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## Living and Teaching Well-being: An Application Plan for a Professional Certificate in Applied Positive Education at The Shawnee Institute


Carolyn Gray  
*University of Pennsylvania, [cg@carolyngray.net](mailto:cg@carolyngray.net)*

Henry Narwhal  
*University of Pennsylvania*

Rosie Jaye  
*University of Pennsylvania*

Supakorn Laohasongkram  
*University of Pennsylvania*

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## Abstract

Modern education is largely focused on academic achievement, yet recent research has called into question whether academic learning is enough to foster and support mental and physical health across the lifespan. Mounting interest in more well-balanced educational approaches that integrate academic learning and character education have inspired the emergence of a new field called positive education. Despite a growing demand, comprehensive training in positive education remains limited. The Shawnee Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of positive education, aims to fill this void by launching a professional certificate in applied positive education. The following paper presents a tailored application plan for implementing a professional certificate program at The Shawnee Institute which includes a situational analysis of the education sector, as well as a literature review detailing the relevance of well-being theory, experiential learning, and personal and organizational change in education settings. The plan concludes with recommendations for professional competencies, a proposal for effective program implementation and evaluation, a detailed curriculum outline, and a sample learning module.

## Keywords

education, positive education, positive psychology, teacher training, teacher certification, well-being, experiential education, place-based education

## Disciplines

Elementary Education and Teaching | Junior High, Intermediate, Middle School Education and Teaching | Other Psychology | Other Teacher Education and Professional Development | School Psychology | Secondary Education and Teaching

Living and Teaching Well-being: An Application Plan for a Professional Certificate in Applied  
Positive Education at The Shawnee Institute

Henry Edwards, Carolyn Gray, Rosie Jaye, and Supakorn Laohasongkram  
University of Pennsylvania

A Service Learning Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
MAPP 702 Applied Positive Interventions

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# CERTIFICATE IN APPLIED POSITIVE EDUCATION

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## **Introduction**

The following paper presents an application plan for a professional certificate in applied positive education. It was developed by a team of graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania for The Shawnee Institute – a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of positive education. It is informed by an analysis of 1) The Shawnee Institute’s mission and services, 2) the education service sector, and 3) theories and interventions in positive psychology relevant to educators’ personal and professional growth, curriculum development, and school-wide change. The tailored proposal culminates with a list of learning competencies (Appendix A) and an outline for a comprehensive curriculum (Appendix C).

## **The Shawnee Institute**

The Shawnee Institute is a nonprofit learning ecosystem dedicated to human flourishing that was founded in 1998 by the Kirkwood family. The Institute is located on the campus of the Shawnee Inn Golf Resort which is owned and operated by the Kirkwood family and nestled in the majestic Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, a mere seventy miles from New York City and 100 miles from Philadelphia. The Institute reflects the Kirkwood’s long lineage of philanthropic leadership, collaborative commitment to social change, and deep family values of service and hope for a positive future. In its first years, the organization’s mission aimed to enhance the educational, cultural, and ecological resources in the Shawnee on Delaware community and surrounding areas. Initial services focused on enriching the local arts and humanities; hosting lifelong learning programs for active seniors; offering mind, body, and spirit wellness programming; organizing wildlife clean-up projects; and sponsoring initiatives for the food insecure (Road Scholar, n.d.; The Shawnee Institute, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d; The Shawnee Playhouse, n.d.).

While a commitment to enhancing the vitality of local and surrounding communities remains a key underlying theme of The Shawnee Institute, the organization's vision and scope broadened in 2015 with the adoption of a rejuvenated four-fold mission to cultivate creativity, innovation, and the positive effects of well-being on the human condition; train individuals to lead productive, flourishing lives; educate global well-being professionals, researchers, and practitioners; and bring together world-class leaders and scholars to address critical global issues (Shawnee Institute, 2017c). Phase one of implementing these new aims has included the continuation of the Institute's valued existing services, as well as the launch of a new genre of retreats focused on school-wide staff trainings (e.g. principals, teachers, coaches, and school administrators) in positive education and the science of well-being. These adaptable ten to thirty day trainings and seminars are taught by industry leaders including researchers and practitioners affiliated with The Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania and The Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center at Columbia University. The Institute hosted its first pilot training in January 2017, which included teachers, principals, and school administrators from The Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. A full training of staff from The Shipley School will be conducted and evaluated in the fall of 2017.

Trainings are hosted at The Shawnee Institute and open to both public and private academic institutions spanning all education levels. Like comparable professional development ventures and positive psychology consulting programs, The Shawnee Institute's trainings are fee-based, but unlike most programs they include room and board. Fees cover overhead expenses and direct costs including room and board, trainer salaries, and course materials. The long-term aim of the Institute is to diversify beyond its current endowment and revenue stream from the Shawnee Inn Golf Resort to include public and private grants in order to provide financial

assistance to underserved schools and increase the accessibility of its trainings.

In its next step toward becoming a global hub for the cultivation and advancement of education in human flourishing, The Shawnee Institute aspires to develop a more rigorous training program for education professionals. Specifically, the Institute will create a professional certificate (and eventual graduate degree) in applied positive education informed by the latest theoretical and empirical research. Graduates students from the Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) program at the University of Pennsylvania were recruited to assist The Institute in laying the groundwork for this professional certificate program including a preliminary set of learning competencies, an outline for a curriculum, and a proposed application plan for their implementation and evaluation.

### **The Science of Well-Being**

For most of the 20th century, mainstream psychology focused predominantly on the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. At the turn of the millennium, a new genre of scientific inquiry called positive psychology emerged to explore definitions of well-being that extend beyond the absence of physical and mental illness (Peterson, 2006). Positive psychology arose to expand the traditional scientific understanding of well-being to include dimensions of human flourishing and what it means to live a good life (Seligman, 2011). Numerous conceptual models of well-being have emerged since the field's inception. One of the most highly recognized frameworks is Dr. Seligman's (2011) PERMA construct, which denotes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement as the five foundational building blocks of well-being. Huppert and So (2013) highlight similar but slightly more delineated dimensions of well-being in their research, including competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem,



and vitality. Despite variance in the specificity or the level of domain in which well-being is defined, there is broad consensus that well-being is multidimensional, encompassing elements of both feeling good and functioning well (Adler, 2016; Huppert & So, 2013; Nikolaev, 2014; Prilleltensky et al., 2015; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Seligman, 2011)

### **An Overview of Well-being in the Education Sector**

The role of education in shaping quality of life is profound and far reaching (United Nations, 2015). Modern conceptualizations of education and its relationship to quality of life tend to be framed, however, through a lens of human capital (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization, 2016). The evolution of curriculum in primary, secondary, higher, and vocational education increasingly emphasizes academic achievement and the mastery of abilities and knowledge that facilitate productivity in the workforce (Jacob, 2017; Ladd, 2017; Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Teacher education and training reflect this trend, highlighting proficiencies in supporting, managing, and evaluating academic development and achievement (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2016). In addition, examination of the national teaching standards in the U.S. and beyond reflect a prevalent gap in instruction and guidelines for competence in self-care and methodologies by which teachers can cultivate their own well-being to enhance classroom learning (Education and Training Foundation, 2017; National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2016; New South Wales Education Standards Authority, 2017; Teacher Education Accreditation Council, 2014). At the same time, rising rates of attrition and chronic stress in educators has been correlated to escalating workloads, classroom sizes, frequent policies changes, and performance measures tethered to student testing outcomes (Ingvarson et al., 2005; Morgan & Craith, 2016; Tait, 2008; Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011; von der Embse,

Schoemann, Kilgus, Wicoff, & Bowler, 2017).

Modern education undoubtedly helps children, adolescent, and adult learners to develop knowledge and skills across domains of well-being. In fact, components of social and emotional learning are becoming increasingly embedded in public and private school curricula (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). However, education continues to fall far short of teaching the full, multifaceted layers of knowledge, strengths, feeling, and functioning that lead to holistic human flourishing across the lifespan (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullotta, 2015; Huppert & So, 2013). Sadly, most modern education systems lack the training, infrastructure, and curriculum for teaching the mindsets and abilities that foster character, connection, meaning, engagement, self-agency, and the multitude of other elements that facilitate happiness and well-being (Adler, 2016).

A new pedagogy of positive education has arisen to fill this void. Positive education embodies an integration of learning aimed at cultivating intellectual potential as well as character strengths and virtues (International Positive Education Network [IPEN], 2017; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). The growing footprint of positive education can be seen across the globe with schoolwide applications of well-being interventions, as well as the redesign of whole-state and national education curricula (Adler, 2016; IPEN, 2017). Applications of positive psychology in education have been correlated with the prevention and reduction of depression and anxiety, a decrease in behavioral problems, and improvements in social and emotional skills, academic achievement, and test scores (Adler, 2016; Brunwasser, Gillham, & Kim, 2009; Seligman et al., 2009). Evidence across studies also consistently highlights the importance of training in the effective implementation of positive education interventions and suggests that whole-system approaches that engage all levels of stakeholders (e.g. students,

teachers, principals, coaches, and staff) may provide the best environment for success and sustainability (Adler, 2016; Durlak et al., 2011; Lovat & Toomey, 2009; Seligman et al., 2009).

The last decade has seen an explosion in the number of programs and institutions implementing positive education and a growing interest in positive education resources and trainings (IPEN, 2017). This was well reflected in the 850 attendees comprised of researchers, students, teachers, principals, school administrators, policymakers, nonprofits, and others from over 30 countries who attended the International Positive Education Network's first international conference on positive education in 2016 (E. Larson, personal communication, January 27, 2017). Yet, despite the growing demand for positive education resources, few intensive education programs exist. Most of the current learning opportunities in positive education are comprised of brief online courses and one- to six-day trainings (Geelong Grammar, 2017; IPEN, 2015; Orego, 2017; University of Melbourne, 2017; Whole Being Institute, 2017). Although these training programs undoubtedly have impact, particularly on an individual classroom level, exemplar case studies in positive education suggest an in-depth, systematic, and holistic training approach helps facilitate the sustainability of school-wide positive education initiatives (Norrish & Seligman, 2015; White & Murray, 2015). In addition, lead researchers of whole-system train-the-trainer programs in positive psychology emphasize the importance of employing a long-term education approach focused on depth to ensure the adequate absorption of knowledge and skill (K. Reivich, personal communication, March 26, 2017).

The field of positive education is at a crossroads where the establishment of standardized core learning competencies and more vigorous training programs are needed to ensure the quality implementation and evaluation of positive education programs. The Shawnee Institute aims to bridge this gap by creating a comprehensive professional certificate program in applied

positive education comparable to the breadth, depth, and credit hours of existing professional certificate programs in positive psychology. The Institute plans to achieve this goal by collaborating with leading academic and research institutions like the University of Pennsylvania to develop an innovative curriculum for training a new generation of professional agents of positive change and well-being in education. Training professionals in education with the tools they need to lead healthy, engaging, and meaningful lives is the first step in building school environments and cultures that support the well-being of students, staff, and the communities in which they are embedded (Schelling & Harris, 2015).

### **An Analysis of the Literature**

To inform the development of learning competencies, a curriculum outline and a tailored application plan for a professional certificate in applied positive education, theoretical and empirical research in the following areas were explored: well-being theory, personal change, organizational change, and experiential learning.

#### **Well-being Theory**

Over the years, many constructs of well-being have been proposed. Among the most well-researched and broadly-applied framework in positive education is Martin Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, which denotes positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement as the fundamental dimensions or desired outcomes of well-being. The following section explores these domains in more detail and highlights their relevance in the context of education.

**Positive Emotions.** Barbara Fredrickson (2013), a leading expert on positive emotion, has identified ten key positive emotions that are most frequently experienced in daily life: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love. These emotions

create what Fredrickson calls a *broaden and build* effect. Fredrickson suggests that when a person feels positive emotion, one is more likely to *broaden* his/her perspectives and *build* personal resources and interpersonal ties (Fredrickson, 2013). Love and interest are two positive emotions that have been correlated with life satisfaction and pleasure in adults and hope has been shown to buffer against stress and adversity across the lifespan (Park & Peterson, 2009; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007). In younger populations, Froh, Seffick, and Emmons (2008) conducted an experiment with early adolescents and found that counting blessings was associated with decreased negative affect and improved self-reported gratitude, optimism, and life satisfaction. Several small-scale random controlled trial studies have shown preliminary evidence that goal setting interventions can promote hope in high school students (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007; Marques, Lopez, & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011).

**Engagement.** Engagement, or what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls flow, is the human experience of total involvement when immersed in a task that challenges one's skills. It embodies an effortless state of working at full capacity that emerges when individuals freely pursue goals that align with their interests and character strengths (Park et al., 2004). Although flow is largely unconscious and commonly characterized by an in-the-moment absence of emotion, people tend to emerge from flow with a sense of enjoyment and accomplishment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). There is some empirical evidence that school-based interventions can increase psychological capacities that support and facilitate engagement. Evidence from a random controlled trial evaluating the efficacy of positive interventions in ninth graders found that a strengths-based curriculum was associated with an increase in teacher- and self-reported student engagement (e.g. curiosity, love of learning, and creativity) in school (Seligman et al., 2009).

**Positive Relationships.** Social connection is also important for well-being. The research of John Bowlby, Harry Harlow, and Mary Ainsworth in the mid-20th century established the importance of child attachment to his/her caregiver (Peterson, 2006). In the ensuing decades, a mountain of research has accumulated illuminating the impact of quality social interaction and relationships on the experience and spread of positive emotion, self-concept, perceptions of belonging, resilience, personal growth, and learning (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Gable & Gosnell, 2011). The relationship between teacher and student is ripe with opportunity for shaping well-being. Roorda, Koomen, and Oort (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of ninety-nine studies and found that strong teacher-student relationships showed medium to large associations with student engagement, and small to medium effects on academic achievement. Furthermore, preliminary evidence from social network research suggests that the well-being of one person can positively affect the well-being of dyads and small groups which points to the potential role classroom culture can play in shaping well-being (Fowler, Christakis, Steptoe, and Diez, 2009).

**Meaning and Purpose.** Meaning and purpose are additional key tenets of well-being. Meaning is often conceptualized as *belonging to and serving something greater than yourself* and purpose is best understood as *a central, self-organizing theme of one's identity and life aims* (Kashdan & McKnight, 2009; Seligman, 2011). Meaning and purpose facilitate the development and pursuit of goals and provide a rich foundation of beliefs significant to managing life's obstacles (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Kashdan & McKnight, 2009). Evidence from developmental theory has long suggested that meaning and purpose are an important part of healthy identity development across the lifespan (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987). Adolescence, in particular, is a highly exploratory time salient to the early development of meaning and purpose. Several studies have shown a correlation between purpose and aspects of

adolescent thriving including hope, positive emotions, and identity development (Bronk, 2011; Bundick & Tirri, 2014; Burrow & Hill, 2011; Damon, Menon, & Cotton Bronk; Quinn, 2016). Meaning and purpose also translate to engagement in the classroom and academic performance. A study conducted by Yeager et al. (2014) found that when educators provided high school students with a reason beyond-the-self to complete assignments, the students stuck to challenging and monotonous tasks longer (Quinn, 2016; Yeager et al., 2014). Similarly, Hulleman and Harackiewicz (2009) showed that when tasked with writing a reflection on the personal relevance of a subject matter, low-performing ninth-graders showed more interest in what they were learning and earned higher grades. Meaning and purpose are salient aspects of well-being both in and outside the classroom. Although more research is needed to discern the best strategies for cultivating meaning and purpose in schools, it is clear that schools represent an appropriate context for the development of meaning (Hill, Burrow, & Sumner, 2013; Quinn, 2016).

**Accomplishment.** Many people pursue accomplishment, or the act of gaining mastery in a goal pursuit, as an intrinsically rewarding means to an end (Locke & Latham, 2002; Seligman, 2011). Goal setting is a fundamental aspect of the human experience, and self-determination theory suggests that goal achievement is a primary human need tied to well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Accomplishment is heavily correlated with grit, which Angela Duckworth (2007) defines as passion and perseverance in the pursuit of long-term goals. Research on entering West Point cadets and participants of The National Spelling Bee, has highlighted the role of deliberate and effortful practice in long-term goal achievement (Duckworth, Kirby, Tsukayama, Berstein, & Ericsson, 2010; Duckworth et al., 2007). Evidence also suggests that students higher in grit are more likely to graduate from high school (Eskreis-Winkler, Shulman, Beal, & Duckworth,

2014). Although these findings reflect small effect sizes, they emphasize the significance of passion and perseverance in achieving success in long-term and potentially difficult goals over and above qualities like talent, physical aptitude, and intelligence (Aknin, Dunn, Whillans, Grant, & Norton, 2013; Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). The importance of accomplishment is also reflected in Carol Dweck's (2008) concept of growth mindset or the belief that one's capacities and abilities are malleable and can be developed through dedication and effort. Several small studies of school-based growth mindset interventions were associated with an increase in grade point average among middle and high school students (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015).

**Vitality.** While not part of the PERMA construct, vitality is an aspect of well-being that has recently received more attention in education. Well-being derives not only from positive thoughts, feelings, and perceptions but their actualization through life-affirming behaviors, movements, and expressions (Shusterman, 2006). Physical activity is one of the most highly visible pathways through which the mind and body interact to facilitate well-being. It is linked not only to positive physical health outcomes but psychological benefits as well, including the prevention and treatment of depression, improved self-regulation of chronic stress and anxiety, enhanced quality of life in people experiencing chronic health issues, and increased positive affect (Faulkner, Hefferon, & Mutrie, 2015). Physical activity is of particular salience to the education sector as rates of obesity in children and young adults continue to rise globally (Ng et al., 2014). A meta-analysis of fifty-nine studies showed physical activity had a small to moderate effect on achievement and cognitive functioning in children (Fedewa, Fedewa, & Ahn).



## Personal Change

**Character strengths.** Virtues and character strengths are a foundational pillar of positive psychology and positive education (Gillham et al., 2011; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). One of the earliest philosophers in the discourse of well-being (*eudaimonia*) in education is Aristotle. For him, wisdom was a practical rather than a purely theoretical study (Aristotle, 1910). Aristotle believed that people must learn virtues through witnessing them in action and translating this awareness into practice. Confucius (2000) came to the similar conclusion. For him, the role of the teacher was to exemplify good character to students.

Thousands of years later, the literature in child and developmental psychology still affirms the crucial role of the teacher. Two of the prevailing perspectives on moral development include socialization/internalization and moral domain theory (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Kochanska & Askan, 1995; Kochanska, Askan, & Koenig, 1995; Smetana 2006; Turiel, 1983). The studies show how children learn moral skills both by 1) internalizing them from being around and witnessing adult role models and 2) through their interaction with social cues and responses from adults. This theoretical evidence eludes to the potential role of teachers in shaping the character development of students. Similarly, research in leadership points to how transformational leadership can affect the well-being of staff and colleagues (Joseph, 2015).

A three-year global study conducted by over fifty-three leading scientists identified twenty-four character strengths that fall under six overarching virtue categories, called Values in Action (VIA) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The six core virtues include: courage (e.g. bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest), humanity (e.g. love, kindness, and social intelligence), justice (e.g. teamwork, fairness, and leadership), temperance (e.g. forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-regulation), transcendence (e.g. appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope,

humor, and spirituality), and wisdom (e.g. creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, and perspective). Interventions encompassing these virtues and character strengths have been applied with promising results in education settings (Norrish, 2015; White & Murray, 2015). Evidence from several studies shows that after participating in VIA interventions, students demonstrated significant improvements in well-being, as well as cohesion, relatedness, positive emotion, and engagement (Oppenheimer, Fialkov, Ecker, & Portnoy, 2014; Quinlan, Swain, Cameron, & Vella-Brodrick, 2014; Wayment, Wiist, Sullivan, & Warren, 2010). Examination of the impact of character strengths-based interventions on teacher well-being remains to be studied.

**Mindfulness.** In recent years, mindfulness has emerged as an important element of education. Ellen Langer (2000, p. 220) defines mindfulness as “a flexible state of mind in which individuals are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context.” Several systematic reviews of randomized trials in mindfulness-based approaches have shown moderate evidence for improving negative psychological conditions, including anxiety, depression, and pain (Sleicher et al., 2014; Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010). Researchers posit that mindfulness decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety by improving self-regulation of attention, increasing awareness and relaxation of the body, increasing emotional regulation, and improving self-perception (Grabovac, Lau, & Willett; Hölzel et al., 2011). A handful of mindfulness-based approaches with children and adolescents have reported similar correlational findings. However, the majority of studies remain non-controlled, longitudinal, and feasibility-based (Kuyken et al., 2013; Tan, 2016; Tan & Martin, 2015). Overall, mindfulness-based interventions show promise in reducing dimensions of psychological stress but weaknesses in study methodology limit current conclusions regarding pathways of causation.

**Emotional Intelligence.** Teaching and school administration are emotionally demanding professions making the field of education a ripe setting for the investigation of Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Lee et al., 2016). EI is best described as “an ability to reason validly with emotions and with emotion-related information and to use emotions to enhance thought” (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016, p. 295). Mayer and Salovey (1997) break EI into four skill areas: learning, understanding, using, and managing emotions. In recent years, researchers have investigated how to impart and embed EI in teachers through workshops and retreats. In a study of pre-service teachers who attended an EI skills workshop, quantitative measures of EI did not improve significantly but qualitative data demonstrated that the workshop attendees gained greater awareness of and a capacity to develop EI (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012). These mixed findings are consistent with the results of several meta-analyses which highlight measurement challenges in evaluating and comparing EI interventions (e.g. measurement of EI as a trait or an ability) (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Although further research is needed to fully understand how the theoretical underpinnings of EI translate to and can be best measured in action, there is some rationale for EI’s value as a potential predictor of well-being (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010). Much of the theoretical grounding of EI stems from emotional regulation (management) research which has shown more consistent and stable findings (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Emotional regulation abilities have been positively associated with positive affect, principal support, job satisfaction, and personal accomplishment (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010). The latter of which is a preventative component of teacher burnout.

**Resilience.** Although operational definitions of resilience vary across fields, it is most commonly defined as a set of abilities that enable people to bounce back from, steer through, and

overcome adversities (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Research in resilience has focused on three domains: biological (e.g. endocrine and immune system functioning), environmental (e.g. availability of social support, cultural norms, and the quantity and nature of community stressors), and psychological (self-awareness, self-regulation, mental agility, optimism, self-efficacy, and connection) (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009; Masten, 2001; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Current research in the field of positive psychology highlights the plasticity of psychological attributes and their cultivable nature (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). A meta-analysis of the 17 controlled Penn Resilience Program evaluations found evidence that resilience-based interventions significantly reduce depressive symptoms through at least 1-year post-intervention (Brunwasser, Gillham, & Kim, 2009). Additional non-experimental research has correlated skill development in resilience with decreased anxiety and increased longevity, and effective stress management and problem-solving (Reivich et al., 2011; Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Additional research is needed to fully understand the causal and transactional dynamics of the psychological processes of resilience and their impact on positive psychological and physical health outcomes.

### **Organizational Change**

Theories of organizational change inform the planning and implementation of classroom-based and whole-system positive education culture and curricula. Contemporary case studies in positive education highlight a fusion of theories as well as old and new methods (Norrish, 2015; White & Murray, 2015). The school-wide implementation of positive education at Saint Peter's College (a K-12 boys school in Adelaide, Australia), for example, was heavily guided by John Kotter's famous eight step process of organizational change which includes 1) creating a sense of urgency, 2) building a guiding coalition, 3) forming a strategic vision, 4) enlisting a volunteer

army, 5) enabling action by removing barriers, 6) generating short-term wins, 7) sustaining acceleration, and 8) instituting change (Kotter, 2012; White & Murray, 2015). Despite their deficit or diagnosis-focused origin, traditional theories of organizational change offer valuable insight into dimensions of institutional change that are transferable to a positive orientation (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Cooperrider & Godwin, 2012). Historical trends in organizational study unveil phenomena like organizational intents, competencies, capacities, processes, outcomes, opportunities, and resources (e.g. people, culture, configuration, coordination, information, and technology) that are relevant to the understanding and design of institutional innovation (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Vollmann, 1996).

More contemporary organizational studies, including positive organizational scholarship (POS) and positive organizational behavior (POB), are explicitly grounded in assumptions of human potential and hold a positive orientation toward institutional change while still recognizing and responding to the challenges commonplace in organizational settings (Cameron & Caza, 2004). Both schools of thought introduce frameworks for examining organizational phenomena useful in uncovering new and untapped modalities for orchestrating positive change in educational ecosystems.

Positive organizational scholarship (POS) focuses on the examination and cultivation of optimal organizational attributes and processes that facilitate employee well-being (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). POS highlights the importance of organizational contexts, structures and methods in crafting environments where individuals and groups can thrive (Cameron et al., 2003). Although much of the literature in POS remains theoretical rather than empirical, there is preliminary evidence suggesting that strength-based professional development approaches, organizational connectivity (positive and respectful team communication patterns) and

virtuousness (e.g. organizational trust and optimism) are associated with higher employee performance (Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004; Cameron & Caza, 2004; Clifton & Harter, 2003; Vogus, 2004). Although few POS studies have been conducted in the education sector, POS offers a valuable conceptual framework for designing and cultivating school environments and cultures that facilitate positive work and learning trajectories (e.g. mentorship opportunities, professional development and training, collaborative team approaches, policies that celebrate accomplishment, etc.) (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011)

Positive organizational behavior (POB) addresses the positive-oriented state-like character strengths and psychological capacities that can be developed and enhanced for wellness and performance in the workplace (Luthans, 2002). Research has consistently shown that malleable state-like human capacities such as self-efficacy (confidence in and mastery over one's experiences and successes), hope (willpower and waypower to achieve one's goals), optimism (expectations of positive outcomes based on positive causal attribution), and subjective well-being (affective and cognitive evaluation of one's life satisfaction) can be cultivated to enhance performance across various work domains (Luthans & Church, 2002; Shane, Snyder, Fred, & Carolyn, 2009). Evaluation data from a randomized controlled study of Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE), a mindfulness-based professional development program, showed evidence that mindfulness resulted in significant improvements in teacher efficacy, burnout and stress, and well-being in the workplace (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013). Similar to POS, much more needs to be studied and learned about POB in educator populations. However, POB illuminates how the use of interventions and trainings that build psychological capacities can be mobilized to induce, maintain, and grow positive pathways for change in education systems.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is an emerging positive discipline of organizational development that is both theoretical and prescriptive. AI is a collaborative method of discovering the best in people and organizations that is grounded in several key assumptions and principles (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008). AI entails a practice of asking questions aimed at enhancing an organization's ability to anticipate and maximize its positive potential through a series of four cycles: the discovery phase, dream phase, design phase, and destiny phase. AI has been applied in the context of organizational development, change management, and process evaluation across diverse work sectors and is highly prevalent in the growing field of positive education (Cockell, 2012; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008; Norrish & Seligman, 2015; Ryan, Soven, Smither, Sullivan, & Vanbuskirk, 1999; White & Murray, 2015). Reflective narratives from these applications hint at the potential of AI as a resource in transforming educational ecosystems. Two of the most widely referenced applications of AI in education include the AI Summits conducted at Geelong Grammar School and Saint Peter's College. Both summits informed the development of holistic school-wide positive education initiatives at the two schools. Despite AI's growing popularity and promising outlook, evaluative studies of the approach remain sparse. More research is needed to fully determine and understand the mechanism by which AI generates short- and long-term organizational change (Grant & Humphries, 2006; Van Der Haar & Hosking, 2004).

### **Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning (EL) is the acquisition of knowledge through experience and reflection. Modern conceptualizations of experiential learning incorporate a variety of educational techniques including immersion learning, service learning, action learning, and lifelong learning (Kolb, 1984). The roots of experiential learning go as far back as *Nicomachean*

*Ethics* in which Aristotle (1910) suggests the things we must learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. Aristotle's notion of learning by doing emerged in educational theory with the publication of John Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938/1963). Dewey believed that an educator's role is to cultivate opportunities to explore purposive experiences and assist learners in reflecting on those experiences in ways that build on their former knowledge, cultivate curiosity, and enhance motivation (Thomas, 2014).

David Kolb expanded on the work of Dewey to develop a four-stage experiential learning model including 1) engagement in a concrete experience, 2) reflective observation, 3) abstract conceptualization, and 4) active experimentation (Kolb & Fry, 1975). Kolb suggested that by progressing through the experiential learning cycle learners move from states of "embeddedness, dependence, and reactive responding to states of self-actualization, self-determination, and pro-action" (Kolb & Fry, 1975, p. 41).

Similarly, research on mindful learning provides exploratory evidence suggesting that how educators teach is just as impactful on learning as what they teach (Langer, 2000). According to Langer, "learning requires mindful engagement with the material in question" and there are at least two ways to achieve this attentiveness (p. 220). The first relies on the educator's ability to teach in ways that encourage mindfulness and open-mindedness. The second focuses on the personal motivation of the learner. Langer's research on conditional teaching suggests that an open-minded teaching style allows learners to sustain performance even as the rules of the game change. Mindful learning highlights that successful learning requires much more than efficacious curricula. Motivations for learning and the way individuals are primed for learning play a large role in the quality of the learning experience (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).



### **Implications of the literature**

While this review is not an exhaustive representation of the abundance of theoretical and empirical evidence emerging from the field of positive psychology and education, it highlights central themes that can inform the development of teaching competencies, a curriculum outline, and an application plan for a professional certificate program in applied positive education.

First, PERMA + Vitality fits well with the needs of educators and students. It is comprehensive yet concise, and each element can be embedded in classroom and school policy and culture.

Second, although additional research is needed to clarify causal pathways across the domains of personal change, organizational change, and experiential learning, theoretical understanding from these fields offers insight into the ways character strengths, mindfulness, resilience, emotional intelligence and regulation, and experiential learning can cultivate teachers both as personal agents and professional stewards of well-being.

### **Application Plan**

#### **Foundation and Values**

The aim of The Certificate in Applied Positive Education (CAPE) Program at The Shawnee Institute is to *empower educators as personal and professional agents of positive change*. By embedding positive psychology into the lives of educators through a holistic and comprehensive living and learning program, CAPE seeks to enhance first the well-being of the teachers and then the students, schools, and communities they touch. Educators are at the core of the CAPE model as they play a pivotal role in the learning and well-being of students and the communities in which they are embedded.

There are three essential values or pillars of the CAPE Program. These include the individual, the experience, and the community. Each pillar plays a critical role in the success of

the other two and in the overall benefit of the CAPE Program.

The first pillar focuses on the individual. In order to effectively teach others what well-being is and how to cultivate it, it is pivotal that educators first and foremost live and breathe well-being themselves. The health and well-being of educators and school administrators is an important first step in cultivating an effective and positive learning environment. Shusterman (2006) highlights the heart, mind, and body as the interconnected dimensions in which individuals can embody flourishing. The CAPE Program embeds learning across all three of these dimensions through diverse content and learning approaches, including outdoor and place-based education strategies.

The second pillar embodies the CAPE Program's emphasis on building an engaging learning environment that nourishes and supports both personal growth and academic learning. Situated on the majestic campus of The Shawnee Inn Golf Resort, the CAPE Program offers an unparalleled place for educators to learn and practice positive psychology principles through a unique, nature-enriched education experience.

Finally, the third pillar captures the CAPE Program's community-based approach to learning the science of well-being. Given its orientation toward whole-school training, the program focuses on crafting a supportive cohort learning community that fosters high quality connection (e.g. interactions that are mutually felt and sensed and have lasting positive implications) and positive social relationships (Dutton, 2003). The CAPE Program aims to curate learning opportunities and environments that allow participants to develop lasting social bonds that will translate into their school environments and facilitate the effective implementation of positive education initiatives.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Given the applicability and familiarity of PERMA and the significance of vitality reflected in the well-being research in education, it is proposed that the CAPE Program adopt PERMA + Vitality as a framework for curriculum development (Faulkner et al., 2015; Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2015; Seligman, 2011; Shusterman, 2006). Since PERMA was developed by Martin Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania, a collaborating partner of The Shawnee Institute, the CAPE Program can capitalize on research, experience, and contacts in positive psychology research and instruction. Character strengths, resilience, and mindfulness, for example, are skills and abilities central to teacher and student well-being that have been well studied by scholars at Penn (Seligman & Peterson, 2004; Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Reivich, Seligman, McBride, 2011; Amishi, Krompinger, Baime, 2007). Although Penn faculty and alumni by no means represent the full array of scholars and practitioners working in the fields of positive psychology and positive education, The Institute's relationship with Penn marks an advantageous starting point for cultivating a pool of experienced and knowledgeable trainers to assist in launching the CAPE Program.

### **Domains of Professional Competency**

Professional competencies provide a useful framework for 1) designing a comprehensive curriculum and syllabus, 2) creating a common vocabulary to enhance clear and consistent expectations across stakeholders, 3) developing assessment measures for evaluating the acquisition of knowledge and skills and 4) creating transparency that helps current and prospective participants understand the objectives and demands of the course work (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2011). The goal of the CAPE competencies is to capture the aims, scope, and content deemed essential for designing, implementing, and evaluating a curriculum

for a professional certificate in applied positive education (refer to Appendix A). The competencies reflect the theoretical foundation and anticipated well-being outcomes (e.g. positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, and vitality) of the CAPE Program. These outcomes are achieved through the acquisition of awareness, knowledge, ability, and skill across six primary learning domains, including self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, intellectual skills, and somatic awareness. Each of these domains and their respective dimensions and content are informed largely by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) core social and emotional learning competencies; formats and structures from proficiency models in related fields; and published syllabi from university-based positive education coursework (American Board of Professional Psychology, 2017; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2016; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2015; University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center, 2017).

The six learning domains of the CAPE competency model are not mutually exclusive but rather overlap to reflect their dynamic and interdependent role in the PERMA + Vitality well-being outcomes. The competencies in each domain embody both foundational or enabling (e.g. knowledge, awareness, and attitudes) and functional (e.g. behaviors, actions, and practices) capacities and skills that represent guideposts for achieving success in applying positive education principles and programming.

One of the challenges of developing standardized competencies for a certificate in applied positive education is the wide variety of functions, roles, and contexts within the profession. It is precarious to presume that all educational professionals will need to demonstrate or be able to appropriately apply the same degree or variety of capacities and skills

across their work domains and education settings. Therefore, the CAPE Program competencies are intended to be responsive to participants with varying 1) points of entry into the field of positive education and 2) points of application of positive education in their respective roles and professional settings.

### **Modes of Learning**

The primary modes of learning central to the delivery of the CAPE curriculum include: reflective learning (e.g. coursework that enables students to step back and critically apply their learning to their own lives and experience), integrative learning (integrated lessons that allow students to formulate and build connections across curricula domains), cohort-based learning (e.g. learning environments that offer opportunities for members to learn from, support, and bond with one another), applied learning (e.g. lessons that allow students to apply knowledge and skills gained in the classroom to real-world settings), and experiential, place-based learning (e.g. curricula that immerse students in local culture, landscapes, and experiences to reiterate, supplement, and/or solidify knowledge and skills) (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Fenning, 2004; Huber & Hutchings, 2004; Smith, 2002; University of Melbourne, 2009). In addition, the CAPE competency model reflects The Shawnee Institute's mission to cultivate agents of well-being who can apply the tenets of well-being science to enhance flourishing in their own lives, as well as the well-being of students, schools, families, and communities.

### **Curriculum Elements**

Based on The Shawnee Institute's ambition to advance training in positive education, and its explicit desire to create and offer an intensive MAPP-inspired training in PE, it is proposed that the CAPE Program consist of approximately 224 hours of direct, onsite instruction, plus 112 hours of web-based distance learning modules after each onsite. These instruction hours reflect

guidelines used in university course development for the Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) program at the University of Pennsylvania (L. Brandwene, personal communication, March 14, 2017). The length of onsites and their timing during the year has yet to be determined, but two structures are suggested (Refer to Appendix B). One model is a one-year, two-semester program that follows the traditional American university schedule. First semester classes would begin in September and end in December. After the winter break, classes would begin again in January and end in May. Another model would have students spend 12 days in the summer at The Shawnee Institute, then go to The Institute for 10 monthly two-day weekend onsites. Feasibility research must be conducted to determine what schedule structure will best meet the needs of The Shawnee Institute's target population.

The instruction and learning will be broken into two terms. The theme of the first term will be "Learning and Living Positive Psychology." During this term students gain an in-depth understanding of the PERMA + Vitality construct and apply it to their lives. The instruction and learning theme of the second term is "Positive Education: Practice, Application, and Institutional Transformation." During the spring term, students gain a deep understanding of positive education research and practice and how to apply it in their educational setting. The last onsite will feature an Appreciative Inquiry Summit where students learn how to create school- and system-wide transformation for positive education (Waters, White, Wong, & Murray, 2015).

Primary instruction during onsites will occur at The Shawnee Inn Golf Resort where The Shawnee Institute is housed. Each onsite (OS) will have a theme or set of themes (Refer to Appendix C). Learning during onsites consists of approximately eight hours of instruction with a one-hour lunch and several breaks throughout the day. Each onsite is followed by a distance learning (DL) period that encompasses independent online learning and participation in

discussion forums.

The primary instructors of the CAPE Program will be leading scholars in positive psychology and positive education, such as Martin Seligman, Angela Duckworth, and Karen Reivich. Highly qualified assistant instructors, ideally drawn from the Penn Resilience Program and graduates from the Penn MAPP program, will assist primary instructors in teaching the experiential and interactive aspects of the curriculum (Seligman, 2011). The student-teacher ratio will be approximately ten-to-one, with an enrollment of forty students, one primary instructor, and three assistant instructors. This ratio is derived from feedback gathered from professional trainers with extensive experience in the fields of positive psychology and positive education (K. Reivich, personal communication, March 26, 2017). It is, therefore, recommended that the student-to-trainer ratio be assessed and monitored through process evaluation.

Applications of applied learning, an additional tenet of the CAPE Program, are guided by a 60:40 ratio derived from the best practices and expertise of master trainers from the Penn Resilience Program (K. Reivich, personal communication, March 26, 2017). The 60:40 ratio suggests that 60% of instructional time be spent embedding skills in the domain of personal development and 40% of training time be dedicated to applying these newly acquired skills in a professional setting. Understanding well-being theories and interventions and experiencing them first hand is an important pathway to becoming a successful educator and steward of well-being science in educational settings (Rechtschaffen, 2014).

Experiential learning (EL) is another integral part of the CAPE curriculum, and The Shawnee Institute provides an exceptional environment for EL. Outdoor activity and exposure to nature has been positively associated with increased subjective vitality (e.g. feeling energetic, alert, and fully alive), autonomy, and positive affect (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2011; Ryan et al., 2010). Available activities include mindfulness in nature, poetry and writing outdoors, place-based education that incorporates the human and natural history of the Shawnee area, and

challenge/team-building activities including an optional “solo” experience similar to those offered in Outward Bound courses (Kalisch, Bobilya, & Daniel, 2011). The CAPE Program will capitalize on the outdoor fitness opportunities at The Shawnee Inn Golf Resort, including biking, disc golf, fishing, hiking, canoeing, skiing, and horseback riding to explore learning in vitality related theory and develop capacities and skill in the domain of somatic awareness. Somatic awareness encompasses a cluster of capacities relating to the exploration of sensations and movements, the expression and release of emotion, and the utilization of the body in experiencing and responding to intuition. Awareness of the connection between the mind and body is essential to understanding the human condition across all domains of life (Shusterman, 2008) (Refer to Appendix A).

The CAPE curriculum is designed to maximize absorption through multi-modal instruction and well-balanced solo and group instruction time. While content learning and retention is critical, one of the central learning goals of the CAPE Program is the development of transferable positive education skills. The integration assignments during distance learning periods are intended to allow participants to gain hands-on experience in their home institution(s) applying positive techniques and interventions in their respective areas of interest and work domains (e.g. curriculum development, lesson planning and instruction, and the development of school culture, policy and administration).

To maximize participant learning of the science of well-being, it is recommended that the CAPE Program utilize a pass/fail grading matrix instead of traditional grade-based marks. Research indicates that grading schema can impact student well-being (Reed, Shanafelt, Satele, & Power, 2011; White & Fantone, 2010). Several studies suggest that graduate and medical school students graded with a pass-fail system have less perceived stress, lower emotional



exhaustion, and greater group cohesion than peers evaluated with letter grade scales (Reed, Shanafelt, Satele, & Power, 2011; Rohe et al., 2006). A standardized grading pass/fail matrix should be developed to evaluate assignments and all CAPE instructors, and assistant instructors should be trained on how to effectively and accurately apply the matrix to ensure consistent and reliable participant evaluation. Pass/fail grades will be accompanied by written appreciative constructive feedback from instructors and fellow students (in cases of group assignments and discussion posts), to help highlight exhibited knowledge and encourage future learning. Peer review has been shown to increase students' self-efficacy in responding to criticism effectively and providing constructive feedback to others, skill sets highly relevant to real world education and work contexts (Anewalt, 2005; Black & Wiliam, 1998). Active engagement in reviewing the work of peers has also been associated with learning gains and students' increased contribution to their own knowledge construction (Li, Liu, & Steckelberg, 2010; Zhi-Feng Liu & Chun-Yi Lee, 2013)

Follow up and iterative learning are important means of ensuring sustainable results in positive psychology and positive education interventions that use train-the-trainer models. Lessons learned from the Penn Resilience Program and the U.S. Army Ready and Resilient Program illuminate the importance of accessing continued post-training support and resources to ensure lasting results (Reivich & Saltzberg, 2017; Gillham, 2017). It is therefore recommended that The Shawnee Institute consider the development of a digital learning platform where resources (e.g. course materials, recorded lectures, featured topic videos) can be disseminated and an alumni community can network, celebrate success, and share resources, tips, and creative ideas. Webpage design and maintenance can be a cumbersome endeavor, so the development of a multiphase technology plan is advisable. An incremental plan will allow The Institute to start

small (e.g. posting lecture notes, class resources, and discussion feeds for current participants) and grow in accordance with the organization's size and services. The Shawnee Institute can also leverage its partnership with the University of Pennsylvania to borrow expertise in the use of Canvas, and other digital learning platforms in current use at Penn.

### **Proposed Evaluation Plan**

To test the feasibility and effectiveness of the CAPE curriculum, an online survey will be developed and disseminated to a convenience sample of potential participants. This will include a broad range of stakeholders, including principals, teachers, coaches, students, researchers and trainers in positive education and positive psychology. These stakeholders will be encouraged to assess aspects of the plan including:

- The effectiveness of the curriculum in translating positive psychology theories and interventions into educational practice.
- The relevance of curriculum content and practices in a global and multicultural context.
- The feasibility and applicability of achieving the capacities and skills of the CAPE Program.
- The accessibility of the location, trainer availability, and the feasibility of frequent onsite, travel expenses, time off work, etc.

Getting feedback from a wide range of stakeholders will help ensure the necessary refinement of the CAPE Program before it launches and will help ensure the program is intimately tailored to the needs of potential participants.

Once the program launches, CAPE will implement pre- and post-tests for all participants to assess shifts in functional and foundational skills and capacities across the CAPE competency

domains (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, somatic awareness, relationship skills, and intellectual skills). The Shawnee Institute's partnership with Penn researchers will be helpful in establishing the best measurement tools to assess change across these domains.

Measuring participant proficiencies pre-program will be useful not only as a baseline to compare to post-test measurements but also as a guidepost for instructors in working with the natural strengths of participants and their specific points of entry into positive education. The ongoing development of capacities and skills across the six CAPE competency domains will also be captured and assessed through the evaluation of course assignments.

The suggested professional competencies outlined in Appendix A should be considered an instrument under development. It is recommended that The Shawnee Institute disseminate the CAPE professional competencies to experts and leaders in the field of education to gather feedback for their refinement. It is further recommended that the proposed proficiencies be frequently compared to The Institute's curriculum materials and participant evaluation data to assess for accuracy, comprehensiveness, and feasibility.

Finally, although participants' effectiveness in translating their acquired knowledge and skill to the classroom (e.g. tracking student-level outcomes) is a tertiary level of evaluation that is beyond the preliminary scope of the CAPE Program and The Shawnee Institute's current resources, processes and strategies for evaluating the impact of positive interventions in school settings are embedded in the curriculum. Participants of the CAPE Program will gain the knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively evaluate positive education interventions in their home institutions (Refer to Appendix A). While The Shawnee Institute does not currently provide direct management and oversight of classroom and school-based evaluation, it is recommended that the organization develop a brief twelve-month participant follow-up survey to identify

lessons learned in the field (e.g. positive outcomes, as well as ineffective strategies) that may illuminate areas for refinement in the CAPE curriculum and competencies.

### **Limitations and Future Considerations**

In developing the foundation for a certificate program in applied positive education, graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania were tasked by The Shawnee Institute to dream big and to focus on breadth using the Master of Applied Positive Psychology Program as an exemplar model. The creation of a lofty and expansive working product was intended to enable The Shawnee Institute to refine and pare down the content as the organization gains more awareness of and experience working with its new target population (e.g. educators and schools). Given the CAPE Program's orientation toward an ideal, several limitations of the application plan present themselves. First, the extensive nature of the curriculum requires frequent onsite visits that may be prohibitive for a whole-school training approach. As discussed in the evaluation plan, extensive feasibility research will need to be conducted. Similarly, the number of credit hours of the program aligned more closely with a master's degree program. Participants may not be incentivized to undertake the CAPE workload if it does not result in a full degree. Market research on professional certificate programs in related fields may assist The Institute in paring down the program to become the industry standard for the requirements of a professional certificate in applied positive education.

A second limitation of the CAPE Program is its heavy dependence on faculty, trainers, and alumni of the University of Pennsylvania. As noted earlier, this is largely due to The Shawnee Institute's existing relationship with Penn faculty. With experience and time, the intent of The Institute is to form mutually-beneficial collaborations with experts and institutions across the full expanse of the fields of positive psychology and education. However, in its

infancy, teachers and trainers will largely reflect the Institute's existing working relationship with Penn.

Similarly, the curriculum reflects recommendations for teaching faculty that are lead researchers in their respective fields and likely have limited availability to take on additional teaching obligations. These endorsements again reflect an ideal and are in service of a request by The Shawnee Institute to highlight individuals who hold expertise across the CAPE Program competency domains.

Another notable limitation of the CAPE Program is its fee structure. Although comparable to industry standards, the cost of the program may be prohibitive for underserved schools which can present issues of equitable access. The equitable dissemination of positive education is not a topic unique to The Shawnee Institute. It remains a focus of attention and topic of discourse across positive education overall. As noted earlier, The Institute's aim as it grows its endowment and secures more grants is to build a platform for scholarship assistance.

Accessibility for individuals with disabilities is a fourth important consideration in the future development of the CAPE curriculum. Special care and consideration needs to be made to ensure that each experiential learning component has a modification plan that meets the needs of participants and instructors with disabilities.

Finally, since The Shawnee Institute and The Shawnee Inn Golf Resort staff will be intricately involved in shaping the culture of the CAPE Program, it is recommended that staff be extended access to training in positive psychology. In order to facilitate a holistic and inclusive learning ecosystem, it is important that The Institute establish an institutional value that celebrates and supports the personal growth of employees. The implementation of this training could take many forms including a phased-in approach starting with the Institute staff, followed

by executive and administrative leadership at the Resort, service and support staff and so on.

### **Conclusion**

The Shawnee Institute seeks to empower educators as personal and professional agents of positive change by offering the world's first in-depth positive education training. The Certificate in Applied Positive Education (CAPE) capitalizes on the four-fold mission of the Shawnee Institute, its natural setting on the Delaware River, and its relationship with the University of Pennsylvania and other global education institutions. The three pillars of the CAPE Program - the individual, the experience, the community - support learner absorption, enhance social support and quality connection, and equip educators to become agents of positive change in their own lives, their teaching, and their institutions. CAPE Program participants will learn to embed the PERMA + Vitality well-being construct in their lives and develop knowledge and skill across six competency domains in positive education including: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, intellectual skills, and somatic awareness. The CAPE Program is an innovative and unique learning program that strives to accelerate the application of well-being science in education settings – a powerful means toward global human flourishing.

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## Appendix A: CAPE Professional Competencies

### Self Awareness

Proficiencies in the domain of self-awareness represent a cluster of capacities and skills relating to the cultivation of an accurate understanding of one's personal values, thoughts, emotions, motivations, goals, and strengths and their effects on self-identity, self-efficacy, the social environment, and professional practice.

- Develops an increased awareness of one's authentic presence and sense of self.
- Is able to identify and differentiate emotional states; demonstrate understanding of the impact positive emotions have on a range of physical, psychological, and social outcomes; and apply techniques and strategies to cultivate positive emotions.
- Articulates knowledge of theories in self-determination, autonomy, and self-agency and their relevance to the personal application and teaching of well-being.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the science of character strengths and how personal strengths can be applied to cultivate well-being in oneself, students, and professional colleagues.
- Is able to evaluate and reflect on one's motivations, desires, and strengths as a tool for enhancing engagement in life, clarifying what is most meaningful in one's life, and reconnecting with one's spark for work in the field of education.
- Recognizes the impact personal values and life experience have on one's professional practice and demonstrates an ability to manage this influence in a constructive and appropriate fashion.
- Illustrates an understanding of the importance personal growth and self-care play in effective professional practice.
- Gains practice and familiarity with teaching modalities of introspective dialogue grounded in self-compassion.
- Demonstrates an appreciation for self-reflection and lifelong learning as integral parts of personal and professional development and knowledge of methods for sustaining reflective teaching, coaching, and management practices within an educational setting.
- Demonstrates knowledge of self-efficacy theory and how to identify, communicate, and cultivate self-efficacy in one's own life.
- Gains first-hand experience practicing activities and crafting environments that foster self-efficacy in students, teachers, parents, colleagues, and/or others.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the science and theories of well-being and can articulate their relevance in one's personal and professional life through first-hand experience applying positive psychology activities and interventions.
- Is able to identify the contexts and psychological processes that shape possibilities for well-being (e.g. how, when, and why flourishing is experienced in one's own life).
- Articulates awareness of one's capacity to inspire and lead.

## Self-Regulation

Proficiencies in the domain of self-regulation encompass capacities and skills relating to the regulation of internal capacities including values, motivations, goals, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings that guide behavior and actions. Impulse control, stress-management skills, self-discipline, motivation, goal-setting skills, mindfulness, and realistic optimism are all internal psychological processes that affect the quality of human experience.

- Demonstrates knowledge of resilience theory and methods of cultivating resilience in oneself and others.
- Is able to identify personal patterns of responding to stress and adversity and can teach methods of cultivating this awareness to students and colleagues.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the psychological determinants of resilience and the role cognitions play in shaping well-being.
- Is able to distinguish common cognitive distortions and apply various techniques for disputing them.
- Acknowledges and appreciates ambiguity and things that lie outside of one's locus of control.
- Demonstrates knowledge of goal setting theory and the role goals play in the pursuit of well-being.
- Recognizes the dimensions of clear and measurable goals, is able to craft well-defined goals and maps for goal accomplishment, and can teach these skills to students and colleagues.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the research on mindfulness, its physical and psychological benefits, and basic techniques for its cultivation.
- Gains first-hand experience practicing meditation in order to experientially explore the range of benefits associated with mindfulness and enhance one's informed knowledge of how to apply mindfulness-based techniques in educational settings.
- Possesses awareness of fixed and growth mindsets and can distinguish between the two.
- Illustrates knowledge of explanatory style, the role optimism plays in the management of stress and resilience, and the attributes of realistic optimism.
- Is able to compare and contrast techniques for cultivating optimism based on empirical evidence and first-hand experience in their application.
- Demonstrates awareness of theories of motivation and methods to enhance motivational processes.
- Understands the role of motivation in academic and professional performance and how to create learning and professional environments that motivate people to be at their best.
- Illustrates awareness of the value of play and the role it serves in stress-reduction and well-being.



- Is able to identify and develop strategies for incorporating play into one's personal and professional domains.
- Develops personal strategies for cultivating calm and using adaptable thinking during times of challenge through the personal exploration of positive interventions.
- Is able to demonstrate the importance of seeking out and utilizing the support of others in managing stress and overcoming adversities.

## Social Awareness

Proficiencies in the domain of social awareness encompass capacities and skills relating to the awareness and appreciation of other's feelings and beliefs, perspective taking, empathy, recognition of group dynamics, and respect for diversity. All of these play an integral part in the development and maintenance of quality social interaction that affirms personal and workplace well-being.

- Demonstrates knowledge of Emotional Intelligence theory and can articulate its relevance across multiple dimensions of well-being.
- Illustrates an understanding of perspective-taking and the role it plays in resilience and healthy relationships.
- Demonstrates an ability to identify the strengths, values, and needs of others including students, parents, and colleagues.
- Is able to recognize and appreciate all behavior, including challenging behavior and demonstrate an understanding of how to apply appropriate strategies for managing and learning from conflict.
- Demonstrates familiarity with and the appropriate use of communication techniques including active inquiry and reflective listening that help increase one's ability to accurately recognizing the feelings, needs, and values of others.
- Increases one's sensitivity to the nuances of change in the social environment to become a more capable facilitator of positive change and well-being.
- Illustrates a capacity to value diversity, seek out cultural knowledge, and continually assess one's cultural responsiveness and sensitivity.
- Is able to cultivate opportunities that celebrate diversity and enhance well-being and professional practice.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the constructs of empathy and compassion, the distinction between the two, and the role one plays in enhancing leadership skills and accurate understanding of others.
- Recognizes the role social awareness plays in effectively advocating for and promoting the needs and interests of others.
- Demonstrates an understanding of social awareness as an important dynamic of organizational life.

- Illustrates an ability to assess organizational culture and an understanding of its effect on workplace well-being.

## Relationship Skills

Proficiencies in the domain of relationships skills encompass a cluster of capacities including effective communication, constructive conflict resolution, team-building and cooperation, transformational leadership, and giving and receiving social support. An ability to build and maintain quality relationships is an essential cornerstone of living a meaningful, engaging, rewarding, and full personal and professional life.

- Develops an understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors that can facilitate and interfere with effectively employing positive communication behaviors.
- Illustrates knowledge of and applied practice in positive communication frameworks and techniques including positive active listening, active constructive responding, reflective listening, and positive introductions.
- Demonstrates an ability to assemble, translate, and introduce clear and useful explanations of positive psychology principles and research in educational settings.
- Illustrates knowledge of the core principles of high quality interaction and an ability to take inventory of one's existing skills and areas for growth in crafting high quality interactions.
- Articulates an understanding of how modalities of communication impact workplace relationships, energy levels, and performance.
- Displays self-awareness of and an ability to assess one's constructive and counterproductive patterns of communication and how they impact team and group environments.
- Exhibits knowledge of the principles and dynamics of team effectiveness.
- Gains first-hand experience practicing methods and strategies that facilitate inclusive, transparent, cooperative, and adaptive teamwork.
- Illustrates knowledge of system change and positive organizational development theories, as well as approaches for creating and contributing to environments that foster connection, celebrate wholeness, and embrace social capital.
- Is able to articulate the importance of modeling positive and healthy behaviors for students, parents, and colleagues.
- Demonstrates awareness of gratitude-based interventions and their applied application.
- Exemplifies knowledge of research in transformational leadership and experientially explores techniques for enhancing one's ability to inspire others to be at their best and to resolve conflict in constructive and positive ways.
- Is able to leverage authenticity, integrity, empathy, and honesty to earn the trust of others.

- Illustrates knowledge of social support theories and how they can be applied to co-create environments where students, colleagues, and parents feel seen, valued, safe, engaged, and supported.

## Intellectual Skills

Proficiencies in the domain of intellectual skills represent a cluster of analytical capacities that support productive and positive behaviors and choices informed by evaluation, reflective analysis, ethical responsibility, and flexible thinking and problem solving. An ability to make informed decisions, assess their consequences, and implement related cognitive and behavioral refinements is a foundational element of personal growth and professionalism.

- Demonstrates knowledge of problem-solving appraisal theories and techniques and their applied application in everyday life and learning settings.
- Is able to think beyond presenting issues, identify patterns and gaps in information, and balance multiple perspectives in reaching conclusions, strategizing solutions to challenges, and setting new directions.
- Illustrates knowledge of the role flexible thinking plays in resilience and framing setbacks in constructive ways that emphasize opportunities for strengths development.
- Demonstrates awareness of theory and research in creativity and its impact on innovative problem-solving and solution finding.
- Conveys a basic understanding of the theories, assumptions, approaches, and language of positive psychology and positive education.
- Is able to critique definitions of “the positive” in positive theories and applications.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the principles of scientific investigation, research methods, and the research-practice loop.
- Illustrates skill in critically consuming social science research, including an ability to interpret and understand basic statistical terminology.
- Is able to evaluate the efficacy of theories and interventions in positive psychology and positive education.
- Demonstrates an ability to integrate theory and scientific evidence in the design and implementation of tailored positive education applications.
- Is able to determine appropriate methods for evaluating positive interventions in personal and professional settings and how to refine interventions accordingly.
- Demonstrates awareness of current ethical guidelines and principles pertaining to the fields of traditional and positive education and is able to employ informed methods to reconcile competing values between the two.
- Is able to identify the limits of one’s practice and know how and when to seek advice and outside expertise.

- Understands the need to monitor the quality of one's practice in positive education, identify the limits of one's practice, and seek advice and outside expertise when appropriate.
- Acknowledges the evolving nature of scientific inquiry in positive education and the need to remain current on the latest methods and research emerging from the field.

## Somatic Awareness

Proficiencies in the domain of somatic awareness encompass a cluster of capacities relating to the exploration of sensation and movement, expression and release of emotion, utilization of the intuition of the body, orientation towards the present, and maximization of savoring. Sensations, perceptions, emotions and thoughts culminate in the expression, movement, and utility of the body. Awareness of the connection between the mind and body is essential to understanding the human condition across all domains of life.

- Demonstrates knowledge of mind-body research and somatic theories and interventions
- Develops somatic awareness of feelings, emotions, and moods as they are felt in the body.
- Gains practice experientially exploring a range of somatic activities (e.g. dance, art, theater, musical expression, exploration in nature, and mindfulness) and their potential benefits.
- Demonstrates familiarity with transformational learning processes that include sound, breath, touch, and imagery and their application in educational settings.
- Illustrates awareness of meditation and exercise science and the physical and psychological benefits of both.
- Develops and models a positive vocabulary for exploring awareness of the body
- Demonstrates integrated knowledge of somatic applications, creative expression, and performance.
- Conveys a basic understanding of the research on experiential versus materialistic spending and savoring.
- Begins to cultivate a personal repertoire of somatic strategies for expressing and relieving counterproductive thoughts and emotions, enhancing engagement, fostering accomplishment, and boosting positive emotion.

Appendix B. CAPE Program Application Plan Snapshot

<b>Program</b>	Professional Certificate in Applied Positive Education (CAPE)
<b>Academic Partners</b>	The University of Pennsylvania and The Positive Psychology Center
<b>Program Intent</b>	The CAPE Program seeks to empower educators as personal and professional agents of positive change.
<b>Description</b>	The CAPE Program aims to introduce professionals in the field of education to the primary theories, research, and interventions in the field of positive psychology and their application to educational settings. The aim of the program is for participants to 1) acquire knowledge and skills to enhance their personal flourishing and 2) increase their capacity to appropriately and effectively apply positive psychology principles and interventions in education settings to enhance the well-being of students, parents, colleagues, and schools.
<b>Program Location</b>	The CAPE Program is based at the campus of The Shawnee Institute in Shawnee on Delaware, Pennsylvania which is 70 miles from New York City and 100 miles from Philadelphia.
<b>Applicants</b>	The CAPE Program is designed for teachers, coaches, counselors, principals, administrators, and other professionals working in schools and institutions in the domain of lifelong learning.
<b>Entry Requirements</b>	A bachelor’s degree is strongly preferred but not required.
<b>Competencies</b>	The CAPE Program aims to increase competencies across six core domains including, self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, intellectual skills, and somatic awareness.
<b>Subjects</b>	The subject content of the CAPE Program includes but is not limited to theories of well-being, positive interventions, positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, character strengths, resilience, mindfulness, and vitality.
<b>Assessment</b>	A standardized pass/fail grading rubric is used to assess participant’s knowledge of and skill in the course content. Assignments include reflection papers, class presentations,

	personal well-being plans, curriculum development plans, teaching notes, and a culminating project paper.
<b>Core Teaching Team</b>	The teaching team consists of master and doctorate level professionals with backgrounds in positive education, positive psychology, and related fields.
<b>Program Length</b>	CAPE is a one-year, part-time program
<b>Program Calendar</b>	<p>To be determined</p> <p><b>Option 1.</b> (includes three-day onsites)  <u>First Semester</u>                      September - 5 day Immersion Week                      + Onsite 1                      October - Onsite 2                      November - Onsite 3                      December - Onsite 4</p> <p><u>Second Semester</u>                      January - Onsite 5                      February - Onsite 6                      March - Onsite 7 &amp; 8                      April - Onsite 9</p> <p><b>Options 2.</b> (includes two-day onsites)  <u>First Semester</u>                      Summer - 12 day Immersion Week                      September - Onsite 1 &amp; 2                      October - Onsite 3                      November - Onsite 4                      December - Onsite 5</p> <p><u>Second Semester</u>                      January - Onsite 6                      February - Onsite 7                      March - Onsite 8 &amp; 9                      April - Onsite 10</p>
<b>Fees</b>	To be determined. Includes room and board, program materials, and meals.

## **Appendix C: Coursework Outline & Five-Day Immersion Week Curriculum Plan**

### **First Term**

#### **Onsite 1: Immersion Week: Positive Emotion, Mindfulness (1), Relationships, Vitality, and the Science of Positive Psychology (1)**

Suggested teaching team: Martin Seligman, Michael Baime, Cory Muscara, John Ratey, Barbara Fredrickson, Jane Dutton, Claire Robertson-Craft & assistant instructors (AIs)

Distance Learning 1 Assignments: reflection, readings, writing assignments, Mood Meter data collection, one blog post, create a mindfulness and vitality plan, create a positive emotions and HQC plan.

#### **Onsite 2: Mindfulness (2), Character Strengths, and the Science of Positive Psychology (2)**

Suggested teaching team: Cory Muscara, Ryan Niemiec, Claire Robertson-Craft, & assistant instructors (AIs)

Distance Learning 2 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Development of Personal Well-Being Plan and Implementation

#### **Onsite 3: Resilience, Meaning,**

Suggested teaching team: Karen Reivich, John Gottman, AIs, and IPEN Teacher Resilience Training Team; Emily Esfahani-Smith, Robert Vallerand, James Pennebaker & AIs

Distance Learning 3 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Development of Personal Well-Being Plan and Implementation

#### **Onsite 4: Engagement, Accomplishment, and Grit**

Suggested teaching team: Angela Duckworth, Carol Dweck, & AIs

Distance Learning 4 Assignments: Reflection, “This I Believe” presentation, Readings, Development of Personal Well-Being Plan and Implementation, Curriculum Development for Culminating Project

#### **Onsite 5: Integration→ Life plan and Spreading Well-being**

Suggested teaching team: AIs and student presentations

Distance Learning 5 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Development of Personal Well-Being Plan and Implementation, Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Culminating Project (design and implement a well-being project for administrators/faculty/staff who work at your educational setting.)

### **Second Term**

#### **Onsite 6: Introduction to Positive Education**

Suggested teaching team: Martin Seligman & IPEN (Emily Larsen and team), AIs

Distance Learning 6 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Curriculum Development & Teaching

**Onsite 7: Introduction to Positive Education (2)**

Suggested teaching team: Peggy Kern (EPOCH), Kristján Kristjánsson, AIs  
Distance Learning 7 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Curriculum Development & Teaching

**Onsite 8: Best practices in positive education: Emotional Intelligence and RULER**

Suggested teaching team: Marc Brackett (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), AIs  
Distance Learning 8 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Curriculum Development, Teaching, & Site-based Project (SBP)

**Onsite 9: Best practices in positive education: Current global positive education landscape and case studies**

Suggested teaching team: IPEN (Emily Larsen et al.), AIs  
Distance Learning 9 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Curriculum Development & Teaching, Site-based Project (SBP)

**Onsite 10: Institutional change: Appreciative Inquiry**

Suggested teaching team: David Cooperrider lead AI summit based on Saint Peter's College AI summit (Waters et al., 2015)  
Distance Learning 10 Assignments: Reflection, Readings, Curriculum Development, Teaching, & Site-Based Project (SBP) (Culminating Project: Design and implement a well-being project for "students," i.e, the targeted positive education recipients at your educational setting)



**Appendix D: Sample CAPE Program Brochure**

