

Keynote Address

John Medina

Dr. John J. Medina is a developmental molecular biologist focused on the genes involved in human brain development and the genetics of psychiatric disorders. He has spent most of his professional life as a private research consultant, working primarily in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries on research related to mental health.

The Brains behind Executive Function: Definition of EF and why you should care

Executive function is a set of mental processes that helps connect past experience with present action. People use it to perform activities such as planning, organizing, strategizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and managing time and space.

How Does Executive Function Affect Learning?

In school, at home or in the workplace, we're called on all day, every day, to self-regulate behaviour. Executive function allows us to:

- Make plans
- Keep track of time and finish work on time
- Keep track of more than one thing at once
- Meaningfully include past knowledge in discussions
- Evaluate ideas and reflect on our work
- Change our minds and make mid-course corrections while thinking, reading and writing
- Ask for help or seek more information when we need it
- Engage in group dynamics
- Wait to speak until we're called on

People with Self Control have high levels of executive function and high executive function is a high predictor of success

John debunked the left and right brain 'thing' and brain gym exercises - no evidence that these are in anyway founded (*interesting!*)

Aerobic Exercise is crucial for executive function - a difference noted in 12 weeks but need a 3 year commitment to this. Executive Function can be improved through aerobic exercise. Exercise specifically boosts EF and helps cope with stress.

150 mins a week i.e. - 5 days a week, 30 minutes of brisk walk will do (you have to walk too fast to sing!)

Are our fitness programmes helping our students improve their executive function?

Breakout

Clare Major, University of Melbourne - Teachers as Architects – A Learner Centred Approach to Differentiation & Personalised Learning

Important prerequisites to allow this to happen in the classroom

- Relationships (teacher:student, student:student etc)

- Learning environment
- Curriculum design (how and what)
- Physical environment
- Socio cultural environment

3 considerations for teachers:

1. **I am present** - being present opens up dopamine expands attention and being able to attend
2. **I see you** - building the learning relationship, noticing, liking, understanding. Tracking (non-directive, non-judgemental, non-questioning) and empathetic understanding (reflecting back the feelings associated the learning experience)
3. **I am committed to your learning** – knowing the interests of the learner

Breakout

Dr Kate Bertram

Illawarra Christian School, NSW

What role does the staff room play in the contemporary school?

What is needed to create better spaces for teachers to work, innovate, collaborate and mentor one another?

If we change the spaces, will the way teachers work change?

The standard of old models of schooling are rapidly fading away

Teachers are working as facilitators, co-learners, mentors, guides...

The classroom, both virtual and physical, is adopting new ways of working and learning for students but staff rooms haven't changed for decades

Two agendas re shaping the traditional office workspaces

Cost effectiveness / productive ratio

Changes in work culture and enhancement of the quality of work experience

Staff room and staff work places need to be:

- Modern aesthetically pleasing presentation
- Open flexible space
- High speed wireless – Connectivity is key
- Latest mobile and fixed technology
- A culture of trust and mutual understanding
- Focus on performance enhancement
- Equitable access to necessary resources

What should our staff room look like/be furnished like?

Day 2 Thursday 2nd October

Breakout

What is An Education Worth Having? Putting the learner at the centre of Teacher Professional Learning Elizabeth Lonergan, Pearson Professional Learning

- Allow for and adapt around student voice
- Incorporate life skills and leadership opportunities
- Opportunities for collaboration

- Opportunities for students to do volunteer work
- Teachers that inspire and motivate
- Teachers who will work to find 'who I am'?
- Allow students to grow as individuals
- Being able to interact with a range of people

The 2007 UNESCO Report Four Pillars of Learning still relevant (to our Charter and Curriculum)

- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to be
- Learning to live together - with passion

Keynote Address

Richard Gerver: Entrepreneurs in Education - the need to be an 'edupreneur' leader

Richard Gerver has been described as one of the most inspirational leaders of his generation. He argues, however, that great leadership is about serving the needs of the people that work for you and rely upon you. The three core principles that underpin Gerver's philosophy are communication, empowerment and impact.

Rate of change has become exponential partly because of technology.

The world is moving so fast that we feel we can't keep up.

First reaction of this is fear - most people think of change as 'something that happens to them'.

We come adverse to change as we think it is someone else's agenda however change is not 'happening to us', we are part of the change. In many ways we just accept change (e.g. the change from a typewriter to a computer is a change none of us even question) so we need to accept change in everything and be part of it.

We need to accept change so it is not stressful. Stress symptoms:

- Anxiety/apprehension when something new suggested
- Tension/ rigidity in novel situations
- Self mediates - alcohol or medication
- Tendency to complain

Teachers are at the heart of helping students with the changes.

Need commitment to professional behaviour - stop the 'buts'

Look for the gaps not the obstacles

Quote from: Steve Wozniak - "The teacher who most inspired me was the one who took an interest in me and made me feel that I could do anything. At apple we never employed anyone who needs managing". *This is where MLEs will come into their own.*

Breakout

Building a Learning Community – The Education Group

Key questions - *to think about for Bayfield...*

What are the key elements of building a Learning Community within our context

How can we be sure all our learning hubs are working to the same level of excellence - consistency of pedagogy. What aligned practices will drive consistency of teaching and learning across the communities

Describe what good looks like in your room, all rooms, all year groups

Work with colleagues to develop indicators, illustrations, rubrics, to shape that understanding of 'good'. Be able to ask the evaluative question - how am I doing against this criteria

Make sure Goals are ISMART and ACE:

iSMART goals

- Inspiring
- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely

+

ACE goals have:

- Action
- Clarity
- Energy

By.... (Timeframe)

I am/have.... (Changed practice)

With the intention that/so that.... (Learner outcomes/benefits)

Breakout

Dr Deidre Le Fevre Supporting Educators in Navigating the Challenges of Change
University of Auckland

Change for Improvement

- Identifying priorities and maintaining coherence - achieve a balance of stability and change
- Surviving the 'implementation dip'
- Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better so don't jump in too soon

Resistance is part of change

Support for risk changes

Navigating perceptions of risk

Change involves uncertainty loss vulnerability

It is how you see yourself makes it scary

Overarching Challenges in Change which is relevant to moving into an MLE

- Analysis and use of student achievement data with others
- De-privatising classroom practice
- Questioning the beliefs and practices of others
- Changing assessment and/or teaching practices

- Need to actively reduce feelings of risk
- Need to see valued outcomes for learners
- Create supportive environments for risk taking

Talking about change has the potential to empower people to work with challenges inherent in change to work towards accepting

Breakout

Building a High Performance Culture – Leadership Keys to Energised and Successful Learning
Wilma Culton, Serpell Primary School, Victoria

Need a holistic culture

- What impression do we want to give visitors? Values should be evident
- Our cups and trophies show we strive for excellence and aspirational student focus
- Learning focused
- Articulate clear and achievable goals
- Credible
- Focused on relationships

Deep culture keys:

- Assumptions - how do we learn
- Beliefs - schools as a place of learning
- Values - inclusive practices
- Norms - expectations
- Patterns of behaviour
- Artefacts
- Curriculum
- Agreed and consistent teaching practice
- Pedagogy founded on reliable research
- Ongoing support for learning for everyone

Building teacher capacity

- Planned, targeted professional learning
- Strong team leaders
- Distributed power and responsibility
- Team structure
- Observation of authentic practice
- Feedback on practice

Relationships are key

Overall Provocations and Thoughts

- Change is everywhere, it is exponential and we are all part of change
- Relationships are key – teachers must know their learners
- More Wifi, twitter walls...
- Quote that stuck: the only way to become a good writer is to read, or have good writing read to you – *are we reading quality novels to the students?*

Thank you for the opportunity to attend this conference.
Sheryl Fletcher

