

PROMOTION OF INDIVIDUAL HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING OF STUDENTS BY A POSITIVE EDUCATION INTERVENTION

PROMOCIÓN DE LA FELICIDAD Y BIENESTAR INDIVIDUAL DE ESTUDIANTES UNIVERSITARIOS PRODUCTO DE UNA INTERVENCIÓN EN EDUCACIÓN POSITIVA

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Abstract

In usual educational practice, it is common to observe a separation between the "academic" curriculum of the students from that of their personal and social development. Nonetheless, an increasing recognition of the value of the students' personal and social development in the classroom, called "Positive Education", is now in progress. Based on such efforts we elaborated a Psycho-Educative Intervention (PEI), with the purpose of integrating professional learning with Happiness and Wellbeing (H&W) through the teaching of healthy lifestyles in students of Universidad Veracruzana (UV). The positive effects of PEI upon the students' H&W were found to be significant. Herein we report the effects of PEI on the students' "academic" curricula, and on their duration over time, as well as try to explain their effects under the light of Positive Education. The effects of PEI on H&W were higher after PEI, but decreased four

months later, although the scores were higher than those before PEI. Also, PEI improved the students' school performance. One way to explain these effects of PEI is through the perspective of the three points (pleasant life, engaged life and meaningful life) raised by Positive Psychology, which were worked within the 15 Sessions of PEI to promote positive emotions and traits in the students.

Keywords: Health, happiness, wellbeing, college students, positive education.

Resumen

En la práctica educativa habitual, es común observar una separación entre la currícula "académica" de los estudiantes y su desarrollo personal y social. Sin embargo, en la actualidad hay un creciente reconocimiento de la importancia que tiene el desarrollo personal y social de los alumnos para su desempeño en el aula, al cual se le ha denominado "Educación Positiva". Basados en dichas propuestas elaboramos una Intervención Psicoeducativa (IPE), con el propósito de integrar el aprendizaje profesional con la felicidad y el bienestar (F y B), a través de la enseñanza de estilos de vida saludables en los estudiantes de la Universidad Veracruzana (UV). Se encontró que los efectos positivos de la IPE sobre la F y B de los estudiantes fueron estadísticamente significativos. En este artículo presentamos los efectos de la IPE en el desempeño "académico" de los estudiantes, la duración de sus efectos, así como la explicación de sus efectos a la luz de la Educación Positiva. Los efectos de la IPE sobre la F y B fueron mayores después de la IPE, pero disminuyeron a los cuatro meses de su aplicación, aunque conservando mayores puntajes a los medidos antes de la IPE. Además, la IPE aumentó el rendimiento escolar de los estudiantes. Una forma de explicar estos efectos del IPE es a través de la perspectiva de los tres puntos (vida placentera, vida comprometida y vida significativa) que plantea la Psicología Positiva, mismos que se desarrollaron con las 15 sesiones de la IPE para promover emociones y actitudes positivas en los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Salud, felicidad, bienestar, estudiantes universitarios, educación positiva.

Introduction

Although Happiness and Wellbeing (H&W) have been generally pursued by humans, we know not of a general agreement reached on how to achieve them (Arguís-Rey, Bolsas-Valero, Hernández-Paniello & Slavador-Monge, 2010). Nor do we know if it's recognized that there is no general way to do so, but that rather, on account of human diversity and variable circumstances, there might be a collection of different unique ways to do so.

Most individuals of Western Culture believe that H&W will come in a distant future, and in the form of material possessions or of favorable external circumstances, overlooking the possibility of immediate satisfaction (Arguís-Rey *et al.*, 2010).

Educators often do the same mistakes possibly because they regard their students' learning as an endowment of knowledge, skills and attitudes, that will pay-off someday, and help them find a good job and make their the living conditions happy (Arguís-Rey *et al.*, 2010). They further believe that H&W derive automatically

from having a formal education, a job and a family.

But, are students taught to be well and happy? If H&W are highly desired goals of human beings, why not cultivate them in the classroom?

In usual educational practice is common to observe a separation between the "academic" curriculum of the students, linked to their mastery of the disciplines' specific information content, from their personal and social development aspects, linked to what it is called "the tutorial" curriculum (to learn to think, to be a person and to coexist with others) (Arguís-Rey *et al.*, 2010). However, H&W are synergistic with better learning of information, for example: the positive psychological mood broadens attention (Bolte, Goschke, & Kuhl, 2003; Fredrickson, 1998; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Rowe, Hirsh, Anderson, & Smith, 2007), and stimulates creative thinking (Estrada, Isen & Young, 1994; Isen, Daubman & Nowicki, 1987; Isen, Rosenzweig & Young, 1991; Kuhl, 1983,

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