Editor's Commentary

Health Promotion Practice at 20!

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The Health Promotion Practice (HPP) story is a good one. It starts in the mid-1990s, first as wistful but recurring conversations among health education colleagues—“Wouldn’t it be amazing to have a journal by and for practitioners?” “Wouldn’t it be great if journals could mentor new authors, especially those in the field?” “Wouldn’t it be something to have a journal dedicated to health promotion practice?” Then those people started talking to other people—and before we knew it, there was a core group led by the visionary trio of Randy Schwartz, Bob Goodman, and Elaine Auld, then there was a proposal to the SOPHE (Society of Public Health Education) Board of Trustees, a contract with Sage Publishing, an editorial board, and, in January 2000, a new journal—HPP!

EXPLORING AND EVOLVING

The first article in that first issue, written by Editor-in-Chief Randy Schwartz and Robert Goodman (2000), noted that “the journal is evolving,” a work in progress. The 100 pages of that first issue hum with the energy of the times and the excitement of the contributors (as well as some pretty funny photos of those of us on the inaugural editorial board!). There were articles exploring new technology—“The Gist of GIS (Geographic Information Systems)” (Goldman & Schmalz, 2000)—and a prescient commentary warning that “although technology may connect some of us, it does not necessarily unite all of us” (Wang, 2000, pp. 77-78). Associate Editor Stephen Thomas (2000) voiced the journal’s alignment with the growing movement to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in his introduction to an interview with Surgeon General David Satcher, conducted by Norma Goodwin (2000). There were book reviews (Garcia & Gambescia, 2000), a commentary demystifying writing for publication (Hayden, 2000), and a reflection on the evolving role of the health education specialist in the health care arena (Crosson & Nakamura, 2000). Articles covered teen pregnancy prevention (Paine-Andrews et al., 2000), a cancer clinical trials education program (Dean-Clower et al., 2000), and photovoice (Wang et al., 2000), and there was a trio on evaluation—including, I believe, the debut of Larry Green’s “Noah’s Ark Principle of Partnering” (Capwell et al., 2000; Green, 2000; Kreuter et al., 2000). As I recall, it was a frantic race to the finish. It was a glorious debut.

“WE SHALL NOT CEASE FROM EXPLORATION . . .”

Just as promised, HPP has continued to evolve. The quotes above and below, from poet T. S. Eliot (1963), mirror the passion of those who have led and contributed to our journal over the past 20 years. The original 10 departments are now Career Development, Practice Notes, and Resources, Frameworks, and Perspectives, reflecting our commitments to beginning each issue with practitioner voices and creating space for shorter and more flexible formats. Today’s longer articles reflect contemporary practice, where evaluation is assumed, culture must be centered, language is thoughtful, and practice implications are explicit. We are indeed a work in progress. In the year(s) ahead, we will be exploring equity and systems of power, determined to contribute to the broader public health dialogue on systemic and structured inequality. We will continue to explore and nurture diverse voices and ways of knowing for, as we found in our 2019 issues, some of the freshest health promotion insight comes from the borders and the

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margins. We will use social media and digital technologies to proudly promote our authors and their articles. And we will continue our journal’s commitment to intentional, inclusive, and evolving language that respects and reflects the nuances of health promotion practice (Roe & Mata, 2019).

The landscape of academic and professional publishing has changed significantly in just 20 years, with the promise of significant change yet ahead. Exponentially more content is available each year for practitioners, scholars, and students, yet it is not equally accessible and can be challenging for busy professionals to navigate. HPP's editorial leadership is actively exploring ways to helpfully organize and present new content, such as our commitment to regularly publishing scoping and systematic literature reviews. We work with SOPHE, Sage, and our sister journals Pedagogy in Health Promotion and Health Education & Behavior to create across-journal collections, such as last year’s timely vaccine hesitancy articles. After the pilot of our 2019 HPP Program Planning and Evaluation Reading List, we are developing more of these popular, curated lists, designed especially for faculty but of interest, we found, to a wide audience. We will continue offering selected papers for free download during special promotions, such as we did last year with our PRIDE thread in June and Native American Heritage Collection in November. Our goal is the best content in the most hands for the greatest impact. We will not cease from exploration.

“. . . AND THE END OF ALL OUR EXPLORING WILL BE TO ARRIVE WHERE WE STARTED AND KNOW THE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME”

In that first issue, my dear colleague, the late Brick Lancaster, and I wrote that our department, the Circle of Research and Practice, aimed to “provide a forum for synthesizing the state of research with the art and science of practice leading to a more vibrant discourse and [more] impact[full] health education and health promotion” (Lancaster & Roe, 2000, p. 36). I smile to think of how Brick and Karen Denard Goldman and others we so miss from our world would enjoy what HPP is publishing today. Just like that first time, they would find articles on technology, health care, and new ways of thinking. The March 2020 authors invite us to extend our embrace and deepen our practice, with articles on new partners and settings, social media and mobile apps, behavior change, childhood obesity, and five Practice Notes contributions. As we celebrate 20 years of HPP, I am grateful for everyone who brought us to this place. Here’s to another 20 years dedicated to vibrant discourse and impactful health promotion practice!

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REFERENCES


