Ed°Expo 2018 Twin Cities Promises to be the Most Student-Centered Conference of the Year!

Inside The Issue:

Students will truly be at the center of this event as they share how learner-centered approaches have impacted their school experience and their lives. Throughout the day, students will share stories, projects and insights on how personalized learning has enhanced and energized their school experiences.

The morning keynote presentation will share the incredible transformation of Jemar Lee, a senior at Iowa BIG. Iowa BIG is a learner-centered environment that makes learners into makers, designers, storytellers, and social entrepreneurs with exposure and interactions with organizations, business partners, and the community. Jemar who recently spoke at iNACOL and Education Reimagined’s national conferences is a firm believer that education needs to be restructured for the benefit of all learners, to make sure they enjoy their learning and reach their highest potential.

In addition to this powerful keynote, students from throughout the metro area from both traditional and charter schools will share their stories in 5-7 minute Ed°x presentations and answer key questions during a student panel. Examples include students from Minnetonka’s Vantage and Prior Lake’s MNCAPS programs who will share how their junior and senior year in high school has been transformed through profession-based learning and real world-projects. Students from highly personalized schools like Avalon Charter School and Northwest Passage will explain what it is like to have the autonomy to drive your own learning based on passions, goals and interests. Elementary students from Minnesota New Country School (MNCS) and Impact Academy in Lakeville will join the others for a dynamic panel.

In addition to the student perspective, participants will also hear from the educators who make personalized learning experiences possible. Teachers from traditional and charter schools will be on hand to share their stories and insights on creating and facilitating personalized learning. At lunch time, participants will choose from three dynamic Power Up! Discussion groups or have a chance to visit the student project gallery and talk to students about the projects they have accomplished to meet standards and goals.

Explore this newsletter to read more about sessions on the essentials that power personalization, student-directed PBL and assessing social/emotional learning with the Hope Survey.

The event will be held at the TIES Conference Center in St. Paul, MN on January 26, 2018. For the full agenda, visit edvisions.org/events
Projects have always been around; a matter of good teaching for centuries in and out of school. There were a couple of short-lived movements over the past century but mostly teacher-led efforts that changed the structure of schooling and not as much the practice of helping students lead their own learning. The project learning approach of Dewey colleague William Kilpatrick (1918) and the “Topic” approach found in British commonwealth schools are generally whole classroom endeavors and usually teacher directed. But the modern day era of project learning really came about with the development of the Minnesota New Country School in 1994. New Country was the first to implement a full time advisory, self-directed project system that guided each individual student to rigorous outcomes in a way that not only depended on the students’ own initiative but caused each to organize her/his work and to consider how each student learns best. It was a learning process within a learning system, not easily understood by most adults at first and certainly not by most students. Still today at MNCS, each student learns as much about her/himself as they learn particular content or skills.

EdVisions’ Long History of Student-Directed PBL Benefits Schools Seeking Transformative, Student-Centered Learning

Even though project learning is still a strong part of its program, there is much more that takes place at MNCS, Avalon and other EdVisions schools than just learning through projects. According to staff, about half the day is spent on project work and the rest of the day highlights other great, progressive learning activities. Field experiences, service learning, student government, tutoring, mentoring, individual skill development, and even some traditional looking classroom endeavors and usually teacher directed. But the modern day era of project learning really came about with the development of the Minnesota New Country School in 1994. New Country was the first to implement a full time advisory, self-directed project system that guided each individual student to rigorous outcomes in a way that not only depended on the students’ own initiative but caused each to organize her/his work and to consider how each student learns best. It was a learning process within a learning system, not easily understood by most adults at first and certainly not by most students. Still today at MNCS, each student learns as much about her/himself as they learn particular content or skills.

We feel it’s important to get project learning right and not just incorporate projects in classes in order to join the latest educational movement. First of all, projects must have a purpose, reason and outcome useful to the student or the audience beyond. Second, projects have a structure; the what, how and when that gives organization to the work and drives an effort to a sensible completion. Third, the outcomes of project work must be clear, assessable and reportable. And fourth, there must be a feedback loop allowing for informing and improving.

EdVisions came about nearly twenty years ago to help folks implement the self-directed project learning model developed at the New Country School. We are still dedicated to that same assistance and we have developed additional tools for innovating in schools and motivating students and teachers. Check us out and let us know if we can help.

There is much talk these days about project-based learning and there are a plethora of models out there in schools. It’s all good because they engage kids to a greater degree and give young people skills they otherwise might not acquire. We can argue about which models are best or what projects are more useful than others but in the long run the movement to learn from real experiences is long overdue and is finally being taken seriously.

ED°ESSENTIALS: WHAT POWERS PERSONALIZATION?

Have you ever wondered how you can create a highly personalized learning community where every student is treated as an individual, empowered to be self-directed producers and learners and utilize practices that result in improved deliverables and quality outcomes? If so, get ready to take a closer look at our morning session about the EdEssentials framework at the EdExpo.

We will talk about how to build strong relationships between adults, students and community through advisories and how this affects social-emotional learning and skill development. We will also take a look at some elements of personalized learning and assessment that will equip students with the knowledge and skills for an engaged post-secondary life. Teachers, we did not forget about you! We will discuss how to empower you to model ownership and democratic leadership through professional development plans that are informed by evaluations by peers, students and parents. As well as coaching and mentoring plans for new staff and continuous improvement.

PBL 101: A STUDENT-DIRECTED APPROACH TO PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Want to take a closer look at Project Based Learning? Join me in the afternoon for PBL 101. We will look at the project process, project management and assessment. Come to the session with project ideas and we can “tune” one or two to experience a project tuning protocol and highlight that projects can fall on a continuum of teacher led to student driven. Hope to see you at the EdExpo, but if you cannot make it, you can always contact me at krissywright@edvisions.org with any questions.

Join the staff from Edio for their Pow-er-Up Discussion over lunch to learn how teachers can manage PBL and standard attainment through a robust digital platform. Visit getedio.com for more info.

Fuel up on PD at the Ed°Expo!

Come join me at Ed°Expo 2018 where I will be hosting these sessions:

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The EdVisions Comprehensive Assessment Plan: Power-Up Discussion at Ed°Expo 2018

Dr. Ron Newell | Director of Assessment
Dr. Steven Rippe | Director of Organization Development & Hope Survey

The EdVisions Assessment plan is designed to strengthen already existing partner schools in the network, provide a coherent plan for developing new sites, and guide transitioning school sites in establishing new parameters for evaluation. We feel that the methods used by State Departments and regulating agencies are not comprehensive enough. Many newly developed schools, charters, alternative schools, and innovative programs are assessed on test scores and graduation rates, although the students often came to them behind in reading and math and were credit deficient. They are not assessed on their engagement, human development potential, nor on their dispositions.

Adolescents have specific socio-emotional needs that research shows schools do not foster; i.e., autonomy, mastery goal orientations, and belonging. When those needs are met in a learning environment, young people respond with higher levels of both behavioral and emotional engagement. Engagement is correlated to higher levels of hope. Hope reflects an individual’s perceptions regarding their ability to clearly conceptualize their goals, develop the specific strategies to reach those goals (i.e., pathways thinking), and initiate and sustain activity based upon those strategies (i.e., agency thinking). Hope is equated to resilience and persistence. This much we have found with previous research.

We intend to measure dispositional hope growth and emotional engagement and correlate it with skill development. We will track reading and math scores on a growth chart, using NWEA’s Measure of Academic Progress and utilizing the student’s RIT scores. It is our hypothesis that there will be significant correlations in growth patterns for all three. This pattern of correlations will be linked to the student’s Academic Placement, ACT, or SAT scores and post-secondary institution acceptance.

From this plan we will derive data that will exhibit innovative schools that utilize the Ed Essentials, or schools that are intentional about developing adolescent engaging environments, do create experiences that lead to the success we all want from our children; being happy, mentally healthy, engaged, capable, and motivated to succeed. We are excited about the possibilities this kind of data will tell us, and would welcome any schools interested in becoming part of the study.

Also at Ed°Expo: Center for School Change

With college costs constantly increasing, Minnesota offers more opportunities than any other state to earn free college credit. Join Director Joe Nathan for the Power-Up Discussion at lunch to review the options to take such courses in a high school, taught by high school or college faculty, on-line, and on a campus.

Visit centersforschoolchange.org for more info.

Introducing...Ed°Talks!

Ed°Talks are an opportunity to interact with experts in the educational field on dynamic topics related to personalized learning. Tune in once a month for tips and insights from our trainers and special guests. Bring your questions and ideas!

Next Ed°Talk:

January 17, 2:30-3:30pm CST: PLPs with Nikki Luedtke (Valley New School) and EdVisions coaches Steven Rippe and Krissy Wright. To join, visit https://zoom.us/j/231296248 at the time of the talk.

February 21
March 21
April 18
May 16
June 20

Future Topics:

Wellness
Interdisciplinary seminars
Deeper Learning
Student exchange
Service Learning
Community Partnership
Expeditions
Project Management/Alternatives to time logs
Digital Accessibility models
ACES and trauma informed programming

Hope Survey, The Next Generation

Dr. Steven Rippe | Director of Organization Development & Hope Survey
Dr. Ron Newell | Director of Assessment

Over the last 18 months we have met with students and staff from around the United States that utilize the Hope Survey and asked for their input on what would make the Hope Survey better. We were told that the Hope Survey is an important tool for documenting successful growth in social-emotional learning and that schools count on us for valid and reliable data that goes beyond high stakes testing as the single indicator of academic performance. We also learned that schools would value a more robust report, that includes resources for interventions and when needed, help facilitating practical interventions that can be measured and evaluated over time.

The Hope Survey team has been busy evolving the Hope Survey to meet the needs of the next generation of our schools. We have developed reports that are personalized to the needs of each school that range from the basic report, to an advanced report created with the school staff that includes practical interventions and support with implementation. We have also developed an adult version of the Hope Survey. We are currently Beta testing this resource and will have it available for schools to utilize by the spring of 2018. If you have any interest in the Hope Survey, social-emotional growth and/or creating your ideal school culture, we encourage you to attend one of our sessions or to contact us directly for a personalized conversation.
The PLP Gap: Perhaps It’s Time to Rethink Our Process?

Dr. Steven Rippe | Director of Organization Development & Hope Survey

I have been part of a wonderful community of educators that has been studying personal learning plans for over a decade. The idea of a true personal learning plan, one that inspires and guides us to become our best, has been a goal worth pursuing. Reflecting on the work of Chris Argyris, I am forced to realize that what we have in our heads around the purpose and process of personal learning plans and what we practice, are often fundamentally different. In this article I will describe the PLP gap, how we arrived there and the new opportunity we have to actualize our original intent.

Working collaboratively with students and educators across the United States we were able to identify elements that facilitated authentic, engaging and transformative personal learning plans. Each year we met and shared our best practices and offered workshops to educators and schools interested in using our process. We do know that our work spread throughout the United States and has taken on a life of its own. We also knew that we still had work to do to make this process work for everyone.

As we were gaining momentum with our personal learning plans, the effects of the No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB, 2002) began to take hold. According to Education Week article I will describe the PLP gap, how we arrived there and the new opportunity we have to actualize our original intent.

Perhaps it is time we challenge our epistemology and practice on how we are engaging in personal learning plans with our students, staff and ourselves. We are teaching and learning in a time that encourages authentic personalization. I am currently involved in a book project on the next generation of student-led personal learning plans with students from Valley New School in Appleton Wisconsin, along with Niki Luedtke (Advisor at Valley New) and Dr. Walter Enloe. If you would like to be involved in our learning community, including our yearly gatherings and/or would like to contribute to our writing project, please join us at the 2018 Ed°Expo.
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.

EdVisions staff recently toured Impact Academy - a personalized learning elementary school in Lakeville, MN doing excellent work within the structure of a district and utilizing those resources to meet students where they are. More information at isd194.org/impact-academy/