

Understanding the dynamics of student achievement – panel discussion

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The link between achievement and engagement

“It’s great to see you all here. Just by making the decision to show up today, you’ve already achieved something”

(David, Teacher)

Impact of trauma on educational experience

“Sometimes children who have been abused and neglected create disruption and chaos in the classroom. Many will be far behind in their learning, and have problems with their peers.

Some may hurt other children, try to hurt teachers, refuse to cooperate, not pay attention, have regular tantrums and generally create disharmony, while others may be silent, withdrawn, inattentive and overly compliant.

Children may alternate in confusing ways between these two extremes.”

(Downey, 2007, p.18)

What do students with complex, developmental trauma backgrounds need?

“A caring relationship with even one adult in school can foster a sense of safety, improve student engagement and social success, and increase student attention and achievement”

(Ristuccia, 2013, p.259)

Trauma informed approaches in schools

- Attention given to the development of positive teacher-student relationships
- Safe, secure, low-stimulus environment
- Whole of school approach
- Support for teachers via supervision, coaching, training, and self-care
- Evidence based frameworks:
 - ARC: Attachment, self-regulation and competency
 - Making SPACE for Learning
 - Calmer Classrooms

The Pavilion Model: A therapeutic, trauma informed approach in practice

- Staff trained in trauma theory
- Small groups 10 – 15 students
- 50/50 teaching/social work classroom staffing model
- Calm, quiet and low stimulus classrooms
- Comfortable, adult like space
- “Circle time” at the beginning and end of each class
- No exclusion – “time in”, not “time out”
- Self-care, supervision and teacher coaching part of ‘whole of school approach’

Measuring achievement at Pavilion

...without this school I don't think he would have had any schooling. I really doubt it...You know he was in children's court that many times, secure welfare and...so yeah, I'd hate to imagine where he would have been.

Now I see a future for him. I see direction for him. I see inside him, the will to learn and the want to learn. And the want to succeed now...

...that's the thing about this school. They don't just worry about the kids schooling, they worry about the kids life. And not many schools do that. When you leave school it's up to you to make a life you know but here they help you prepare for your life. They encourage you to go and get that life.

(Father of student about to begin Year 12)



Thank you

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