



Patrick Henry Elementary School

STUDENT CHOICE DURING LITERACY ROTATIONS



CORE COMPONENT

Learner Led: Enable learners to take ownership of their learning so that it can dynamically adjust to their skills, curiosity and goals

Learner Led at Patrick Henry School

Patrick Henry Elementary has been focused on Learner Led instruction to personalize learning for students. Learner Led instruction encourages learners to have meaningful input and choice in their learning, and it goes beyond differentiated instruction to truly transform the learning experience.

Our Sources

Mr. Juan Gutierrez - Principal



"I had the opportunity to visit [a personalized learning school], and the sheer desire and motivation that I saw within the students told me there was another way to create educational opportunities for our students, where they were driving their own learning. If we can create an environment where students are at the core of their learning, I think we'll go a long way to meeting their learning needs and reaching their goals, not only in education but in life."

Ms. Tania Figueroa - Teacher



"I think the biggest impact as a teacher is seeing students develop these amazing leadership skills, developing this passion for learning that was hidden in them. They weren't aware of the power they had to guide their learning. Now that they do have that power, it's amazing to see the ideas they come up with."

Student Choice During Literacy Rotations

To personalize learning in her classroom, Ms. Figueroa offers her students choice in how they spend time in their daily literacy rotations, supplemented by regular check-ins with her to ensure progress. She uses the literacy block to create an environment where students own their learning path: they set their own goals in conference with her, determine their own schedule for the literacy rotations, select the work they will do each day, work collaboratively with their classmates, and engage with her to monitor progress toward reaching goals.

During the literacy rotations, students engage in a mix of activities that are independent, team-based, and teacher-facilitated. Over time, students earn more autonomy, including setting their personal schedule each day, choosing where they will work, and the ability to change their pace as needed. By having frequent check-ins with students in teams to review their data and progress, Ms. Figueroa is able to continually support and monitor the students during their learning journey and build a supportive team culture.

Ms. Figueroa notes that since students started making choices and directing their own learning, their engagement has increased dramatically. Students who were reluctant in the past now ask for extra time to work on choice activities and email her from home to share their learning. She is proud to see them transfer their excitement for learning to their daily lives outside of school.

ABOUT

Patrick Henry Elementary School

Chicago Public Schools
Neighborhood School
Acceptance based on student
living in boundary

650

Total PreK-6 Students

4%

African American

2%

Asian

83%

Hispanic

7%

White

4%

Other

88%

Low Income

13%

Diverse Learners

46%

English Learners

17%

Mobility

(Reflects any enrollment change between the first school day in October and the last day of the school year.)

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HOW IT WORKS in Ms. Figueroa's class...



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DEMONSTRATED

STEP ONE: Prepare activity options to meet student needs

- **Determine the appropriate learning progression:** Ms. Figueroa uses multiple data sources to plan and prepare activities and materials to meet a range of needs and personalize learning for students.
 - Use varied data to inform instruction, including formative assessments, student work, student input, learning goals, student interests, etc. Offer activity options that students can personalize to their needs and interests, including independent and collaborative work.



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STEP TWO: Coach students in creating their schedule for the week

- **Offer learners an organized approach:** Students in Ms. Figueroa's class use a template she created in Google Classroom to build their learning plan. It has space for students to enter their choices for each rotation every day.
 - Keep the template easy for students to use. It can be paper and pencil or electronic. Provide enough space for students to enter their activity choices. Consider adding a reflection question to support student metacognition.



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STEP THREE: Support students to build their learning plans

- **Coach learners to identify needs:** Ms. Figueroa teaches students to select an appropriate number and type of choices based on their individual needs. Not all students have the same number of choices or the same types of activities.
 - Help students build stamina for making choices. Offer only a few options to choose from, and add more as students become more comfortable with the process.



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STEP FOUR: Establish a structure to support students

- **Adjust learning goals and plans:** Ms. Figueroa uses four learning rotations; each rotation is 15-20 minutes in length. The activity in each rotation is fluid. Ms. Figueroa's students may shift what they are doing partway through the rotation, or continue the activity into the next rotation. Ms. Figueroa's activities consist of: a) team meeting with the teacher; b) reader response; c) independent project; d) online ELA program.
 - Help students develop autonomy by scaffolding their choices. To begin, students work on one activity during the designated rotation. As students build awareness and knowledge of their needs, they may shorten or extend activities across rotations.



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STEP FIVE: Meet with student teams to monitor progress

- **Position teacher role based on learning needs:** Ms. Figueroa divides her students into teams based on their data and needs. During literacy rounds, she meets with every team of students every day.
- **Cultivate an environment to enhance collaboration and peer support:** During team meetings, Ms. Figueroa checks on student progress and plans. She helps students plan how they will support each other.
 - Frequent check-ins help students stay on-task and on-target toward their goals. Use a consistent format and reflection questions to build students' ability to monitor their own progress and needs. Role play how students can support each other.



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STEP SIX: Assist students to adjust pace and plans

- **Collaborate with learners to identify and include preferences:** As students become more autonomous, Ms. Figueroa allows them to choose what to work on, when to work on it, and where to work. Students may also change their pace or plans as their needs change.
 - Support students to manage their own learning. Use think-alouds to demonstrate making choices to meet learning needs. Model how to adjust plans and pace in response to needs.

Ms. Figueroa uses a personalized approach during her daily literacy block, in which students create their own schedule to accomplish their literacy activities. She develops a schedule template in Google Classroom for each of her students, showing the four rotations available each day. Students input their choices for each rotation. Once rotations begin, students choose where and how to work, whether independently or in groups.

When students began making choices and building their own schedules, they were engaged; however, Ms. Figueroa realized that her students needed more structure and support in order to complete their activities. To support them in developing independence, she groups her students in teams and meets with those teams daily. She uses this meeting time to check in with students on their progress and help them support each other. Ms. Figueroa also uses these team meetings to help students set achievable goals they can accomplish during the week. As students demonstrate that they can independently accomplish their goals, she offers larger projects of their own design and a greater number of rotations that they can schedule. However, she continues to check in daily with each team and track her students' progress closely.

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