



Student Motivation and Quality of Life in Higher Education

Hennin, Marcus A.; Krägeloh, Christian U.; and Wong-Toi, Glenis, eds.

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Book Review

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Student Motivation and Quality of Life in Higher Education provides readers a constructive overview of the relationship between student motivation and quality of life (QOL) in higher education. In five parts comprising twenty-three chapters, the book presents a wide range of topics and emphases. Part I, "Student perspectives," offers two student case studies (one undergraduate, one graduate), relating their perspectives and experiences as to influences on personal QOL and learning motivation. These reflections set the stage for Parts II through V.

Part II focuses on "Theoretical perspectives" concerned with matters of learning motivation, QOL and higher education, and applied positive psychology in higher education (chapters 3-5, respectively). Part III attends to "Diversity perspectives on motivation to learn and quality of life," containing ten chapters encompassing wide-ranging variables such as international student well-being, higher education views among various nations and people groups, health-related and disability impact on QOL and motivation to learn, and effects of optimism and positive orientation on student well-being and learning. Part IV centers on "Promotion of motivation to learn and quality of life in higher education," comprising six chapters examining and reflecting on improving academic QOL via counseling, resilience in students and teaching resilience skills via a computer-assisted learning website, eLearning support for mental health and perceived self-efficacy, a peer support program for student well-being, curriculum implications resulting from QOL and motivation and professionalism studies, and reclamation of light and liberty and learning related to higher education and student stress. Part V, the final chapter (23) "Synthesis of motivation to learn and quality of life," presents the editors' conclusion and a proposed integrative QOL and student motivation model.

Evident strengths of this book include the important (and apparently original) intentional integration of QOL and student motivation, supported with substantive research, reflection, and proposals. Additional strengths of the book include the breadth of the general subject matter and variety of global perspectives. Chapters vary somewhat in terms of research, reflection, and presentation quality (not atypical of edited volumes). One apparent (and somewhat paradoxical) weakness concerns the book's striving for – and generally achieving – various and useful diversities while also limiting its general ethos to mainly (though not exclusively) medical and health-related students, curricula, and attention. Broadening the research and application to include a wider base of students, disciplines, and curricula (more liberal arts, for instance) would foster greater connectivity within broader academia (undergraduate and graduate) – enhancing the appeal and merit of this already fine tome.

Of particular importance is the dynamic “evolving model of education-related quality of life” (210), summarizing well the overall research findings and important reflective and application possibilities pertaining to student motivation and QOL in higher education. The model avoids reductionistic tendencies owing to its complex, symbiotic, and holistic orientation.

I recommend this book as a constructive resource for higher education institutions (public and private): the book represents a strong effort toward advancing its stated goal of combining “the concepts of motivation and quality of life with the view to enriching the educational sector” (212).

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