working together in the outdoors, fully dependent on each other. It really is something you need to experience to understand.

In the past couple of years of uncertainty, I know that as educators you have done everything you can to make adventures or memorable events for your students. It is what teachers do, even against the odds. Our desire to push kids out of their comfort zones and provide meaningful opportunities stems from our deeper understanding of the importance of having a community.

My focus this entire school year has been to re-establish the connections our students had with the environment and our outdoor spaces from years ago. I have no desire to go back to where we came from before this pandemic, as I do strongly feel our world was forced to slow down and enjoy life again. As tough as all of this has been, there were many silver linings. If the theme of these pandemic years was slowing down and taking a little more time for the little things life had to offer, then this year we needed to shift our focus and grow. I wanted to remind myself daily to slow down with my students but also rebuild our community and connections to one another—taking the time to do it right and not rush the results.

Outdoor education allows us to slow down and reconnect on a daily basis. In my classes, I have found that journaling, forest bathing, establishing “sit spots,” reading a story in a nearby park and experiencing an activity on the land are all great ways of forcing us to take note of the speed we are going. Every day this school year, we have tried to bring back routines of the old while showing compassion for the present. This is all building a great community around us. Our students and teachers are establishing a whole new way to learn and be. It is actually incredible when you stop to think about what they have been through—setting up online classes, learning remotely, becoming independent and increasing work motivation on their own without all the support that usually surrounds them. To refocus our energy this year, I have spent even more time on team building, trust and icebreaking games just to acknowledge all that the students have been through in the past few years. Learning to trust and communicate in person once again is not something you can sprint through or take for granted; you need to be methodical and intentional in your practice, even if it's a fun icebreaking game.

I encourage you to take a moment and reflect. What did you do this year to slow down and allow your students to connect to their peers, their school or themselves? Did

your students feel more a part of a community this year than the past few? Did this pandemic force you to go outside for safety and spark a change for the better?

I was fortunate enough to take students on several day trips last year during the pandemic. What was so great about those day trips was the fact that the students really appreciated being out of the school, to do something normal. At the start of the 2021 school year, I could already sense the buzz from the students at the potential opportunities that this year might hold. Trips or no trips, I knew the students were in a much better place mentally than the previous year—they didn't want to be behind a computer screen any more, or stuck in one cohort classroom again. Teachers were in a dance between enthusiastic for the new year and exhausted still from the previous expedition known as pandemic teaching of years past. Mother Nature quickly provided a recharging ground for many people in our world and was perhaps the strongest teacher of all. Go outside. Enjoy each day for what it is worth from sunrise to sunset. Little things each day make us feel accomplished and valued.

This year I feel lucky that I was able to play games and see joy in kids' eyes again. They were eager to learn and be part of a class that didn't have four walls. Watching kids help each other with bike repairs, setting up tarps and lighting camp stoves—and, of course, how can I ever forget the epic cross-country ski wipeouts that occurred so often! Not to mention that we were outside almost every day, making kids feel that much safer.

The ability to take our time and go slowly through the year is something I really appreciate about outdoor education. It is nice to spend time on activities the kids are enjoying and slowly mastering, as opposed to rushing off to the next topic. An even bigger reward is when the kids are enthusiastically engaged in the process of learning, and not focused on an outcome or target. For example, students go from learning the basics of bike maintenance and repairs to confidently riding pathways, roads or hills, and then building jumps or ramps. They get to enjoy the process of things. Connecting with the topics and finding ways to support their community are opportunities that I truly value with students. Having the flexibility to connect, support the community and slow down are aspects purposely built into the program.

Students join our classes, clubs and communities to be a part of something. We all want that. There is something extremely powerful about a group of individuals that are all on the same page working toward a common goal. What is even more powerful is the fact that the

students in outdoor groups are learning new skills and values while coming together to achieve togetherness. In our weekly or daily classes/meetings, our students are constantly shown what a safe environment our spaces can be. The ways we are able to show students and leaders a sense of belonging over common goals is outstanding. When students start buying into a program or believing in one another, *they* will organize, clean and maintain all the gear or equipment, for example. The students will be investing not only for their own years of adventure, but also to help future students follow in their steps. I call it the *eco-system effect*, when everyone—students, parents, school community, alumni and future students—works together in an endless cycle. As a junior high teacher, being able to share a sense of community with 12- to 15-year-olds is pretty special. It's a chance to show youth they can be a part of a lifetime of change. To me, seeing former students and alumni volunteering to help lead other students or show them skills they learned is what teaching is all about. This year, more than ever, those alumni wanted to come back to help show the power of our community. They wanted to make sure the students of today had a part of something they remember experiencing and are still proud of.

The outdoor education world makes you spend more time listening—not just to nature, but to those around you and with you on the adventure. With the year we have all had, I would hope one of the biggest skills we can learn or take away is to listen to others. I hope this year you were also able to listen to yourself and take time for your own connections. It is important to lead yourself on your journey before you can lead others on theirs.

We all have the ability to get through these unknown years in a safe and caring way. Individually and together as a community, we can conquer this with our strong sense of belonging, our knowledge and our ability to overcome obstacles daily. Just like those moments when our adventure hits a challenge, we all need to look within ourselves, find patience, embrace our community, and absolutely support and care for one another with compassion. I hope this school year has brought you many great journeys that have left your students in amazement and wonder. Remember to adventure one step at a time—and don't forget to look up from time to time and enjoy what life has to offer.

If you are interested in learning more about outdoor education, starting a class or building a program at your school, please reach out by e-mailing me at crrustemeyer@cbe.ab.ca and visiting <http://www.geoec.org/>.



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How Teachers Can Help Schools Become More Weight Neutral

Elizabeth Tingle

My four-year-old daughter watched me closely from the kitchen table, where she finished her breakfast as I packed a snack for her morning kindergarten class. My older son was still getting dressed. We were running late for school today. Too late to walk, which would disappoint my son. Ever since the walk-to-school campaign last year, he wanted to walk as often as possible. At least our easy-going baby was happy in his bouncy chair—for now.

“Make sure it has two food groups,” my daughter reminded me.

“I know,” I replied as I peeled the plastic off of her stringed cheese so that her snack was technically still garbage-free.

“How about we pack one of these banana muffins as part of your snack?” I suggested.

Her large eyes widened even more. She asked, “Won’t that look too much like a cupcake?”

“It’s a muffin, not a cupcake. It doesn’t have a wrapper, and cupcakes always have wrappers,” I countered.

“But it has chocolate chips, and when my friend brought in a granola bar with chocolate chips in it, the teacher said that we couldn’t all do the dance of joy because it wasn’t healthy. I don’t want to be like that!”

I felt as though I didn’t have time for this discussion. I mustered some patience and responded, “I didn’t put that many chocolate chips in. Here, I will put in the one that has the fewest chocolate chips on top. How about that?”

She quietly considered this and eventually relented, “I hope that’s okay.”

“Great! Now go brush your teeth and tell your brother to get down here,” I said.

Observing my three children’s school experiences has added a new perspective to the understanding of health education and health promotion I have developed for teaching health at the junior and senior high level. I think as I deepened in my experience as a teacher, I became further removed from my experience as a student. Repeating the school experience through the eyes of my

children, I have seen how much they crave the approval of a teacher they adore, and how casual comments and advice from their teachers become crystallized in their minds. I have been reminded of how pressing the need to fit in with peers feels for children. As they share daily reports of their day, I realize how students’ most memorable parts of the school day rarely have anything to do with curricular outcomes.

I have slowly accumulated these observations, particularly when my children showed distress in response to well-meaning health promotion efforts. I wondered how health education and health promotion efforts could inspire students to make positive changes without making them feel guilty, anxious or excluded when that is not possible. I became so curious about these questions that when that mellow baby from my story entered Grade 1, I became a student again at the University of Calgary to pursue a master’s in educational research. After extensive study, conducting my own research and learning from others,¹ I have gained more understanding about how health promotion efforts should be rooted in a weight-neutral paradigm and should look very different from many health messages issuing from the diet and wellness industry. I have a clearer sense of how, with small intentional changes, health can be promoted from a holistic, positive, strengths-based perspective.

In Western culture, there tends to be a very weight-centric approach to health and the notions of diet and exercise. A weight-centric approach considers weight to be the primary indicator of an individual’s health, and that food and exercise should be manipulated until a so-called “healthy” weight is achieved. In contrast, a weight-neutral approach takes a more holistic view of health and places the emphasis on behaviours under an individual’s control rather than on weight. A weight-neutral approach has been found to increase health behaviours and health outcomes without increasing the risk of eating disorders and compulsive exercise (Bacon and Aphramor 2011; Dugmore et al 2020). These researchers argue for a weight-neutral approach to health

promotion, and that efforts should (1) *emphasize* improving individuals' relationship with food, (2) *prioritize* emotional and physical well-being over the pursuit of a lower weight and (3) *criticize* the stigma and prejudice faced by people in larger bodies (Dugmore et al 2020). I believe there are multiple ways that teachers in the school context can incorporate a weight-neutral approach in order to make schools health promoting for all students.

1. Emphasize improving individuals' relationship with food

Much of the learning about food at school is informal. As teachers, we are often around students when they are eating, whether at meals, snacks or class celebrations that include some form of food. Teachers (of all grades and subjects) and lunchroom staff can subtly improve students' relationship with food by trusting children to eat according to their own appetites and by resisting interfering with how they are eating. There will be some students who eat all of their lunch, and there will be others who will pick at their food and not eat very much. Students' appetites may vary from day to day, and some students may eat their food in a specific or unusual order (for example, dessert first, or moving through each food sequentially). When adults coax children to "eat more of this" or "not so much of that," it erodes children's ability to eat according to their internal cues (Galloway et al 2006). As much as possible, we can try to make eating opportunities at school a relaxing and social time for students to connect with each other and take care of their bodies.

Similarly, we can avoid commenting on food items, either negatively or positively, because that can make some students feel anxious about the food they have brought to school. Children are rarely in charge of the grocery shopping for their household, and praising certain foods over others may alienate some students from their peers or their parents. The food a child brings into school is often the result of a complex negotiation of numerous factors, including family food traditions, a child's pickiness, parents' time and financial resources, allergies, medical needs, religious guidelines, or strong sensory preferences; attempts at influencing this complex array of factors in the name of health can have negative implications for both students and their parents (Tanner et al 2019). Children need to trust that their parents or guardians are feeding them well in order to have a healthy relationship with food, and how we talk about food when

students are eating under our care can go a long way to support that trust.

There may be occasions where we formally teach about nutrition or food preparation, such as in a health or culinary class. These lessons can be an opportunity for us to help students develop "eating competence," and to help them feel more comfortable around new foods and, ultimately, feeding themselves as they mature (Satter 2007). Research on Satter's model demonstrates that individuals with higher levels of eating competence are confident, comfortable and flexible with their eating, and have superior metabolic profiles and more positive quality of life indicators (Satter 2020). Rather than sorting foods into "good" and "bad" categories, or calculating the number of calories consumed for a period, lessons on nutrition education can have a more positive and empowering focus. Learning activities that help students to appreciate variety in their diet, taste-test different foods if they want to, understand where foods come from, and budget or make a balanced snack or meal are all approaches that can develop eating competence and maintain positive attitudes about food. The nutrition educators with Dairy Farmers of Canada (2019, 2021) have made it a priority to use a weight-neutral approach in their school resources, some of which have been given the Ellyn Satter Institute seal of approval. Such resources demonstrate how, with small changes and awareness, we can teach students about food and nutrition without increasing anxiety or rigidity for their food choices.

2. Prioritize emotional and physical well-being over the pursuit of a lower weight

A comprehensive approach to well-being considers multiple domains, including our physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual health (Deschesnes, Martin and Hill 2003). Western culture and media, however, often define health in terms of physical dimensions. This focus on physical health tends to distill into a focus on weight because of the weight-centric paradigm. A preoccupation with the pursuit of weight loss can compromise other dimensions of health (Bacon and Aphramor 2011). The research is clear that intentional weight loss is unlikely to result in permanent body changes; the overwhelming majority of individuals will regain the weight lost, and sometimes gain more (Mann et al 2007). The physical toll of this diet cycling is likely worse than remaining at a stable higher weight (Bacon and Aphramor 2011). The emotional toll of the pursuit of weight loss,

often ending in weight regain, can be a significant source of frustration and depression (Koenig and Wasserman 1995). Some individuals may habitually pursue weight loss as a coping strategy and go on to develop an eating disorder (Heatherton and Polivy 1992). When weight management is the central goal of health promotion, it is likely to result in negative physical and emotional impacts in the long term. Therefore, it is inadvisable to have students calculate their own BMI or to set any kind of weight goal for themselves as part of a learning activity. Well-meaning “obesity prevention” and other health initiatives in the school setting that promote dieting or fitness tracking in school settings have led to cases of students developing an eating disorder requiring hospitalization (Pinhas et al 2013).

Instead of focusing on weight, teachers can focus on promoting healthy behaviours in all dimensions of well-being. The Health at Every Size (HAES) approach offers compelling evidence that everyone can improve their health, regardless of weight (Bacon and Aphramor 2011). Exercise can be encouraged as a way to build strength, connect with others, sleep better or enjoy the outdoors, instead of as a weight management tool (Alberga and Russell-Mayhew 2016). Nutritious foods help us to have consistent energy, are better for our body’s functioning, may cost less and often leave less of an impact on the environment. The long-term research on social emotional learning (SEL) interventions suggests that helping students to focus on their emotional and social well-being is time well spent (Taylor et al 2017). Students need to learn the lifelong skills related to media literacy to face the increasingly disordered messages present in social media (Marks, De Foe and Collett 2020). Prioritizing multidimensional health helps us to feel energized and resilient in the face of challenges we may face. Teachers can promote an embodied approach to health, in which the focus is on how health behaviours can improve how we feel about ourselves and inside our bodies, rather than on the external appearance of our bodies.

3. Criticize the stigma and prejudice faced by people in larger bodies

Students and teachers come in all sizes. School should be a place where every *body* can feel like they belong. Unfortunately, schools are a common place for weight-based teasing and bullying. All over the world, every day, students of varying sizes are teased about their weight (Puhl et al 2015). Because high weight is so harshly judged

in our current culture, this weight-based teasing may not be as frequently reported, often goes undisciplined and can create enduring shame (Thompson et al 2020). Students who are teased about their weight, and those that witness such encounters, internalize weight bias and may believe that their body, rather than the bullying, is the problem. Bullying policies in schools often do not mention size-based teasing, even though students report that weight-based bullying is more common than being bullied for race, religion, socioeconomic class, gender or sexual orientation (Puhl et al 2015). As teachers, we must take weight-based discrimination as seriously as any other form of prejudice. Speak up when your school is discussing policies regarding bullying to make sure that body size is a protected characteristic in your school community. If colleagues or students say something that is weight-biased, try to kindly reframe weight as complex or model a weight-neutral approach. Cultural change occurs both in large amendments at the system level—and also one conversation at a time.

Finally, consider your own biases and beliefs about bodies, food and weight. Our attitudes about nutrition and exercise, which have been shaped by our own lived experience in addition to our knowledge and professional training, can affect how we talk about these topics with our students. As teachers, we are also influenced by the weight-centric culture we are immersed in. Indeed, there is research to suggest that teachers have higher rates of disordered eating and eating disorders than the general population (Yager and O’Dea 2009). If you need help in resolving a preoccupation with weight or a compulsive relationship with exercise, take the time to start an important conversation with a mental health professional. *You* also deserve to have a positive relationship with your body. Be mindful that colleagues may be in recovery from such issues, and avoid criticizing others’ bodies, praising another’s weight loss and discussing your own weight goals or diet plans. Even well-meaning compliments, seemingly harmless jokes or self-deprecating comments about weight can have the result of making someone feel anxious, judged or alienated from the group (Mills and Fuller-Tyszkiewicz 2016). With greater awareness and intention, we can discuss health in ways that are positive and empowering, and work to ensure that school feels welcoming for everyone, no matter what they packed for lunch today.

Note

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Adult Recess: How Play Supports Overall Well-Being

Sarah Balla

Riiiiinnnggg! Let's reconnect to that recess-bell feeling, shall we?

Despite a resolute decision to never grow up, I have somehow managed to find a niche in the professional world as a physical education teacher and wellness consultant. I have always loved to play, and as I have done more research, reading and experimenting, I have discovered just how powerful play can be into adulthood.

We are very in tune with the importance of play for the healthy growth and development of the child, but what about the big kids? What about the importance of play for adults? I hope that as you read this you might remember how powerful play can be for our overall well-being.

Play comes naturally to us in childhood. As children, we have an innate knowledge that play is not only super fun, but incredibly valuable. We do not lose that knowledge—we simply forget it. I have found that over the years we begin to see the world differently and start to equate our worth with our productivity. We are strongly encouraged to hop on board the wave of hustle, and it can often sweep us away without us even noticing.

Tapping into our childhood wisdom can be so valuable in infusing our adult lives with more joy! As young children, we spend much of our time in a natural state of play and we are in touch with this knowledge:

1. Nature is awesome. Playing outside in nature has the power to heal, to ground and to provide endless possibilities for our imaginations as it connects all of our senses into the present moment (Louv 2010).
2. Wonder and awe are a beautiful part of life. As children we allow ourselves to be completely enraptured and wowed by the world around us (Louv 2010).

3. Connection with others is key. We never outgrow the need for comfort and closeness (Brown 2009).
4. It is important to stop, drop and play. Follow your excitement, do that thing that pulls you in with curiosity. Jump in the pile of leaves, pick up the paintbrush and sing the song (Clark 2018).
5. Challenge and risk can lead to great joy and great discovery (Brown 2009). Somewhere along the way we become very afraid to fail. Become a beginner at something and prepare to have fun and fall down a few times.
6. The body remembers what the brain forgets. If you are struggling to get into a playful, more lighthearted state of mind, try engaging in movement play. Our muscles send signals through afferent nerves that run toward the brain, and by moving our bodies in a fun and playful way we can positively influence our state of mind and our emotions (Cuddy 2018).

Integrating more play into our adult lives can seem silly and frivolous, but when we can consider a shift in mindset that embraces play, we can experience a major boost in our mental health and overall well-being. We have been sold a false dichotomy when it comes to our identities. Two things can be true simultaneously: you can be both a professional and a goof off, strong and soft, serious and lighthearted, productive and playful. In fact,



play has been shown to increase productivity (Brown 2009). “It’s paradoxical that a little bit of ‘nonproductive’ activity can make one enormously more productive and invigorated in other aspects of life. When an activity speaks to one’s deepest truth, it is a catalyst, enlivening everything else” (Brown 2009, 11).

So, what if you walked out to the field and did a cartwheel at lunchtime? What if you played hungry, hungry hippos this evening? What if you dusted off your childhood Lego set and lost track of time? What if you drank your water out of a crazy straw? What if you packed a lunch your five-year-old self would be pumped about? I dare you to challenge yourself and play today. And I double dare you to model play for others. I have seen the positive ripple effect that can occur in a workplace or classroom when we prioritize play and build it into our busy schedules. As smiles widen, relationships strengthen, common ground is found and trust is established.



Consider this your permission slip to play. Sometimes feeling as if we don’t have the permission or support to do something is the only mental block standing in our way. You have neuroscience on your side! Stuart Brown, founder of the National Institute for Play, explains how play lights up the brain and shapes our growth and development, even into adulthood. “Neuroscientists, developmental biologists, social scientists, and researchers from every point of scientific compass now know that play is a profound biological process” (Brown 2009, 5).

Let’s remember the sheer joy we felt in play as a child and see if we can tap into that magic as we move through this year. Make your seven-year-old self proud!

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Equanimity: From Mental Wellness to Mental Strength

Lisa Grant

Pause. If you are like me and have the tendency to skim right to the meat and potatoes when reading journal articles, please, I implore you to pause. Instead of skipping the introduction, I invite you to move to a dark, quiet environment and find a comfortable seat. Now, place the soles of your feet on the floor (or take a cross-legged sitting position), and allow me to guide you through a breathing exercise that will only take a few minutes. I promise you, it will be worth it!

This breathing technique is called *box breathing* (Gotter 2020). If you are familiar with this technique, go ahead and practise a few rounds. If you are new to the box breathing practice, it consists of the following five sequential steps:

1. Start by taking a slow exhale to empty the oxygen from your lungs.
2. Next, inhale deeply through your nose while slowly counting to four in your head.
3. Hold your breath for the same slow count of four.
4. Now release your breath through your mouth for another slow count of four.
5. The last step is to hold your breath once again for a count of four. Repeat these steps once or twice more as you wish.

Now take a moment and notice how your body feels: notice how your mind feels; ahhhhh, this is what relaxation feels like. Do you remember what relaxation feels like? I know I needed a reminder!

I think it is safe to say that the 2020/21 school year was not easy for any of us. Even with over a decade of teaching and leadership experience, when I found myself teaching online last year, I felt like I was starting over as a brand-new teacher. Navigating virtual classrooms, performing online assessments and, most important, establishing relationships with my students and their families through a screen proved far more challenging than I had ever imagined. The teaching strategies I had accumulated over the years were tossed aside and, through many trials and errors, I began to learn a whole new bag of tricks.

On top of striving to be an effective teacher for my students, also fairly new to the virtual learning environment, I was under the pressure of supporting my daughter, who was starting her first year of middle school, all while attempting to maintain my own sanity in the midst of a global pandemic. The mental health of my students, my daughter and myself became of utmost importance.

What I discovered was that just as the teaching strategies I had in my toolkit had quickly become outdated, my mental wellness practices also fell short in keeping up to speed with the ever-changing landscape of the last year and a half. Spending quality time with friends, immersing myself in nature, and my yoga and meditation practices were no longer sufficient to maintain my mental health. I had become increasingly anxious and began to experience frequent bouts of depression. When I started working with a holistic wellness practitioner, we discovered the many ways in which my anxiety and depression presented themselves in my physical body, including headaches, insomnia and high blood pressure.

I knew I had to go beyond maintaining my mental wellness and move toward cultivating mental strength, but I was unsure of where to start. In conversing with my holistic wellness specialist, I was reminded of *equanimity*, a concept first introduced to me by an Ayurveda practitioner and yoga instructor at a professional learning event. He suggested that the best way to understand equanimity, described in the following section of this article, is to practise it, as shared with him by his teachers of Vipassana meditation and the original teachings of Gautama Buddha. With a little bit of research and numerous trials and errors, I created a list of quick and effective strategies to strengthen my mental health and practice equanimity.

My intention in writing this article is to share with you my personal, rudimentary understanding of equanimity and how the practice of equanimity may benefit our physical and mental health, and to provide a toolkit of practices that can be used to work toward achieving an equanimous state of mind.

What Is Equanimity?

With or without a global pandemic, teachers are often perpetually in a state of hypervigilance. From skinned knees, missing pencils and fistfights to staff meetings, new curriculum and parent e-mails, we are incessantly receiving and processing information and making decisions. Our brains and our bodies are constantly on the go, often leaving us exhausted and running on empty by the end of the day, only to start it all over again the next morning.

Of course, I trust that I speak for many teachers when I say I love what I do! I live and breathe for the moments when I see students genuinely engaged in a science experiment or when that proverbial lightbulb lights up as students come to understand a new concept. The challenge then becomes how to move away from this state of hypervigilance and toward a state of equanimity so that we can begin to mitigate the stressors and truly take pleasure in the joys of teaching.

There are many definitions of equanimity. One that spoke to me defined *equanimity* as an even-minded mental state toward all experiences, whether they be positive, negative or neutral (Desbordes et al 2015). The key to understanding this definition is to see equanimity as an internal state of mind, a state in which your subjective sensory experiences come and go as they respond to objective situations. Equanimity is a way to accept external circumstances just as they are, without attempts to suppress, deny, resist or fixate on them (Salter 2018).

As a visual learner, I found a great analogy that enabled me to visualize what equanimity looks like (LuVogt 2017) and that I would like to share with you. Imagine life as an ocean and obstacles as waves. As challenges arise and the waves become increasingly aggressive, you can make one of three choices. The first choice is to stand firm like a rocky crag, resisting and striving to fight the waves. At first, this sounds like a viable option—after all, we are strong and brave, and with persistence, we can simply ride out the waves. However, life is ultimately stronger than we are; while we may be able to ride out some storms, we will eventually tire and resistance will prove futile.

Our second option is to go with the flow and let it all go, as some yoga practitioners like to say. We become complacent and begin to dissociate ourselves from life's challenges. While this initially sounds like a safe and easy option, what happens when we completely surrender is we put ourselves at the mercy of the storm. When the waves of the storm become more and more tumultuous,

our indifference puts us at risk of being dashed against the rocks or even thrown ashore.

The third alternative is to act as a buoy. A buoy has the freedom and flexibility to rise and fall with the waves as challenges arise while simultaneously remaining anchored to the ocean floor, protecting it from colliding into rocks or becoming beached by the tide. By working toward a mental state of equanimity, we essentially become our own anchors, as we cultivate mental strength in the face of challenges (Bernhard 2011).

Why Is Equanimity Important?

Picture this: it is the first week of school and you sit down at your desk during lunch break to check your e-mail. In your inbox, you see an angry e-mail from a parent asking to schedule a meeting regarding a concern about an incident that happened to their child. Or imagine this: it is Monday morning and as you are getting your lesson materials ready, your principal walks in. After exchanging pleasantries, the principal says they need to talk to you and ask you to stop by their office later.

Consider how your body might feel in response to the above scenarios. Would your heart beat faster? Would your palms get sweaty? How might your breathing be affected? What about your mind—would your brain buzz with thoughts racing? Would you go over every moment of the past few days in your mind, wondering where you went wrong?

As explained by Harvard Health Publishing (2020), when our bodies perceive danger, our stress response begins in the amygdala, also known as the emotional processing centre of our brain. The amygdala interprets the danger and sends distress signals to our hypothalamus. The hypothalamus then continues to pass along this information to the rest of our body through the autonomic nervous system.

Our autonomic nervous system is composed of two parts: the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). You may have heard of the fight-or-flight response; that is our SNS at work. When activated, the SNS pumps adrenaline through our body so we can react quickly in the face of perceived dangers. While essential to the survival of the human species (think jumping out of the way in the face of oncoming traffic), it becomes problematic when our SNS starts responding to non-life-threatening stressors (for example, parent e-mails, principal meetings, report cards and so on), causing elevated levels of stress. In our

physical bodies, chronic stress may present itself as high blood pressure, anxiety, depression and addiction (Hurley 2018).

The perhaps less talked about part of our autonomic nervous system is our parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), also known as our rest-and-digest response. Once our brains interpret the perceived danger to be over, the PNS becomes activated and our body starts to release relaxing and calming hormones, thereby reducing our levels of stress and anxiety. This calm and relaxed mental state may present in our physical bodies as elevated moods, strengthened immune systems and reduced blood pressure (Hurley 2018).

When we work toward cultivating an equanimous state of mind, we are learning to intentionally activate our parasympathetic nervous system to induce a calm and relaxed mental state. Aside from the benefits to our physical bodies, being in a state of equanimity may also lead to decreased reactivity to negative triggers, resulting in increased fulfilment of life experiences and improved personal relationships.

How Can We Cultivate Equanimity?

Luckily, there are a number of ways we can cultivate equanimity and improve our mental strength so that we can embrace a calm and relaxed state. Depending on how much time and money you have at your disposal, some strategies include spending time in nature, practising yoga and meditation, getting a massage, and exercising (Hurley 2018).

I understand that, for busy teachers, finding the time to practise these strategies may be a significant barrier. Therefore, I will focus on four quick and simple practices that can be done right in the classroom. Best of all, these strategies can be adapted so that we can invite our students to join us in our practice. While it may feel onerous at first, I have found that in time, I no longer have to intentionally make time and put forth effort to practise these strategies—they have become second nature. In a sense, I have trained my mind and body to be more equanimous.

Let's get started!

Box Breathing

Remember when I asked that you stay with me through the introduction and I promised you that it would be

worth it? That box breathing exercise (Gotter 2020) I outlined is actually the first strategy.

As box breathing takes only a matter of minutes, it can be done first thing in the morning, during recess or at any time you feel the need to activate your PNS and induce the release of some calm and relaxation hormones into your body. I also encourage you to practise this breathing technique with your students; after the lunch recess might be a good time. I would recommend turning off the lights, putting on some soft music and inviting your students to close their eyes. Initially, students will require guidance and there may be some giggles, but I think you might be surprised at how effective this strategy can be in lowering the energy level of the class.

Panoramic/Peripheral Vision

The second strategy is called *panoramic* or *peripheral vision*. While technology has become an integral part of teaching and learning, what tends to happen when we continuously stare at screens is that our vision becomes hyperfocused; this tunnel vision can activate our SNS. To bring balance to our nervous systems, we can engage in panoramic/peripheral vision. The practice of panoramic/peripheral vision alters our optic flow, which can turn off our stress response by activating our PNS (Wapner 2020).

Engaging in panoramic/peripheral vision can be as simple as looking out the window, preferably at a flat horizon line. Soften and relax your gaze, and direct your attention to the details in your periphery by noticing what is above, below and to the sides of your focal point.

Once you are comfortable with practising panoramic/peripheral vision, invite your students to join you. If you do not have a window in your classroom, improvise by putting up some calming posters of nature. When possible, go out for a short walk during your lunch break, or take your students outside for a short walk around the schoolyard to practice panoramic/peripheral vision outside. In my experience, alongside the fresh air and body break, this practice makes a world of difference to student moods, mental health and productivity.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation/Tense and Release

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), also known as tense and release exercises, is another quick and easy practice to manually relax our muscles and activate our

PNS. As you practice PMR, be sure to pay attention to your body so that you can begin to recognize what muscle tension and muscle relaxation feel like; this may take some time, but once you start recognizing signs of tension in your body, that is your cue to move through this practice.

Like box breathing, the PMR strategy works best if you are able to sit comfortably in a dark and quiet environment. I sometimes close my classroom door and practise PMR during my recess or lunch break. PMR is also a simple technique to introduce to your students once you are familiar with the practise.

To begin PMR, choose a small part of your body, such as your hands or feet, where you would like to start (I like to start with my feet and work my way up). Once you have decided where to start, take a deep breath and apply tension to that body part by squeezing the applicable muscles as hard as you can for about five seconds; try to isolate and tense only those muscles you are targeting. For example, if you decide to start with your feet, make sure you are only curling your toes and tensing up the muscles in your feet and that your calves are not also tensing up. Remember to take note of how muscle tension feels in your body.

When practicing PMR, after applying tension to your muscles, slowly exhale and intentionally relax that body part and make a mental note of how the muscle relaxation feels. Allow your body to remain in this relaxed state for about 15 seconds before moving on to the next part of your body. Repeat this process with the different muscle groups until you have moved through your whole body. If you are unsure of how to break down the muscle groups of your body, Anxiety Canada (2019) provides a great guide as well as descriptions of how to apply tension to particular muscle groups.

You can practise progressive muscle relaxation when you notice yourself feeling tense, and also as a preventative measure before you get to that state. PMR has been found to reduce overall tension and stress levels, induce feelings of relaxation when anxiety levels rise and decrease physical presentations of stress such as stomach aches, headaches and insomnia (Anxiety Canada 2019).

Trauma Release Exercises

The last practice I will share with you is a type of trauma release exercise simply known as *shaking*. Shaking is a fun way to shake out old, stagnant energy and release stored-up tension in your body (*Times of India* 2019). The

best part about shaking is that there does not have to be set steps or rules; however, if you would prefer some guidance on where to start, there are a number of tutorials available online by searching for trauma release exercises (TRE). I like to start the practice of shaking by bouncing my knees. Once I feel comfortable, I gradually shake up to my hips, torso and then, eventually, my arms and shoulders. You can alternate between little trembles to full body movements; just make sure you give yourself enough space. Music is always a great addition to set the mood while shaking.

The practice of shaking can last anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour, or longer. I also enjoy practising this technique with my students; I find their positive energy contagious, and shaking is a great way to bond with them! Again, this practice will likely get silly and laughter is sure to ensue, so I would take it outside when possible; right before recess or at the end of the day may be the most optimal times.

Conclusion

The recent decline of mental health has been coined the “silent pandemic” (Thornicroft 2020; World Vision 2021); we cannot afford to be silent any more. I believe that, as teachers, it is imperative that we take care of our own mental wellness so that we may create the space necessary to tend to our students’ mental health as well. As much as teachers can be martyrs, constantly giving to our students, we must remember that we cannot pour from an empty cup.

The practices outlined in this article are intended to provide you with a starting point on your journey of cultivating mental strength and reaching an equanimous state of mind. Please be reminded that your journey to equanimity will not be linear. There will be times when you find yourself taking one step forward and two steps back; this is when you must show yourself some compassion and acknowledge that where you are on your journey is perfect. Also, keep in mind that I am right here with you on your journey—so please, take my hand, and let us all walk together.

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Active Schools. On the weekends, Lisa likes to be physically active and is often found on her yoga mat, in front of a punching bag or on top of a mountain. She believes that now, more than ever, the mental and physical health of students needs to be at the forefront of our teaching practice.

Supporting a Healthy School Community with Nutrient-Dense Recipes

Cailyn Morash and Krysta Florence

Introduction

Children and youth are of critical importance in society. Their health contributes to a foundation for a strong, vibrant society with a promising future. Providing opportunities for children and youth to obtain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop healthy lifestyles is essential (Berg et al 2017). A key element in healthy lifestyle development is building and maintaining healthy relationships with food. Because there are established links between nutrient-dense foods and academic performance, helping children and youth learn more about the benefits of quality relationships with food can potentially influence academic outcomes and positively influence their overall health (Penney and McIsaac 2012). Such nutrition-related learning can include creating positive environments, which allow food to be viewed as celebration, culture, and expression.

The intent for this article is to add to the ongoing discussions related to helping students build healthy relationships with food and to provide a few quick and easy nutrient-dense recipe ideas that can be used by teachers, shared with colleagues and embraced in the school community. We share these recipes with an emphasis on the importance of nutrient-dense foods, and not on encouraging eating to adjust body weight and shape among students, which has been noted as a risk factor for both obesity and eating disorders (Russell-Mayhew 2021). Through a short discussion related to the Alberta health and life skills program of studies, the comprehensive school health approach and three nutrient-dense recipes, we hope we can add to the current knowledge concerning student health and well-being.

Words from a Preservice Teacher

Helping children and youth increase their knowledge about the importance of nutrient-dense foods is important to me. I begin with a short narrative about what has led me to writing this article and to my excitement for my future career as an elementary school teacher.

Prior to beginning my education after-degree program at Concordia University of Edmonton, I worked as a nutrition educator with a company called FoodImpact. My educational background related to this position includes a bachelor of science in psychology and nutrition from the University of Alberta, in addition to a wealth of professional experiences volunteering with APPLE Schools and the Department of Pediatrics (University of Alberta). As part of my work as a nutrition educator, I visited a number of schools in Alberta, helping to educate students about nutrient-dense foods and building healthy relationships with food. My role afforded opportunities to assist students and their families to gain more awareness about simple, quick, nutrient-dense snacks and meals. As a result of these enriching experiences working with students, I observed many promising practices of classroom teachers and school leaders in helping students develop healthy relationships with food.

—Cailyn Morash

A Curricular Focus

According to Alberta's health and life skills program of studies (Alberta Learning 2003),

... health of students is viewed as an integral component of a larger system of health within the home, school and community environment. It

involves the establishment of collaborative partnerships among students, parents, educators, health care professionals and other community supports to address social and environmental factors that influence and determine optimal health (p 2)

Moreover, “to make responsible and healthy choices, students need to know how to seek out relevant and accurate information” (Alberta Learning 2003, 2). That said, when considering “wellness choices” (Alberta Learning 2003), it is critical for teachers to help students “make responsible and informed choices to maintain health ...” (p 5), where socioeconomics and availability allow. In terms of elementary school, Table 1 lists some specific learning outcomes (SLO) that support our message for this article.

Comprehensive School Health

To support such pertinent curricular learning outcomes, applying the comprehensive school health (CSH) framework could have additional benefits when considering teaching students about nutrition-related topics (for example, W-1.5, W-5.5). Comprehensive school health is an internationally recognized model aimed at addressing health in a holistic, planned and coordinated way (Joint Consortium for School Health [JCSH] 2016). By focusing

on nutrition-related activities from four interconnected yet distinct components, school communities can influence student health and education outcomes (JCSH 2016). The four components are listed below.

Teaching and Learning

- **Example 1:** By teaching the curricular learning outcomes from the health and life skills and physical education program of studies, teachers give students the tools to make wellness-related decisions that best fit their lifestyle.
- **Example 2:** When food preparation skills are taught or exemplified in the classroom, students may become more eager to help cook at home.

Social and Physical Environment

- **Example 1:** By sharing family-style meal ideas and demonstrating ways to prepare meals together, schools can positively influence the social and physical environment.
- **Example 2:** Discussing and making nutrient-dense foods available (for example, snacks) can positively influence the physical environment.

Table 1. Health and Life Skills: Specific Learning Outcomes (Alberta Learning 2003)

GRADE	SLO	STUDENTS WILL ...
Kindergarten	W-K.5	recognize that nutritious foods are needed for growth and to feel good/have energy (for example, nutritious snacks)
Grade 1	W-1.5	recognize the importance of basic, healthy, nutritional choices to well-being of self (for example, variety of food, drinking water, eating a nutritious breakfast)
Grade 2	W-2.5	classify foods according to <i>Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating</i> , and apply knowledge of food groups to plan for appropriate snacks and meals
Grade 3	W-3.5	apply guidelines from <i>Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating</i> to individual nutritional circumstances (for example, active children eat/drink more)
Grade 4	W-4.5	analyze the need for variety and moderation in a balanced diet (for example, role of protein, fats, carbohydrates, minerals, water, vitamins)
Grade 5	W-5.5	examine ways in which healthy eating can accommodate a broad range of eating behaviours (for example, individual preferences, vegetarianism, cultural food patterns, allergies/medical conditions, diabetes)
Grade 6	W-6.5	analyze personal eating behaviours—foods and fluids—in a variety of settings (for example, home, school, restaurants)

Partnerships and Services

Example 1: Families can be encouraged to volunteer in classrooms/schools to help with food preparation (for example, morning health hut) or donations from local food vendors.

Example 2: School communities can use resources (for example, Alberta Health Services [www.albertahealthservices.ca/]) to share recipes in a newsletter; such wellness messaging can be transferred to the home environment.

Policy

- **Example 1:** Shared nutrient-dense recipes can link to Canada's Food Guide (Health Canada 2021) and district- or school-level policies about foods served and/or sold in school communities (for example, celebrating diversity, preparing together).
- **Example 2:** Recipe cards can be linked to classroom practices related to preparing and sharing meals. Less formal policies are in place at the school and classroom level to ensure the sharing and implementation of wellness practices that support students and staff.

As part of their developmental journey, students will benefit from enhancing their knowledge about nutrition, building healthy relationships with food and using food as a means to celebrate culture. In the next section, we share three recipes intended to expand on the *sharing spirit* of educators that can help us all continue to learn from each other—whether that be meaningful physical activity ideas, quality lesson plan ideas, assessment ideas or, as noted here, nutrient-dense recipe ideas, all with the intent of helping to enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes across our school communities.

Recipe Ideas to Share

As is common throughout educational communities, recipes are readily available and shared with the aim to support the building of healthy relationships with food; as Health Canada (2021) encourages, let's experience the benefits, enjoyment and exploration of food. Each recipe has been written with a focus on boosting nutrition, simplicity and enjoyment. Enjoy!

These three recipes represent our efforts to add to the *sharing spirit* of educators. The recipes, designed by Cailyn to provide a nutritional boost, have been ... *continued on page 60*

RICE KRISPIES ENERGY BALLS

Using a child-friendly, familiar ingredient like Rice Krispies makes children more likely to try something new. Additionally, Rice Krispies are low in added sugar and add a pop of texture.

This recipe is allergy friendly and no-bake, and welcomes helping hands to the kitchen.

Ingredients

- 1 cup Rice Krispies
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sunflower seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pumpkin seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 2 tbsp ground flaxseed
- pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sunflower seed butter
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp vanilla



Directions

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Combine the Rice Krispies, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, cranberries, coconut, chia seeds and salt in a large bowl.
3. Combine the sunflower seed butter, honey and vanilla in a small bowl.
4. Pour the sunflower seed butter mixture onto the Rice Krispies mixture and stir to combine. It should be sticky and starting to form a ball.
5. Once the energy balls come together, lightly grease hands, roll mixture into balls and place on the lined baking sheet. Chill until set. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer.

Makes 12–15 Energy Balls

Notes

- This recipe is fairly flexible and forgiving.
- Try different combinations of your favourite cereals, nuts (if your school is nut aware as opposed to nut free), seeds, dried fruits and nut/seed butters.
- Enjoy this recipe with a piece of fruit to target all food groups.

TACO SALAD

Taco salad is a terrific quick meal idea. Children can be involved with tearing lettuce, shredding cheese, juicing limes, picking cilantro leaves and so forth, and have autonomy regarding what ingredients go into their individual taco salad.

This is a great recipe for accommodating children with allergies and/or dietary restrictions.

Ingredients

- 1 lb cooked ground beef or turkey or veggie crumble, seasoned with salt, pepper, and taco seasoning
- 1 19-oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 4–6 cups romaine lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces
- 4 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 avocados, chopped
- 1 cup corn
- 1 cup cheese (for example, Monterey jack or cheddar), shredded
- 1 cup salsa
- ½ cup sour cream
- 4 limes, juiced
- 2 green onions, chopped
- ½ cup cilantro, roughly chopped
- tortilla chips



Directions

1. Set up all ingredients in an assembly line.
3. Add desired salad ingredients (ground beef or turkey or veggie crumble, beans, lettuce, tomatoes, avocados, corn and cheese) in an individual bowl.
5. Top with salsa, sour cream and freshly squeezed lime juice.
7. Garnish with green onions and cilantro.
8. Serve with tortilla chips.

Makes 4 servings

Notes

- Taco salad is great for school lunches; it does not need to be microwaved.
- If packing for lunch, separate the salad, toppings and tortilla chips to avoid a soggy salad.
- Remember to pack with an ice pack!

GREEN GOBLIN SMOOTHIE

This Green Goblin Smoothie, which incorporates many nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables, pairs perfectly with a Halloween candy or two! For a fun twist, draw a spooky face on a clear plastic cup with a black permanent marker before serving.

Ingredients

- 1 cup leafy greens (spinach, kale)
- ½ avocado
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen pineapple
- 1 cup frozen mango
- 1 cup 100% pure carrot, apple or orange juice
- 1 cup milk (cow's or plant-based alternative)
- ¾ cup plain yogurt
- hemp hearts (optional)

Directions

1. Toss ingredients into a blender, with the liquids and fresh produce at the bottom closest to the blades and frozen fruit at the top.
2. Blend, pour into prepared cups, garnish with hemp hearts (optional), and enjoy!

Makes 2 servings

Notes

- If you do not have a powerful blender, use more fresh fruit than frozen.
- To boost the nutrition even more, add frozen riced cauliflower, chia seeds and/or flaxseed.



developed to entice teachers to share throughout their school communities, whether that be through health education-related lessons, where students have an opportunity to experience making these recipes at school, or in monthly newsletters sent directly to parents/guardians, for example. (Note: when recipes are sent directly to parents/guardians, students are not caught in the middle; this can help to reduce any unwanted pressure that may be felt by parents/guardians, if social determinants of health such as socioeconomic conditions limit what foods parents/guardians can offer their children.)

A quick suggestion: we encourage teachers and students to create their own recipes as an individual or class project and then to make these recipes at school. Such an activity can further embrace food as celebration, culture and expression.

For more inspiration, check out these nutrient-dense recipe resource banks:

- PHE Canada: “At My Best—Let’s Cook!” <https://atmybest.ca/en/activities/cooking-kids>
- APPLE Schools: “Healthy Holiday Celebrations” www.appleschools.ca/healthy-holiday-celebrations
- Heart and Stroke: “Kid-Friendly Meals” <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/healthy-living/recipes/kid-friendly-meals>

Concluding Thoughts

Helping students build healthy relationships with food is essential for their growth and development. Given that nutrition is essential to child and youth development, influences academic performance and is tied to the current program of studies, we believe that modelling healthy habits and supporting overall wellness in the classroom—and throughout the school environment—are critical for student learning. Nutrition does not have to be complicated; it is about making small, simple, sustainable changes. Such changes can include an environment that emphasizes food as celebration, culture and expression, while fostering healthy lifelong relationships with food and one’s body. In the school environment, such an aim can be embedded in specifically designed lessons, suggested in monthly school newsletters and rooted in other targeted approaches. The school environment affords many opportunities to support student wellness.

To help further support our message throughout this article, Table 2 lists a few nutrition-related resources that may interest you as you continue to help students build healthy relationships with food. I am looking forward to one day having my own classroom to help enable my students “to make well-informed, healthy choices” (Alberta Learning 2003, 1) and, ultimately, to help them build and maintain healthy relationships with food and their bodies.

TABLE 2. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Alberta Curriculum Analysis (Russell-Mayhew)	An Open Letter to All Alberta Parents of School-Aged Children https://alberta-curriculum-analysis.ca/an-open-letter-to-all-alberta-parents-of-school-aged-children/
Alberta Health Services	School Nutrition Education Resource List www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-school-resource-list.pdf
APPLE Schools	“About APPLE Schools” www.appleschools.ca/about
Desiree Nielsen	<i>Eat More Plants</i> Cookbook available at https://desireerd.com
FoodImpact	Education Resources www.foodimpact.ca/education-resources1.html
Fraiche Living (Tori Wesszer)	“School Lunches: 25 Healthy Ideas” https://fraicheliving.com/school-lunches-50-healthy-ideas-tips/
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada	“Healthy Eating” www.heartandstroke.ca/healthy-living/healthy-eating
Sarah Remmer	“Child and Adolescent Nutrition” www.sarahremmer.com/category/nutrition-articles/child-and-adolescent-nutrition/

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Cailyn Morash received her bachelor of science in psychology and nutrition from the University of Alberta in April 2017. After volunteering with APPLE Schools and the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta, Cailyn became a nutrition educator with FoodImpact, in January 2018. The combination of her education and her experience coaching children in a variety of sports, such as gymnastics, swimming and soccer, gave her a solid foundation from which child nutrition education flourishes. Cailyn is working toward a bachelor of education after-degree at Concordia University of Edmonton, graduating in April 2022. Cailyn believes that healthy lifestyles can be achieved through community involvement and by supplying children with the tools to make healthy decisions. She can be reached at cmorash@student.concordia.ab.ca.



Krysta Florence graduated with a bachelor of arts in psychology and elementary education from Concordia University of Edmonton in 2020. Following a decade of coaching both soccer and rugby to youth in her community, Krysta decided to follow her passion and enrolled in the bachelor of education after-degree program at Concordia University of Edmonton, where she sits on the Education Student Health and Wellness Committee. Krysta hopes to use her education degree in combination with her love for health and fitness to aid in providing future generations with the tools needed to lead healthy, active lives. She can be reached at kflorenc@student.concordia.ab.ca.

Movement Education: Delivering Physical Literacy

Jaiden Hourie

Tansi, Oki, Hello!

My name is Jaiden Hourie and I am a second-year bachelor of education student specializing in elementary health and physical education at Mount Royal University, in Calgary, Alberta. I am a proud Cree Métis woman, and am privileged to make my home here in Mohkinstsis (Calgary) on Treaty 7 territory. I am incredibly passionate about physical education and aim to become a teacher who can ignite this same passion and love in my students. I believe that my role as a teacher will be to encourage, support and inspire my students to feel empowered in their outcomes. My ultimate goal as a teacher is to create an inclusive learning environment in which all students feel safe and engaged, in a way that promotes achievement in the highest capacity. I look forward to continuously finding new avenues to grow and deepen my understanding of physical education, both as a student and as a future educator.

Having had the opportunity to engage in a variety of stimulating classes relevant to my minor during my first year, I was able to extract many key learnings and insights, one of these being the importance of fostering an understanding of physical literacy in our youth and promoting and nurturing their physical literacy for life. Greatly inspired by an infographic described as an “evolving and dynamic model of physical literacy for life” (Francis et al 2011, 7), I ventured to create an evolved version that aimed to synthesize key learnings from one of my physical literacy courses, Physical Literacy 1530. Born out of this is my infographic, which reflects the *what* and the *how* of delivering physical literacy. The infographic speaks to the importance of understanding and teaching fundamental movement skills, inclusion and assessment, and aims to aid in the streamlining of critical information

while keeping it engaging and transparent—that is, I want this piece to be a useful resource for instructors’ personal use as well as in the classroom. I believe that by drawing from this infographic and familiarizing ourselves with the information therein, we might be better able to deliver physical literacy and achieve our ultimate goal of promoting physical literacy for life.

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Jaiden Hourie is a proud Métis student at Mount Royal University; she is a second-year bachelor of education student specializing in elementary health and physical education. Jaiden is also honoured to be the president of Mount Royal University’s Education Undergraduate Society for the 2021/22 school year. In her studies, she has been fascinated by physical literacy and health education, and greatly anticipates her continued learning in those areas. Additionally, Jaiden looks forward to focusing on pedagogy in the areas of mental health, diversity and inclusion. Outside the classroom, Jaiden enjoys outdoor activities including hiking, climbing, trekking and backcountry camping. Jaiden also has a passion for indoor volleyball, which she played at the elite level. Jaiden hopes to be an educator who creates a strong, positive and lasting impact on her students, peers and community at large.

WHAT? HOW?

Movement Education: Delivering Physical Literacy

What Is Physical Literacy?

"Individuals who are physically literate move with confidence and competence in a wide variety of physical activities that benefit the development of the whole person" (Francis et al 2011, 2).

Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)

Fundamental movement skills can be viewed in three categories: **stability and balance**, **locomotion**, and **manipulation**.



Manipulation

Refers to the controlling of an object. This can be with or without the use of an implement. For example, manipulation occurs in tennis, where the racquet acts as the manipulator.



Stability and Balance

Stability and balance "refers to the first and most basic area of movement literacy; it is a prerequisite to all other skills" (Francis et al 2011, 37). This is achieved by focusing on the body's equilibrium and capacity to remain steady.



Locomotion

The ways in which the body travels across an area; for example, running, galloping, or skipping.

Let's talk
FMS

WHY Fundamental Movement Skills? Fundamental movement skills are the foundation or building blocks of movement; they provide us with understandings and skills that allow us to advance to more complex and sport-specific skills. These skills also support our being active for life!



If you can run



And you can
manipulate



Then you can play
soccer!

How can we teach fundamental movement skills?

Think DAIGG!

Let's take a look at the Alberta Education Movement Dimensions

These dimensions not only offer us ways to support the learning of FMS, but they also allow us to continually grow, develop and master these skills.



D

Dance

Dance can be a difficult subject in some classrooms and environments. An incredible alternative and new application which you can try at home or in classrooms is DancePI3y! There is minimal choreography and a lot of play, making this an excellent resource, especially for younger age groups.

A

Alternative Environments

It is important that individuals have the opportunity to interact with a range of physical environments, including indoors, outdoors, air, snow, water and ice. This can allow individuals to explore and find a passion for a variety of activities and can encourage them to be active for life.

I

Individual Activity

Individual activity can equip individuals with the competence and confidence to move forward and be active for life. Individuals may also find a passion for a single activity that they choose to pursue at higher or even competitive levels.

G

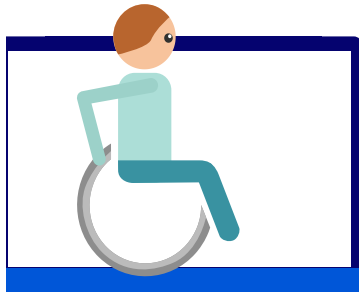
Gymnastics

Gymnastics is incredibly useful for the learning of the above-mentioned stability and balance FMS. Gymnastics also offers many transferable skills into other sports. For example, if an individual is looking to improve their agility and flexibility in skiing, they might also benefit from doing gymnastics.

G

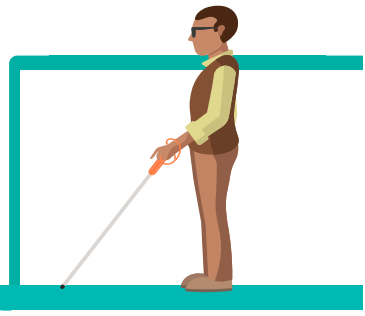
Games

Commonly applied as teaching games for understanding (TGfU), the objective is to use small-sided games along with fundamental movement skills and strategies to enhance movement and engagement. This model is meant to create more knowledgeable game players but also to motivate participants!



INCLUSION

Our delivery is only as good as its capacity to positively impact and support as many individuals as possible. We must endeavour to ensure that as many individuals as possible are included, and we must honour those who are differently abled. Here are some best practices for ensuring that everyone benefits from the learning and growth of FMS and can develop physical literacy.



What is inclusion?

Full inclusion is achieved when a child with a disability participates in the least restrictive environment.

This Includes social opportunities to participate in the same physical activity as others.

Tips for promoting inclusion:

- Avoid looking for issues
- Find areas of strength
- Involve the participant
- Provide opportunities for participants to shine
- Use instructional support
- Foster equal relationships
- Encourage inclusive culture
- Facilitate social interactions

Re-evaluate your

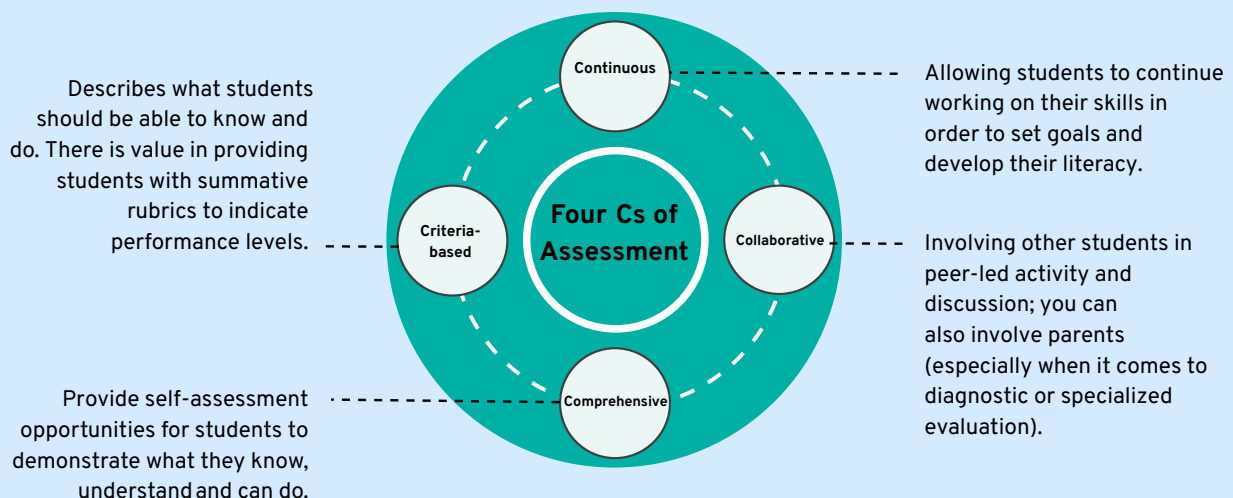
- Task/curriculum
- Equipment
- Environment
- Instructions
- Rules

(Francis et al 2011, 28–29)

ASSESSMENT

“How will we know if Canadian children are more physically literate as a result of strategic, programmatic, or curricular initiatives if physical literacy is not actually assessed?” (Tremblay and Lloyd 2010, 30).

It is critical that we gather reliable information on students' understanding and growth in different skills. In order to do this, we must use a form of assessment. While we recognize that there are many ways to assess physical literacy in the classroom, it is critical that we attempt to adhere to our important principle Four Cs as designed by Francis et al (2011, 256). These dimensions allow us to offer a well-rounded approach to assessment and offer students the best opportunity for success.



Four C model adapted from Francis et al 2011

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Runner, the journal of the Health and Physical Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, is a professional journal for physical education teachers in Alberta. Authors are encouraged to submit articles of relevance in either a peer review or editorial review process. Topics may include, but are not limited to, personal explorations of significant classroom experiences; descriptions of innovative classroom and school practices; reviews or evaluations of instructional and curricular methods, programs or materials; discussions of trends, issues or policies; and scientific research.

Manuscripts on other themes will also be considered for publication and may be up to 2,500 words long. References to works cited should appear in full in a list at the end of the article using the author-date system. Photographs, line drawings and diagrams are welcome. To

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Manuscripts should be submitted electronically in Word format. A cover page should include the contributor's name, professional position, address, phone number and e-mail address. A Copyright Transfer Agreement must be completed once a submission is accepted.

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Send manuscripts for future issues to Astrid Kendrick at runner@hpec.ab.ca.

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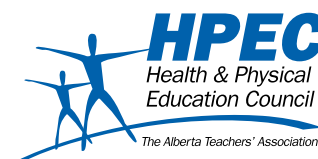
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HPEC Mission Statement

The Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC), as a professional organization of teachers, advocates for quality health and physical education programs and provides opportunities for professional growth and development of its members. HPEC is committed to providing leadership in creating healthy, active school communities.



HPEC Vision Statement

Alberta teachers will provide quality instruction and programs in health and physical education to promote the development of healthy, active lifestyles in students.

Objectives

The objectives of HPEC shall be to

- improve curriculum, instruction and assessment in health and physical education through increased knowledge, skills and understanding;
- develop, study and propose professional resources and responses to health and physical education issues;
- ensure that teachers have access to meaningful professional development opportunities that meet their needs throughout all stages of their career;
- enhance the expertise of members by promoting an understanding of current research to inform professional practice;
- liaise with other organizations that seek to promote healthy, active lifestyles within school communities;
- further the continuous development and evaluation of standards and guidelines within the profession for personnel, programs and facilities in health and physical education; and
- facilitate broad-based, skilful participation in the planning and implementation of effective, collaborative, ongoing professional development.

Beliefs

HPEC believes that

- a well-delivered health and physical education curriculum supported by quality instruction can change health behaviours of children and youth in K-12;
- health and physical education play a valued and vital role in providing a quality, balanced education for all children and youth in Alberta schools;
- all students in all grades in Alberta schools should have the right and opportunity to experience sustained, vigorous physical activity through participation in quality daily physical education programs;
- wellness is an outcome of quality health and physical education programs that develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to assist students to make appropriate choices to live active, healthy lives; and
- comprehensive school health is the framework for the delivery of quality health and physical education programs to promote and develop wellness in Alberta's children and youth.

From the Executive Handbook of the Health and Physical Education Council (2016).

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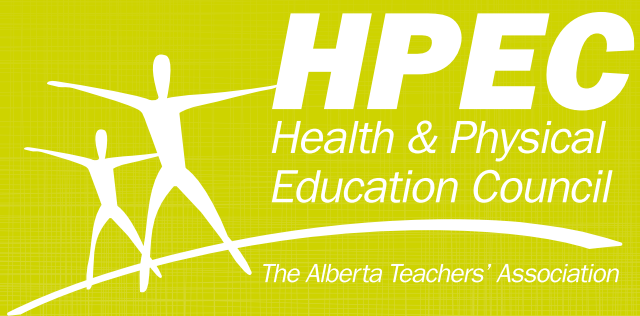
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