



The Matopos Project

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In this presentation, Pia Kanoyangwa & Pat Winney will share how they have assisted Prep aged students and multi-aged SWD to develop their social and emotional wellbeing while balancing rapidly growing school and family expectations whilst embracing the school vision “Excellence ~ Positivity ~ Community”.

This strengths based multi-dimensional framework aims to increase holistic “education that fosters traditional academic skills and skills for happiness” (Professor Seligman, 2009). This has led to sustainable wellbeing outlooks by students, families and staff. The presenters will demonstrate how they have strategically worked towards nurturing positive psychology practices within their classrooms focusing on “positive emotions, positive experiences, positive environments, human strengths and virtues” (Lyubomirsky, 2007).

Components of the program will include collaboration and communication skills which were explicitly taught to enhance individual self-regulation and awareness, relationships and contribution to the school community. Social and emotional lessons include Moments of Mindfulness, affirmations, nurture and loyalty. Strengths of trust, optimism, gratitude and resilience will be presented in synergy with the skills of life long coaching and a growth mindset.

The presenters will outline how they developed and incorporated targeted programs over the year that engaged and connected families, student teacher relationships and our SEL journey whilst providing daily opportunities to foster friendship among students. We will highlight how we have assisted students to build their resiliency skills and their social and emotional skills while balancing academic requirements.

The Matopos Project included the Positive Detective Campaign (Lea Waters). The presenters will share how the campaign evolved into a term program which culminated with a Happiness Trolls Delivery Service. Other areas explicitly explored include our Gratitude Wall “Make Gratitude Your Attitude”; extension adventures from a growth mindset to a benefit mindset and our end of year POW – Positivity, Outreach, Wellbeing Initiative.

Success of this program has been evident in parental, staff and community feedback whereby gratitude and thankfulness is expressed; increased parent hero volunteers for our weekly Fun Friday mornings; and a higher rate of fathers attending our annual excursion. Families have also discussed how they are incorporating Moments of Mindfulness into their homes and how they are developing their abilities to change their mindset to desired positive outcomes. The presenters will outline how end of term events have been embraced and well attended by family members which have provided students with a positive sense of self while being supported for their achievements.