# Peer to Peer

Teacher Wellbeing

The Layers of Mental Health

Mental Health and Wellbeing can be very complex and are made up of different factors that can influence us on a daily basis. It is therefore really important to understand yourself and your team so that you are able to identify triggers that influences your wellbeing, and put effective support in place.

The onion analogy is to demonstrate that our wellbeing is 'fluid' and can change depending on what is happening for us personally at any given moment. Some days or weeks you may be able to take on more because your stress and anxiety in these different areas are low, but when your stress and anxiety in these areas are high, you may be overwhelmed by your workload and other factors, leading to a sense of overwhelm, burnout or low wellbeing.

In this workshop we aimed to discuss what wellbeing looks like for us individually and how we can identify triggers and put support strategies in place for times of high stress and anxiety, we also looked at our basic human need for connection and belonging and the impact that loneliness can have on our wellbeing and finally we looked at how leaders can reduce and streamline systems and structures in order to reduce workload for their staff.

Thank you Jana for this excellent analogy!
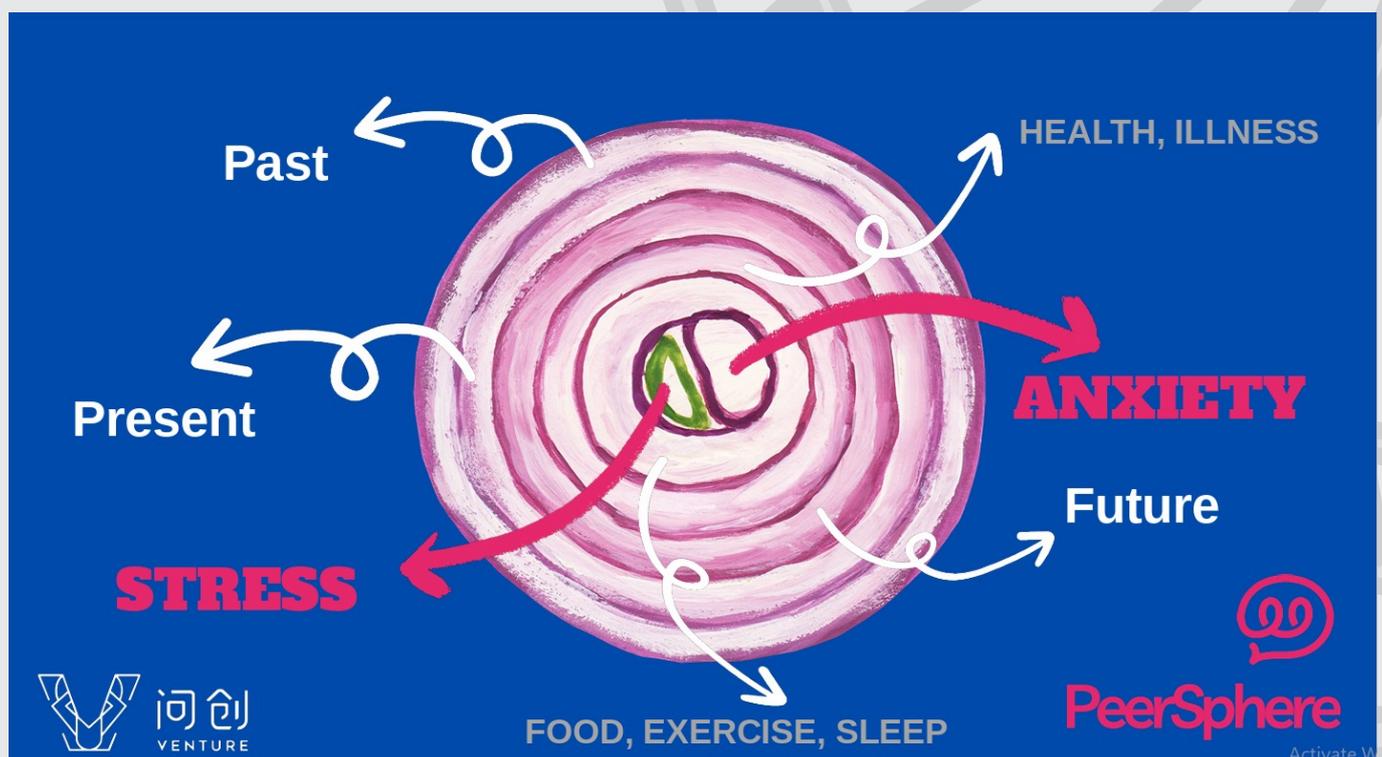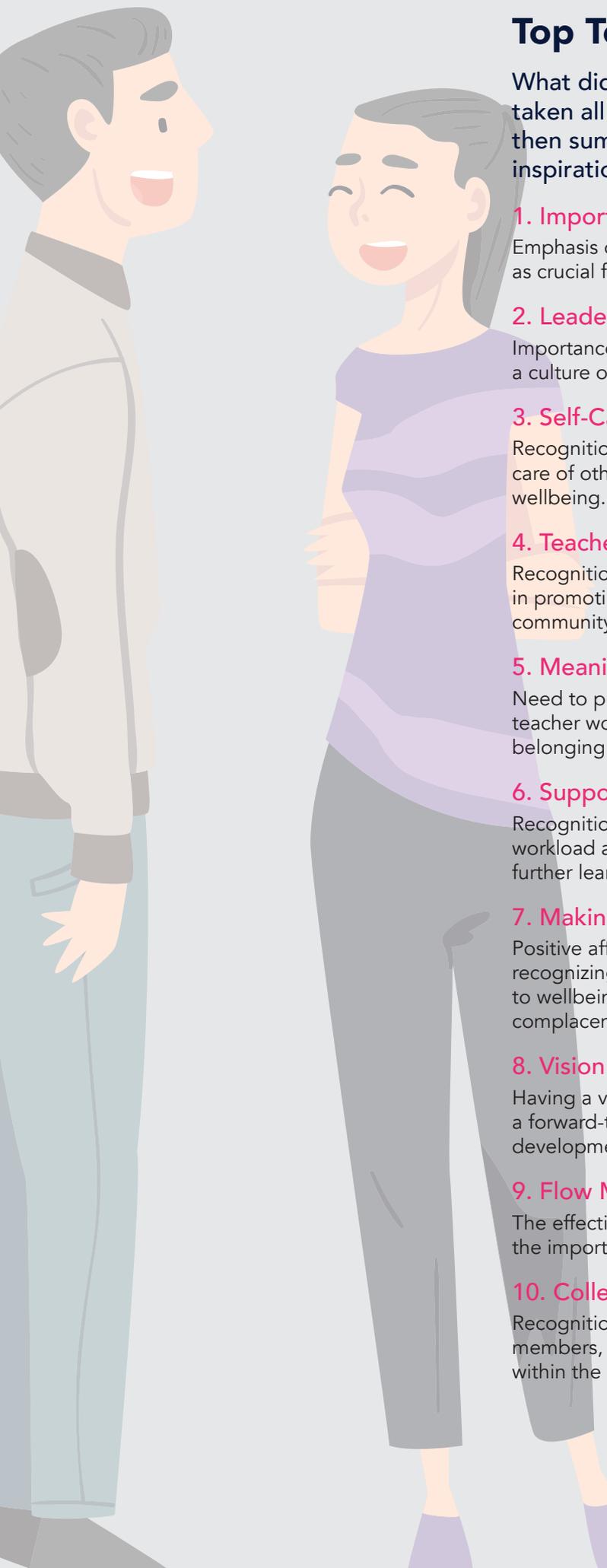
Top Ten Takeaways Ranked!

What did P2P teachers find most valuable? We've taken all 75+ takeaways, grouped them by frequency, then summarized them here using the main ideas and inspiration teachers took with them from the day.

1. Importance of Relationships and Trust:
Emphasis on building relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging as crucial factors for teacher wellbeing.

2. Leadership Role in Wellbeing:
Importance placed on communication, collaboration, and creating a culture of trust among staff members.

3. Self-Care and Health:
Recognition of the need to take care of oneself first before taking care of others, along with different platforms for catering to staff wellbeing.

4. Teacher Autonomy and Voice:
Recognition of the vital role of teacher autonomy and voice in promoting wellbeing and building trust within the school community.

5. Meaningful Challenge and Feedback:
Need to provide opportunities for meaningful challenge within teacher workload, along with meaningful feedback and a sense of belonging to alleviate stress.

6. Support Systems and Resources:
Recognition of different ways of supporting teachers and offloading workload at different levels, along with providing resources for further learning and consistency in implementing school policies.

7. Making a Difference and Being Dedicated:
Positive affirmations of making a difference in students' lives, recognizing each other as important resources, and the dedication to wellbeing with excellent systems in place while avoiding complacency.

8. Vision for Future Self as an Educator:
Having a vision for one's future self as an educator, suggesting a forward-thinking approach to personal and professional development.

9. Flow Map and Feedback Tools:
The effectiveness of flow maps in aiding understanding, along with the importance of meaningful feedback for staff wellbeing.

10. Collective Wellbeing:
Recognition of the collective commitment to wellbeing among staff members, indicating a strong sense of community and support within the school environment.

For School Leadership

Summarised from all of the responses, these were the top 5 areas that teachers felt schools and leaders could better support teacher wellbeing:

1. Creating a Culture of Collaboration and Autonomy

Encouraging collaboration and autonomy among teachers to foster a sense of ownership and empowerment in decision-making processes.

Example: Establish structures and processes that empower teachers to hae a voice in school policies and practices.

2. Building Trusting Relationships

Developing trusting relationships between leaders and teachers through active listening, genuine care, and meaningful participation in decision-making.

Example: Be visible and available to teachers, demonstrating genuine care and support for their wellbeing.

3. Managing Workload

Addressing workload concerns by providing resources, support tools, and open communication channels for teachers to effectively manage their responsibilities.

Example: Open lines of communication for teachers to express workload concerns and provide feedback on workload distribution.

4. Promoting Teacher Voice and Feedback

Empowering teachers to share their perspectives and feedback, and integrating their voices into decision-making processes to create a culture of inclusion and mutual respect.

Example: Give teachers a voice in decision-making processes and show them the changes you have made based on their feedback.

5. Being Authentic and Open to Discussion

Fostering an environment of authenticity and openness where teachers feel valued, heard, and supported in discussing wellbeing concerns and collaborating on solutions.

Example: Build trust with teachers by sharing why certain policies are in place and decisions made.

Breakout 1:

The Power of Connection: Supporting colleagues for improved wellbeing

As leaders and colleagues, we can create a more positive work environment by offering support and building strong relationships. In this break-out room, teachers discussed ways to recognise when colleagues may be struggling and how to offer support.

Together we, as teachers, can foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of distress or loneliness in the workplace.

1. Activities that support staff feeling connected through shared interests

Organizing team-building activities or interest-based groups can help staff bond over common interests, strengthening connections and camaraderie among colleagues.

2. Empowering middle leaders to identify signs and symptoms of when colleagues are struggling and reporting these concern

Providing training and resources to middle leaders enables them to recognize signs of colleagues in distress and create a supportive environment where concerns can be addressed promptly and confidentially.

3. Strategies for creating positive teams and work environments

Implementing strategies such as regular team meetings, recognition of achievements, constructive feedback, and fostering a culture of appreciation and collaboration can contribute to a positive and supportive work environment.

4. Encourage open communication and support among colleagues

Promoting a culture of open communication, active listening, and mutual support encourages colleagues to share ideas, concerns, and resources, fostering collaboration and problem-solving within the team.

5. Resources available to support colleagues in need

Providing information about available support resources, such as counseling services, employee assistance programs, or professional development opportunities, and facilitating access to these resources can assist colleagues in need and demonstrate organizational support for staff wellbeing.

"Its good to see other teachers facing the same concerns: how to balance all of the different expectations placed on us from parents to leadership to students"
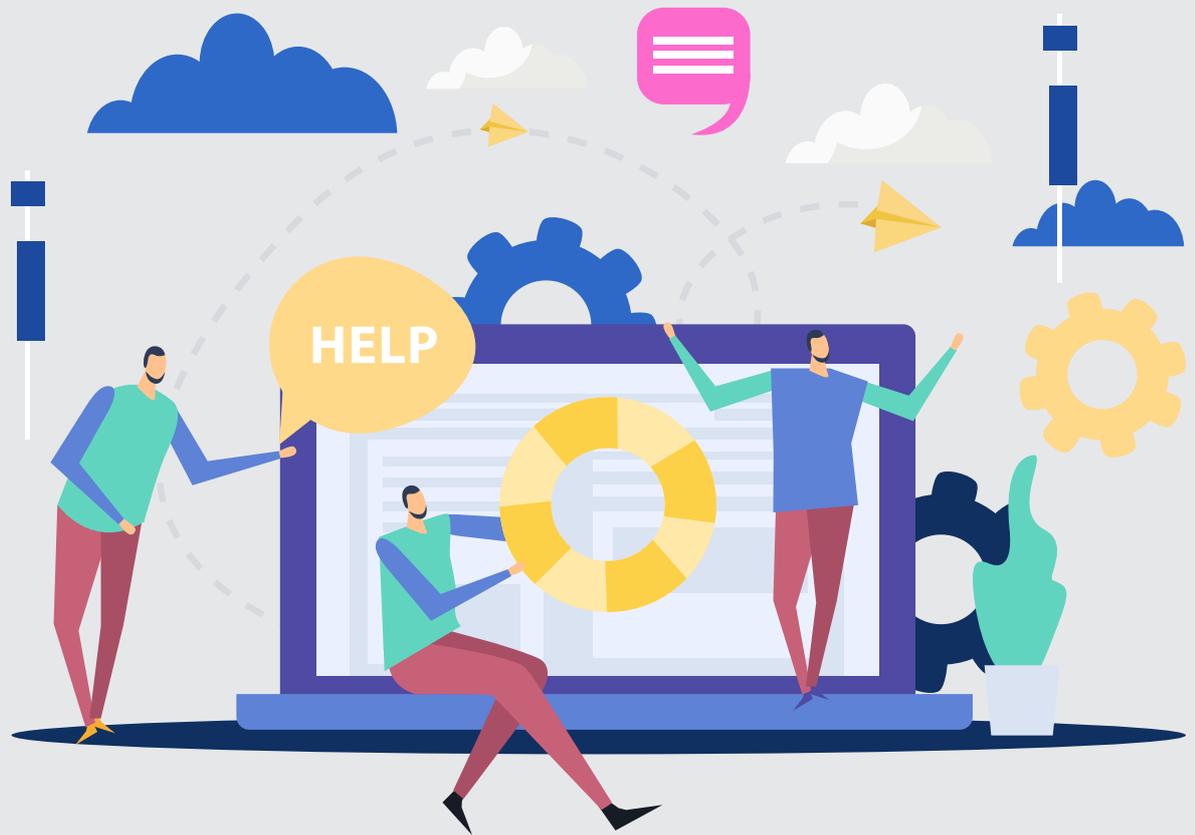
Breakout Session 2

Streamlining for Success: Supportive systems to enhance teacher wellbeing

In this session, teachers focused on optimising processes and systems within educational settings to promote success and enhance teacher wellbeing. By implementing supportive structures and strategies, teachers should be able to better cultivate an environment that empowers educators and fosters their professional growth and satisfaction.

1. Giving teachers the 'Why'

Explaining why teachers should implement a new policy or change their teaching methods in a certain way allows them to feel part of the conversation and also have stake in the outcome of the change. Explain how it helps them, be transparent and open.

2. Commit to just one takeaway

When providing new support systems and new ideas for PD, don't try to remember everything or try to enforce everything at once. Allow yourself and others to remember just one thing that resonated with them to try to implement.

3. Use your colleagues' expertise

Teachers have a wealth of personal experience and knowledge that is often untapped, take advantage of the experience in your team to designate people as experts in a certain sector. This encourages them to develop as to retain the expert title and helps other teachers know where to look for support across various areas.

4. Autonomy is with the teacher

Teachers need an environment in which they can try new things and evaluate the success themselves. Teachers can identify their own needs and their appraisals can be about how they have worked to solve their own solutions, trusting them to do so, before turning to extended support systems.

"NQTs are the most up to date on the latest research and practise – we should use their expertise to update our teachers too! Though they may lack experience, their knowledge should be celebrated and shared to support the whole team"

"Teachers should be allowed to fall forward and be allowed to take risks"

Breakout 3:

Wellbeing From Within

This session dove into the concept of teacher wellbeing from an internal perspective, emphasising self-awareness and proactive strategies to cultivate mental and emotional health. Participants explored techniques for recognising personal stressors, building resilience, and implementing self-care practices to foster a sustainable sense of wellbeing.

1. Identifying clues that perhaps you're not coping

Identify the obstacles that block your own self care whether that is a superhero mindset; lack of support; a perceived lack of self-worth. Identifying these impediments is the first step in moving towards better mental wellbeing.

2. Building resilience and understanding stress

A liitle bit of stress is necessary, the importance is knowing when it is too much and you are being overwhelmed. Building resilience through various tools and excercises should hopefully mean you never get to the point of being unable to cope.

3. Stress Management

Look inwards to what works best for you. We are all individuals: what are your greatest dreams/aspirations; which people in your life are most important to you; what possessions are most important to you. These things that you value and make you feel better can all be used to manage your own stress.

4. Individual responsibility

You have to make the decision to manage your stress. When looking inward, see what you can control and leave behind that which you cannot. Decide to impliement areas of enjoyment, as small as they may be, more frequently into your life. Investigate what are your triggers and what are things that bring you joy. To find wellbeing from within, it is important to be proactive in bringing stress relievers into your life to balance the inevitable stress.

"Self being is very important, you need to take care of yourself first before taking care of others"

"You cannot be complacent when it comes to your own mental wellbeing"

Thank You to our Hosts!

WELLINGTON COLLEGE
CHINA
惠灵顿(中国)

"Thank you Wellington Tianjin! You have a great school, it was the perfect location"

"The snacks were great!"

"It was a great event, thank you for hosting Peer to Peer in Tianjin, I hope more events will be hold here!"

"Thank you for a lovely afternoon of learning and sharing, valuable connections and opportunities to learn from each other. Much appreciated!"

"Tianjin College is such a wonderful school with a great atmosphere!"

"Thanks to everyone at Wellington College who supported this event! I learned alot"

"Thank you very much Wellington Tianjin: a warm atmosphere and a lovely collaboration"

PeerSphere

Tomorrow calls for new collaborations and connections.

Connect to Peers
And learn together

We build thriving communities for education professionals that want to collaborate and solve meaningful problems related to their role.

All of our 2023/24 communities are up and running with peers from over 100 international schools!

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Or contact Carenza on:
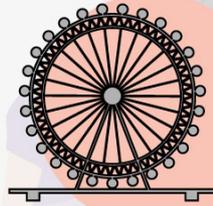carenza@ventureeducation.org

Peer to Peer

Interactive Peer Sharing and Learning for all School Staff

A participant-driven gathering of educators providing the opportunity to connect in-person, share practices, and explore common professional inquiries.

Venture 问创 · **PeerSphere**

Shanghai
Jan 20
Multi-Lingual Learners

Tianjin
Feb 24
Teacher Wellbeing

Beijing
Mar 16
AI in the Classroom

Nanjing
May 18
Student Agency

Hangzhou
Apr 25
Diversifying Leadership

Chengdu
June 8
Intercultural Relationships

Guangzhou
Sept 7
First 90 Days for Leaders

Wuhan or Fuzhou
Oct 19
Assessment for Learning

Shenzhen
Dec 7
DEI & Recruitment

Ningbo
Nov 9
Pastoral Care

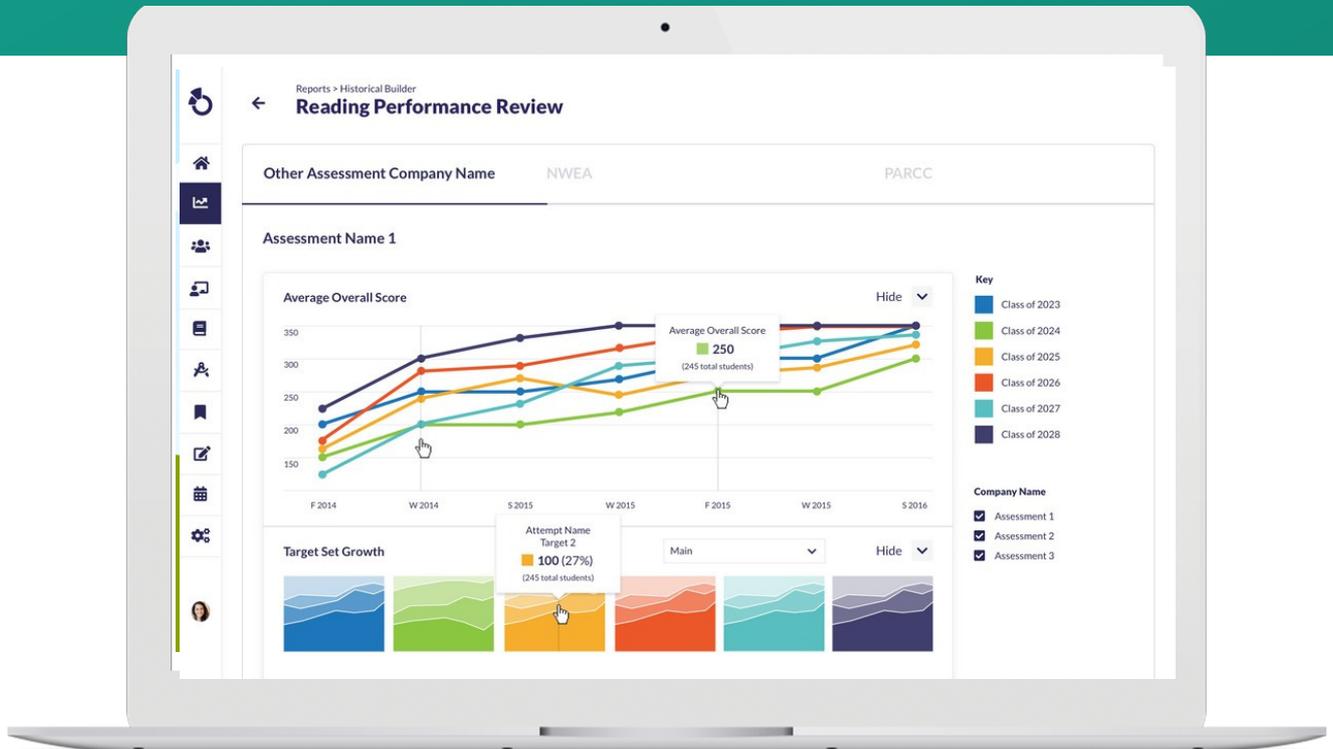**All times and locations will be shared closer to the date**

Scan the QR for more information!

Free for all PeerSphere members and Venture Subscribers
300 RMB per participant

Teach Better

Analyse student data to better understand student' academic, social, and emotional well-being

Reports > Historical Builder
Reading Performance Review

Other Assessment Company Name   NWEA   PARCC

Assessment Name 1

Average Overall Score   Hide ⌄

Average Overall Score
250
(245 total students)

350
300
250
200
150

F 2014   W 2014   S 2015   W 2015   F 2015   W 2015   S 2016

Attempt Name
Target 2
100 (27%)
(245 total students)

Key
Class of 2023
Class of 2024
Class of 2025
Class of 2026
Class of 2027
Class of 2028

Company Name
☑ Assessment 1
☑ Assessment 2
☑ Assessment 3

Target Set Growth   Main ⌄   Hide ⌄

Instruct

Assign, organize, and share lessons with ease.

Communicate

Share announcements to classes or directly to families.
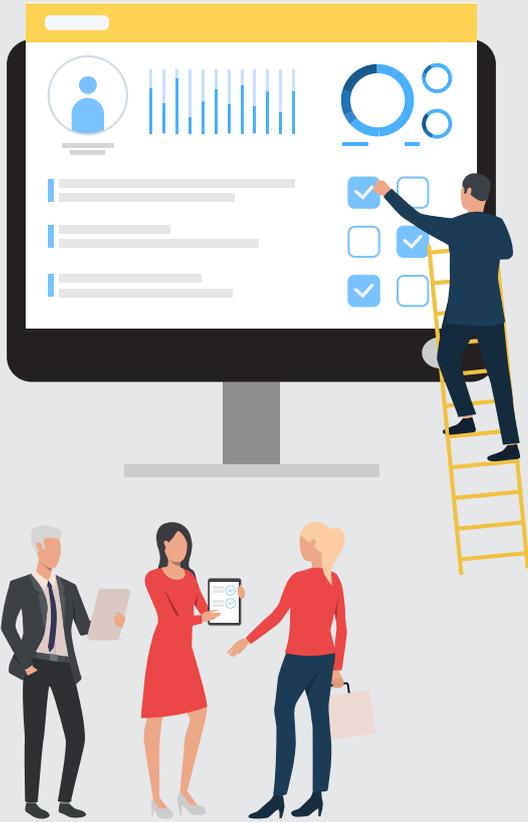
Celebrate

Showcase student work, behavior, and accomplishments.

With Otus, teachers are able to have a more hollistic view of a student and can focus on learning targets, and behavioral goals.

Daniel Rosenberg

Otus China Head

Otus
Learning, Together

otus.com.cn

Useful Resources

Below are the four most-mentioned digital resources used by teachers

The Great Teaching Toolkit

The Great Teaching Toolkit reviews the best bets for teachers to invest time and effort in if they want their students to learn more through evidence-based education.

Coaching Training Workshops

These coaching courses support, empower and inspire international educators to become accredited coaches - resulting in a positive, supportive coaching culture across the whole organisation to dramatically improve mental health.

The Tony Little Centre- Eton Free PD Courses

Resources include a wide range of talks, professional development workshops, materials you can use and opportunities for collaboration.

"Headspace" Mindfulness App

Through evidence-based meditation and mindfulness tools, mental health coaching, therapy, psychiatry, Headspace helps you create life-changing habits to support your mental health and find a healthier, happier you.

Final Thought

I am honoured and grateful for the opportunity to have hosted this PeerSphere and Venture workshop on Teacher Wellbeing and Mental Health.I was impressed by the meaningful discussions and contributions from everyone in the breakout rooms and during our panel discussion. Thank you also to participants who shared additional resources and insights.

I hope that the information and strategies we shared will help you prioritise your own wellbeing and mental health as you continue to make a positive impact on your students and in your communities. In the words of Renee Peterson Trudeau – "Nurturing yourself is not selfish – it's essential to your survival and your wellbeing."

Jana van Zyl Host of P2P Tianjin

Scan to find links and details of all of the resources mentioned throughout the gathering

Scan to join our Teachers in China WeChat community