EdVisions To Host Powerful Day of Transformational Learning!

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The EdVisions Ed°Expo 2018 Twin Cities: Fuel your vision! event will be held in St. Paul, MN on January 26, 2018. Leaders, educators and innovators transforming their schools and districts will share their experiences personalizing learning and creating opportunities for deeper, more relevant learning. Students will share how learner-centered approaches have impacted their school experience and their lives.

Attendees will enjoy networking opportunities, workshops and activities, student presentations and project demonstrations, powerful keynotes and immersive school tours. Participants will learn about the drivers of personalization through the EdVisions design essentials (Ed°Essentials), get inspired by fellow educators, and find tangible, proven ways to start transforming the learning in their school or classroom.

In addition to excellent content and dialogue, participants can see the Ed°Essentials in action through a school immersion visit to a learner-centered school (transportation provided). There will be opportunities to talk with teachers and students and see student-driven, PBL in action. Space is limited, and advance sign-up is required.

If you are interested in project-based learning (PBL), student voice and choice, the importance of social/emotional learning, career pathways and future ready learning, this day of learning is designed for you! Come spend the day learning from practitioners and students from successful, learner-centered schools and programs.

CEU and grad credits available. Breakfast, lunch, and refreshments provided.

For the full agenda, visit edvisions.org/events

To purchase tickets, visit edexpo.eventbrite.com

Educators from the Institute of Project-Based Learning in Tokyo visited Minnesota last month and toured several EdVisions schools including Avalon, HSRA, and MNCS (pictured above). The institute credits EdVisions and MNCS for inspiring them to pursue PBL in Japan. Enjoy a few photos from their visit throughout this issue of the newsletter! For more information on the Institute, visit pbl-japan.com.
Seymour Sarason, in his book What Do You Mean by Learning, defines learning as “not a point in time but a process over time...the concept of learning should refer to and in action make us sensitive to personal and interpersonal, cognitive and affective, overt and covert features that are always in the picture, their strengths never being zero.”

Learning is narrowly defined as a point in time, personal, cognitive and overt; usually marked by tests (a point in time), graded individually (personal), using knowing and thinking (cognitive), and graded upon some standard generally known (overt). However, this kind of knowing is not all that makes up the persons being tested, nor is it the most productive element to know about a person. As Sarason so boldly stated, these kind of overt tests do not take into account process, interpersonal, affective nor covert knowledge and awareness, “their strengths never being zero.”

Educators, parents and the general public ought to be aware of these other very human elements, because they often are the very things that make us human and productive. Learning is defined, basically, as things we know and/or do. Rarely is it connected to what we become! Learning, if it takes into consideration what we ought to become, will be transformational. People ought to change into different sorts of people, creating a better character, not simply into beings that can pass tests with greater regularity. To do that we must take into consideration the process, the interpersonal, the affectionate, and the covert.

Kitchenor explained there are three levels of cognition; one, simple cognition, where an individual computes, memorizes, reads and comprehends; second, metacognition, where an individual monitors his or her own progress and products; and third, epistemic cognition, where an individual reflects on the limits of knowledge, the certainty of knowledge, and the criteria of knowing. Epistemic knowledge allows for people to know their limitations, their strengths, their ability to overcome obstacles, and their understanding of how to succeed. Epistemic knowing emerges in later adolescents, and is considered transformative learning.

Productive learning takes into account all of these things; knowing, process, and true understanding of self. Sarason uses the term productive learning, where “motivation will be engendered and sustained, attitudes about the significance and rewards of learning will be reinforced, feelings about self and subject matter will contribute to a sense of growth, and future school learning will be embraced.” Generally speaking, the current curriculum-based, time-based, classroom-based, and test-based structure appears not to create this kind of learner. If this system does, they do not assess them properly.

To paraphrase Sarason, productive learning is manifested by increased student questioning, students expressing themselves without fear of failure or ridicule, students critiquing the teacher’s ideas and opinions, and would have students pronouncing their judgments in a public forum. If such a school environment exists, how would nationally or state normed tests judge whether or not such things are actually happening?

Unless reform efforts can change the relationships between the actors on the stage and the audience significantly enough to produce productive learning environments, they will always fail. If we do not change those relationships begun on page 3
tween parent and teacher, teacher and teacher, and teacher
to student, productive learning is unlikely. True productive
learning is a product of personal, cognitive, emotional, and
motivational factors, all of which have an impact upon each
and every student.

The first step in creating such an environment is to discover
and continually observe those interactions between teach-
ers and students, and teachers and teachers. This is why the
Hope Surveys have become invaluable to EdVisions. They
allow the schools, parents, authorizers, and other organiza-
tions an invaluable look into the relationships and culture of
a school in its attempts to provide productive learning. By
discovering the student perceptions of the level of engage-
ment, autonomy, belongingness, mastery goal orientations,
and their self-report of their level of transformation as per-
ceived in the hope score, students provide their attitudes,
motivations, and willingness to learn in the future. Hence,
we measure the atmosphere of a school to get a read on the
productive learning that has the power to transform lives.

At this time EdVisions has a survey ready to measure teacher
efficacy, collegiality and hope. Teachers also may grow as
individuals, and school cultures either encourage or discour-
gage it. If teachers know the overall culture of their school as it
pertains to students, and they take measures to correct that
culture, do you not suppose they can do the same for their
own culture? Perhaps the two go hand-in-hand? We will not
know that until we have more data, and we ought to have
enough data this spring to create a hypothesis around this
question.

Our world view here at EdVisions is that students and schools
cannot be labeled as failing due merely to test scores (and
other curriculum or time-based criteria). There may well be
major transformations taking place. And when test scores
are not failures, there are still other factors which ought also
to be considered – such as hope. Hope is a dispositional
attribute which can predict failure or success in life. An atmo-
sphere of positive relationships between teacher and parent,
teacher and teacher, and teacher and student means disposi-
tional growth for students. Hope growth leads to greater
learning as measured on tests, therefore is a precursor.

But it is more than that. Hope is an outcome in and of itself,
one which ought to be placed on a higher level than test
scores of any kind. It is a measure of productive learning, of
epistemic learning. It is time education places emphasis on
assessing what really matters.

References

Sarason, S. B. (2004). And What Do YOU Mean by Learning?
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Student voice represents the values, beliefs, cultures and opinions of students and is reflected in everything from the operations of a school from instruction to facilities. It is important to promote student voice in schools because it increases engagement and student agency.

Here are some ways to incorporate student voices at your school:

**Ask for student feedback** - This can be done formally through surveys or through regular conversations, just be sure to do it on a regular basis.

**Include students on staff committees** - Include students on staff teams that develop and discuss policy and planning on topics such as hiring and discipline. Be sure to include your students as members of the team and not just observers; think of them as stakeholders and partners.

**Student-led conferences** - As much as possible, students should be leading the discussions about their learning. This can apply to conversations about academics, special education needs, discipline, etc.

The Ed°Essentials support a school in providing students the skills and tools necessary to provide student voice that contributes to a positive school culture. Small Learning Communities and Advisory provides space to build strong relationships among staff and students. This provides the level of comfort and understanding necessary for student voice in matters such as restorative justice. Personalized and project-based learning encourages students to look at different ways of learning and approaching problems while giving them the time, space and choice to develop their own ideas. Authentic Assessment allows students to become accustomed to giving and receiving feedback to and from peers, advisors, parents, community members and beyond.

To discuss how you and your team can promote student voice at your school, contact Krissy at krissywright@edvisions.org or text/call 612.601.1093.

Thank you so much for presenting to our team. I’m happy to say after many conversations with staff that a foundation for PBL was understood. We are very excited to continue our partnership and would like to know the approach to our next steps.

Kelly Tschudy-Lafean, Forest Lake Public Schools
What IS the Hope Survey?

As you read in our Newsletters that we are holding monthly Hope Survey ‘Coffee Talks’, you just might be asking yourself “What in the world is the Hope Survey”? If that is the case, let us introduce you to the Hope Survey.

BACKGROUND
Research shows students engagement and motivation decreases as they progress through secondary school. This disengagement and lack of motivation is a key concern for educators. In searching for an explanation for this decline, educational researchers have examined the nature of the school environment and determined that school environments can exert influences on student motivations and engagement through their support or lack of support for students’ developmental needs. These needs include autonomy, belongingness and competence (measured by goal orientation).

PURPOSE
The Hope Survey is a unique tool, which enables schools to assess their school environment through the eyes of their students by measuring student perceptions of autonomy, belongingness and goal orientations as well as their resulting engagement in learning and disposition toward achievement. The Hope Survey can diagnose whether a school culture has the components that encourage higher levels of engagement in learning.

THE HOPE SURVEY
The Hope Survey consists of a series of online surveys, which ask students questions regarding non-academic outcomes (autonomy, belongingness, goal orientation academic press, engagement and hope). Hope is measured with a hope index.

VALIDITY
The Hope Surveys were designed to measure students’ perception of the school environment by pulling together reliable, valid measurement instruments from different sources. All scales used in the Hope Survey were developed by researchers at major universities and have been used repeatedly in educational research in a variety of different student demographics. All measures have a published background of reliability and validity research behind them.

USING THE RESULTS
The core of the Hope Surveys measure “hope.” “Hope” reflects an individual’s self perception regarding their ability to clearly conceptualize their goals, develop the specific strategies to reach those goals and initiate and sustain activity based upon those strategies. Hope data matched with their academic achievement scores can provide a detailed picture of the school environment and its effects on student performance.

Please note that our website is undergoing a transition to a new site. For questions or additional information please feel free to contact us through the online forms or by contacting Mary Moening at marymoening@edvisions.org or 612-601-1073.
EdVisions’ approach focuses on highly personalized learning. Through the training, teachers learn to create dynamic, student-centered learning experiences where they can achieve curriculum standards through rigorous, engaging projects that are driven by student interest and community/global connections. In schools that have embraced the EdVisions approach, educators experience a new level of professionalism by empowering them to develop systems of teacher governance and shared leadership.

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