What Makes for Human Flourishing?
Creating a Culture of Wholeness in Schools

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Today’s journey

Re-committing to values of balance and wholeness – to what makes for human flourishing.

Examining research that supports the critical need for creating school cultures that promote the integration of head and heart.

Exploring ways to propel students toward health, a love of themselves and others, a love of learning, lasting resilience and success.

Committing to reconciling the cultural forces behind the continuance of poor practices that create challenges for students and tough dilemmas for adults.

Realizing that, collectively, we can change these conditions by making adaptive shifts that support students in achieving rigorous and rewarding outcomes through nurturing wholeness.
A Frame for Wholeness: Ethos, Pathos, Logos

Ethos

“Dedicated and honest educators and parents, almost uniformly, have openly admitted to regularly putting too much pressure on their students and children. Further, these same adults have also acknowledged feeling deeply troubled by these admissions, as they realize that putting too much pressure on these adolescents conflicts directly with their original intentions of educating and parenting in healthy balanced ways. This unpopular but real predicament reflects a true double bind for us. As a population of well-intended professional educators and committed parents around the world, we are acting in ways that compromise our very intentions. On the one hand, we feel deeply committed to educating and parenting our students/children in healthy balanced ways. On the other hand, under the weight of so much economic and cultural pressure, we simultaneously find ourselves overscheduling, overworking, and at times, overwhelming our students.” David Gleason, Researcher Psychologist

Pathos

“We find that instead of schools supporting adolescents’ emerging passions, drive for connection and collaboration, courage to do things in new ways, and their creative imaginations, despite our best intentions, we shut them down, make them fear each other’s successes, overwork them with the same old kinds of learning, do little to support their imaginations, sleep-deprive them, set them up for a sense of inadequacy and competition, and offer them a set of values and goals that research shows has little to do with much of anything that is positive in life- like well-being, social and emotional intelligence, happiness and even financial and professional success.” Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Director, Mindsight Institute

Logos

“As we examine the many lists of desired learnings to prepare our future citizens for a life of problem solving, uncertainty, and globalization, and given the access we have to information through technologies, it has become apparent that the keys to learning are dispositional in nature. Thinking dispositions are tendencies toward particular patterns of intellectual behavior. We are not suggesting that we abandon nor should we diminish the teaching of basic skills and knowledge of significant, relevant content and conceptual understandings. These too are essential for our students’ future. Might we give equal attention to students’ reading skills as well as their love of reading; their knowledge of scientific principles as well as their curiosity, intrigue, and wonderment about scientific phenomena; their knowledge and application of mathematical processes as well as their persistence with complex problems? The focus is not only on learning of the content but also learning from the content.” Art Costa and Bena Kallick, Researchers, Educators
Current Practices in our Schools

Health and wellness:
Mindfulness practices
Quality food and nutrition
Health curriculum incorporating emotional health

Community
Learning and sharing spaces that support interaction and community
Learning commons
Wide hallways with seating
Beauty, light and space as a priority
Mindfulness/chill spaces (drop-in)
Outdoors as third classroom
Couches in classrooms/hallways
Arts - elevated role

Schedules
Block

Inclusive practices
Co-planning/co-teaching rather than pull out
EAL immersion
Celebrations of diversity/global literacy
Personalized learning
Student agency
Seeking to view the whole child
Portfolios
Student (data) profiles
Service learning
Journaling and reflection across the curriculum
Parenting programs
Parent collaboration - addressing hyper-schooling
Study groups
Gleason’s Supportive Strategies

- Schedule
- Sleep
- Developing Executive Functions
- Mindfulness Meditation
- Respecting Developmental Integrity
- Overworking
- Beyond the Classroom
- Local and Global Service Opportunities
- Health and Wellness Curricula
- “Best” College vs. “Best-Fit” College
- Pressures of Diversity

At What Cost? Defending Adolescent Development in Fiercely Competitive Schools, 2017. PP 145-155
Three Balloons Organizer
**Guiding Questions for Team Reflection and Conversations**

Given this vision of wholeness and flourishing, where are we on our journey to recommitting to create cultures that move students towards balance- achieving rigorous outcomes while nurturing their wholeness?
And...
What might be some ways to overcome competing tensions that lead us away from this?

What adaptive things might we begin doing?

What might we see more of?

What might we see less of?

What do we want to continue doing?

What tools and tactics might we use to move forward?
Lenses and organizers that invite dialogue, discussion and action

Both dialogue and discussion are needed to fuel collective visioning and collaborative organizational changes.

Dialogue is a reflective learning process in which group members seek to understand one another’s viewpoints and deeply held assumptions. Listening is key to creating shared meaning. Dialogue creates an emotional and cognitive safety zone in which ideas flow for examination without judgment.

Discussion, in its Latin root discutere, means “to shake apart.” It focuses on the parts and their relationships to one another: the causes, the effects, and the ripple effects of proposed actions and solutions. The outcome of effective discussion is a collaboratively owned decision. Mindful group members pay attention to three essential elements during productive discussion. They monitor themselves, the processes of skilled discussion, and the details of the problem solving, planning, and decision-making processes in which they are engaged.

The Adaptive School, Garmston and Wellman, 2016

- One “Tiny” Disturbance
  In social systems, tiny events cause major disturbances. You don’t have to touch everyone and everything to begin making a significant difference.
  - Given our promises and expectations, what initial step (positive tiny disturbance) can be taken to move toward promoting balance?

- The 5 States of Mind/ Energy Sources: creating a culture of wholeness and holonomy- in students, adults, groups, and the school community.
  (Source: the Adaptive School, Garmston and Wellman, 2016 and Cognitive Coaching™, Costa and Garmston, 2016)
  As drivers within the system, how might we plan for...
    Efficacy, Flexibility, Consciousness, Craftsmanship & Interdependence

- Tinker, Dabble, Doodle, Try: Unlock The Power of the Unfocused Mind
  Author: Srini Pillay, 2017

- Storytelling- Write your School’s Success Story of creating a culture of wholeness. Story telling is a powerful way to organize thoughts and emotions. Stories delight, enchant, touch, teach, recall, inspire, motivate, challenge. They help us understand. They imprint a picture on our minds. Want to make a point or raise an issue? Tell a story. — Janet Litherland
Lenses and organizers that invite dialogue, discussion and action

- David Gleason’s 3 Adaptive Questions
  (Source: At What Cost, Defending Adolescent Development in Fiercely Competitive Schools, 2017, pp.139-140)
  - In light of what so many educators and parents have candidly acknowledged, how can we now deliver on what we publicly promise?
  - How can we now respond to these increasingly alarming conditions? How can we align our teaching, coaching and advising with what David Elkind called “the ultimate scientific authority,” the developing human brain?
  - How can we now begin to make changes that both respect adolescent development and that simultaneously help us to address our own fears?

- Ethos, Pathos, Logos

- Kegan and Lahey’s
  (Source: An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization DDO, 2016.)
  - How might we create the three strategic cores of a deliberately developmental organization- Edge, Home, and Groove-for our staff? For our Students?

- Promoting a Spirit of Inquiry:
  High-functioning groups and group members infuse their work with a spirit of inquiry. Inquiry is central to professional communities that produce stable gains in student learning. To inquire is to ask, be curious, invite the transmission of thoughts or feelings, confer, consult, wonder, request, examine and investigate ideas. Inquirers pause and paraphrase during inquiry.
  Inquiry examples
  - How might we mediate systems toward the greatest degree of wholeness?
  - What are possible ways we can teach with soul?
  - What are ways to address the challenge of better achieving academic goals within a system of wholeness?

- Use Adaptive Schools Strategies: Example - The Assumptions Wall to surface, examine and challenge deeply held beliefs and mental models that might support or hinder positive school change
Work as Blessing

May your work excite your heart,
Kindle in your mind a creativity
To journey beyond the old limits
Of all that has become wearisome.

May this work challenge you toward
New frontiers that will emerge
As you begin to approach them,
Calling forth from you the full force
And depth of your undiscovered gifts.

May the work fit the rhythms of your soul,
Enabling you to draw from the invisible
New ideas and a vision that will inspire.

Remember to be kind
To those who work with you,
Endeavor to remain aware
Of the quiet world
That lives behind each face.

Be fair in your expectations,
Compassionate in your criticism.
May you have the grace of encouragement
To awaken the gift in the other's heart,
Building in them the confidence
To follow the call of the gift.

May you come to know that work
Which emerges from the mind of love
Will have beauty and form.

May this work be worthy
Of the energy of your heart
And the light of your thought.

May your work assume a proper space in your life;
Instead of owning or using you,
May it challenge and refine you,
Bringing you every day further
Into the wonder of your heart.

- John O'Donohue,
To Bless the Space Between Us
Team Organizing Experience: Collaborative Expressions

Using “Work as a Blessing” Poem

Directions

1. Presenter orally reads poem.
2. Team members select one line of the poem that speaks to him/her.
3. Jot that line down on an index card.
4. Underneath the line that you wrote on the card, create and jot down a line of your own... inspired by the one you chose.
5. Team Round-robin share: Read both your lines from your index card.
6. End with collectively saying: “Our work is a blessing.”
Journal
Notes
Notes


Jensen, Frances E., MD and Amy Ellis Nutt. The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist’s Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults. Harper Collins Publisher, 2015.


