Chapter 12

Leading P–12 Transformative Initiatives in Personalized Learning:
Empowering Teachers and Students to Assert Agency in Their Own Development

Christine McCoid
Hazlet Township Public Schools, USA

Stephany Hesslein
Middletown Township Public Schools, USA

Marla Beil
Middletown Township Public Schools, USA

Tracy Mulvaney
Monmouth University, USA

Lauren Niesz
Monmouth University, USA

ABSTRACT

Innovation P-12 school settings is happening every day in schools across the country. This chapter focuses on three transformative initiatives emphasizing personalized learning of both students and teachers. Three of the authors are presently employed as school- and district-level administrators in various central New Jersey P-12 school districts. In addition to serving as administrators, they are also completing a doctoral program in educational leadership at Monmouth University, where the final two authors are employed. A key component of the doctoral program is the implementation of a transformative learning project (TLP). The first two projects discuss innovations that encourage elementary students to take agency in their learning through student-led conferences and the SPARK program. The third project emphasizes one principal's dedication to providing personalized learning in staff development, empowering teach-ers to take control of their own professional growth. All projects provide a comprehensive view of the implementation process through a leadership lens.

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Personalized learning aims to tailor teaching and learning to meet each student's strengths, needs, and interests as well to empower students to have voice and choice in all aspects of the learning process (ISTE, 2016; iNACOL, 2016; NCLD, 2017). Although there is not one universal definition of personalized learning, the following three characteristics are generally present in most literature: (1) systems that tailor learning to individual needs, skills and interests; (2) enriched learning experiences that prepare students to be college and career ready; and (3) teachers have a specific role that includes designing, managing, leading, guiding, and supporting students as they take ownership of their learning (Pane, Steiner, Baird, & Hamilton, 2015). This chapter provides three case studies of transformative leadership projects that focus on personalized learning for both K-12 students and teachers. The initial two case studies involve elementary students who take agency in their own learning through student led conferences and personalized learning projects. The final case study reviews the personalized learning of teachers through professional development designed and driven by their own identified strengths and needs. These projects clearly illustrate the value of personalized learning and its impact on all students and teachers in a school system.

LETTING STUDENTS STEER THE SHIP: PLACING STUDENTS AT THE HELM OF THEIR OWN LEARNING THROUGH STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Introduction

It is essential that students have classroom experiences that promote the skills needed to be successful in our ever-changing world. These skills include the ability to think, analyze, weigh evidence, problem solve and communicate effectively (Wagner, 2008). Our education system needs to guide students in achieving their potential in the innovation era. It is time for the field of education to meet the needs of 21st-century learners. The world needs self-motivated individuals to solve complex issues, to persevere when challenges arise, and to learn from experience to overcome obstacles with unique solutions. If the goal of the education system is to produce an innovative workforce, there is an urgent need to redesign and repurpose schools. Paul Tough (2012) reaffirms that there are more important aspects of school than content and achievement, when he states:

What matters most in a child's development, they say, is not how much information we can stuff into her brain in the first few years. What matters, instead, is whether we are able to help her develop a very different set of qualities, a list that includes persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit, and self-confidence. (Tough, 2012, p. xv)

School should be a place where students prepare for the world ahead, in which students are able to develop the skill to ask new questions, solve new problems and create new knowledge. These are the skills the future demands. In order for today's students to survive in tomorrow's world, they will need to be flexible, adaptable and lifelong learners. To prepare for *their* future, students must be involved in *their* learning. By providing students with autonomy in learning, students are able to achieve at levels greater than anticipated.

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/leading-p-12-transformative-initiatives-in-personalized-learning/233713

Related Content

Computational Thinking and Multifaceted Skills: A Qualitative Study in Primary Schools
Gary Wong, Shan Jiangand Runzhi Kong (2018). *Teaching Computational Thinking in Primary Education (pp. 78-101).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/computational-thinking-and-multifaceted-skills/189865

Teach Less and Learn More: Enhance the Student Learning Experience Through an Innovative Curriculum
Ratneswary Rasiah, Sotheeswari Somasundram, Kelly Pei Leng Teeand Jason James Turner (2021). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 29-42).*
www.irma-international.org/article/teach-less-and-learn-more/269746

Pedagogical Foci of Teaching Cantonese as a Second Language: From Linguistic Competence to Pragmatic Use
Siu-lun Lee (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 1-10).*
www.irma-international.org/article/pedagogical-foci-of-teaching-cantonese-as-a-second-language/247106

Nonviolent Teaching: Creating a Safe Haven for Students
Simon George Taukeniand Matshidiso J. Taole (2021). *Research Anthology on School Shootings, Peer Victimization, and Solutions for Building Safer Educational Institutions (pp. 675-693).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/nonviolent-teaching/263493

Program Outcomes and Rural Immersion Track: An Experience
Sagar B. Patiland S. V. Patil (2022). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 1-11).*
www.irma-international.org/article/program-outcomes-rural-immersion-track/290382