

15th June 2016

## Positive Psychology and Coaching Delivering Positive Results for Students

The 2016 International Symposium for Coaching and Positive Psychology in Education was held on 2 - 3 June in Sydney and provided over 300 delegates with an opportunity to engage with international and national research and practice in positive psychology and coaching in educational contexts.

Keynote highlights:

Robert Biswas Diener (positive psychologist, author and instructor at Portland State University) challenged the members of the audience to review their understanding of strengths and the limitations in the current way of viewing them.

Associate Professor Christian Van Nieuwerburgh (Associate Professor of Coaching, Henley Centre for Coaching and Behavioural Change, Henley Business School, University of Reading) encouraged delegates to identify coaching as a philosophy that intersects with positive psychology.

Professor Lea Waters (Gerry Higgins Chair in Positive Psychology and is the Director of the Centre for Positive Psychology, University of Melbourne) identified the importance of wellbeing as an embedded part of all schools and shared research on the significant impact of wellbeing on NAPLAN results.

Mathew White PhD (Director of Wellbeing and Positive Education, St Peter's College, Adelaide) challenged delegates on the importance of wellbeing and positive psychology, while stating the challenges schools have in ensuring the programs, policies and processes 'stick'. Delegates participated in the research, key themes and issues, each keynote shared through active discussions.

Delegates were fortunate to hear from national and system leaders on the importance of focusing on the whole child through wellbeing and pastoral care programs. Ross Fox (Executive Director, National Catholic Education Commission) spoke about pastoral care being central to Catholic Education, and the dignity of the student is at the center of pastoral care. Greg Prior (Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, Department of Education NSW), identified that Wellbeing is a key component of the Department of Education NSW School Excellence Framework and the system has structures in place to support it.

Concurrent session presentations shared leading practices, policies and research with school leaders to connect back to their schools, supporting the success of their students and the thriving of a culture supporting positive psychology and coaching.

The 2016 International Symposium for Coaching and Positive Psychology in Education provided delegates with an opportunity to reflect on leadership, management and practice in schools to promote positive student outcomes. Aasha Murthy, CEO of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders commented "In times where students, teachers and principals are challenged daily, the importance of student and staff wellbeing through positive psychology can not be understated. ACEL is proud to have played a key role in the success of this event"

Delegates connected with each other and the keynotes, sharing their experiences, knowledge and ideas. Delegates at the Symposium were inspired and motivated to promote the importance of positive psychology and coaching further in their schools.

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