

**“Influencing within groups does not just mean that we do things or enact processes with each other but that we are present for each other in the still, sacred but conscious space and stillness of authentic relationship. As a group we have to search for this stillness even within the busyness of the work environment”- Patrick Duignan**

## **SHOWCASING WELLBEING FOR LEARNING: ONE GOAL, MANY STRATEGIES**

More than 150 educators attended the Wellbeing for Learning Inquiry showcase at the Allan Scott Park centre, Morphettville on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The day reflected strongly the three principles of the DECS Learner Wellbeing Framework (see below?). Twenty-eight sites, representing Children’s Centres to Secondary schools, shared their inquiry journeys over the past year as workshop, roundtable and poster presentations. Their audience included site leaders and representatives from Regional Offices and the Education Centre. Patrick Duignan, Emeritus Professor, featured as keynote speaker. He emphasised the real challenge for leadership (teachers are leaders) is having strong influence through relationships. Dialogue with people and self respect are critical, as they influence how others perceive you as a leader. Patrick suggested an influential leader must have what he calls the X Factor-exercising good judgement and practical wisdom, being centred, calm and embracing stillness, having a presence. Real presence in relationships is the key, he stressed. In other words, no presence = no relationships = no influence = NO LEADERSHIP.

His afternoon keynote highlighted the work of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other recent evidence to illustrate the paradigm shift -*New Patterns for New Thinking*-needed for 21<sup>st</sup> learning environments, given “excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on (students’) achievement” (Hattie, 2008 NZ). People, purposes and processes and a balance between inquiry-based learning and deliberative teaching will influence the dynamics of deep learning environments.

This is pertinent to learners’ voices, evidenced in many site presentations. Children’s Centres through to Senior Secondary schools have accessed the thoughts and opinions of their children and students with recorded conversations, student-developed surveys, questionnaires, student forums, student research and subsequent presentations to staff and students, recording narratives, getting involved in site inquiries with authentic links to decision making and utilising other student groups.

Among the many benefits that were reported was the mutual respect and trust developed through engaging with learners and developing meaningful student and teacher relationships for learning and living. In addition, valuing the voice of learners has contributed to a whole site approach in building vibrant, effective and caring learning communities.

Evaluations featured words and phrases such as: *inspiring, informative, thought provoking, affirming*, while comments included:

- *this conference made me realise that most sites have used this Inquiry as a springboard;*
- *inquiry is the beginning of the journey; professional and engaging presentations:*
- *as a secondary principal I have learned a lot from my primary colleagues:*
- *the day was a great model for professional learning, project support and a method of pathways to future site developments.*

For more information about 'Wellbeing for learning' inquiries and presentations, please visit the *reflections* page on the Learner Wellbeing website at [www.decs.sa.gov.au/learnerwellbeing](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/learnerwellbeing)

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