

Guide to Personalized Learning Experiences

Eight Strategies to Implement Personalized Learning Experiences

3. Nurture Trust by Granting Freedom

To gain trust, students must have the freedom and opportunity to make choices that build others' trust in them. Trust is the currency by which personalized learning experiences prosper in the complexity of a school system. Granting students a high degree of freedom may feel like losing control, but it's vital to the success of a personalized learning model and instilling independence in the students. Even if learners fail to use their freedom wisely, it becomes a valuable learning opportunity. By granting freedom, teachers practice taking a step back, which lets them see how students react and what they will gravitate to. By understanding how students behave when given freedom, teachers can adapt their approach and respond to learner needs and interests.

METHODS

Give learners an opportunity to make choices, speak up and be heard. Allow students more freedom over where they work, assignments, pacing and demonstration of learning.

Reflect with students when they break trust and recognize when they might not be ready for autonomy.

Start small and take intentional steps over the course of the year, as students gain trust and teachers become more comfortable.

Story from the Field

One second grade teacher described herself as a “control freak” and shared how unnerving it was to allow her students to have more freedom. She started out small, by placing some beanbags out in the hallway and allowing kids to work out there on their own. Over time, the learners slowly gained her trust by completing their work and staying on task. Students were then able to move down the hallway to work if they chose. What started out as a stressor, she shared, has now become a learning opportunity. She sees that she's grown as a professional and her students have demonstrated their ability to handle more personal responsibility.

SHIFTING TO A STUDENT-CENTERED MODEL

Traditional Education Environments

In this model, the teacher occupies the most space, designing activities, making decisions and in control of student learning experiences. Learners are taught to pay attention to the teacher.

Opening up Space

Shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered experiences requires the teacher to take a step back so space can be opened and the student can step into the center of their own learning.

Evolving Education Environments

In this model, the student occupies the most space. Learners are designing activities, making decisions and in control of their learning experiences. Teachers are taught to pay attention to the student, and provide support and counsel when needed.

NEXT CHAPTER - [Empower Student Choice + Voice](#)

PREVIOUS CHAPTER - [Develop Community](#)
