Chapter 1
Building a Positive Institution

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Introduction

> All of what happens at St Peter's College, Adelaide, in regard to the education we offer and provide has at its heart the shaping of character. That I believe is our core business. All the experiences and opportunities have a common purpose: to build good men, great men, who will be good fathers, partners, good husbands and good citizens. This is not to diminish the value we place on academic mastery, but rather to emphasise that the gaining of wisdom is the true goal. As we shape character we equip our boys, your boys, to use knowledge and understanding as influenced through their experiences and values. Each part of a St Peter's College education is important. Sport, music, drama and out-door education, are as much about teamwork, perseverance, commitment, courage and fairness as they are about fitness, relaxation and adventure. Community service is about selflessness, Chapel is to feed your soul and the House is to provide a home where a boy is cherished, loved and understood. I want every boy to know that they are special. You are our *raison d'être*. Without you there is no St Peter's College. (Murray 2013)

Walk into St Peter's College, Adelaide, and you will notice the impact the introduction of well-being has had at the school. Now one of the top two reasons why parents enrol their sons at St Peter's College, the impact it has had on the staff and students, is apparent. Since 2011, over 8,000 people have attended public lectures on well-being as part of the School's Rex J Lipman Fellows Program and the

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school's community engagement.[1] Today, over 1385 students, a whole generation, study seven scientifically informed positive education lessons from the early years to Year 10 as part of the timetable and supported by existing pastoral care systems and approaches. By 2015, all students will have completed at least three explicitly taught well-being programs.

As well as being educated within a culture that continues to teach, build and embed well-being positive psychology concepts such as strengths of character, hope, and resilience are discussed as part of the English literature curriculum in novels, films, and plays. In Chaplaincy, strengths of the disciples and other Biblical stories are discussed. On the sporting field, students are coached from a strengths-based model consistent with lessons taught in class. Psychological services embrace strengths as well as traditional approaches. The style of student leadership has evolved to focus on building relationships, spearheaded by the Captain and Vice-Captain of the School. Policies have integrated Seligman's (2011) PERMA in the appraisal process of staff. Culture action groups have been created Chaired by the Director of Human Resources, Annette Cinnamond, to focus on change culture, values, communication, and leadership at the school as identified by staff. We define positive education as an umbrella term used to describe empirically validated interventions and programs from positive psychology that have an impact on student well-being (White and Waters 2014).

Building "positive institutions", including schools is one of the three pillars of positive psychology. Students in the Junior School of St Peter's College, Adelaide

[1] St Peter's College Rex J Lipman Fellows have included Baroness Greenfield CBE, Professor Patrick McGorry AO, Professor Felicia Huppert, Professor Hans Henrik Knoop, Professor Toni Noble, Professor Peter Singer AC, Associate Professor Rufus Black, Professor Lea Waters, the Rev'd Professor James Haire AC, the Rev'd Professor Andrew McGowan, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Professor Michael Bernard, Professor Rob Moodie AM and A/Professor Jane Burns.

St Peter's College, Adelaide is one of a handful of institutions in the world that has brought well-being to scale across all aspects of school life. When reflecting on the school's progress, Martin Seligman (2013, p. 30) observed, "I believe St Peter's College is the world leader in developing evidence-based whole-school approaches in all aspects of school life." Significantly, St Peter's College is the first institution to have adopted well-being at a strategic level, integrating well-being theory throughout policy and practice (White and Waters 2014; White 2014).

Since January 2011, following all staff consultation, well-being has been a strategic and operational goal in the school's plan. It is emblematic of the school's evolution of leadership and thinking. This, in an institution that is over 168 years old. St Peter's College integrated Seligman's (2011, 2013) PERMA theory, measured well-being in its staff and students, developed approaches how to use this measurement to inform developmental programs from the early years of learning (aged 3) to 16 years of age, across pastoral care, behaviour management and school sporting programs to build a positive institution (Durlak et al. 2011).

In junior years (3–11 years old), our programs and approaches have been adopted after careful consideration under the leadership of the Head of Junior School David Hine, in collaboration with David Kolpak, Sheryle Yorston, Suzanne Haddy, and staff. In our senior years, Sam McKinney, Deputy Headmaster and Head of Senior School, and David Scott spearheaded the development of our behaviour management system, along with pastoral care providers including Heads of House and mentors. In Years 8 and 10 our positive education programs have been developed under the watchful eye of David Threadgold (Head of Personal Development) and Emily Fitzsimons, (Head of English & Positive Education Coordinator) and their pioneering interdisciplinary team teaching every boy evidence-based well-being skills. In sports coaching, Darren Pitt helped to manage the integration of well-being principles through our approach (White and Waters 2014).

School Culture and Well-Being

We are repeatedly asked "how do I bring well-being to scale in my school?" Our advice is simple. You must start with your school culture. Integrating the science of positive psychology *within* the context of your school's culture and strengths is an evolutionary process and takes time; however, it means you will create a well-being approach for your school. At St Peter's College, well-being is an operational goal in our strategic mission. It is an Anglican positive psychology (cf. Chap. 2). In the process, the creativity of our staff and students was unleashed.

Reading the title of this chapter a shrewd observer might at first cringe at the term "positive institution" when discussing education. Kristjánsson's (2013a) excellent summary outlined ten myths of character development programs; unclear science, redundant, old-fashioned, religious, paternalistic, anti-democratic and anti-intellectual, conservative, individualistic and situation specific. However, as demonstrated by the process outlined in this book what we have experienced in becoming a
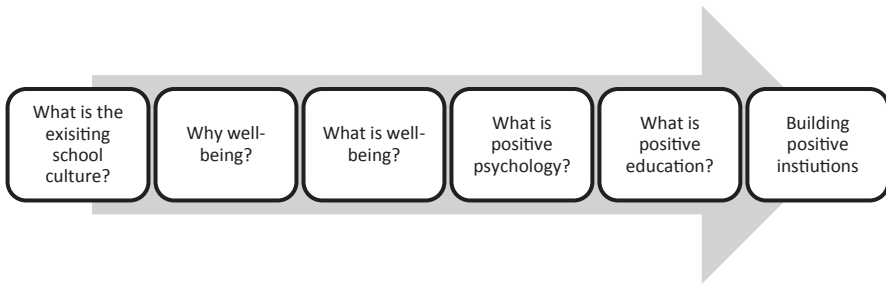
Fig. 1.1 St Peter's College's approach to building a positive institution 2011–2014

positive institution it is anything but these points. As summarised by Fig. 1.1 we did this by asking six questions towards managing well-being: what is the school's existing culture? Why well-being? What is well-being? What is positive psychology? What is positive education? How do we build a positive institution?

Well-Being and Institutional Culture

A limitation of existing character education programs and positive psychology literature is that it fails to recognise the role of philosophy and Aristotelian heritage. The pursuit of well-being is ancient, and it appears inseparable from education. It is not the only contender for attention in contemporary schooling policy, but discussion of the pursuit of well-being flows through western history, from the first pages of history written by Herodotus, to the epics of Homer, and Hesiod, to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *Inferno* and *Paradiso*, Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, to the geniuses of the enlightenment: each of these great works of literature describe journeys of character within the context of their cultural setting and understanding of what it means to lead a good life (Waters 2011; McMahon 2006).

Education takes place within communities not factories. Reflecting on the significance of building residential communities, the Classical Scholar Dan Rusell (2009, p. 328), Percy Seymour Reader in Ancient History and Philosophy at Ormond College, University of Melbourne, argues that it is the company we keep that matters the most when building cultures of well-being. Russell's observations are crucial to understand the role community's play within our society to foster well-being culture as people create it. For example, this is true when we consider that students will spend up to 12 years of their lives immersed in the culture of schools. From Russell's perspective, to encourage our students to develop their virtues and strengths we must work from within institutions. He believes that we need to belong to institutions and communities of people who share this goal and state its importance (Morris 2013).

Each school has its own culture, and we underscore the importance of diversity, demonstrated by behaviours and interactions. It is an important starting point to

bring well-being to scale. Lessons learnt from surveys of research in the United Kingdom by Berkowitz and Bier (2007) and Durlak (2011) illustrate the sustained steps needed to create character education programs in over 300 schools. These reviews provide helpful observations, and informed our approach stressing the significance of existing school culture. We have been influenced by developments in positive organizational practices in business. This includes topics as diverse as collective efficacy of employees (Goddard and Salloum 2012, pp. 642–650); organizational identity (Harquail and Brickson 2012, pp. 677–690); organizational energy (Vogel and Bruch 2012, pp. 691–702); and innovation (DeGraff and Nathan-Robert 2012, pp. 703–714).

At St Peter's College, our student and staff moral development takes place within our Anglican context. As an institution with a history of motivated faculty and students as examples of the types of character we hope they will embody, this provides the cultural setting to grow a scientifically informed approach to well-being. The deep Anglican values of our school focus on unlocking individual strengths and virtues, fostering well-being, as well as building lifelong engagement and commitment to service, along with social justice. The developments outlined in this chapter should be considered in the context of the pages of our school's history and one part of the St Peter's College story. We encourage interested readers to survey the histories of St Peter's College by Grenfell-Price (1947), Tregenza (1996), and Thornton (2010) as evidence of generations of alumni who have had significant global impact, including three Nobel Laureates and 42 Rhodes Scholars, and the school's significant role in cultural, political, religious, and scientific life on the world's stage, and provide an overview of our heritage. Your school will be different, with its own unique culture and history, and this is your starting point to grow what is working well (Seligman 2013).

Where does education for well-being fit? What alarms us is that despite the World Health Organisation's warning, well-being is not part of a mainstream agenda for the majority of students in schools. For example, strategic advisers of the Framework for 21st Century Learning include Intel's Education Strategist, Ford Motor Company Fund's Director of Education, US Fund's for UNICEF and Apple Inc's Senior Manager for Education Leadership and Policy, who support a focus on career and life skills, learning and innovation, the 4Cs of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, information, media and technology skills and the core subjects that focus on reading, writing and arithmetic (www.p21.org). Where is the voice for well-being in this group? It is one thing to have a literate workforce. However, if they are not equipped with the skills for well-being in the midst of the cut and thrust of the contemporary workplace the potential economic impact is significant (Layard 2009, 2011).

Schools have traditionally taught foundational knowledge; students are required to obtain core content, cross-disciplinary knowledge, and develop literacy across a number of subject disciplines. However, there is the 'meta-knowledge' required to develop creativity, innovation, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, and the 'humanistic knowledge' required to develop cultural competence, and ethical and emotional awareness for life and job skills.

The number of young people within schools presenting with mental anxieties requiring intervention has increased. This has a substantial impact on the institutions and teams who manage these students and staff. Not only at the classroom level, but as teachers become more involved in the daily routines of families and the challenges that they face. The educational horizon is becoming more complex. Have the systems and the methods we encourage our teachers to use evolved to keep pace? At the grassroots level, there is a capability gap in teacher's abilities to notice and respond to well-being and mental health problems. The educational sociologist Johanna Wyn (2007) claims, "while older educational agendas such as literacies and numeracy remain significant…education is an increasingly important for its role in assisting young people to develop the capacities and skills that will enable them to live well and that will enhance social cohesion" (p. 35).

Why Well-Being? A Case for Urgency

The recognition of well-being as a scientifically informed approach, integrated into the education of young people could be a hallmark development of 21st century educational policy (Gilman et al. 2009; Knoop 2011). Well-being education is not about fixing what is wrong with students. It is about developing their strengths and adopting a widespread preventative model for well-being. As educators we teach students first and subjects second. Education is a human enterprise. Consider how a teacher must navigate the following according to the New South Wales Mental Health Commission (2014):

- 1 in 4 Australians aged 16-24 are living with a mental disorder and one in three experiences moderate to high levels of psychological distress.
- About 1in 4 of young men and 1 in 3 of women had a mental health disorder.
- The top 3 concerns to young people were:

  ○ School of study problems
  ○ Coping with stress
  ○ Body image

These problems cause enormous stress and adversely affect mental health and self-esteem.

- Mental illness in young men aged 12-25 alone has been estimated to cost the Australian economy $3.27 billion a year in productivity
- Australia loses more than 9 million working days per annum because of mental illness among young men alone
- However, data measuring young men's access to mental health care reveals that only 13% received any care for their mental illness.

It is about building cultural environments where staff and students are able to flourish and are equipped with the skills, awareness, and capabilities to achieve their goals and seek expert help from counsellors and psychologists to learn how they can be their very best self (Seligman 2013).

If we accept the view that young people are the keystone of our future, then the world they inherit will be one with too much mental illness (Keyes 2009). One of the reasons for greater focus on student well-being at the school or institutional level has been because of our better understanding of the enormity of the challenge on the horizon.

If we consider these data, combined with Layard's (2013) proposition that economic prosperity in the west appears to offer little protection, there is cause for concern. The economic effect of mental ill-health has a substantial impact on Australia's economy, as reported by Robertson et al. (2013), who highlight that "in 2009 the direct costs of untreated mental disorders in Australian young people totalled $ 10.6 billion" (p. 11).

There is no avoiding that schools are right at the centre of these developments. At a global scale, the World Health Organization (WHO) predicts by 2030, depression will be the highest level of disability of any mental or physical disorder (WHO 2011). Burns et al. (2010) reinforce the significance of adolescence and young adulthood as an important window for the early onset of mental health problems. The Australian Bureau of Statistics highlights, "suicide rates remain high, with suicide now the foremost cause of death in 15–24 year old age" (Robertson et al. 2013, p. 10).

Madden et al. (2013), Waters (2013) and Robertson et al. (2013) from the Melbourne-based Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (2013) each emphasize the real challenges and opportunities faced by young people, as young people share more personal information on their digital profiles now than in the past.

As Robertson et al. (2013) highlight, we need to engage young people more and gather their "views, opinions and experiences regarding mental health …" (p. 6). Young people's continual "digital connectedness" is prompted by widespread access to mobile telephones, laptops, and other devices wired to social media, where the Harvard University's PEW Report states the median teen Facebook user has "300 friends, while the typical teen twitter user has 79 follower" (Madden et al., p. 6). We have a generation who seemingly appear to be continuously digitally connected to both everything and nothing simultaneously (Robertson et al. 2013). This has caused concern among many commentators; however, recent research by Johnson et al. (2013) highlight that there are many social and emotional benefits of video gaming and that gaming has the capacity to be an effective therapy tool for young people.

The Director of Psychological Services at Australia's Black Dog Institute, dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by mood disorders, Vijaya Manicavasagar (2013), warns that "up to 80 % of suicides are reported to be preceded by a mood disorder, and depression is associated with higher rates of death and disability from cardiovascular disease (Frassure-Smith and Lesperence 1995), diabetes (Eaton 2002) and cancer (Massie 2004)" to the point where the "Australian Bureau of Statistics highlights that one quarter of Australians suffer from mental illness (Waters 2013)". What can schools do better? While a case for schools to focus on well-being lies in the valleys of the ill-being of our young people, there is evidence that focusing on the well-being of organizations at a systems level has benefits (Cameron et al. 2012). Evidence suggests that preventative models of well-being

buffer individuals against depression, anxiety, and other disorders in individuals (Brunwasser et al. 2009; Seligman 2012, 2013).

School-based positive psychology interventions note that students who complete empirically based courses find school more interesting, feel better at school, report that they are learning more, are eager to go to school, report higher levels of optimism, and are more satisfied in their relationships (Waters 2011, pp. 75–90). In a meta-analysis of 213 studies and over 270,034 individuals, Durlak and Weissberg (2011) highlight that students who were enrolled in a social and emotional learning program ranked over 11 % higher on achievement tests when compared with other students. People who are able to identify and use their strengths more effectively are more likely to be successful and have greater levels of self-discipline. This, it is argued, can predict student academic accomplishment over time with greater success than traditional IQ tests (Duckworth and Seligman 2005; Seligman 2013).

Recognising the importance of well-being as a key driver in student achievement Gregory Park (2013) has focused on integrating scientific research of positive education interventions that highlight wellbeing as a key to academic achievement. Park (2013, pp. 5–8) highlights the following examples:

- A recent study of self-control, reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, tracked 1000 children from birth to age 32 measuring their self-control throughout early childhood (Moffitt et al. 2011). After controlling for childhood differences in IQ and socioeconomic status, higher childhood self-control predicted dramatically better outcomes in adult educational qualifications, health and wealth. The study's authors concluded, "Interventions addressing self-control might reduce a panoply of societal costs, save taxpayers money, and promote prosperity"
- Self-control predicted high school grades, absences, and at-home study habits better than IQ (Duckworth and Seligman 2005).
- Self-control predicted homework completion, classroom conduct, and report card grades in a longitudinal study of over 500 middle school students (Duckworth et al. 2012).
- Individuals' levels of grit—perseverance for long-term goals—predicted several forms of academically-related achievement, including grades at top US universities, retention in elite military academy classes, and ranking in a national spelling competition (Duckworth et al. 2007).
- Changes in a student's self-control predicted changes his/her school grades 6 months (Duckworth et al. 2011).
- Self-control predicts childhood health, too. A study of children progressing into adolescence found that self-control was an important protective factor against becoming overweight (Tsukayama et al. 2010).
- A recent meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal Positive Education or Social Emotional Learning SEL programs, involving over 250,000 students, concluded that these interventions had positive effects across a range of outcomes (Durlak et al. 2011)

With shifting attitudes towards traditional institutions, including the family and religion, schools are being asked to help manage and educate young people beyond reading and writing, resulting in teachers becoming more counsellors (Ecclestone 2004). It is clear that the industrial age of the school is dead as we enter the 21st century and schools embrace the capabilities and support systems needed for the next 100 years. We believe that an answer to these challenges lies in Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) call for schools to become positive institutions. In this approach, whole systems adopt well-being as a goal; where staff well-being and culture are explicitly part of a school's operational agenda and students are taught scientifically informed well-being programs in the same way we teach history, mathematics, and science (Boniwell 2013, p. 535). These calls have been echoed by Waters, who argues that education must evolve to include a fourth *R* to become **r**eading, **w**riting, **a**rithmetic, and **r**esilience (Seligman 2013; Waters 2013).

An overview of educational policy in over seventy countries shows that governments tend to focus on traditional academic agendas of improving the teaching and learning of reading, writing, and arithmetic. As summarized in the 2007 and 2010, McKinsey & Company's report, *How the World's Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top*, the international benchmark of successful national systems of education remains an international study launched in 1997 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is PISA or the Programme for International Student Assessment (McKinsey 2010). However, Popovic (2013, pp. 551–562) argues that when we teach reading, writing, and arithmetic in schools, we do not have an end goal in mind—in the long run, we don't mind if a student writes the book or just reads it. When we teach, we believe that it is a child's right to be able to read, write, and count. The same should apply to well-being. This, we argue, is one part of a far broader discussion of school improvement agenda.

Despite evidence of grass roots interest in the area, peer-reviewed publications by psychologists and educational psychologists have remained limited. Rusk and Waters (2013) published a review of positive psychology's published peer-reviewed growth and observed the exponential development in the area over the past 14 years. This has been limited to the areas of psychology, organizational psychology and business (Cameron et al. 2012, pp. 1–17). However, a survey of participants in the education strand at three World Congresses in Positive Psychology in 2009, 2011 in Philadelphia, and Los Angeles 2013, with delegates from over fifty nations, reinforces advancements in the areas of education, organizational development, health, sport, the arts and business suggests substantial growth.

Defining Positive Psychology

It is right that schools should focus on learning; however, every moment with students and staff in schools is a pastoral moment, even when teaching history or geography. Do we all recognize this gift? The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham states, "good teaching is underpinned by an ethos

Table 1.1 Towards positive institutions—key definitions

Term	Definitions	Source
Positive psychology	The scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and all stops in between	Peterson (2006)
Well-being	A theory defined by Seligman as PERMA: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment	Seligman (2011)
Positive education	An umbrella term used to describe empirically validated interventions and programs from positive psychology that have impact on student well-being	Seligman et al. (2009) White and Waters (2014) White (2014)
Positive institutions	Organizational systems focusing on learning for traditional capabilities as well as aiming to move individuals toward better citizenship, responsibility, nurture, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic	Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000)

and language that enables a public discussion of character within the school community so that good character permeates all subject teaching and learning". As outlined in Table 1.1, we believe school leaders must highlight a process and sequence when introducing definitions to create scientifically informed well-being programs in order to become a positive institution.

It is now over 14 years since Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) launched the positive psychology movement, or the "scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and all stops in between" (Peterson 2006, p. 4). This definition plays a significant part in the evolution of the movement; however, we support the view that positive psychology is about the full spectrum of human emotion outlined by Norrish and Vella-Brodrick (2009) who claim that "positive psychology contributes a comprehensive approach to mental health by adding investigation of positive emotions and human strengths to existing knowledge of mental illness and dysfunction" (p. 275).

The growth of positive education has particular resonance with teachers who have long been at the frontline of education. In Kristán Kristjánsson's (2013) excellent critique of positive psychology, he claims, "… if experienced teachers tell you that an idea is salient, practical and teachable, you are well advised to give it a second hearing…" Feedback from the 150 St Peter's College staff trained in positive psychology conducted over six days by a team from the University of Pennsylvania included comments such as:

- "Without a doubt, unequivocally, the best conference I have ever attended in my 16 years of teaching. It was fascinating, relevant, ground breaking, energizing, and highly applicable and practical. It was an absolute pleasure and privilege to attend. As a result, I have a strong sense of purpose and direction. In short, I have experienced more PERMA. Thank you."
- "This course is both life-changing and practical. It's particularly helpful to practice the skills. I hope staff will continue to implement the principles in their work and lives. I wish everyone in the world could take this course."

- "Brilliant week; uplifting, inspiring to make a change, and energizing. I won't forget it and will constantly draw on the concepts explored. Thank you."
- "The practice nature of this course made it one of the very best conferences I have ever attended."

What is happening here? When teachers who have been involved in education for years say that there is something "life changing" or that this could be the "most powerful professional development" that they have experienced, there must be more than a grain of truth to cause us to take a second look at the area of well-being in schools (White 2014). As summarised by David et al. (2013), the movement appears poised to touch all aspects of human inquiry, including: psychology, philosophy, spiritual approaches, happiness and society, education, organizations, relationships, policy and interventions (Pawelski et al. 2013). John White argues that there are two aspects to individual well-being: to lead a flourishing life there are basic requirements that are needed, including food, drink, shelter, clothing, income, health and practical intelligence to help foster good judgment. If all of the points are met in one, is this enough? Surely there is more to help individuals find greater meaning and purpose in life (White 2013, pp. 540–550).

While schools may not be able to influence the first point, they are most certainly able to influence the second. This can be achieved by ensuring that students are taught the cognitive decision-making skills to develop skills of judgment and critical thinking and the capability for self-awareness. Well-being is not just the absence of mental illness (McAllisters 2005). It is building school cultures and employing processes that lead to high levels of flourishing, being able to measure and replicate the process. Kristjánsson (2013, pp. 13–15) highlights that positive psychology revolves around three pillars:

- Positive emotions: hope, joy, trust, comfort
- Positive traits: loyalty, leadership, modesty, gratitude
- Positive Institutions: family, community, schools and democracy

While advances have been made in the study of positive emotions at the individual level by Fredrickson and Losada (2005); Kok et al. (2013); Cameron et al. (2012); and positive traits by Gilman et al. (2009) in time for more discussion about the institution's impact on well-being has arrived (Waters et al. 2012).

Given the World Health Organisation's prediction we highlighted earlier, the urgent question for school leaders, policy makers, and school governors is "what are schools doing now?" and "Are we using an outmoded approach to well-being in schools?" Critics argue that positive psychology ignores the negatives aspects of life at the expense of a wellness agenda. This is an oversimplification of its application in education and fails to truly grapple with the significance of well-being science. As Waters (2011) notes, this view overlooks that positive psychology focuses on the positive processes and methods that can be employed during challenging and negative times. Some allege that positive psychology asserts that you should be "happy" all of the time. This challenging oversimplification of the science for educators when the school system should be considered as whole. Last one common

misconception about positive psychology is that it focuses on positive "thinking". School leaders must stress this significant misconception about positive psychology and focus on the tools and processes that enable resilient thinking, not blind optimism (Lazarus 2003).

Defining Well-Being

From a clinical perspective, well-being in schools must be more than the absence of illness (McAllister 2005). However, it can be an ambiguous area—in particular, for institutions. In a scoping study commissioned by the Australian Federal Government into factors affecting student well-being, Noble et al. (2008) identified seven pathways schools can promote well-being:

- Building a respectful and supportive school community.
- Developing pro-social values.
- Providing a safe learning environment.
- Enhancing social-emotional learning.
- Using strengths based approaches.
- Fostering a sense of meaning and purpose.
- Encouraging a healthy lifestyle (p. 30).

Noble et al.'s (2008) observations of the well-being literature reinforced the significance of integrating this into current educational practice writing:

> … Student wellbeing is strongly linked to learning. A student's level of well-being at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning, and their social-emotional behaviour. It is enhanced when schools in partnerships adopt evidence-informed practices with families and the community. Optimal student wellbeing is a sustainable state, characterized by predominately positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships at school, resilience, self-optimisation and a high level of satisfaction with learning experiences. (Noble 2008, p. 9)

While we have focused on the empirical arguments for well-being, this chapter does not set out to provide an exhaustive discussion of the origins of happiness or well-being philosophy. Values and character education is not a recent phenomenon. Plato's Academy in Athens, Aristotle's Lyceum, and Arnold's Muscular Christianity are examples of values-based approaches to schooling. While character and virtue—parts of positive education—have their foundation in religious systems, they are not only bound to faith. Positive psychology's contribution to the area is that it is able to provide a scientific validation and approaches to enhance well-being and unifies previously disparate approaches.

Nussbaum (1994, 2000), McMahon (2006), and Pawelski and Moore (2012) provide outstanding overviews of this topic. However, for our students we stress the classical contribution, using Herodotus' search for *eudemonia* or the flourishing life. For example our students consider how Herodotus recounts a conversation between Croesus, the wealthiest man in the world, and an Athenian sage and lawyer

Table 1.2 Classical Terms defining well-being (ref. McMahon 2006; p. 3–5)

Classical greek	English translation	Sources
Eutychia	luck	Herodotus
Eudaimonia	A flourishing, favored life	Herodotus
Eudaimon	Good fortune	Hesoid
Dysdaimon	Turned away or led astray	Herodotus

Table 1.3 Seligman's PERMA theory (2011, pp. 12–20)

P	Positive emotion
E	Engagement
R	Relationships
M	Meaning
A	Accomplishment

Solon. In this story, Solon uses the noun *eudemonia* to describe the pursuit of a life well lived, one that is praise worthy. The classical components of *eudemonia* include marriage, children, and the success of the family name.

We believe that it is not enough to encourage students to lead a flourishing life for its own sake, like Croesus, but that it should be linked with the desire to serve something, which is larger than oneself. For example, as McMahon (2006) noted, in classical Athens service rendered to the *polis* or the city-state was one path towards *eudemonia*. Pericles notes, "[…] if a man is able to serve the state he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition" (p. 22). Traditionally, well-being has either been understood to be hedonic or a person's emotional view of their well-being, satisfaction with life, and ability to balance positive and negative affects. Alternatively, the eudaemonic view focuses on an individual's fledgling capabilities that need to be developed to build more fully functioning people or citizens in the community and this has particular resonance for vision-based institutions such as schools (Table 1.2).

We argue that an effective way for schools to conceptualize well-being and explain it to staff and students is to explore the ancient paradox of *eutychia* (luck) and the difference between *eudaimonia* (a flourishing life). At an institutional level, eudaimonia is applicable in many different settings, and is the promotion of an ancient tradition. We have adopted the integration of Seligman's (2011) eudaemonic five factor theory of PERMA: **p**ositive **e**motion, **e**ngagement, **r**elationships, **m**eaning, and **a**ccomplishment as one such way to achieve this goal, as summarized in Table 1.3 (Seligman 2011).

St. Peter's College surveyed a number of definitions to operationalize well-being. However, when examining these in combination with our existing culture, Seligman's (2011) definition was able to stand up to robust integration and application across curriculum, co-curricular, leadership, policy, and operational aspects of school life from the earliest to the senior year. Specific ways we have operationalized PERMA in the process of managing change, measurement strategies for students and staff, applications in human resources, teaching programs, and student leaders will be outlined throughout this publication.

Defining Positive Education

"Isn't all education positive?" is the usual retort, even from politicians, to the term. We define positive education as an umbrella term used to describe empirically-validated interventions and programs from positive psychology that have an impact on student well-being (Brunwasser et al. 2009; Donaldson 2011; Seligman et al. 2009; White and Waters 2014). As summarized in McMahon's (2006) overview of the history of happiness, positive education is a young science with a long history, grounded in the west's Aristotelian heritage (David et al. 2013, pp. 535–671). Schools do have the potential to be both positive and negative places. Students readily state that schools are the crucible for character development (White 2013). Reflections on schooling, even years later, can elicit vivid memories, not always good. The quality of our institutions and the learning and teaching that go on in them are linked with our educational experiences (Kristjánsson 2013a).

When teaching positive education, what do we actually mean and what are we trying to achieve? What are the goals and actions against which we choose to map our progress? What we mean is that we are teaching programs that have been shown to have scientific basis to improve the level of student well-being. What we are doing when we teach these skills is to buffer students before they need them. Positive psychologists argue that systems and approaches to mental health have been deeply rooted in the traditional view of human psychology—a disease or pathology model that focuses on what is wrong with the human condition.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi argue that psychologists should focus the same level of rigour and scientific inquiry on what is right with humans. One objective is to help people to be able to understand positive emotions, including love, joy, and gratitude, and the tools that can enable individuals to boost these levels of experiences empirically to achieve eudaimonia. Positive psychologists do not argue that positive education programs should blindly focus on all that is good. Instead, they are asking for a realignment of school systems, making the participants in these systems aware of their potential biases and limitations (Peterson 2006; Seligman et al. 2009; Seligman 2013).

At a systems level, education is caught between an industrial and 21st century model. We should view positive education and its influence on our systems as a whole. As educational policy advances, teaching practice can lag behind for educational capabilities. However, is the system of education we have perpetuating an outmoded, industrialized view of the world? We have observed that positive education programs in schools appears in three forms:

1. Empirically-validated and scientifically-informed well-being intervention programs that have impact on well-being
2. Scientifically-informed proactive strategies to the whole school mental health programs in schools
3. Specific virtues or values and character-based education lessons based in philosophy or values-based learning

The way individual schools approach positive education is as diverse as student's populations themselves. Schools such as the KIPP Academies in the USA, CorStone's work with adolescent girls in the slums of India, Geelong Grammar School in Australia, Wellington College in the UK, and numerous schools in the East End of London, inner Philadelphia, upstate New York, and rural government schools in Australia.

The diversity of educators and educational systems that engage with the topic of well-being is significant. The majority of these examples focus on teaching programs that are required to build positive education curriculum in schools. However, we argue that when schools adopt both an organizational platform with positive psychology incorporated in policy and practice in its operational goals aligned with healthy programs, then the transformative leadership that is required to move from good to great in institutions is unleashed.

Defining Positive Institutions

We believe the long-term goal of building schools as positive institutions is much larger than focusing on academic outcomes alone. To be clear, we are not proposing an either-or, well-being or learning model. We firmly believe that positive education is education for both traditional skills and character development. Leming (2000, p. 413) states that a major stumbling block for schools is a lack of explicit theoretical models to bring character education and well-being programs to scale at a systems level. While Norrish and Vella-Broderick (2009), Seligman et al. (2009), Waters et al. (2012) have advanced the area, further details must be published; much can still be learnt from positive organizational scholarship "to unify a variety of approaches in organizational studies, each of which incorporates the notion of the positive" (Cameron et al. 2012, pp. 1–2; Cameron and Winn 2012, pp. 231–243).

Educational researchers, including Hanushek et al. (1998); Rowe et al. (2007) and Hattie (2003), tell us that the quality of teaching, teacher interaction with students, and teacher feedback have the greatest impact on educational outcomes. If this is the case, our hypothesis is that it is impossible for a teacher to have a sustained impact on student outcomes without recognizing his of her student's character and the impact of his or her own. If we are to build positive institutions, school leaders must align their school's vision, mission, and operational goals to build clear frameworks and invest in quality evidence-based learning for teachers and support staff. This will activate a virtuous cycle of school improvement (Manz et al. 2006).

We argue a key to unlock the potential of positive institutions lies at the intersection of the whole school leadership, strategy, and empirical lessons from positive psychology. This is explicitly linked to enriching the whole school staff's well-being first, and then student well-being, with the expectation to build whole community systems focusing on optimal human functioning (Roffey 2012, pp. 8–10). We assert that positive institutions must not lose sight of Aristotle's ancient wisdom that the development of individual and collective moral character education takes
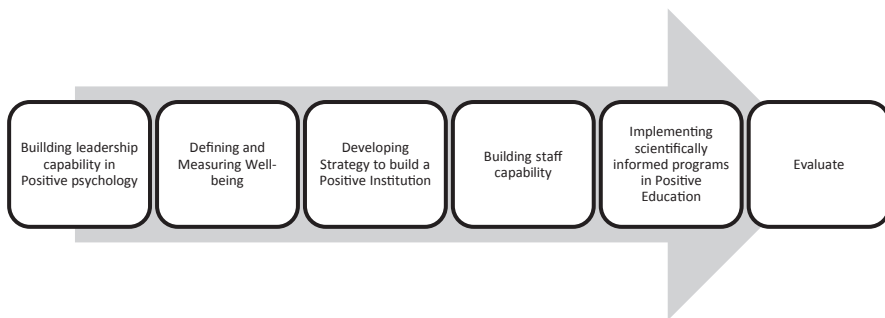
Fig. 1.2 A positive institution: a model for schooling (Waters 2011, 2012)

place within an institution as systems model examples of human character and that starts with the teachers acquiring well-being skills for themselves first.

Building a Positive Institution

It is not enough for students to become book smart. Character matters. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 5) identified positive institutions as a central vehicle to good citizenship, with educational systems focusing on learning for traditional academic capabilities, as well as aiming to "move individuals toward better citizenship, responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic." For many schools, values-based education is central to the development of school culture. Other researchers, including Gogolin et.al. (2007) , Wong (2011), Waters (2011, 2013a and b), Waters et al. (2013), Berkowitz and Bustamante (2013), and Elias (2013) have challenged schools and policy makers to provide the same degree of attention to the development of explicit character and social-emotional learning in the same way that they promote traditional approaches to academic achievement.

In his conceptualization of an enabling institution, Peterson (2006) expanded Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's view that virtues should be present not only within individual students and staff of an institution, but at the collective or school level so that the institution itself has moral character. While Peterson suggested possible approaches as outlined in Fig. 1.2 and Fig. 1.3.

Waters (2011, 2012) defined eleven areas well-being interconnected in and across school systems. Her approach was adapted with her collaboration at St Peter's College by the Senior Leadership Team, with feedback from our School's Chaplain to create operational objectives and strategies to achieve the well-being goal for the school during a forward-looking program created for the school's executive team.

Waters (2012, 2013) asserts that well-being has the potential to act as the activating core across school systems to help define the behavioural changes required to activate positive institutions. As summarized in St Peter's College adapted Waters'
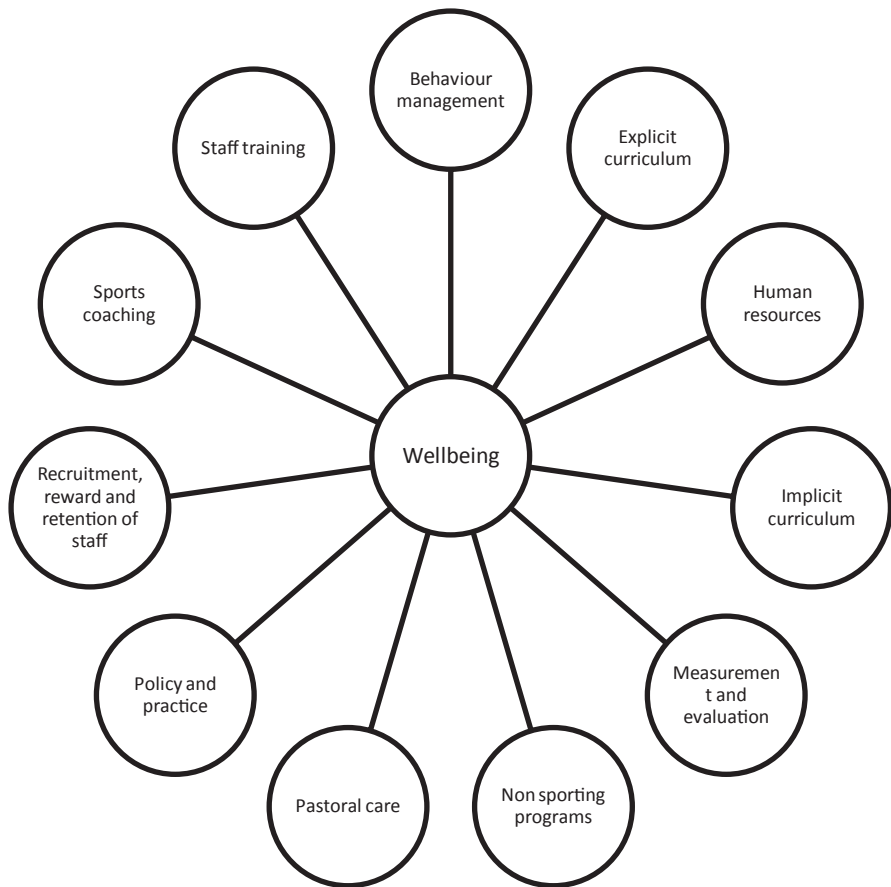
Fig. 1.3 Waters (2011) Leading cultural change at schools through a positive psychology approach

original concept to act as a road map to integrate well-being at an operational level. These projects advanced at different paces with leadership, measurement, and strategy, with a clear sense of long-term outcomes, steps to guide the choice of teaching programs and the integration of well-being concepts more widely across the school.

Peterson (2006) argues that schools must have moral goals to guide its members to be caring, responsible, and productive people in society. Building a positive institution takes time. If there is one thing in schools that is a precious commodity, it is time! It is not until well-being is incorporated as part of a school's strategy that the first steps towards measurable progress can be made. We argue well-being should be part of a 5-year plan that establishes clear goals, objectives, and strategies to measure success along the way. Above all, it requires bold and visionary leadership to manage the change process and align it with student outcomes.

To achieve the goal of becoming a positive institution, we argue that schools should focus on more collaborative approaches to change, intentionally engage in positive processes, and look to positive organizational scholarship for methods in

strategic planning that focuses on growing the good (Fullan 2001). When building positive institutions, we support the application of fusing traditional approaches to change, as advocated by Kotter (2007), with appreciative approaches to unlock the strengths of existing systems advocated by Cooperrider. Waters and White (2011) highlighted that, while these approaches could appear contradictory; however, they provide measurable processes to implement and unlock the energy of school communities.

One model is to highlight well-being as a catalyst for change, outlining the case for growth and reminding staff that, in their daily roles, they are part of a much larger script towards building student capability and that their knowledge needs to be enriched. The stark statistics on mental ill-being resonate with educators at the coalface because they are readily able to recognize the students in their classes who are not flourishing. However, we urge schools to engage the sceptics actively. We have found that even the most determined sceptic is able to appreciate the importance of well-being in the light of the mental health data. She or he will enrich the conversation, and make the structure and vision stronger. The vision needs to be co-created, and we advocate an appreciative approach. The appreciative inquiry process we adopted for this is outlined in Chap. 3. This is an important step as it taps into the values of the organization and grows a positive institution from the values of what is good.

Caught or Taught?

Should well-being be caught, or taught? A number of educational researchers argue that an effective way to embed this type of education is not to teach these skills through explicit lessons but through the general culture and tone of schools (Hamblin 1978; Marland 1974; Pring 1984). It is a very real tension in schools and one that we remain highly sceptical about. An idealistic approach claims that by implying well-being is important it will have benefit for students. However, we have found it requires planning, strategy, measurement and systems. But, one where too much time and energy can be lost when we consider the urgency of the WHO's 2030 challenge. This is supported by the view of some teachers who argue that the well-being principles can be found in literature, drama, the sporting field, leadership programs, and the general relationship between the teacher and the student.

There are two significant limitations when adopting this approach alone: first, the long-term efficacy of this approach is unclear. Second, the return on investment is uncertain. In short, a change to these approaches might make people *feel* better; but whether or not it is actually having measurable impact is not certain. Building positive institutions requires transformative leaders and leadership. It requires vision, bravery, and most of all tenacity. When advising school leaders, we urge them to consider how they are able to integrate well-being as a whole and support this with scientifically informed programs that have been demonstrated to have an im-

pact and avoid a hit-and-miss approach. At best, to provide a mediocre experience to a handful of students; at its worst, it undermines overall goals to improve schools. The disadvantage of an *ad-hoc* approach is that it is not systematic; it is not measurable and can easily become fragmented and inconsistent.

Critics, including Ecclestone (2004), warn against the 'therapeutising' of education. This is a short-term perspective and trivialises the complexity faced by many colleagues in schools. We believe her argument has missed the very real challenges of managing well-being in schools. Norrish and Vella-Brodrick (2009), Seligman et al. (2009), Waters (2011), Waters et al. (2012), McCall et al. (2012), Pawelski (2011), and Pawelski and Moores (2012) argue that positive psychology can be integrated into the traditional curriculum.

For example, in the Australian context, Robertson et al. (2013) tabled in their report, *How did we score? Engaging young people in the development of a National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention*, the work of Burns et al. (2010) and Slade (2009) who asserts, "…timely and evidence-based treatments are only encouraged by a small proposition of those young people who do receive care. This has a substantial effect on the overall well-being of our community" (p. 11). Kristjánsson (2013) underscores, and we agree with him, educators must learn from advances in psychology, philosophy, and sociology, and that education should not be about the "one-way traffic" of ideas and the view that it will somehow diminish the teaching of traditional subjects (p. 213).

We argue for schools and school systems to adopt a holistic approach to well-being as outlined in Fig. 1.3. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's original definition of positive institutions needs to be enriched. It is not enough to state that schools should educate good citizens. We argue that a positive institution approach has the eight goals outlined in Table 1.4. To operationalize the overall goal to become a positive institution, schools must be explicit about the goals, objectives, and strategies they develop so that they are able to highlight their progress. Based on our experience, we believe that there are eight operational goals that should be tackled over a 3–5 year period to achieve the vision of becoming a positive institution. These goals include:

1. Build executive leadership capability in well-being science
2. Define and measure well-being
3. Enhance resilience of the community
4. Develop a change management strategy
5. Invest in building staff leadership capability
6. Implement scientifically informed programs in Positive Education
7. Evaluate the efficiency of the program
8. Develop models for positive organizational change

From these eight overarching goals, it is possible to develop a distributed set of organizational objectives and strategies to employ to achieve each. Based upon this organizational framework, we believe that it is possible to introduce systematic change throughout a school, aligned with the existing vision and mission. To promote this evolution, we suggest discussion about:

Table 1.4 Building a positive institution: St Peter's College, Adelaide

Goal	Objectives	Strategies	Time (months)
Building leadership capability	Equip school executive with scientifically informed definitions of well-being and current mental health statistics	Ensure school leaders embrace well-being as central to their role and responsibility for staff and students Train school executive in positive psychology and well-being principles Establish collaborative workplace environments	6
Define and measure well-being	Employ evidence-based definition of well-being consistent with organizational goals	Develop aligned staff and student measures of well-being	12
Enhance resilience	Buffer staff and students against depression and anxiety	Design a scientifically informed well-being program based on best practice drawing on existing institutional strengths	12
Develop a strategy to build a positive institution	Employ traditional and appreciative approaches to change	Involve all staff in the change process Employ Kotter's approach to change Employ Cameron's Organizational Virtues to measure Employ Coopperrider's Appreciate Inquiry model to manage change and define success for students, staff and parents	6
Building staff capability	Train staff in positive psychology, well-being and resilience	Ensure staff embrace well-being as central to their role Align well-being strategy with school strategy Align well-being strategy and actions with school values over develop a 1–3–5 year plan	12 18
Implementing programs	Ensure consistency with current evidence-based positive psychology	Review existing positive psychology programs for evidence-based efficacy Consistency with the defection of PERMA adopted Programs should be identified for the Early Years, Middle, Junior and Senior Schooling Positive Psychology for Parenting program delivered	12 18
Evaluate	Consult staff to define success	Define key milestones over the course of a 1–3–5 year plan to implement positive education programs across the school Elicit feedback from staff, students and parents on particular programs	12 24 36
Develop positive organizational change models	Integrate positive organizational change models	Embed well-being in policy across the institution Enhance counselling services across the institution with Appreciative Inquiry, with traditional approaches as a method to in developing organizational change, renewal and growth	12 24 36

- Progress towards a new vision based on well-being
- Include changing ideas/ concepts in behavioural interviews for the appointment of new staff and promotions with a focus on well-being
- Recognize the contribution of the team and key players
- Create a change management and knowledge transfer plan

Particular strategies to manage organizational change are central to the implementation of this type of whole school framework and program (cf. Chap. 3). As educational developments take place within school contexts, it is important that school culture is integrated. We argue that a comprehensive well-being approach is made up of the following elements:

1. Strategic vision, mission and impact with organizational values
2. Cultural alignment
3. Measurement
4. Evidence based programs
5. Ongoing review and improvement
6. A focus on evidence of student learning outcomes, design and delivery

Finally, the introduction of well-being and the change model being implemented should become part of the organizational culture, integrated with the support of Senior Leadership strategy in the institution, and executed with tenacity and commitment from the top.

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