

Guest Editor

The Birth of a Journal - What Can We Expect?

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If you're reading this page, then the event has already occurred. *The International Electronic Journal of Health Education* has been born. I for one, have been eagerly awaiting its arrival and hoping this journal will not just be a new electronic version of the other journals currently representing our field. This is not to imply there is something "wrong" with the others. It is just that it would be refreshing and invigorating to see a little more diversity in the mechanics of publishing and subject matter presented. As all new things are filled with the promise of potential, it is with interest and optimism that I hope to become acquainted with this new member of our professional family over the next months. However, it is also with a degree of realism, for as the journal grows, it will inevitably take on a life of its own and develop in ways no one would predict or anticipate today. Although, as readers we can't control the course this journal will take on its journey into the future, here are a few suggestions I would make as it departs.

First, I hope it will continue in its electronic format. Not only does this keep us up to date and in tune with the times we live and work in, but it presents other advantages as well. If nothing else it saves on paper clutter. It makes research for professionals and students more accessible. So, for its readership, the electronic format will save, energy, and our natural resources.

The second wish I hope for regards content. I have often wondered if somewhere there was an unwritten rule that our journals were supposed to be boring. When is the last time you heard a colleague say "did you read that last issue of the XXXXX Journal, wasn't it interesting?" Probably you never heard that, because our publications frequently are not interesting. I understand there is a need for scholarly research -- some of our subjects are technical. But some areas of our concern are also very interesting. Take for example issues which have recently appeared on the HEDIR listserv, including: to CHES or not to CHES; celebrity endorsements; a history teacher turning a classroom into a speakeasy; a man who claimed to have cancer circulating a chain letter to raise money and implying equally bad things could happen to you if you don't contribute ("what goes around comes around"). All this is interesting stuff; article material -- perhaps. What I would like to see in a new publication is a blend of

articles -- some with an emphasis on research, some on timely topics not yet fully researched, and some presenting our professional experiences and observations. I would like to see a journal that really provides the opportunity for sharing information, not just a mechanism for churning out academic papers needed to feed the "publish or perish" monster. In other words, I hope it is interesting as well as informative. Also, a sense of humor would be a real plus.

Talking about the publication of articles brings me to my third wish. To the parents of this publication, I would request you please don't forget contributors -- those who submit the articles that will give shape, form and substance to this journal. The kindest act you could do for your future contributors would be to either permit multiple submissions, or to respond to contributors in a reasonable amount of time. Many journals will not accept a submission for consideration if the author does not sign a statement indicating the material will not be submitted simultaneously to another journal. Then the author waits and waits, and waits. Sometimes for nine months or longer, by which time his or her prized submission is too old and dated for anyone's consideration. Writers, who in good faith present articles for consideration would appreciate a reasonable time period in which to expect a response, say four to six months. If this could be clearly stated in authors' guidelines and then adhered to in practice, it would make for one big happy family.

So here's my congratulations on the birth of *The International Electronic Journal of Health Education*. It is my hope that it will really be different and an improvement over what is currently available. Maybe someday I will hear a colleague say, "Did you read that issue? Wasn't it interesting!"