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THE BIG IDEA

Student Well-Being:
What About It?

SNAPSHOT

The Road to Resilience

PEOPLE

Building a Flourishing
School Community



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Well-being refers to the state, condition or accomplishment of feeling good and functioning well, for both individuals and groups. It is about experiencing positive emotions and life satisfaction, being engaged in chosen activities, having positive relationships, and living a life oriented towards growth, meaning and purpose.

In this issue, we feature voices from researchers, teachers and school leaders that resonate towards one common goal—to cultivate well-being in schools.

We showcase insights drawn from three NIE studies that focus on some of the key elements of well-being—sense of purpose, engagement, positive relationships and positive emotional dispositions. One researcher examines the ways in which our Singaporean youth construct meaning and purpose in life. Another researcher explores the power of teacher language in creating a positive classroom climate to improve academic engagement and performance of students. The third NIE research study presents effective strategies to nurture students' gratitude and hope, and explicates how such strategies impact students' well-being and academic outcomes.

Creating a positive environment is essential to students' well-being and development. Teachers who advocate positive education share about approaches and principles to create a positive classroom culture. They underscore the importance of instilling joy of learning among students and creating opportunities for students to savour their strengths and build positive social connections. School leaders also detail their journeys toward establishing and maintaining a school culture that value both academic excellence and well-being, engaging not only members of the school staff, but also parents. For the parents, a former teacher shares about her three-pronged approach to positive parenting that pays attention to the self, environment and tools.

The rest of the issue offers experience-based tips on how to create a positive and engaging classroom, develop resilience, and use visualization in teaching.

We hope that this issue opens up an important educational dialogue and inspire readers to plant and nurture seeds of well-being to help students lead a thriving and meaningful life!

Dr Imelda Caleon

Research Scientist, Office of Education Research

Dr Jennifer Pei-Ling Tan

Senior Research Scientist, Office of Education Research



ONLINE EXCLUSIVES



RESEARCH IN ACTION

Fostering Student Well-Being:
Engaged Learning with Positive
Teacher Language

Fostering Student Well-Being:
Nurturing Positivity

PEOPLE

Enable Youth to Thrive,
Not Just Survive

TIP BITS

Create a Positive and Engaging
Classroom in 5 Ways

CONTRIBUTION

Visualization as Means of Closing
Expert-Novice Gap in Teaching

STUDENT WELL-BEING

What About It?

The concept of well-being in education today is not new. Many schools are moving towards a culture of well-being among their students to help them flourish in both academic and social realms. We speak to this issue's guest editors Dr Imelda Caleon and Dr Jennifer Pei-Ling Tan from the Office of Education Research at NIE to understand this concept and how educators can foster it in classrooms.

Many tend to relate well-being to happiness. However, happiness does not define well-being; the feeling of happiness is only one aspect of overall well-being, which comprises other factors.

Research Scientist Dr Imelda Caleon explains: "Well-being is a complex multi-dimensional construct. Some might equate it with happiness and quality of life. However, it is often conceived as a combination of both 'feeling good' and 'functioning well'."

Feeling good is associated with the *hedonic* tradition in describing well-being, which emphasizes the positive emotional states. This includes positive affect such as the feeling of joy and pleasure, and satisfaction with life. *Functioning well*, on the other hand, is associated with the *eudaimonic* approach of understanding well-being as going beyond positive emotional experiences to emphasize meaning, sense of purpose and self-realization.

IMPORTANCE OF WELL-BEING

Over the past 10 years, a growing body of evidence shows why student well-being is an important element of education



and overall student success. Two big reasons emerge. One is the recognition that schooling is about much more than academic outcomes. Second, students with high levels of well-being tend to have better academic *and* life outcomes, in school and beyond.

For these reasons, educators play an increasingly crucial role in supporting students' mental health and well-being in schools. "There are many current reports of increased prevalence of depression and other well-being issues among youth globally and locally," shares Imelda.

A recent article in Psychological Medicine reported that depression, especially among teens, rose significantly from 2005 to 2015 in the US. In Singapore, two Straits Times articles in March and August 2017 pointed to our children and teens experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. In September last year, Channel NewsAsia reported that more Singaporean children are seeking support for well-being problems, such as depression.

Noting these, Imelda asserts: "The issue of student well-being needs to be tackled head-on, given that it not only affects the socio-emotional realm but also has detrimental effects on students' overall learning and future life outcomes."

UNPACKING THE CONCEPT OF WELL-BEING

Professor Carol Ryff, an American psychologist, conceived well-being as *optimal functioning*, which comprises six broad dimensions that cover the eudaimonic aspect: *self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth*.

Another American psychologist, Professor Martin Seligman, proposed the PERMA model of well-being as comprising *positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and*

accomplishment. This emphasizes both the eudaimonic and hedonic aspects of well-being.

"Both frameworks stem largely from the fields of psychology and its rapidly growing sub-field of positive psychology," explains Senior Research Scientist Dr Jennifer Pei-Ling Tan. "These are well complemented by more sociological understandings of well-being as an accomplishment that continually evolves for individuals as they draw on social, moral and cognitive resources to navigate everyday life."

She adds, "Well-being, seen through a sociological lens, is far from a static state of being that can be easily measured and quantified. Rather, one's sense of well-being is malleable and particularly sensitive to processes of identity formation and sense-making in relation to significant others in families, communities and broader society."

As such, social, cultural, and historical influences, and the role that schools and teachers play, become paramount.



ONLINE EXTRAS!

How can teachers help foster well-being in schools? Find out in the online version of this article.

ADVOCATING WELL-BEING: SOME CAVEATS

Positive education, along with the broader field of positive psychology, focuses on promoting the positive aspects of human functioning such as human strengths and potentials, as well as the processes and experiences that enable human flourishing.

It is important for educators to generate environments and conditions where these positive attributes, dispositions, processes and experiences are cultivated. As such, positive education is not just about promoting positive thoughts, emotions and experiences. It is also not about ignoring the negative aspects of human existence.

“What positive education advocates is to emphasize what we are commonly neglecting. And that is to focus on our improvement and growth more than on our failure, and on our strengths more than on our weaknesses,” Imelda says.

Imelda also believes that teachers need to keep an open mind when faced with difficulties in the classrooms. Imelda advises:

“Remember that positive education approaches are there to supplement common strategies to handle students’ challenges and problems, but not to replace them!”

Adding to this, Jennifer stressed: “It is also important to remember that social conditions are imperative to students’ sense of well-being.” Social transitions, for example, across critical phases of schooling, or even “micro” changes of classes or teachers, could constitute vulnerable spaces and pivotal turning points for our students.

“Yet, many of these key social transitions are often taken-for-granted and may easily slip our attention in light of other pressing professional demands and responsibilities,” Jennifer explains. “Our students’ social networks and participation in and out of schools, as well as their felt levels of social support are crucial to their sense of purpose and wellness, especially in the face of life’s unending ebb and flow of successes, failures, uncertainties and challenges.”

Quoting Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, Jennifer concludes, “Just as all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare, fostering students’ well-being is no mean feat. Simple solutions are beyond our grasp. But opening up this shared dialogue in our Singapore education fraternity definitely marks an important step forward.” ■

About the Interviewees

Imelda Caleon is a Research Scientist and her research interests include at-risk learners, positive education, positive psychology and resilience. **Jennifer Pei-Ling Tan** is a Senior Research Scientist and her research interests include creativity & 21st century competencies, culture and identity, and learning technologies & analytics. They are both with the Office of Education Research at NIE.



A Culture of POSITIVITY



A positive school culture is an integral part of education for students to feel accepted, valued and respected. Today, educators play an important role in developing a culture that fosters student well-being to help them become competent and compassionate individuals. A teacher from Greenridge Primary School shares with us how her school encourages the practices of well-being as part of its culture.

“Positive education can be put into practice every day. It is a way of life,” Mdm Nur Jannah Bte Juri says. To promote positivity in teaching and learning at Greenridge Primary School, she took up the challenge to embark on a Positive Education Journey when she took over the school’s Student Well-Being Department in 2014. She has since been providing fellow teachers with practical resources to use in their classrooms.

Encouraged by the impact of positive education on the morale of both teachers and students in his previous schools, Principal Mr Chua Choon Hock first introduced the concepts of positive psychology to his teachers in 2013 and fully supported the Positive Education initiative led by Jannah. “Mr Chua believes that it is important for us to have positive emotions, build positive relationships and find meaning in what we do so that coming to school will be more purposeful,” Jannah shares.

PRACTICES FOR A POSITIVE LIFE

Greenridge Primary School’s Positive Education approach aims to create a culture of well-being at the heart of quality education. Through the implementation of the school’s Positive Education programme, pupils learn life skills beyond the classroom to increase their learning capacity and help them build happy and successful lives.

“We researched on positive practices but we were unsure on how we could implement them in the classroom,” Jannah shares. “When my Vice-Principal, Mrs Tan-Kay Hwee Geak, chanced upon a workshop by Research Scientist Dr Imelda Caleon on nurturing positivity in schools at NIE, she sent a team of Year Heads and Assistant Year Heads for it and that kick-started our Positive Education Journey,” Jannah adds.

Through close collaborations with Imelda, the school was introduced to the Gratitude packages, comprising tips and tools that can be applied to pupils’ daily lives according to their abilities and respective age groups (*read more about the package in the online version of SingTeach*).

Every pupil also receives a student handbook at the beginning of the school year that includes an additional feature—gratitude cards. These cards act as tokens of appreciation for anyone who has shown them kindness. Primary 1 pupils are encouraged to give one to their Primary 4 buddy at the end of the buddy programme, which aims to help new pupils settle well in a new environment through a support system of care and guidance from their seniors.

Teachers also express their appreciation to pupils in the form of *Praise Mails*, which are addressed to their parents and sent by post. “In the past, parents only hear from teachers when their





ONLINE EXTRAS!

Read more about the Gratitude Package in the online version of *SingTeach*

“Positive education makes the good even better”

children misbehave, but now they get to know about the good things their children have done in school as well,” Jannah explains. “Parents have given us positive feedback on this initiative.”

Through these efforts, pupils understand the importance of expressing gratitude to someone and that it creates meaning in both the giver’s and recipient’s lives. “It also builds resilience when you know that someone is there for you and that you are not alone,” she adds.

POSITIVITY OVER PUNISHMENT

Aside from encouraging positive

expression among pupils and teachers, Mr Yeo Wi Kiat, the school’s Discipline Master, also believes that the secret to effective discipline is to build relationships proactively instead of reacting punitively to pupils’ misbehavior. This is known as *Positive Discipline*.

By developing Positive Discipline approaches in classrooms such as giving pupils the chance to explain their mistakes, pupils can actively reflect on their wrongdoings and learn from them.

The school also practises *Senses in Harmony* after recess to get pupils to settle down before heading back to their classes. Pupils engage in a short breathing exercise daily after recess while listening to calming classical music in the background. The music is also accompanied with simple instructions to guide their focus on the music and their breathing. This helps to calm pupils down after their activity-filled recess by guiding them to refocus and be in a state of readiness for subsequent lessons.

TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS

To change the entire school’s

In their own words

FOSTERING WELL-BEING IN LEARNERS

Educating students in the 21st century entails helping learners to flourish academically and holistically. It goes beyond mere textbook knowledge to cultivating well-being, which is at the heart of learning. Three teachers share how they are doing this at their schools.

“ The Singapore education journey is such an exciting one! Fostering the well-being of students is, in effect, helping them *explore and find their calling in life*. It also encourages students to *learn the soft skills* to navigate through life with confidence, a realistic sense of optimism and good fellowship. Teachers can instil the joy of learning in students by understanding the psychology of engagement, connecting with them, and practising self-care.

**Mrs Chua-Yap
Chen Hian Veronica**

Director/Well-Being,
Hwa Chong Institution



culture, teachers have to constantly role-model positive behaviors and growth mindsets. It is the belief that people have limitless potential to learn and grow with practice, perseverance and effort.

As part of their weekly level meetings, book study sessions are organized in which every teacher reads a chapter of a book that discusses Positive Education before sharing their classroom success stories and takeaways with one another. Over time, teachers realized that this benefits not just the pupils, but also themselves.

“Positive Education makes the good even better,” Jannah shares. “It cultivates positive attitudes, builds personal strengths and enables us to find deeper happiness in our lives and communities.”

Positive education does not end in school. “If we emphasize the importance of positive education to our pupils in school but if it is not practised at home, then the message will be lost,” Jannah says. As such, parents are informed about and guided through the school’s positive education efforts

during meet-the-parents sessions. She hopes that this effort will encourage parents to continue to reinforce positive practices at home.

Jannah observes that pupils are generally more grateful and appreciative towards what they have now. “Research has shown that optimism about life increases after expressing gratitude. When you look for the good and focus on it, you will start seeing better things coming into your life. This is why we should teach our children to view life with gratitude.”

Being part of a character-focused school with over 20 years of history, it is Jannah’s hope that all her pupils will eventually internalize these acts of positivity and develop holistically today, for their future. “The future belongs to those who believe in positivity, resilience and optimism to overcome challenges ahead.” ■

“Through these efforts, pupils understand the importance of expressing gratitude to someone and that it creates meaning in both the giver’s and recipient’s lives.”



About the Interviewee

Nur Jannah Bte Juri (middle, in black) is Head of the Student Well-Being Department at Greenridge Primary School.

“Explicit teaching in character and citizenship education equips students with life skills such as *resilience*, *empathy* and *growth mindset*. There are also many school experiences that allow students to exercise these skills so that they can master them for their own well-being. Building on strengths under wisdom such as love for learning, curiosity and creativity can be nurtured to make their learning a joyful and life-long experience. As educators, we could consciously create such opportunities so that students can savour these strengths.

Mrs Ng-Kang Yee Fhang, Fann

Head of Department, Character & Citizenship Education,
Clementi Town Secondary School

“Many studies have shown that fostering well-being, especially through specially designed guidance programmes, is able to provide the platform for students to experience something positive. As students get to know themselves and others around them better, they are intrinsically motivated to care and be kind to others. We hope such intended process will not only plant seeds of positive behaviour in the students but motivate them to become ‘pro-social agents’, not only within the school but out to the community as well.

Ms Juli Anna Mohamad Aris

Senior Teacher/Mathematics,
Assumption Pathway School



The Road to Resilience

Students achieving good educational outcomes despite adversity is the epitome of academic resilience and it enables young people to perform better than what their circumstances might have predicted. Hence, active promotion of this trait in schools is important and requires the entire school community to be involved in strategic planning and detailed practice.

What can you do in the classroom?

1. **Do not** provide answers immediately
2. **Avoid** spoon feeding for tests and exams
3. **Promote** friendly competition, leadership and responsibility
4. **Encourage** outward thinking
5. **Create** group work opportunities

Resilience beyond the classroom

Resilience is a lifelong skill. Encourage your students to start by practising one of these simple steps and adding more to their resilience skills bank along the way. You can encourage them to try one of the following methods:

SOCIAL

1. **Make connections**
Spend time with people you admire
2. **Ask for help**
It is a sign of strength to know what you do not know
3. **Do activities you enjoy**
Have fun while engaging with others

MENTAL

1. **Cultivate your strength**
Use them to boost your confidence
2. **Unplug at least once a week**
Notice your surroundings and try meditation
3. **Practise reflective thinking**
Reflecting on your actions and reactions can help you in future adversities

PHYSICAL

1. **Get outdoors**
Being in nature lowers stress, and improves mood and energy
2. **Exercise**
Helps your body adapt to stress and reduce anxiety
3. **Drink water**
Hydration increases energy and boosts the immune system



How resilient are you?

Want to know how adaptive you are to difficult or challenging life experiences?

(1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

I'm usually optimistic. Difficulties are temporary and I will overcome them.

Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.

I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.

I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.

I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations and can laugh at myself.

I learn valuable lessons from others' and my own experiences.

I'm good at solving problems and making things work well.

I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.

I've turned misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

TOTAL RATING

1 in 3 students suffer from mental health issues, with 25% of these students having diagnosable illness.

Yet it is estimated that almost 40% do not seek help.



Your results

Less than 20: Low Resilience

You may have trouble handling pressure or setbacks, and may feel deeply hurt by any criticism. Consider seeking some professional counsel or support in developing your resilience skills.

20-30: Some Resilience

You have some valuable pro-resilience skills, but also plenty of room for improvement. Strive to strengthen the characteristics you already have and to cultivate the characteristics you lack.

30-35: Adequate Resilience

You are a self-motivated learner who recovers well from most challenges. Learning more about resilience will empower you to find more joy in life, even in the face of adversity.

35-45: Highly Resilient

You bounce back well from life's setbacks and can thrive even under pressure. You could be of service to others who are trying to cope better with adversity.

SCHOOL FACTORS

★ Teacher's Belief
School and Classroom Culture
Students' Economic Demographic
Safety and Discipline
Emphasis on Academic Success

STUDENT FACTORS

★ Educational Aspirations
Academic Performance
Bullying Experiences
Family Support
Social Background

Top Factors Promoting Resilience

Be sure to keep these in mind during brainstorming sessions!

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- During that period, I sensed that education in Singapore was at a crossroads - that we have to decide if excellence (e.g., success in academics, co-curricular activities) or well-being (e.g., values inculcation, growth mindset, positive emotion) should be the key focus of education. This observation prompted me to think about whether we really have to prioritize excellence over well-being or vice versa in education.
- I began exploring approaches to education that foster both excellence and well-being, and discovered Positive Education and the work of Geelong Grammar School www.ggs.vic.edu.au/School/Positive-Education/What-is-Positive-Education through my research. Coincidentally, not long after I embarked on this discovery journey, I learned that I would be leading WWPS the following year.
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Fostering Student Well-Being: A *Purposeful* Education

ONLINE EXTRAS!

This is the first of a three-part article describing research studies by NIE researchers as they explore how supporting students in elements of well-being—*sense of purpose, strong relationships and engagement, and positivity*—can help improve overall well-being. Through exploratory studies as well as school interventions, they seek to understand and help students not only cope with difficulties and improve their academic performance, but also thrive in life.

Read Part 2 and 3 in the online version of *SingTeach!*

Hearing from Our Youths

In one of the first studies in Singapore to tackle the question of purpose and uncover what is personally relevant and meaningful to Singapore youths, Mary Anne Heng observed that the views of students are often given short shrift in curriculum policy decisions. Hence, students' school and learning experiences may not be consistent with education policy aims about developing passion, curiosity and creativity in learning (Ng, 2004).

Purpose, a long-term, stable and high-level intention to influence the world in ways both meaningful to oneself and others (Damon, 2008), is tremendously empowering with potential to shape the value systems of youths. Youth purpose has been linked to higher levels of life satisfaction and school achievement (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib & Finch, 2009).

"During our one-on-one interviews with secondary school students, many were willing to share broadly and deeply about meaning and purpose in school and life," Mary Anne shares. Students were mostly very keen to talk about their school experiences. They had important things to say with some profound insights.

Mary Anne feels there is a need to look more carefully into students' learning and lives in the design of meaningful educational experiences.

"It is important that schools make time to ask students more fundamental questions about what they make of school and life," she says. "In the classroom, what typically happens is that teachers teach the *subject* to help students do well in the exams. If schooling is to be an experience that speaks to students as human beings, we need to change our approach so that we are also teaching, engaging and learning with the *student*."



Associate Professor Mary Anne Heng believes that beyond a single-minded focus on performance outcomes, schools should guide students in addressing important life questions to find purpose in school and life. She shares findings from her study on Singapore youths' sense of meaning and purpose to open up discussions about what makes high quality and meaningful school experiences for students' growth and socialization into whole persons.

Opening up the Conversation

To do this, the school curriculum should provide spaces for students to make meaningful connections in both the formal- and co-curriculum.

"Schools should encourage students to reflect and make sense of things in relation to their own experiences, hopes and challenges for the future. It is through a deep, personal connection that learning comes alive and becomes deeply stimulating, meaningful and impactful," she adds.

Teachers can facilitate this by focusing on the *significance* of the content of what they teach. For example, in a traditional lesson on persuasive writing, besides teaching students the form and structure of an argument, teachers could encourage students to reflect on critical questions such as: *Why is the issue important to me and my community? How does the issue confront and challenge my assumptions?* Such questions develop students' critical thinking skills and awareness of significant and even critical ideas that are relevant and valuable to their own lives.

A purpose-focused education thus helps students connect more deeply with the school curriculum and find meaning in what they learn. Reflecting on what Professor of Education from the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, Dennis Shirley, said in a recent interview, there is a need for schools to go beyond the nurture of the intellect and towards the *human experience of schooling in Singapore*, unleashing a more purposeful idealism in our youth towards reimagining tomorrow. ■



About the Interviewee

Mary Anne Heng is Associate Dean and Associate Professor with the Graduate Studies and Professional Learning and the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Academic Group at NIE. Her published work focuses on the intersections of curriculum leadership and educational change, and teacher and student learning.

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Building a Flourishing School Community



Mr Ng Yeow Ling's belief that excellence and well-being are central to education inspired him to lead Westwood Primary School on a journey of Positive Education. We speak to him to learn about his discovery of Positive Education and why he believes in this framework.

Q How did you discover Positive Education?

I first learned about Positive Education in 2012, a year before Westwood Primary School (WWPS) was established.

During that period, I sensed that education in Singapore was at a crossroads—that we have to decide if excellence (e.g., success in academics, co-curricular activities) or well-being (e.g., values inculcation, growth mindset, positive emotion) should be the key focus of education. This observation prompted me to think about whether we really have to prioritize excellence over well-being or vice versa in education.

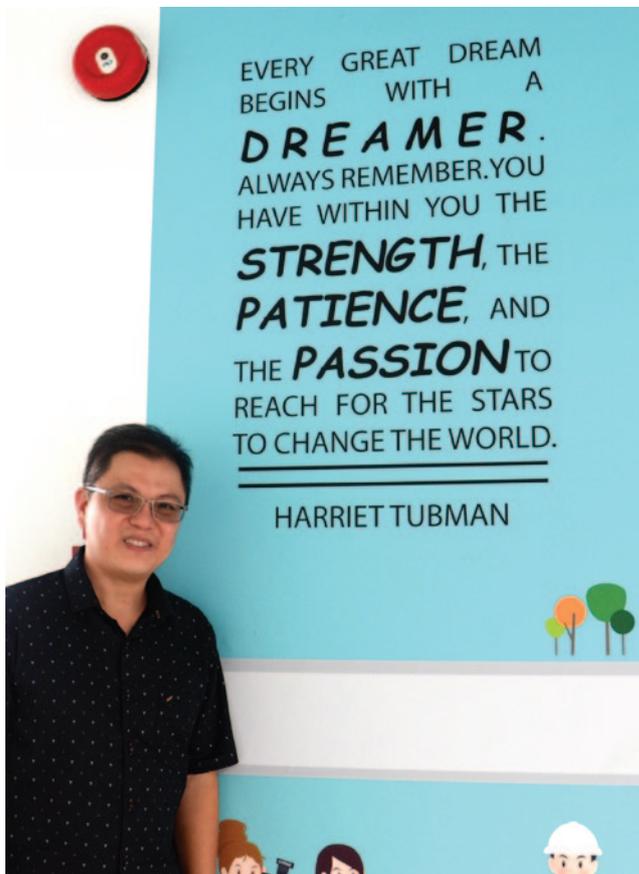
I began exploring approaches to education that foster both excellence and well-being, and discovered Positive Education and the work of Geelong Grammar School through my research. Coincidentally, not long after I embarked on this discovery journey, I learned that I would be leading WWPS the following year.



Q What inspired you to anchor the school culture of Westwood Primary School in Positive Education?

I believe that excellence and well-being are equally important and we need not pursue one aspect at the expense of another. Furthermore, my experience as an educator has made me conscious that amidst the pursuit of excellence, we also have to promote the well-being of students and staff to nurture a thriving school community.

When I was preparing to start work at WWPS, I often thought about how the school could bring forth an experience of education that would enable students and staff to flourish. I thus conducted further research on Geelong Grammar School and was struck by the efficacy of its Positive Education framework in fostering well-being and excellence in the school community—that not only affirmed my belief that we can pursue both in education, but also motivated me to initiate a similar framework in WWPS.



About the Interviewee

Ng Yeow Ling is Principal of Westwood Primary School. He began his career in education in 1995 and took up his first school leadership role in 2004. Yeow Ling headed another primary school before joining Westwood in 2013.

Q Why is Positive Education relevant today and how does it benefit students?

Until recently, there has not been much emphasis on the emotional aspect of learning within the context of education in Singapore. Today, there is greater discussion on the joy of learning, experimentation and intrinsic motivation—these boil down to whether the educational environment facilitates learning.

As an educational philosophy connected to positive psychology, Positive Education seeks to enable students to recognize that they have the power to derive their own happiness and fulfillment. This begins with having students focus on the positives and viewing the glass as half-full rather than half-empty.

In WWPS, for instance, we get our students to share *what went well* for them every week so that they are aware that there is always something to celebrate and be thankful for (see *Instilling Positivity and Resilience with Positive Education*

in *SingTeach* Issue 57). We also aim to nurture resilience in our students by cultivating in them the mindset that they have the inner capacity to overcome challenges and can bounce back even after experiencing setbacks.

In addition, WWPS also involve parents by encouraging them to write affirmation notes to their children and place them on a board of positivity during the meet-the-parents session. Children feel heartened and supported after they read their parents' messages to them.

When Positive Education is enacted well and students internalize its takeaways, they would become self-motivated and self-directed learners with a healthy outlook on life. These attributes would also better position students to succeed in whatever they pursue.

Q What advice do you have for school leaders/educators who wish to encourage a school culture of Positive Education?

Over the years, as the staff community of WWPS expanded, we had to redouble efforts to induct new staff into the school culture. Our new teachers also had to enact Positive Education in the classroom and the initial lack of familiarity could mean that they do the form but not the substance of the approach. As Positive Education is not a process but about attitudes and beliefs, we have to review our practices regularly to ensure that students and even staff actually benefit from Positive Education.

Another challenge I have encountered concerns staff who are undecided about whether Positive Education is for them. Instead of convincing them to believe in this approach, I invite these staff to join my team on board a journey of discovering Positive Education in WWPS and the value it brings to them and their work.

Q What challenges did you encounter in making Positive Education a reality in Westwood Primary School and how did you address them?

Know and experience what Positive Education can offer to yourself in your personal life before considering how it can be extended to your colleagues and students. Positive Education should also not be regarded as a to-do list or tool in itself, but as a school culture and educational philosophy to uphold.

Parental engagement is another area that school leaders should focus on. At WWPS, we run Positive Education workshops for parents to help

them better understand the work we do. The topics covered in these workshops resonate with many parents and they recognize the value that Positive Education brings to their children. In fact, parents also wish to join us on board this journey and find out how they can complement our work at home.

Ultimately, the success of Positive Education is not only dependent on the efforts of teachers, but also parental support. ■



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