

1     **Teaching a holistic, harmonious and internal motivational concept of excellence**  
2                     **to promote Olympic ideals, health and well-being for all**

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20

### **Abstract**

21 Based on recent trends in positive psychology, on ancient Greek sport literature and  
22 particularly on Aristotle's philosophy, the holistic, harmonious and internal  
23 motivational components of excellence and their implications for students' motivation  
24 for physical activity, health and well-being are presented. While modern motivational  
25 theories and research have partly addressed the holistic and internal motivational  
26 components of excellence, they have yet to address its harmonious part. In this article  
27 it is explained why all three components of excellence are required to promote  
28 eudaimonic well-being, which is the ultimate aim of Olympism. It is argued also that  
29 the conceptualization of hedonic-eudaimonic well-being should be primarily based on  
30 the "me" versus "us" meaning. While current physical activity experiences more often  
31 reflect a hedonistic perspective, to promote health and well-being for all, an  
32 eudaimonic perspective in teaching in physical education and youth sport is needed.  
33 This should primarily focus on the promotion of Olympic ideals, such as excellence,  
34 friendship, and respect. These three ideals and well-being are all very much  
35 interconnected, when all three components of excellence exist in excess. To promote  
36 excellence, Olympic ideals, and well-being, the core ideas of an educational  
37 philosophy promoting excellence in physical education and youth sport are presented.

38

39        *“Physical education is the most effective means of providing all children and*  
40        *youth with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding*  
41        *for lifelong participation in society.” The Declaration of Berlin 2013 – UNESCO’s*  
42        *World Sports Ministers Conference (MINEPS V)*  
43

44            Motivation aims at excellence.<sup>1</sup> But do all of us adopt the same concept of  
45    excellence? If not, does it affect motivational theories and their implications?  
46    Influential behavioral scientists underline the importance of concepts and research  
47    perspectives coming from cultures which are not the prototype of WEIRD (Western,  
48    Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic) societies (Henrich, Heine &  
49    Norenzayan, 2010). The present perspective was affected by influences in the  
50    conceptualization of excellence and well-being from my own culture, Greek, and the  
51    culture that I understood through ancient Greek texts, particularly Aristotle’s ethics.<sup>2</sup>  
52    Importantly, thanks to influential modern philosophers (e.g., Anscombe, 1958;  
53    MacIntyre, 2007), psychologists (e.g., Fowers, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989;  
54    Waterman, 1993) and philosophers of education (e.g., Kristjánsson, 2007) who drew  
55    ideas from the ancient Greek culture and particularly Aristotle, the concepts and ideas  
56    presented here are already popular in contemporary philosophy, psychology and  
57    education. I believe that they will soon become popular in Physical Education (PE)  
58    and sport too.<sup>3</sup>

59            Ancient Greece is considered the birthplace of democracy, Western  
60    philosophy, Olympic Games, sport pedagogy, and other sciences and arts (Wikipedia,  
61    2017, Greece). The main education setting was the gymnasium where PE aimed at the  
62    development of youngsters’ excellence of any kind (arete) because this leads to health  
63    and well-being/human flourishing (eudaimonia) (Reid, & Holowchak, 2011). Hence,  
64    when we recently proposed to the Greek Ministry of Education that the central aim of

65 PE in senior high school (grades 10-12) should be “lifelong Physical Activity (PA) for  
66 health and well-being”, it was widely accepted (Papaioannou et al., 2014). Of course  
67 this is not surprising given the recent trends in sport and health sciences (e.g., Li, et  
68 al., 2016). What I felt that we missed though, was a clear reference to the  
69 development of arete (translated “excellence of any kind”; Liddell & Scott, 1940)  
70 through PE. In fact, Aristotle claimed that “eudaimonia (transl. as “happiness” or “a  
71 flourishing life”) consists of arete” (*NE*, I 8, 1098b30).<sup>4,5</sup>

72 In this article I will argue that the cultivation of excellence of any kind should  
73 be reintroduced and integrated with the aim to promote health and well-being of  
74 future PE curricula worldwide. I will explain why excellence of any kind is  
75 inseparable from “eudaimonic” well-being, a term which is used to imply meaningful  
76 experiences and students’ flourishing, and why these are needed to sustain long-term  
77 PA and psychological health. I will also explain why implementation of successful  
78 strategies towards excellence have better chances to promote health and well-being  
79 for all individuals than the mere emphasis on momentary experiences of joy and  
80 pleasure in PE which reflect “hedonic” well-being and a biomedical perspective of  
81 health (Kimiecik, 2016) that often compromises the inclusive component of this aim  
82 (Li & Rukavina, 2012).

83 Importantly, the present approach is aligned with Pierre de Coubertin’s  
84 emphasis on character development and promotion of human good through PE and  
85 sport (Muller, 2010). It is also aligned with the recent appreciation of PE’s important  
86 role in the development of social and civic skills by World Ministers and Senior  
87 Officials responsible for PE and sport (UNESCO, 2013). Accordingly, PE’s central  
88 aim to promote “excellence of any kind, health and well-being” might help this school

89 subject to regain its prestigious status that it had in ancient Greece, a goal that  
90 Coubertin tried passionately to achieve (Muller, 2010).

91 To clarify my arguments, here I present the holistic, harmonious, and internal  
92 motivational components that are inherent in the concept of excellence of any kind,  
93 their consequences for physical activity, health and well-being, and the implications  
94 for motivational research in PE and youth sport. To help readers understand the three  
95 components of excellence I will start with the contextualization of the meaning of  
96 excellence/arete in ancient Greek sport.

### 97 **Three Components of Excellence**

#### 98 **Holistic Component**

99 The Greek vocabulary has two words for “excellence:” “aristos” and “arete”.  
100 They belong to a word family starting with “ar” deriving from the Greek verb  
101 “ararisko” implying “join,” “connect,” and “fit together” (e.g., the Greek words  
102 «armos» joint, «arthro» article, «arithmos» number, amount, the verb «aretao», thrive,  
103 prosper, and “armonia”, means of joining, fastening, harmony, music).<sup>6</sup> In “ar”+“istos»  
104 the second part «-istos» is an ending of Greek superlatives like “meg-istos” (biggest)  
105 and “tah-istos” (fastest). For ancient Greeks someone becomes “**aristos**” (excellent)  
106 when all the best qualities (physical, mental, spiritual, moral) within oneself are  
107 perfectly connected. For example, MacIntyre (2007, p. 127) suggests that in Homer’s  
108 Iliad, “physical strength, courage and intelligence are among the excellences.”

109 Like contemporary individualistic perspectives of excellence that focus on “me”,  
110 an intra-individual perspective of a holistic meaning of excellence connoted the

111 perfect connection of excellent qualities within-the-person. Examples of such qualities  
112 are given in the following three ancient texts referring to “arete” in sport:

113 Athletes’ excellence combined amazing physical abilities, skills, determination  
114 and passion: In  
115 Olympic or Isthmian or Panathenaic Games...the arete of men and physical  
116 beauty, amazing conditioning and great skill and irresistible force and daring and  
117 pride and unbeatable determination and indescribable passion for victory (Solon in  
118 Lucian, Anacharsis 9–14; translated by Miller, 2004, p. 78).

119

120 Arete was the result of exercise connecting physical and mental skills:  
121 ball playing trains the eye... (because the player) judges its flight accurately. The  
122 player will also sharpen his critical abilities by planning how to catch the ball and  
123 stay out of the middle, and how to snatch the ball if he happens to be in the  
124 middle. Thinking alone will keep weight down, but if it is mixed with some  
125 exercise and rivalry which ends in pleasure, it promotes health in the body and  
126 intelligence in the mind. This is an important benefit if an exercise can aid both  
127 the body and the mind toward the arete which is inherent in each. (Galen, On  
128 Exercise with the Small Ball ca. a.d. 180; translated by Miller, 2004, p. 122).

129

130 Arete was connected with good sportpersonship, (e.g., “Menelaos called out:  
131 “Antilochos, ... you won’t get the prize without swearing that you played fair!”, in  
132 Homer’s Iliad; translated by Miller, 2004, p. 4).

133 Greeks also adopted an inter-individual perspective of the holistic meaning of  
134 excellence, which focused on “us”. “Connectivity” and “fitting together” are found in  
135 the meaning of excellence at higher-ordered levels of generalization: between-

136 persons, between persons and cities, and between persons-cities-gods. The most  
137 important PanHellenic Games, Olympic, Pythia, Nemea and Isthmia, were contexts of  
138 excellence facilitating the communication between Greeks and the development of  
139 common Greek identity and culture. The aim of the Olympic truce was to stop wars  
140 during the Olympic Games and bring Greeks together in Olympia. Olympic winners'  
141 excellence reflected the excellence of their cities. Greeks tried to connect the  
142 excellence of athletes and cities with gods within the social and holly atmosphere of  
143 PanHellenic Games. This is illustrated in the following extract from a text in a marble  
144 stele in Delphi where Greeks honored the Olympian deity Apollo:

145 the Aitolians... announce the Soteria games which they are establishing as a  
146 memorial to the salvation of Greece and of the victory over the barbarians who  
147 were attacking the sanctuary of Apollo which is common to all Greeks, and the  
148 Greeks themselves,... citizens who compete and win at the Soteria have the same  
149 honors as those written in the law for victors at the Pythia and Nemea; that the  
150 Aitolian League be commended and crowned with a gold crown because of its  
151 **arete** and reverence toward the gods and valor against the barbarians (translated  
152 by Miller, 2004, p. 153-154).

### 153 **Harmonious and internal motivational components**

154 As MacIntyre (2007) observed, the holistic meaning of excellence that is found in  
155 Homeric poems was the first stage of development of a more comprehensive  
156 definition of excellence that was provided later, particularly by Aristotle. Prior to  
157 Aristotle, pre-Socratic philosophers had already emphasized another component of  
158 excellence and well-being, that of moderation and harmonious life. Some of their  
159 sayings survive in modern Greek language, e.g., “nothing in excess” (*midén ágan*)

160 and “moderation is best” (*métron áriston*) (Laertius, 1853). Later, Socrates and Plato  
161 emphasized particularly the links between excellence and well-being and the  
162 importance of self-regulation and self-control in the attainment of excellence. The  
163 most famous student of Plato, Aristotle, focused particularly on the internal  
164 motivational component of excellence (Kraut, 1995) and he integrated it with the  
165 harmonious component, as is depicted in his definition of excellence:

166 a state of mind concerned with deliberate choice, consisting of the mean relative to  
167 us, as determined by a rational principle, that is, as a “phronimos” (i.e., man of  
168 practical wisdom) would determine it. It is a mean between two vices—one  
169 stemming from excess, the other from defect—and, once again, while the vices  
170 either exceed or fall short of what is appropriate in feelings and actions, arete finds  
171 the mean and chooses it. Thus, concerning its essential quality and the definition  
172 which states what it really consists of, arete is the mean, but concerning what is  
173 best and right it is an extreme. (NE, II 6, 1106b35-1107a5).<sup>6</sup>

174 While for ancient Greeks and Aristotle excess was generally a vice, in modern  
175 English dictionaries excess is central to the definition of excellence: e.g., “extremely  
176 high quality; extreme merit; superiority; the quality of being outstanding or extremely  
177 good; the condition of being superior; surpassing goodness” (online English  
178 Dictionaries: Cambridge; Collins; Dictionary.com; Longman; MacMillan; Oxford;  
179 WordReference.com). “Arete” has been translated in English as “excellence of any  
180 kind” (Liddell & Scott, 1940) and virtue, although scholars like MacIntyre (2007, p.  
181 122, 181) and Miller (2004) consider virtue a narrower conceptualization than  
182 “excellence.” Still in several modern English dictionaries (e.g., online Merriam-  
183 Webster Dictionary) virtue is defined as a universal moral principle or duty, “a



184 particular moral excellence; conformity to a standard of right” or in line with rule-  
185 utilitarianism perspectives “a beneficial quality or power of a thing”, but nowhere is  
186 found the concept of “deliberate choice” and the internal motivational approach which  
187 is inherent in Aristotle’s definition of “excellence.” Contemporary philosophers like  
188 MacIntyre (2007) emphasized the importance of the harmonious and internal  
189 motivational component of excellence for the development of new perspectives to  
190 promote human good. Physical educators have an important role in the education of  
191 children about the consequences of different conceptualizations of excellence in sport.

192           Along these lines, McNamee, Jones and Duda (2003) observed that the  
193 primacy of contemporary duty and consequential theories over virtue ethics often  
194 directs individuals including athletes

195           to come to fair agreements that are not ethically defensible. It seems in  
196 professional North American ice hockey that everyone agrees to be  
197 violent...Consider those who overconform to violent norms of sport sub-cultures.  
198 This is not courage as a virtue, but rashness, a failure to see what dangers are  
199 properly to be faced; failure to emotionally attach significance to the health and  
200 well-being of an opponent. (p. 73).

201           Sport philosophers adopting an Aristotelian approach have reminded the  
202 numerous unethical and unhealthy behaviours in sport when Olympic records and  
203 world records are uncritically considered good and indication of human excellence  
204 (Loland, 2001). Likewise, Schantz (2016) pointed out that the emphasis on excess in  
205 sport will result in athletes characterized as cyborgs or post-humans. Still the impact  
206 of these philosophers in modern sport has been trivial and they will remain so unless  
207 their approaches infuse into the dominant paradigms of other sport and social

208 sciences, including sport pedagogy, that will apply these ideas in practice. Modern  
209 sport history might allow room for optimism.

210 Muller (2010) suggested that Aristotle's emphasis on the internal motivational  
211 dimension of excellence was shared by the founder of the modern Olympic Games  
212 but this has not been realized until recently:

213 the Olympic Movement spent all those years using this problem as a demonstration  
214 of its high ethical standards, in the same way as the doping problems of the present  
215 day. Coubertin thought differently: he was interested in the inner, moral,  
216 responsible attitude of the athlete to which the Olympic education was to  
217 contribute. (p. 9).

218 What's more, Pierre de Coubertin (1918) espoused ancient Greeks' emphasis  
219 on harmony and moderation when he defined the term Olympic Education; "this  
220 *Pedagogie Olympique* – of which I recently said it is based simultaneously on the cult  
221 of the physical effort and the cult of harmony – in other words, on the taste of excess  
222 combined with moderation" (in Muller, p. 217).

223 Interestingly, the five interconnected Olympic rings depict the notions of  
224 connection, symmetry, and harmony, but not excess which is emphasized in modern  
225 Olympics. Pierre de Coubertin was aware of the meaning of excellence in ancient  
226 Greece, which might implicitly affected him when he created this Olympic icon to  
227 celebrate human excellence and human good.

## 228 **Internal Motivational Component of Excellence and Well-being in PE and Sport**

229 Contemporary research supports the notion that individuals adopting  
230 Aristotle's internal motivational definition of excellence and success are more likely  
231 to experience well-being and to initiate actions aiming to integrate their well-being

232 with the good of the society than individuals adopting excellence as is defined by  
233 normative and duty perspectives. Below I briefly summarize evidence stemming  
234 from recent motivational research in PE and sport. Where evidence does not exist,  
235 implications for future research are suggested.

### 236 **Personal growth versus normatively defined goals** and well-being

237 Aristotle's connection of goal-directed action with well-being is central in his  
238 ethics works. His first sentence in *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) reads, "Every art or  
239 applied science and every systematic investigation, and similarly every action and  
240 choice, seem to aim at some good; the good therefore, has been well defined at that at  
241 which all things aim" (NE, I 1, 1094a1). Not every kind of goal-directed action leads  
242 to excellence and well-being though. For Aristotle excellence of any kind and well-  
243 being are accomplished through the pursuit of personal growth but not normative  
244 goals (e.g., Ryff & Singer, 2008). As Johnston (1997) observed, for Aristotle, "The  
245 excellence of the human being is thus going to be associated with growth towards  
246 some final realization of his or her true and best nature" (p. 6).

247 Contemporary research proved that Aristotle was right. Achievement goals  
248 theorists (Nicholls, 2009) established that internal motivational definitions of  
249 achievement and success lead to mastery goal, or more generally, personal growth  
250 goal pursuit (Papaioannou, 2006; Papaioannou, Simou, Kosmidou, Milosis & Tsigilis,  
251 2009), while normative definitions of success leads to normative performance goal  
252 pursuit. Extensive research across achievement settings such as PE and sports implies  
253 that an emphasis on context-specific personal growth goals (i.e., mastery achievement  
254 goals) is more likely to produce adaptive outcomes for both the person and society  
255 than an emphasis on normative performance goals (for reviews and meta-analyses, see

256 Papaioannou, Zourbanos, Krommidas & Ampatzoglou, 2012; Roberts, Treasure &  
257 Conroy, 2007). An emphasis on personal growth goals is linked with intrinsic interest  
258 to achieve, positive emotion achievement and decreased negative emotions, positive  
259 thoughts, task focus, deep cognitive processes, and metacognitive strategies. We have  
260 also evidence suggesting that while PE and sport-specific growth goals are predictors  
261 of long-term participation in physical activities and sports, normative performance  
262 goals are not (e.g., Papaioannou, Bebetos, Theodorakis, et al., 2006).

263           Importantly, athletes and PE students adopting personal growth goals  
264 experience positive psychological outcomes beyond sport: high satisfaction in life,  
265 high vitality, high general self-esteem, increased positive affect, and decreased  
266 positive affect in life. On the other hand, several of these positive outcomes do not  
267 emerge through the adoption of normative performance goals (Roberts et al., 2007;  
268 Papaioannou et al., 2012). Coaches and PE teachers emphasizing normative  
269 performance approach goals create a social-psychological environment that  
270 disempowers and excludes the less competent children from sport and exercise  
271 settings. On the other hand, they create a more inclusive environment when they  
272 emphasize an inherent motivational definition of success and personal growth (e.g.,  
273 Papaioannou, 1995).

274           In line with Aristotle, modern research in PE, sport and other achievement  
275 settings revealed that an emphasis on personal growth goals is likely to promote  
276 human good: collaboration and peer support, ethical behaviors and sportspersonship.  
277 On the other hand, an emphasis on normative performance goals leads to egocentric  
278 thinking, the perceptions of others as opponents, interpersonal conflict, cheating, and  
279 aggressive behaviors (e.g., Sage, & Kavussanu, 2007; Smith, Balaguer, & Duda,

280 2006; Van Yperen, Hamstra & van der Klauw, 2011). An emphasis on competence  
281 growth goals in PE has been associated with responsibility and discipline in PE while  
282 an emphasis on normative performance goals has been linked with disruptive  
283 behaviors (e.g., Agbuga, Xiang, & McBride, 2010; Papaioannou, 1998). A priority on  
284 normative performance goals is connected with egocentrically defined values that  
285 emphasize pursuit of one's own interests, normative success, social prestige, and control  
286 or dominance over people and resources, such as power. On the other hand, a priority  
287 on personal growth goals is positively linked with values indicating concern for the  
288 welfare and interests of others, like benevolence (e.g., helpful, forgiving, honest) and  
289 universalism (e.g., social justice, a world at peace, equality, etc.) (Papaioannou, et al.,  
290 2012).

291 *Implications for future research.* The association of values with personal growth  
292 versus normative performance goals in PE and sport settings should be further examined  
293 with longitudinal and intervention designs.

#### 294 **Intrinsic-extrinsic goals and well-being**

295 Aristotle was one of the first to argue that intrinsically but not extrinsically  
296 motivated actions lead to well-being. He not only defined intrinsic-extrinsic  
297 motivation as it is often defined today, but he also explained why the pursuit of  
298 extrinsic goals is unlikely to lead to happiness and why the pursuit of intrinsic goals  
299 indicates excellence:

300 If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake  
301 (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose  
302 everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on

303 to be an infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be  
304 the good and the chief good. (*NE*, I 2, 1094a15-20).

305 Recently Self-Determination Theorists (SDT) Ryan, Huta, and Deci (2008)  
306 illustrated this with the following example of questions and possible answers:  
307 “why are you working so hard?”...“to accumulate money or wealth”...“ why do  
308 you want wealth?”...“because I want to be admired”... why do you want to be  
309 admired?”...so far we have not reached a “bottom line”...But suppose the person  
310 answers “because I want be loved”...“why do you want to be loved?”...“because  
311 love is good”...love is irreducible... intrinsic goals... are not reducible to other  
312 goals, but are done for their own sake. (p. 148-150).

313 Extensive research over the last 20 years, including a recent meta-analysis of  
314 findings (Dittmar, Bond, Hurst & Kasser, 2014), supports Aristotle’s argument that  
315 while materialism and the pursuit of extrinsic goals in life such as money, fame and  
316 appealing appearance are negatively linked to health and well-being<sup>7</sup>, intrinsic goals  
317 in life such affiliation, community feeling/helpfulness, and growth are positively  
318 related to well-being (Kasser & Ryan 1996). Materialism goes hand in hand with  
319 normative/non-authentic goals and hinders authentic personal growth. A longitudinal  
320 study in an Eastern and a Western culture revealed that students who were higher in  
321 materialism emphasized higher normative performance approach and avoidance goals  
322 but less mastery goals and worse school performance (Ku, Dittmar & Banerjee,  
323 2014).

324 The positive effects of intrinsic goals and the negative effects of extrinsic  
325 goals on well-being emerged across several life domains including PA settings. In PE  
326 classes Papaioannou, Simou, Kosmidou, Milosis & Tsigilis (2009) applied the  
327 multidimensional model of goal orientations (Papaioannou, 2006), investigating the

328 association of goal orientations in life and in PE with intrinsic goals in life (contribute  
329 to society, promote science/understand nature) and in PE (adopt active lifestyles,  
330 become good citizens), and extrinsic goals in life (acquire money/power) and in PE  
331 and well-being indices. After partialling out effects of social desirability, intrinsic  
332 goals in life and in PE corresponded positively to personal growth goal in life and  
333 mastery goal in PE, while both personal growth goals in life and in PE were positively  
334 linked with positive emotions in life and in PE, and satisfaction in life and in PE. On  
335 the other hand, extrinsic goals in life corresponded positively to goals towards  
336 exhibition of superiority in life and in PE (i.e., performance goals), but the latter had  
337 no impact on well-being and positive affect in PE.

338 In an exercise setting, Sebire, Standage and Vansteenkiste, (2009) calculated a  
339 relative intrinsic goals variable by subtracting the mean of extrinsic (image, social  
340 recognition) from the mean of intrinsic (health management, skill development, social  
341 affiliation) goals subscales. They found that the relative intrinsic goals variable  
342 corresponded positively to exercise behavior, psychological well-being and physical  
343 self-worth and negatively to exercise anxiety. Their findings were replicated later  
344 across several studies, like in the longitudinal study of Gunnell, Crocker, Mack,  
345 Wilson, and Zumbo (2014).

346 *Implications for future research.* Interventions in PE might examine the  
347 effectiveness of teaching methods and curricula emphasizing the pursuit of intrinsic  
348 and personal growth goals both in life and in PE/PA settings and their effects on  
349 youth PA activity, health, and well-being. A relevant example is presented by Milosis  
350 and Papaioannou (2007) who applied a multidisciplinary curriculum in PE  
351 emphasizing personal growth goals in life, in PE, and in other school subjects. This

352 intervention had positive effects on mastery goal adoption, students' multidimensional  
353 self-concept and satisfaction in PE and school. Much more intervention research is  
354 needed in this area.

### 355 **Intrinsic/Internal and Extrinsic/Instrumental motivation**

356         The concept of intrinsic motivation is associated with pleasure while doing an  
357 action. Aristotle acknowledges that while it is positive to have fun during learning and  
358 executing an action, "there are many things that we would be keen about and should  
359 consider excellent even if they brought no pleasure...we should choose these even if  
360 no pleasure resulted from them" (*NE*, X 3, 1174a1-5). In fact, he observed that "the  
361 pleasure proper to a morally good activity is good, the pleasure proper to a bad  
362 activity evil" (*NE*, X 5, 1175b25).

363         Participation in practices or games are not aimless, results matter. However,  
364 for an individual pursuing excellence of any kind, what primarily matters is whether  
365 both the final aim (*telos*) and the adopted actions leading to results are good/ethical.  
366 When we play a game we want to win, but we are internally motivated when we  
367 pursue excellence (i.e., to win) because we exhibited excellent performance. If we  
368 cheat in the game, we treat the end as external to the activity and we fail to exhibit  
369 excellence of any kind. That's why psychologists like Fowers (2012, 2016) and  
370 Schwartz and Wrzesniewski (2016) suggest that Aristotle made the distinction of  
371 internal-instrumental motives alongside the contingency of actions-process and ends-  
372 consequences. Internally motivated individuals care both about the excellence of the  
373 action and the results/consequences and the relation between them. Instrumentally  
374 motivated individuals care about the results irrespective of how these results are  
375 accomplished.



376 In the long-term, internally motivated individuals achieve better outcomes for  
377 themselves and society. A 10-yearlong study by Wrzesniewski, et al., (2014) showed  
378 that strong internally based motives for undertaking a course of action were associated  
379 with stronger persistence, better performance and better careers; however, internally  
380 based motives when they were accompanied by strong instrumentally based motives  
381 had negative effects on persistence and performance. No relevant research exists in  
382 PE and sport.

383 *Implications for future research.* Yearlong methodologies might examine the  
384 hypothesis: PE and PA participants and athletes achieve better outcomes for  
385 themselves and society when they prioritize internally motivated and not instrumental  
386 actions in their careers, PA, and life.

387 Aristotle's emphasis on excellent actions done by choice and not under  
388 compulsion is particularly underlined by SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2016). This theory will  
389 gain from research on deliberate choice determined by knowledge and practical  
390 wisdom which are required to define which goals/aims are good to pursue.  
391 Importantly, because many self-determined behaviors can be evil, research should  
392 focus on pedagogical practices promoting not just autonomy but deliberate choice to  
393 promote both personal and social well-being. This is explained in the following  
394 section.

### 395 **Well-being, Health and Excellence of any Kind: "Me" versus "Us"**

396 A holistic concept of excellence for students in PE implies very high levels of  
397 competences across all domains of human action and life, including school, sport, and  
398 peer/social settings. This is important for students' well-being and health. For  
399 example, the European Parliament (2006) declared that

400 Social competence is linked to personal and social well-being which requires an  
401 understanding of how individuals can ensure optimum physical and mental health,  
402 including as a resource for oneself and one's family and one's immediate social  
403 environment, and knowledge of how a healthy lifestyle can contribute to this. (p.  
404 17).

405 Indeed, meta-analytic research findings support the links among social  
406 competence, health, and personal well-being across individuals (e.g., Kimiecik, 2016;  
407 Martins, Ramalho & Morin, 2010). However, various historical examples imply that  
408 some social competences that benefit individuals, such as communication skills, do  
409 not always serve social well-being and human good. Positive psychologists would be  
410 tempted to investigate the latter across different conceptualizations of well-being,  
411 particularly between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Vittersø, 2016a).

#### 412 **Hedonia and Eudaimonia**

413 Hedonia and eudaimonia are two Greek words whose philosophical  
414 underpinnings are found respectively in Aristippus and the Cyrenaics philosophical  
415 school on the one hand and Socrates/Plato and particularly Aristotle's philosophical  
416 schools on the other. Today hedonia is usually used to describe experiences of  
417 pleasure irrespective of the sources from which that pleasure is derived. In modern  
418 psychological literature a popular definition of eudaimonia reads, "feelings of  
419 personal expressiveness... when acting in ways perceived to involve the development  
420 of one's best potentials and the use of these potentials in pursuit of one's purpose in  
421 living" (Waterman, et al., 2010, p. 42). In general, eudaimonia is usually associated  
422 with ideas about pursuing excellence and the best within us, true self, actualizing

423 potential, feelings of personal expressiveness, meaning, and purpose (Kimiecik,  
424 2016).

425 Contemporary psychologists adopt many approaches, definitions, and  
426 measures of eudaimonic well-being and even reviews of the various perspectives  
427 (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Vittersø, 2016b) become quickly  
428 updated because this field is growing rapidly. Almost each of the authors of the recent  
429 38-chapter volume on eudaimonic well-being (Vittersø, 2016a) positioned (implicitly  
430 or explicitly) themselves in relation to Aristotle's original ideas. Several of them  
431 connected excellence/virtue with eudaimonia (Fowers, 2016; Haybron, 2016; Hirata,  
432 2016; Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Schwartz & Wrzesniewski, 2016; Steger, 2016), with  
433 Hybron (2016) observing "it is odd that neither "virtue" nor "excellence" makes its  
434 way into most eudaimonic scales" (p. 49). What is important in these views is the  
435 conceptualization of hedonia and eudaimonia as actions motivated to serve primarily  
436 "me" or "us", respectively. For example, according to Steger (2016) "hedonia would  
437 be actions motivated by self-centered interest in immediate gratification and  
438 eudaimonia would be effort directed at making a more enduring impact that benefits  
439 the self in the context of other people and responsibility toward the collective or  
440 community" (p. 178).<sup>8</sup>

441 The connection of excellence/virtue with eudaimonia is critical for  
442 contemporary personal and social well-being. With regard to personal well-being  
443 Haybron (2016, p. 50) noted, "caring and doing for others is well-known to be a  
444 potent source of subjective well-being, and there is little doubt that people who care a  
445 great deal for others tend to fare better than the selfish." The association of  
446 excellence/virtue with eudaimonia is also critical for health because a large body of

447 studies has established the positive relation between eudaimonia and health (Ryff,  
448 2014; Kimiecik, 2016).

449 *Implications for research.* The above have important potential for research in  
450 PE/PA, health, and personal well-being. Two examples comes to mind First, one  
451 might examine whether caring for others is determinant of mutual support among  
452 family members to pursue healthy lifestyles, including regular exercise of all family  
453 members and correspondingly a determinant of families' well-being. Second, one  
454 might examine whether these caring/supportive families are adaptive to health  
455 education and facilitate the work of PE teachers to involve parents and families in the  
456 adoption of extra-curricular and out-of-school physical activities, as the World Health  
457 Organization (2007) advises us to do.

#### 458 **PE, Sport and Social Well-being**

459 Intergovernmental organizations expect from PE to have an impact on social  
460 well-being too. The European Parliament (2006) identified civic competences as key-  
461 competences for lifelong learning, while the Dclaration of Berlin (2013) as presented  
462 in a recent UNESCO document consider PE an important context to develop skills,  
463 attitudes and knowledge for civic engagement (McLennan & Thompson, 2015).

464 According to the European Parliaments (2006), "skills of civic competence relate to  
465 the ability to...display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local  
466 and wider community" (p. 17), while the UNESCO document encourages PE teachers  
467 to motivate students to develop ties with communities. More broadly, the United  
468 Nations (2003) promote the idea of PE and Sport For Development (SFD) and Peace.

469 Lyras and Peachey (2011, p. 311) define SFD, as "the use of sport to exert a  
470 positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youths and adults, the  
471 social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and

472 states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution.” These authors  
473 suggest that while sport offers opportunities for intergroup contact which is the  
474 medicine against racism, prejudice, and discrimination, to facilitate the process of  
475 breaking down stereotypes and prejudice group, a number of other prerequisites exist.  
476 Specifically, sport group members should have equal status and common goals in  
477 sport activities, they should cooperate to reach their goals, they must be supported by  
478 authorities, structures, and social institutions to attain their goals, and they should  
479 develop friendship in order to have lasting effects. Still, to eliminate prejudice it is  
480 also required to develop positive emotions and cognitions toward out-group members  
481 which should be also generalized to people with similar characteristics, while in order  
482 to realize their potentials “people also need to think beyond “self”, understand  
483 concepts that go beyond what they see and touch, and develop higher mental  
484 processes that enable them to develop their ideologies, have a vision, be creative, and  
485 care about universal issues” (Lyras & Peachey, 2011, p. 313).

486 Lyras’ and Peachey’s (2011) principles for human development and inter-  
487 group acceptance reflect very well Aristotle’s notion of excellence of any kind. As  
488 Fowers (2016) observed,

489 Aristotle discussed the content of goals as an outgrowth of humanity’s social and  
490 reasoning nature. In the domain of sociality... he emphasized friendship, justice  
491 and good governance...In the domain of reasoning...he saw practical wisdom  
492 (good judgement), scientific knowledge and contemplative wisdom as necessary  
493 components of eudaimonia. (p. 73).

494 Why are reasoning, knowledge and wisdom needed? Because “virtue stems  
495 not from obedience to rules that are imposed, but from the good that is chosen for its  
496 own sake; from a balancing of personal pleasure and civic duty in a manner that

497 achieves a harmonious “Golden mean” (Dean, 2016, p. 508). For example, voting is a  
498 civic duty but we have many historical examples suggesting that ill-informed citizens  
499 have voted for parties that undermined democracy. One needs knowledge and  
500 practical wisdom to understand what constitutes good governance and how civic  
501 engagement contributes to good governance. For Aristotle the pursuit of shared goals  
502 and social well-being is a rational option for individuals. Only within flourishing  
503 societies all individuals flourish too.

504         The importance of Aristotle’s conceptualization of excellence of any kind has  
505 implications for inclusion in PE and sport of disadvantaged, minority, and any other  
506 individual or group differing from the dominant/major group. Organizations such as  
507 the United Nations (2003) consider PE and sport important contexts for the social  
508 inclusion of immigrants/refugees, disabled, or disadvantaged students. However,  
509 existing reviews suggest that PE and sport can promote either social inclusion or  
510 exclusion of ethnic minorities depending on the goal structure of the social-  
511 psychological environment (Hatzigeorgiadis, Morela, Elbe, Kouli, & Sanchez, 2013).  
512 A PE class structure emphasizing mastery goals facilitates integration and  
513 assimilation while a PE class structure promoting normative performance goals is  
514 linked with marginalization and lack of interaction with students of the other culture  
515 (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2013; Kouli & Papaioannou, 2009).

516         Although a mastery goal structure creates the appropriate substratum to base  
517 inclusion-specific strategies, it is not enough to promote a fully inclusive climate. For  
518 example, even when the PE climate is perceived as extremely high mastery-oriented,  
519 both high and low perceived ability students are much more involved, active,  
520 interested, and satisfied when they play with high rather than low sport ability  
521 students (Papaioannou, 1995). It seems that most contemporary PE and sport

522 experiences are much more hedonic than eudaimonic. These experience helps no one  
523 to co-exercise with individuals of low athletic abilities or overweight people, which is  
524 very common in adulthood. Unfortunately, emerging research implies that overweight  
525 students experience many different kinds of teasing in PE (Li & Rukavina, 2012),  
526 which seems an important cause of decreased levels of PA in PE of overweight  
527 students (Pathare, Piche, Nicosia, & Haskvitz, 2016). To make students very involved  
528 and satisfied when they play with low ability, overweight, disadvantaged and  
529 marginalized peers we must firstly help them to empathize with these peers before we  
530 teach them how to adjust their games to make them inclusive and satisfying for all.

531 *Implications for future research on social well-being.* We have yet to  
532 investigate which pedagogical models and practices in PE assist students to thing  
533 beyond “self,” develop higher mental processes that enable them to have a vision and  
534 be proactive about universal issues. This research can be achieved following further  
535 theory development in which the promotion of “we” will be at the center of  
536 motivational processes and not one of possible motivational outcomes. Fowers (2012,  
537 p. 10) was very critical suggesting “the goods that psychologists do promote (e.g.,  
538 autonomy, efficacy, satisfaction) turn out to be the centerpieces of individualism and  
539 instrumentalism, the predominant perspectives on the good life in the modern West.”  
540 For example, although mastery goal adoption is adaptive for both individuals and  
541 society, it is primarily an individualistic goal that is probably less effective to enact  
542 proactive behaviors than the pursuit of shared goals (i.e., goals pursued and achieved  
543 in concert with others; Fowers, 2012; Fowers, Anderson, Lefevor, & Lang 2015) or  
544 the pursuit of altruistic goals.

545 Within our individualistic societies many will be cautious towards these ideas.  
546 Even scholars who believe that benevolence is part of human nature seem to accept

547 that “a life of excellence and virtue can, in some circumstances, lead to less day-to-  
548 day positive affect and even a premature death” (Ryan & Martela, 2016, p. 112). But  
549 these circumstances are rather very rare in peace times for those who adopt the  
550 harmonious component in Aristotle’s definition of excellence. Individuals who have  
551 developed excellence of any kind have the practical wisdom to balance wisely  
552 between individualistic and altruistic goals pursuit. Future research in PE/PA should  
553 examine the role of practical wisdom in the pursuit of personal growth, shared, and  
554 altruistic goals in PE, PA, and life. This research and its implications for pedagogical  
555 practice has the potential to make substantial impact in the literature of inclusion and  
556 personal and social well-being.

#### 557 **Measurement of Excellence of any kind**

558 The measurement of excellence of any kind (arete) is the greatest challenge  
559 ahead. The general trend has been the focus on the measurement of virtue, despite  
560 arguments that virtue is a narrower conceptualization of excellence of any kind (i.e.,  
561 “arete”; MacIntyre, 2007; Miller, 2004). This limits researchers on the measurement  
562 of character, probably because ethics and character were the topic of Nichomachean  
563 Ethics. Still, as is illustrated in the aforementioned Gallen’s excerpt, for ancient  
564 Greeks a person’s excellence of any kind is found both in body and mind.<sup>9</sup>. This  
565 critical issue has gone unnoticed across virtue measurement articles in psychology  
566 and education. Although the measurement of mind is the main focus of most  
567 disciplines in education and psychology, PE and sport sciences are interested in the  
568 measurement of excellence of both mind and body. This complicates even further the  
569 already complicated literature on the measurement of virtue (Curren, & Kotzee, 2014;  
570 Fowers, 2014; Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). These sources  
571 cover extensively the various challenges in the measurement of virtue, hence I will



572 not reiterate them here. I will only summarize in titles some of these authors' most  
573 central points that are also connected with the previous analysis. Trying to integrate  
574 them within the more general concept of excellence, the term "strength" below is used  
575 to refer to qualities of both mind and body.

576 *Implications for future research.* We need measures of excellence in PE and  
577 sport capturing the three components of excellence and practical wisdom.

578 Accordingly, the following should be considered. First, in line with the holistic  
579 component, all mind and body excellences and strengths should be treated  
580 interdependently and not in isolation from each other. Second, in line with the  
581 harmonious component, when wisdom is not exercised excess can be vice; hence,  
582 more of a single strength is not necessarily better. Third, in line with the internal  
583 motivational component, excellence should be measured in concert with the pursued  
584 good/goal. When this goal contributes harmoniously to both personal and social  
585 flourishing, excess of the required strengths indicates excellence. Finally, practical  
586 wisdom should be incorporated and assessed in the measurements of excellence and  
587 all strengths.

588 Most of the existing virtue self-reports do not comply with these tenets (e.g.,  
589 Proctor & Tweed, 2016; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). As alternative to self-reports,  
590 experience sampling approaches (Fowers, 2014) and coding of participants' responses  
591 to stories of life dilemmas by trained coders (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000) have been  
592 also proposed as promising methods in virtue measurement.

593 The existing limitations and challenges should not discourage researchers from  
594 research on excellence of any kind. Although far from perfect, there are measures  
595 capturing some determinants of excellence, such as personal growth goals  
596 (Papaioannou et al., 2009) and eudaimonic motives (Hutta & Ryan, 2010), or

597 outcomes of excellence such as eudaimonic well-being (e.g., Waterman et al., 2010;  
598 Ryff, 1989). Researchers might also use measures of virtue (e.g., Peterson &  
599 Seligman, 2004) and wisdom (reviewed by Law & Staudinger, 2016) alongside other  
600 tools, acknowledging of course the limitations of these instruments.

601 **Teaching the Core Olympic Values to Promote Well-Being: Excellence,**  
602 **Friendship, Respect**

603 In his essay "L'Olympisme a l'ecole. Il faut l'encourager!" Coubertin (1934)  
604 argued that Olympic education should be part of the school curriculum. The  
605 International Olympic Committee (IOC) considers excellence, friendship, and respect  
606 the 3 core values of Olympism (The Olympic Museum Educational and Cultural  
607 Services, 2013). As stated below, for ancient Greeks and Aristotle in particular,  
608 friendship and respect were inseparable from excellence. But not all kinds of friendship  
609 and respect though, only those reflecting the internal motivational component of  
610 excellence. Below I link these ideas of Aristotle with implications of modern theories of  
611 motivation for teaching in PE. Lastly, I provide implications for teaching harmonious  
612 concepts of excellence in PE.

613 **Aristotle's legacy and implications of motivational theories in PE**

614 Experience from action, habituation (Kristjánsson, 2007, p. 31-48), social  
615 modeling, Plato's Socratic dialogues promoting critical thinking and wisdom, and  
616 perfect-excellent friendship are some of the best known social processes that were used  
617 in ancient Greece to cultivate excellence. Their influences on modern motivation  
618 theories are found in recommendations of social learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1986)  
619 such as social modeling and the goal setting strategy that is aligned with Aristotle's  
620 intentional approach to personal growth. Aristotle's legacy is also found in modern

621 ideas stemming from Achievement Goals Theory (AGT) and SDT about motivational  
622 climates emphasizing mastery goal adoption, internally motivated decisions, and human  
623 relationships (Duda, Papaioannou Appleton, Quested & Krommidas, 2014). A lot of  
624 research on motivational climate in PE was based on Ames' (1992) suggestions to adopt  
625 Epstein's (1989) TARGET (Task, Authority, Recognition, Grouping, Evaluation,  
626 Timing) model (e.g., Braithwaite, Spray & Warburton, 2011), which, however, missed  
627 an emphasis on caring and authentic friendships as Aristotle would suggest. As I explain  
628 below, a caring environment and friendships constitute the most critical components of a  
629 motivational climate promoting mastery goals and love for learning and growth. Finally,  
630 empowering climates should adopt a harmonious approach to growth to promote well-  
631 being.

### 632 **Friendship**

633 Aristotle devoted one fifth of NE to friendship because he considered it  
634 excellence that promotes well-being: "Friendship is excellence (arete), or involves  
635 excellence and is most necessary for our life" (NE, VIII 1, 1155a1-5).<sup>10</sup> Aristotle  
636 discussed extensively friendship between peers but he also used the term to discuss all  
637 human relationships (e.g., NE, VIII 12, 1161b10-1162a30). He distinguished between  
638 utility friendship, friendship for pleasure, and perfect friendship. Excellence can be  
639 promoted only through perfect friendship, which "is the friendship of men who are  
640 good, and alike in excellence (arete) (NE, VIII 3, 1156b5). Friendship is critical for  
641 the development of character: excellent friends cultivate the development of one's  
642 excellence, like vicious friends cultivate one's viciousness. Aristotle's ideas are in  
643 line with recent research confirming that friends tend to become more alike in terms  
644 of pursuing intrinsic or extrinsic goals over time (Duriez, Giletta, Kuppens &

645 Vansteenkiste, 2013). This study showed that adolescents select friends according to  
646 perceived goal (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) pursuit similarity but their goals are also  
647 influenced by peers.

648         Recent research on Relationships Motivation Theory (RMT), a mini-theory of  
649 SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2016), is also in line with Aristotle's philosophy. SDT  
650 researchers have found that people's need for relatedness are satisfied when social  
651 interactions promote their autonomy, which is critical to enhance their well-being  
652 (e.g., Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007). Aristotle would add to this though  
653 that it is not enough for PE teachers and mates to support students' autonomy and to  
654 sustain the good relations that we typically find in PE and sport settings. We should  
655 also adopt an eudaimonic approach, that is, to support others' growth through  
656 authentically caring behaviors, which ultimately promote students' eudaimonic well-  
657 being. This cannot take place with the typical hedonic approaches that are found  
658 across many sport settings. Aristotle explicitly stated that peer relationships that are  
659 based only on pleasure from playing in sport and in PE cannot sustain for long and  
660 they don't develop excellence. Friendships are sustained for long and promote  
661 happiness when they are deep and caring, aiming at the development of excellence of  
662 both parties.

663         Emerging research on caring in PE is in line with some of these predictions.  
664 Overweight students felt being cared when PE teachers and peers were concerned  
665 about their well-being in PE classes (Li, Rukavina, & Foster, 2013). Moreover,  
666 perceived caring in PE was positively connected with enjoyment and high effort in PE  
667 classes (Zhao & Li, 2016). This line of research might provide important insights on  
668 the creation of inclusive environments and the promotion of students' well-being

669 through interventions focused on the development of authentic friendships. Returning  
670 to the aforementioned issue of students' motivation when they play with mates  
671 differing in abilities, gender, ethnicity, etc., the implication is clear: the development  
672 of authentic friendships between students is prerequisite for a truly inclusive  
673 environment for all children. Only perfect friends aiming towards excellence really  
674 care for the growth of both themselves and their friends and can be fully involved and  
675 satisfied when they play together. However, we have little knowledge how to promote  
676 perfect friendship through PE and PA and how to create a class environment in line  
677 with the eudaimonic perspective. For sure, the individualistic goals that are found in  
678 AGT and motivational climate literature should be enriched with shared and altruistic  
679 goals, the achievement affect should be enriched with eudaimonic affect like love, and  
680 the social skills like communication and cooperation should be enriched with  
681 eudaimonic social skills like empathy. Importantly, the specific shared goals in PE  
682 should be also aligned with shared intrinsic goals in life aiming to serve both personal  
683 and social well-being.

#### 684 **Respect**

685 For the IOC respect "includes respect for oneself and one's body, respect for  
686 one another, the rules and the environment" (The Olympic Museum Education and  
687 Cultural Services, 2013). Here I focus on respect for the rules because the others are  
688 addressed elsewhere in this article. Respect for the rules is the most important  
689 component of an excellent (or virtuous) person for Aristotle. It is an expression of the  
690 internal motivational component of excellence which is developed through full  
691 internalization of rules, as SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2016) also implies.

692 Don Hellison's (1985, 2011) suggested practical ways of how to achieve  
693 respect in PE. His Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model reflects  
694 a pedagogical philosophy influenced by Aristotle's legacy rather than normative or  
695 utilitarian philosophies. As Aristotle would teach us, Hellison put irresponsible  
696 behaviors in PE at the lowest level, internally motivated actions in the middle levels,  
697 and helping others and extending them in other domains of human action at the  
698 highest levels. With the assistance of various pedagogical practices the aim of PE  
699 teachers is to help children internalize rules at lower levels and move to higher levels  
700 where they are trying to learn how to initiate responsible and helping behaviors  
701 towards others and how to generalize these excellence skills in other life settings .  
702 Research in PE revealed a strong positive intercorrelation pattern among the fully  
703 internalized reasons for discipline suggested by Hellison and SDT, growth goals in PE  
704 and discipline in PE, but external reasons for discipline suggesting compliance with a  
705 duty (e.g., because "that's what I am supposed to do" "that's the rule") had no relation  
706 with discipline in PE (e.g., Papaioannou, 1998). Hellison focused on the whole person  
707 development through teaching life skills that empowers children and help them to  
708 flourish in life (Hemphill, Andrew & Richards, 2016). In line with Aristotle's  
709 suggestions, disengaged students participating in TPSR PA programs demonstrated  
710 social awareness such as understanding others' perspectives, helping behavior and  
711 positive peer relationships (Gordon, Jacobs & Wright, 2016). The TPSR model was  
712 adopted by scholars across several countries to promote human good through PE,  
713 such as the recent study of Mandigo, Corlett and Ticas (2016) in Salvador targeting  
714 the reduction of violence through teaching in PE; both the aim and design of this  
715 study are in line with Aristotle's philosophy.

716 **Excellence**

717           *Holistic and internal motivational component of excellence.* A holistic model  
718 of excellence in PE implies development of all competences and qualities of students  
719 that promote personal and social well-being, which is certainly in line with the aims  
720 of national PE curricula worldwide (Hastie, 2017). This requires an emphasis on  
721 whole person development in PE. To achieve it we need to integrate curricula  
722 emphasizing social and individual responsibility (e.g., Hellison, 2011), life skills  
723 development grounded on the promotion of students' autonomy, relatedness, and  
724 competence (e.g., Hodge, Danish & Martin, 2012), health-related physical activity  
725 promotion (e.g., Welk, Eisenmann & Dolman, 2006), and sport skills development  
726 through sport education models that also emphasize ethical development (e.g.,  
727 Harvey, Kirk, & O'Donovan, 2014; Siedentop, Hastie & van der Mars, 2004).

728           Such an integration sounds atheoretical but it is not. The aforementioned  
729 curricula share many common features, most importantly the emphasis on students'  
730 growth and well-being. We can integrate them based on sound theory if we adopt a  
731 philosophy emphasizing the pursuit of both personal growth and shared goals in life.  
732 For example, in one of our interventions to promote life skills, social responsibility,  
733 and PA, a key-message was "by growing everywhere I will live a better/happier life"  
734 (Milosis & Papaioannou, 2007; Papaioannou & Milosis, 2009). This philosophy can  
735 be realized in PE through a motivational climate emphasizing mutual support in the  
736 pursuit of the short term mastery and shared goals specified by the aforementioned  
737 curricula and through a teaching process that enable students to deliberately choose  
738 these goals to promote health and both personal and social well-being. Theory and  
739 research implies that a personal growth goal pursuit triggers cognitive-emotional  
740 processes resulting in outcomes described in these curricula: adoption of exercise self-  
741 regulation strategies, exercise and sport adoption and healthy lifestyle (Papaioannou

742 et al., 2011), meta-cognitive strategies, life skill development, progress goals across  
743 different life settings, multidimensional self-concept, well-being (Papaioannou et al.,  
744 2009; Milosis & Papaioannou, 2007; Papaioannou & Milosis, 2009), and mental  
745 health (Robitschek & Keyes, 2009). Further benefits for social well-being are  
746 expected through shared and altruistic goal pursuit.

747 *Harmonious component of excellence.* None of the above curricula can  
748 promote both personal and social well-being if they do not concurrently emphasize  
749 the harmonious component of excellence. A successful approach to develop holistic  
750 excellence requires wisdom to select the goals that should be prioritized in particular  
751 situations to promote well-being. The following recommendations stem from  
752 Aristotle's definition of excellence implying to "deliberately chose the mean relative  
753 to us... the mean between two vices—one stemming from excess, the other from  
754 defect... as a man of practical wisdom would determine it" (*NE*, II 6, 1106b35-  
755 1107a5). Teaching in PE should enable students to exercise knowledge and wisdom to  
756 investigate where they stand in relation to themselves and to others and to find and  
757 choose the mean that will help them harmoniously integrate either different qualities  
758 within themselves and different goal pursuits, or different interests between  
759 themselves and others. To make the right choice students need knowledge, or they  
760 should discover knowledge through practice, which is related to the specific situation  
761 and to the goal pursuit that achieves harmony and flourishing for all. Teaching in PE  
762 should also enable students to experience eudaimonic emotions and deliberately  
763 choose the mean and those goals leading to both personal and social well-being.  
764 Accordingly, the following recommendations which are related to the aims of the  
765 Olympic movement are proposed.



766 *Physical Activity & pro-health pursuits.* Lack of physical activity and health is  
767 certainly vice but excessive emphasis can be also a vice. As Hirata (2016, p. 58)  
768 suggested,  
769 pursuing better and better health will eventually come at the expense of other  
770 goods, certain pro-health choices may not be prudent for a given person because  
771 the concomitant sacrifice in terms of other goods is out of proportion with —  
772 i.e. would not be justified by—the health benefits gained (p. 58).

773 *Respect for the body.* Both the untrained and overtrained body is vice. Too much  
774 emphasis on beauty and strength leads to maladaptive internalization of reasons for  
775 PA, and discontinuity in PA settings and to clinical symptoms like eating disorders  
776 and mental disorders, but goals for overall health increase intrinsic motivation, long-  
777 term PA, and well-being (Verstuyf, Patrick, Vansteenkiste, & Teixeira, 2012).

778 *Effort and cheating.* Excellence requires high effort which is found in the mean  
779 between deceiving others and deceiving oneself when one applies low effort. Winning  
780 through cheating does not require excellence and does not lead to eudaimonic well-  
781 being. Moral behavior in sport occurs through internal motivation linked with  
782 individuals' pursuit of eudaimonic well-being (Sage & Kavussanu, 2010).

783 *Cooperation and intra-team conflict.* Sustained teamwork requires finding and  
784 selecting the mean between one's interests and others' interests. It requires integration  
785 of one's perspective with that of others' to overcome disagreements (Rahim, 2002)  
786 and promote psychological well-being (Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello, & Patrick, 2005).  
787 Obliging, dominating, and avoiding styles are ineffective to reduce conflict and  
788 unlikely to promote everyone's well-being (Rahim, 2002). Shared goal pursuit is  
789 required for sustained teamwork, friendship, and flourishing of all individuals.



815 marginalization of PE. In this paper, I explained why a reintroduction of the ancient  
816 Greek definition of excellence and Aristotle’s virtue ethics will help humanity to  
817 confront these challenges in PE and youth sport. Contemporary motivational theories  
818 can assist us to promote the holistic and internally motivated components of  
819 excellence that were favored by Greeks and Aristotle. However, these theories should  
820 be further developed to address effectively the harmonious component of excellence  
821 too. To promote the holistic, harmonious, and internal motivational concept of  
822 excellence we need wise leaders, particularly in schools, governments and sports.  
823 Biesta (2012) suggested, “Following Aristotle ... the key question for teacher  
824 education is not how to become competent or skilled in the application of scientific  
825 evidence... (but) how to become educationally wise.” (p. 6). Based on Aristotle we  
826 can conclude that teachers’ and leaders’ knowledge development about excellence  
827 and well-being is important for the development of their wisdom. I hope that this  
828 article will stimulate researchers and policy makers to promote this knowledge in PE  
829 and sport.

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## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the present ideas and quotes to ancient Greek texts have been previously presented in the 55<sup>th</sup> and the 56<sup>th</sup> International Sessions for Young Participants of the International Olympic Academy, Ancient Olympia, Greece.

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<sup>2</sup> Like most contemporary experts in ancient Greek literature, I disown Aristotle's and ancient Greeks' views about the lower status of slaves, women and non-Greeks, which were common views across most human societies for millennia before and after Aristotle's time. However, a criticism of past views using present-day ideas would be anachronism/presentism. As Fowers (2016, p. 68) noted, Aristotle's "*ethics can be relatively easily universalized to all human beings to square with contemporary views*".

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<sup>3</sup> This is not the place to argue about the contribution of Aristotle's ideas in contemporary science, why to read Aristotle and not other philosophers, how to interpret Aristotle or those who wrote about Aristotle, etc. Barnes (1995) provided a nice introduction to Aristotle, advising readers on issues such as why and how to read Aristotle (Barnes, 1995, p. ix – xix), to check one translation against another and to suspect the possibility of error or infelicity in translation, because "*even the best translations contain errors*" (Barnes, 1995, p. xxii-xxiii), to remember that less than one third of Aristotle's work has survived (Barnes, 1995, p. 6-15), etc.

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<sup>4</sup> According to Kraut (1979) contemporary conceptions of happiness tend to be subjectivist but Aristotle's "eudaimonia" is closer to "welfare" and "human flourishing". Several authors prefer to simply use the Greek term.

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<sup>5</sup> This and other translated quotes from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) were provided following careful inspection of translations of NE to English from different scholars (transl. by Crisp; Johnston; Ross; Reeve) and translations of NE to

1189 modern Greek from Greek scholars (Lipourlis) (see Note 4). All translations and the  
1190 present quotes to Aristotle followed the Bekker code of references to Aristotle's  
1191 surviving works (Barnes, 1995, p. xxi). E.g., for this reference/quote, NE for  
1192 Nicomachean Ethics, I for Book 1, Part 8, 1098<sup>th</sup> Bekker Page, "b" for right-hand  
1193 Column, Line 30. The original ancient Greek text can be found in the online edition of  
1194 Bywater (1984).

1195 <sup>6</sup> I am very grateful to Antonios Papaioannou, an excellent scholar of the  
1196 ancient Greek language, who draw my attention to the etymology of this Greek word.

1197 <sup>7</sup> For Aristotle poverty also decreases well-being; hence people need a certain  
1198 amount of money/wealth that allows them to flourish.

1199 <sup>8</sup> Not all Aristotelians agree with Steger's identification of pleasure and  
1200 selfishness. For example, it might promote an unacknowledged religious (e.g.,  
1201 Judeo-Christian or Muslim) ethic, but projecting this value position in science  
1202 withoutacknowledgement might be problematic (Fowers, personal communication)."

1203 <sup>9</sup> Here we provided evidence that the word "arete" implying excellence of  
1204 both body and mind is found both in Homer (MacIntyre, 2007) whom Aristotle  
1205 mentioned many times and in Galen who lived several centuries after Aristotle.  
1206 Aristotle also used the term "arete" to refer to the ability of lyre-player who plays his  
1207 lyre excellently (NE, 1.7, 1098a); in this passage of NE the most recent translations of  
1208 arete is "excellence" (e.g., transl. by Reeve, 2014, p. 17) but in the past it has been  
1209 translated as "goodness" (transl. by Ross, 1908/1999 p. 11). Reeve (2014, p. 211)  
1210 noted that "arete is often nowadays translated as "excellence." An advantage of the  
1211 traditional translation "virtue" is that it preserves the link with socalled virtue ethics."

1212 <sup>10</sup> The IOC maintains friendship as distinct Olympic value from excellence,  
1213 which is in line with current thinking. Indeed, MacIntyre (2007, p. 182) noted:

1214 “*consider the importance of friendship as a virtue in Aristotle's list —how different*  
1215 *from us!*” However, if we want to emphasize the humanistic purpose of Olympism,  
1216 then the philosophy supporting the inseparable nature of excellence, friendship (and  
1217 respect) should be promoted.

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1219

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