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The Positive Performance Academy

Denis Hevey, Founder, CEO.

POSITIVE
PERFORMANCE
ACADEMY



The Positive Performance Academy H.E.R.O. Programme

"We can't always build the future for our youth,

But

We can build our youth for the future."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882 – 1945)

"Human development is far more diverse than the limited curriculum of current educational structures. The role of positive psychology in education is to foster a positive learning and development environment to enable the primary 'users' to positively embrace and successfully deal with the challenges of the modern world and thrive rather than merely survive."

Positive Educational Interventions.

Comprehensive positive education interventions apply key principles of positive psychology to build enduring skills for optimal functionality, performance, and well-being. These initiatives are designed to cultivate positive qualities such as resilience, compassion, hope, optimism, self-efficacy, gratitude, mindfulness, healthy stress-management, emotional intelligence and social intelligence. *The role of positive psychology in education is to foster a positive learning and development environment to enable the primary 'users' to positively embrace and successfully deal with all the challenges of the modern world and thrive rather than merely survive. It fosters a love of learning by nurturing what really matters in life. Live to learn then learn to live, love to learn then learn to then love life itself.*

“Positive Education is the established application of Positive Psychology Interventions in school based frameworks” (Seligman, 2011).

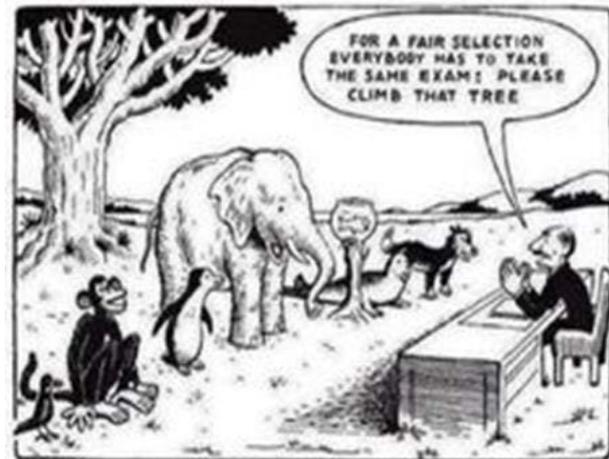
The Case for ‘Positive Education’ Interventions

The case for ‘positive education’ interventions is underpinned by three main arguments, which are based on scientific evidence, these are:

1. The pressure to prove and gain points rather than an education has resulted in a ‘*hacking approach*’ in the education system rather than a holistic approach to the development of the whole individual. *‘Human development is far more diverse than the limited curriculum of the current education structure.’ (Sir. Ken Robinson, 2006)*
2. In the broad spectrum of some self-imposed stress and anxiety at one end to extreme consequences of anti-social behaviour at the other the current correction and remedial strategies alone are deficit solutions. They are simply not proven to work (Fox Eades, 2009). In some instances, for example, anti-bullying campaigns they may even be harmful because they are not only an incomplete model but can result in the promotion, of what is designed to

prevent due to the priming effect. Through focusing on the undesirable behaviour, these programmes may unintentionally create a social priming effect (Bargh, 2012). Environmental stimuli (primes) subtly activate mental constructs that influence behaviour, usually without our awareness. In many instances it results in more of the occurrence of the undesired behaviour due to the priming effect and maladaptive responses (Hansen, W.B., 2007). This effect has been proven in the past in relation to the D.A.R.E. Programme (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). Research from the University of Maryland found that D.A.R.E. graduates were **more** likely than others to drink alcohol, smoke tobacco and to use illegal drugs (Gottfredson, G.D. 1998). A high standard of zero tolerance should be set but this only outlines what not to do and may not guide the development of positive pro-self, pro-social behaviour and what could be done instead.

3. 'Positive education' interventions that focus on building meaning, purpose, optimism, hope, mindfulness, gratitude, grit and resilience are proven to be vastly more effective in bringing a wider spectrum of benefits to the youth who take part. This in turn also benefits the schools and communities to which they belong as well as enhancing a 'love of life' itself and skills and strategies to realise life's rich reservoir of potential.



Our Education System

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

- Albert Einstein

Positive Educational Interventions Established Benefits.

- Promoting engagement with life and healthy sense of self where risk of stress and anxiety sometimes leading to depression and even suicide is significantly reduced. (Eggert et al. 1995)
- The building of social and communicational intelligences that give true meaningful connectivity and not just social media connections and meaningless/electronic 'likes'. (Bargh. 2012)
- The building of physical well-being to promote cognitive functionality as well as physical activity to promote physical health. (Fredrickson, B. L., 2009)
- The building of positive self-awareness and healthier options by taking notice of what really matters. (Marques et al., 2011)
- The building of a 'love of learning' that underpins personal growth and purposeful potential realisation. (Seligman et al., 2009)
- The building of social responsibility, emotional intelligence and compassion which in turn benefits the wider community and society. (Christakis, Fowler., 2013)

The H.E.R.O. Programme®

The H.E.R.O. Programme ® is one of the positive education initiatives which the Positive Performance Academy has designed for young people. It is remarkably effective and backed up by science and experience. The key focus of the programme is on the students, their well-being and the full realisation of their positive and purposeful potential.



The central purposes of the H.E.R.O. programme are to:

1. To develop a holistic model in personal growth that fosters the love of learning and life.
2. To Self-Regulate positive options, choices and coping strategies to effectively deal with unhealthy maladaptive behaviours and inappropriate responses to them.
3. To develop and empower young people to adopt pro self and pro social behaviours through content and characteristics of The H.E.R.O. Programme®

The H.E.R.O. Programme ® encompasses 4 key positive development goals.

The 4 Goals of The HERO Programme, To Positively Develop;

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|--|
| 1. Hope and Hunger (Motivation) |
| 2. Efficacy and Empowerment |
| 3. Resilience and being Response- Able |
| 4. Optimism and Opportunity |

These key goals are delivered through the five educational pillars of the H.E.R.O. Programme, which are listed in the box on below.

Five Educational Pillars of The H.E.R.O. Programme

Development of Character Strengths, Virtues, Purpose, Values and Positive Self- Awareness

Engagement with Positive Emotions & Mood Management, Growth Mindset and Optimism

Building Positive Relationships with Self and others while Creating a Supportive Community Culture

Positive Engagement that gives Goal Commitment and Motivation to Improve and Grow in a positive, pressure free environment

Resilience, Coping Strategies and Post Trauma Growth to Bounce Back from Adversity and be even Stronger.

1. Development of Character Strengths, Virtues, Purpose, Values and Positive Self-Awareness.

- a) Values, Purpose and Passion.
Exercises that identify personal values and how to use them to develop a purposeful way of living with passion for what really matters in life and what makes life worth living.
- b) Through the use of the Values in Action (VIA) framework and the youth questionnaire for strengths assessment (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) each student identifies their strengths as a self-awareness exercise. These positive progress and personal growth focused approaches not only reduce maladaptive behaviours but also enhance sustainable positive pro-social and pro-growth adaptive behaviour.

2. Engagement with Positive Emotions & Mood Management, Growth Mindset and Optimism.

- a) This part of The H.E.R.O. Programme® highlights emotional awareness in self and others and builds active engagement with positive emotions in order to develop positive and effective mood management.
- b) Developing a growth mindset involves fostering the belief that your abilities and intelligence can change over time. Each human can improve their skills or intelligence through their efforts and our true potential is unknown and unknowable.
- c) Optimism gives ownership to the individual regarding the effects of happenings in life. It is the tendency to believe that one will generally experience good versus bad outcomes in life.

3. Building Positive Relationships with Self and others while creating a Supportive Community Culture.

Designed to build social responsibility, positive peer culture, social support, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation to not only nullify various forms of anti-social behaviour and harmful consequences to others and to the self but, also, to build a

positive, safe, and secure environment where students can thrive. This is a positive leadership process of personal development.

4. Positive Engagement that gives Goal Commitment and Motivation to Improve and Grow in a positive, pressure free environment.

Designed to create a positive future orientation and self-confidence in personal meaningful achievements. It promotes self-awareness of intrinsic motivation and perseverance through engagement of *'being fully awake in the pursuit of purposeful dreams.'* This will be achieved by the active engagement in:

- Goal Setting Exercises and Workshops.
- Understanding and Practicing [Flow](#).
- Time Intelligence and Energy Management Awareness.
- Value Awareness Exercises.
- Skills of Sustainable Behavioural Change.

5. Resilience, Coping Strategies and Post Trauma Growth.

Resilience development is one of the more utilized school curriculum-based programmes in positive education initiatives. It is designed to build coping skills and 'bounce back' ability and also to enhance abilities and confidence after setbacks and other adverse events. (Reivich and Shatte, 2002) (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995) Extensive research shows that resilience-building programmes in education environments reduce stress, promote learning, and improve well-being (Reivich et al., 2007).

Positive Education interventions in Ireland.

The H.E.R.O. Programme® and other positive psychology programmes have been running for transition year and 5th year students in various secondary schools in Ireland for over 10 years and to date have not only proven popular but also effective given the extensive positive feedback:



Evidence and Relevant Research from Positive Education Interventions.

Research carried out over 5 different countries (Australia, China, Portugal, U.S. and U.K.) concluded that programmes focusing on developing resilience dramatically reduces stress, promotes learning and improves well-being (Reivich et al., 2007)

Research on promoting mindfulness in a public urban middle-school in California, which involved an intervention group engaging in daily mindfulness activities for 12 minutes before and after school, had significant beneficial impacts on the students;

- Increase in maths and English grades.
- The intervention group were reported to be friendlier, happier, calmer and more focused.
- Lower hyperactivity and class disturbance. (Nidich et al., 2011)

Positive Education Interventions Worldwide.

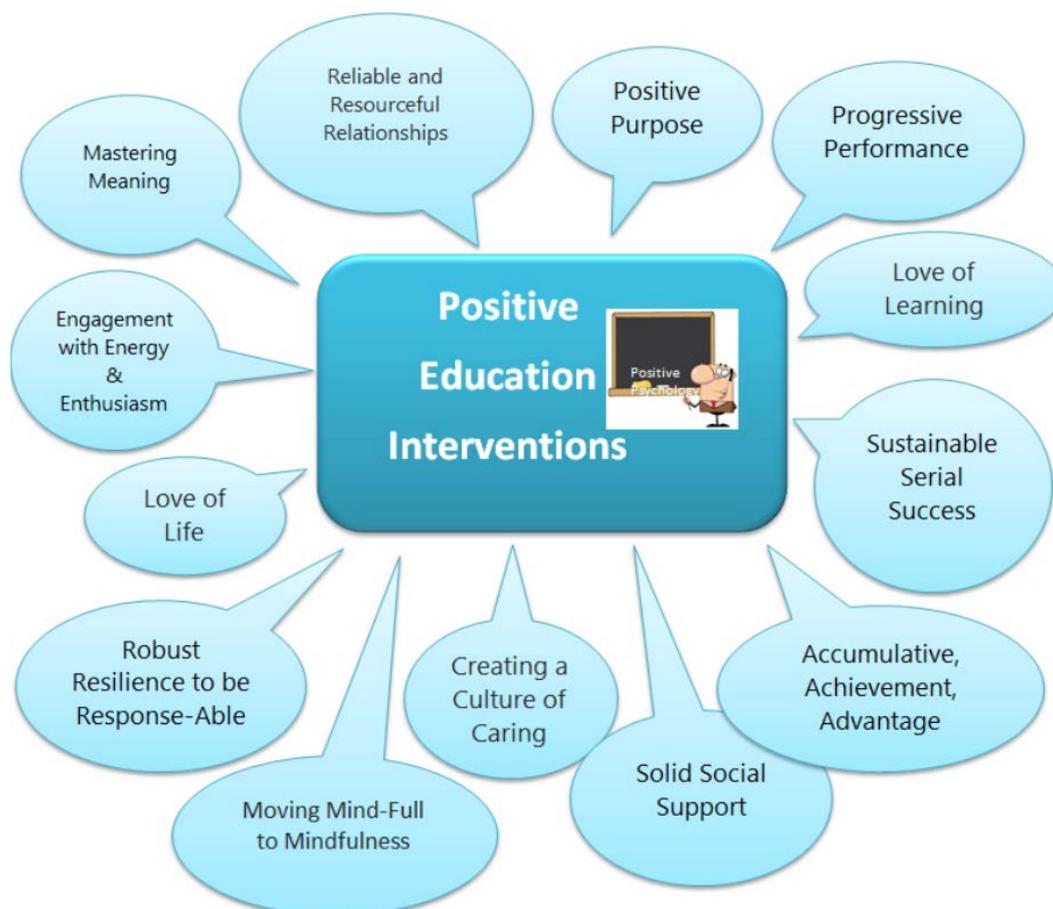
Successful positive education interventions have been run in a multitude of countries across the globe including Australia, China, Portugal, Japan, America and The U.K. Many scientific studies have been carried out in worldwide highlighting the many established benefits of a proactive focused approach such as positive psychological interventions in schools.

A strength-based intervention within a large urban high school in the U.S. conducted over 6 weeks increased students:

- o Academic expectations.
- o Self-efficacy and self-empowerment.
- o Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.
- o Perceptions of one's own ability. (Austin, 2005)

These case studies of many studies that conclude that positive characteristics and behaviours such as character strengths, mindfulness, self-awareness, hope and optimism, resilience, relationship building and effective coping strategies can be taught in school with significant benefits to not only the youth who take part but to the culture of the school as a whole. These scientific studies highlight the many established benefits of a proactive focused approach such as positive psychology interventions in school.

Summary of the Established Benefits of Positive Interventions.



The time is now ripe to invest in our youth to reap future rewards.

It is up to us of the generative age to ensure the holistic development of the next generation, beyond the limitations of current educational structures.

Are you interested in developing the next generation to thrive rather than merely survive?

If so, check out our website

PositivePerformanceAcademy.com or email denis@denishevey.ie. **We offer a one hour, no obligation, and no cost introductory consultation to explore how we could aid you in the development of the next generation.**

[Denis Hevey](#) is an ICF Accredited Coach who holds a Masters in Applied Positive Psychology. His main area of exploration and expertise is the area of "Optimal Human Functionality" for individuals, teams & organisations. He is the founder and CEO of the Positive Performance Academy. Denis has dedicated a large portion of his time to young people by focusing on the healthy development of the next generation. These interventions, including the successful H.E.R.O. programme, focus on empowering

youth and building on their talent & strengths to promote positive leadership, potential fulfilment, and growth in competence and authentic confidence.

Testimonials.

Sean C. Doran, TY Coordinator & Guidance Counsellor, Patrician Secondary School Newbridge.

'Harnessing material from a wide range of disciplines and sharing vivid and engaging stories from his own life in an engaging and interactive style, Denis left the students more self-aware of their values and strengths and the mindset that leads to both personal and professional success. Perhaps most important of all, Denis gave them the tools to help unlock that potential and transfer it to their own learning. In my view, students and indeed professionals working with students, would be inspired by the depth, range and quality of this engaging and immersive presentation. Highly recommended and in the words of one student 'many thanks - that was great! Why can't school always be like this?'

Alan McGinty, Principle at Blackrock College, Dublin.

Denis has a wonderful way about his coaching work. His ability to engage with and adapt to a young audience is brilliant and the results of his work have been very evident. Over the number of years that Denis has presented his programmes in Blackrock College, he has successfully coached several groups of teenage male students in a number of personal development fields. The results of The Positive Performance Academy's involvement in Blackrock include increases in personal accountability, personal performance, pro-social behaviour and an improvement in the culture of proactive positivity throughout the school. His personal leadership and H.E.R.O. programmes are highly recommended to other schools.

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