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Empowering Learners through Habits of Mind and Personalized Pathways:

An Ethnographic Study

A Project Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of

Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

Megan A. Amundson

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science in

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DEDICATION

With great pleasure, I dedicate this action research project to the biggest teacher and supporter of any type of writing that I have ever done, Mr. John Zdrazil who passed away while I was finishing my research. I am sure that if he would have been alive to edit my final draft, he would have covered it in red ink and left it under my windshield wiper; a place he was sure I'd see it. I am the writer, researcher, and teacher that I am today because of him.

ABSTRACT

While teaching using a personalized learning concept, it was discovered that learners did not have the necessary social emotional skills that they needed in order to successfully make decisions for their learning. Throughout researching personalized learning, engagement, self-pacing, and empowered learning three different Habits of Mind, the school district's social emotional learning program, were identified to teach to a small group of learners in grades three through six to help them better understand what personalized learning is and why they are doing it in order to take ownership of their learning. Therefore this research question was created: How does the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind change the level of ownership learners take in a personalized learning model? Learners took a four question open ended survey at the beginning of the study, then they were taught three different Habits of Mind over three weeks and then took the exact same survey in order to compare the results. The researcher also completed a journal throughout to include their thoughts and feelings of what was happening in the classroom. The survey showed direct, tangible results of the level of ownership change for the learners but the journaling showed a much greater level of ownership change. Learners went from not making appropriate choices and struggling with personalized learning to choosing choices that fit them well academically and persevering through challenges that come with personalized learning. With even more social emotional instruction, the level of ownership hopefully would continue to improve.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Personalization, self-pacing and learner empowerment all go hand in hand with one another. In order to have a truly personalized classroom, all three are essential and yet one is assumed to have been learned prior and can be detrimental to the learning process if not explicitly taught. Often when reading about personalized learning, the words voice and choice are mentioned, however it is not a common practice to explicitly teach a learner how to find their voice. Learner ownership and empowerment are skills that are difficult to teach and difficult to execute after being taught and yet teachers all over assume that their learners are coming in with the skills that they need in order to be successful independent learners, including the district that this action research was conducted in.

District 2364 is a small school in a rural community that prides itself on being innovative. The district focuses on building relationships, individualization and personalization for learners. Personalization begins in kindergarten but it really changes in fifth and sixth grade where true departmentalization begins. They utilized a scheduler that allowed learners to choose which classes that they take when and on what days as well as allowed for voice and choice throughout their class periods. They believed that learners should be in charge of their learning and needed to take ownership of their learning under the assumption that it would create high engagement situations.

Brief Literature Review

The research that has been written about personalized learning and self-paced learning is extensive. However, the two phrases are often combined or thought to mean the same thing when in

reality, you can self-pace learning without truly personalizing learning. Personalized learning involves learner choice and control about what you learn and could also include a self-paced curriculum in that process (Netcoh, 2017). Learners have been shown to prefer to choose what and how they learn as well as admit to being highly engaged in their learning when it is up to them. Watson et al. (2018) found that when given the choice between self-paced learning and a traditional fixed pace, learners dramatically chose the self-paced learning option. In a study conducted by Fredricks et al. (2014), they found that personalized learning created an environment where engagement was higher because learners had supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, as well as opportunities for choice and sufficient structure.

Structure was a topic that came up frequently in the research that was conducted which added a layer to the research that wasn't expected. DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh (2019) have demonstrated that self advocacy, self discipline and self regulation have to be learned before any type of personalization can begin. However, many schools or classrooms jump right into personalized learning without teaching their learners about themselves which causes issues. Netcoh (2017) also found that there was a serious power struggle in a classroom when the learners were not taught the social emotional skills necessary prior to beginning a personalized learning unit.

Statement of the Problem

Having not had a great deal of experience with personalized learning last year, the researcher of this study was pretty much just improvising and doing what the rest of the teachers on the team were doing. When given a choice in class, learners were often choosing the option that they could complete the fastest just to check the box off rather than taking ownership in their learning and choosing the choice that fit them best. They were focusing on going through the motions of school like they've done

every other year of their education to check the box of finishing an assignment rather than making themselves better. Learners even had the opportunity to self-pace themselves but because they weren't taught how to take ownership in their learning or why personalized learning was important for their learning process, they preferred to just stay on pace with the teacher, do their assignment as quickly as they can and then move on to the next step the very next day.

There also didn't appear to be a high level of engagement in their learning. They often chose the easiest assignment possible just to get done as quickly as they could. Since they were completing the work, and they were doing it well, this led to the assumption that they were engaged and knew what they were doing. Then, they would get to a test and they would have no idea how to do some of the skills which means that they weren't actually engaged, they were simply checking the box. Taking ownership of their learning rectified this problem because they didn't move on to the next concept until they completely understood the previous one.

Purpose of the Study

Since learners have been taught how to do school by simply checking boxes and moving on, they appear to really struggle when asked to move away from the typical school structure towards a more personalized system. If learners are taught the social emotional skills needed to be self-sufficient and take ownership of their learning, the entire experience will go much better. Personalized learning and self-pacing increases engagement and ownership of learning but it has to be scaffolded prior to successful implementation (Netcoh, 2017). Without the structures and scaffolds put in place at the beginning, both learners and teachers were frustrated with the chaos and disorganization in the classroom. The purpose of this study is to go back and teach learners how to take ownership in their learning by teaching them explicitly three of the sixteen Habits of Mind: thinking flexibly, persisting, and

thinking about your thinking (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). Then, with structure and support, release the control back over to them to allow them to dive deeper into the standards to increase their engagement and love of school again.

Research Question

How does the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind change the level of ownership learners take in a personalized learning model?

Definition of Variables

The following are the variable of the study:

- Independent Variable: The independent variable in this study is the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind, the school district's social emotional curriculum. Persisting, thinking about your thinking and thinking flexibly will be explicitly taught to each learner so that they have the base skills needed in order to successfully self-pace (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017).
- Dependent Variable: The dependent variable in this study is the degree of ownership that the learners are showing before teaching the Habits of Mind as well as after in a personalized learning setting that includes self-pacing and choice.

Significance of the Study

A child spends more than half of their early life in school. They learn how to come into the classroom appropriately, the routines and procedures in each room, what they need to do to get a good grade and how to pass the class and then they leave, year after year. By the time they get to middle school, they have figured out how to do school and learners typically either excel at checking off the boxes without ever going deep into any subject or they do the bare minimum to get by. Neither of those

scenarios are creating the 21st century learners our world needs which is why this study is so important. Learners should take ownership of their learning and understand why it is important to do that. Learners need to be more than just learners. They should question, explore, create, innovate and truly dive deep into the standards that educators are required to teach. Personalized learning, self-paced learning and empowerment can help get them there!

Research Ethics

Permission and IRB Approval. In order to conduct this study, the researcher will seek MSUM's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to ensure the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects (Mills & Gay, 2019). Likewise, authorization to conduct this study will be sought from the school district where the research project will be taking place (See Appendix C).

Informed Consent. Protection of human subjects participating in research will be assured. Participant minors will be informed of the purpose of the study via the Method of Assent (See Appendix A) that the researcher will read to participants before the beginning of the study. Participants will be aware that this study is conducted as part of the researcher's Master Degree Program and that it will benefit her teaching practice. Informed consent means that the parents of participants have been fully informed of the purpose and procedures of the study for which consent is sought and that parents understand and agree, in writing, to their child participating in the study (Rothstein & Johnson, 2014). Confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms (e.g., Student 1) without the utilization of any identifying information. The choice to participate or withdraw at any time will be outlined both, verbally and in writing.

Limitations.

The limitation for this study is COVID-19 because of the collaboration limitations and the unknown absences. Learners are not able to work together to solve problems because they have to stay six feet apart at all times. This limited their engagement because they wanted to work together so badly and had to constantly remind them to spread apart which interrupted their learning. There are also many learners who unexpectedly had to be absent for multiple days because of COVID quarantine guidelines so they missed the Habit of Mind lessons as well as opportunities for personalized pathways and self-paced learning. Jumping into the personalized pathways and self-paced learning without receiving the social emotional skills needed greatly affected their engagement as well as their ability to take ownership of their learning. There was also a limitation due to the amount of learners that were involved in the study. There is no way to know for sure if the eighteen participants would have the same outcome as if an entire school were to participate.

Conclusions

Personalized learning and self-pacing is becoming a topic in education that is widely talked about. Many school leaders and educators are moving away from traditional school and moving towards personalizing each learner's education. Since this is becoming more popular, administrators, teachers and even learners are trying to learn more about it because it has been shown to increase engagement and academic achievement. However, it is necessary to provide scaffolding which is the piece that many educators are forgetting about before diving off the deep end into personalized learning and self-pacing. In the following chapter, there will be a more in depth analysis of the research that was conducted on engagement, personalized learning, self-pacing, and empowered learning.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

District 2364's vision is to be a small town, high performing district that prepares learners through personalized learning experiences to make a positive impact in a rapidly changing world. In the classroom, there are high expectations for the learners and they are allowed a lot of voice and choice in their learning but they don't typically take ownership of their learning or understand the reasoning behind each choice that they make.

Luckily, there were plenty of resources, articles and research done when it comes to engagement, personalized learning and self-paced learning, but those topics led to two other topics that weren't necessarily a part of the plan when beginning the research: empowered learning and transformational teaching. Both of these new topics were not quite as easy to find research on but they came up throughout the research in personalized learning and engagement so often that they had to be included. Throughout the research project, the researcher realized that they were much more invested in the empowerment of the learners compared to the actual engagement of the learning in general.

In the following literature review, the research behind learner engagement, personalized learning, self-paced learning, and empowered learning will be reviewed. Finally, a new type of teaching style that was discovered throughout the research process, transformational teaching, will also be discussed.

Body of the Review

Engagement

Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2014) proposed that there are three different types of engagement: behavioral, emotional and cognitive. Behavioral engagement revolves around learner conduct, effort, persistence, concentration, attention and participation. Emotional engagement includes the affective reactions such as interest, boredom, anxiety and happiness as well as many others. Finally, cognitive engagement is a learners investment in their learning, their self-regulation and their preference for challenge.

Engaging learners is a global issue, not just a singular classroom issue (Pedler et al., 2020). Learning needs to be meaningful, social, relevant and human in order to be engaging for learners (Spencer & Juliani, 2017) yet social and emotional skills are also required in order to engage successfully (DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019). When learners are practicing self awareness and self management they are engaged (DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019). It is also necessary to develop dispositions that welcome struggles in order to be successfully engaged (Lim et al., 2013).

Personalized learning has positively predicted behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement in math classes as well as having a positive perception by learners (Talbert et al., 2019). Gningue et al. (2013) found that high engagement increased from 40% to 63.5% and low engagement decreased from 9% to 4% using personalized learning. The higher levels of personalized learning practices created more effective, engaging outcomes for learners (Gningue et al., 2013). Learner motivation is also important in engaging learners; however, there has been a lack of research on how motivation to learn leads to higher levels of engagement (Halif et al., 2020). Halif et al's (2020) research still led to the fact that motivation is one of the most important factors educators can prioritize to enhance learning.

Personalized Learning

There are many different definitions of personalized learning in the education world (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; Kallick & Zmuda, 2017; Rickabaugh, 2016). Most of them revolved around the approach to learning and instruction and involve some sort of voice and choice for learners but the definition also allows for each individual person to personalize. Even the definition of personalized learning is personalizable because personalized learning is such an umbrella term (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). In *Learning Personalized*, the definition says that personalized learning is "a progressively student-driven model in which students deeply engage in meaningful, authentic and rigorous challenges to demonstrate desired outcomes" (Zmuda et al., 2015, p.7). Overall, personalized learning allows learners to take their learning into their own hands and the control is turned over from the teacher to the learner. This does not mean that learners are not meeting objectives, instead it means that learners may meet different objectives at different times depending on their level of understanding.

The biggest challenge with defining personalized learning comes with the question about how it differs from differentiation and individualization. Netcoh (2017) believed that the learners choice and control over how they learn distinguishes personalized learning from differentiation and individualization. In personalized learning, learners are now active participants in "setting their own goals, planning their learning pathways and demonstrating how they have learned the information" (Rickabaugh, 2016, p.6). However, in differentiation and individualization, the teacher is still the main driver of all of those things and is not simply a facilitator.

Bray & McClaskey (2015) identified four stages of personalized learning and clarified that teachers must go through each stage successively. The first stage is where the learning is teacher centered with direct instruction done by the teacher. Stage two is still teacher centered but there is

learner voice involved. Stage three, however, moves to a student centered model with the teacher and

the learner co-designing the plans. Finally, the fourth stage is learner driven with the teacher as simply

the facilitator and partner in learning. In *Students at the Center*, Kallick and Zmuda identify four different

attributes that personalized learning must have: voice, co-creation, social construction and self discovery

(Kallick & Zmuda, 2017, p. 2-4). The first attribute, voice, is "the student's involvement and engagement

in the what and the how of learning" (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017, p.3). Co-creation and social construction go

hand in hand, the first of which works with the teacher to help build curriculum and assessments while

the second works with their classmates through collaboration and camaraderie (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017).

Finally, the fourth attribute, self-discovery, allows learners to understand how they learn best by

reflecting and envisioning what's coming next (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). Each of those attributes can and

should be found in each stage of personalized learning as well.

Fredricks et al. (2014) studied engagement associated with personalized learning in conjunction

with academic achievement and found that engagement was higher in classrooms with supportive

teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice and sufficient structure.

Netcoh (2017) also found that motivation, engagement and learning suffer when teachers control

instruction and learners have limited opportunities for choice. Young adolescents greatly desire the

opportunity to have choice in their learning (Netcoh, 2017; Rickabaugh, 2016). Through surveys at

different intervals throughout their research study as well as interviews with learners, DeMink-Carthew

& Netcoh (2019) found that learners liked or loved making choices about how they learned and felt little

to no stress associated with that choice. However, not every learner had the same experience with

choice so it is very important that teachers listen to their learners first. Social and emotional skills are

needed to fully engage in personalized learning and learners must identify their learning preferences

through structured experiences before being released into full personalized learning (DeMink-Carthew &

Netcoh, 2019). Structure is a driving factor in successful implementations of personalized learning

(Netcoh, 2017).

Netcoh (2017) found that learners struggled to get over the choice attribute of personalized

learning because it is often over emphasized but instead found that they should be emphasizing the

voice attribute so that learners understand they are partnering with their teacher in order to learn. The

learners in that study believed that they should receive unlimited choice and therefore had control over

the entirety of the class period. Choice was framed as the end in and of itself rather than a means for

working toward their learning goals (Netcoh, 2017). Without the scaffolding of values and expectations,

learners and teachers were butting heads over control. The teacher should still be the facilitator of the

learning even though it is personalized (Lobb, 2020).

Although personalized learning is hard to define (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017; Bray & McClaskey,

2015) and has many different pieces to it, it has been shown in different ways that learners value having

choice in how they learn. It has also been shown that personalized learning leads to higher engagement

(Fredricks et al., 2004) and that with the deeper learning experiences that personalized learning offers

the learning environment becomes more collaborative (Netcoh, 2017).

Self-Paced Learning

Self-paced learning is an important part of personalized learning because all teachers have

realized that not one single learner learns the same material at the same pace or to the same depth as

another learner. Therefore, it is imperative that learners are given the appropriate time that they need to

spend on each skill. For one learner, that may be ten minutes but for another learner it could be two

hours. A self-paced curriculum also allows learners to be flexible with when they are learning as well as

how they learn it (Palaigeorgiou & Papadopoulou, 2019; Rhode, 2009; Watson et al., 2018) and after

teaching through a pandemic, this is something that holds great value for teachers. Rhode (2019) also

found that a self-paced format was a vital factor in allowing learners to learn using a variety of methods

so it actually allowed for more voice and choice.

Interactive learning videos is one way to enable self-paced learning and with a combination of

tablets, interactive videos and a self-paced curriculum (Palaigeorgiou & Papadopoulou, 2019) found a

significant increase in learning outcomes. From the pretest at the beginning of the unit to the posttest at

the end of the unit, there was a 71.23% increase in the class's average score. Learners reported liking not

having to be in sync with the teacher or their peers, especially since they didn't have to wait for the rest

of the class to understand if they understood right away (Palaigeorgiou & Papadopoulou, 2019).

Although there was not a control group in this study, the learners reported that the self-paced aspect of

the teaching was extremely motivating as well as engaging. Self-paced learning allowed for more

collaboration between both teachers and learners as well as between groups of learners. (Watson et al.,

2018) found that when given the choice between self-paced learning and a traditional fixed pace,

learners dramatically chose the self-paced learning option.

The biggest drawback of self-paced learning is the pre teaching of social and emotional skills that

it requires (Tullis & Benjamin, 2011). Self control, self discipline and self regulation are all extremely

necessary prerequisites for both self-paced learning and personalized learning (Palaigeorgiou &

Papadopoulou, 2019). Learners need the motivation from within themselves to monitor and control

their learning in order to be successful (Tullis & Benjamin, 2011). However, learners also need to be

trusted with control over their learning once they have successfully shown that they can do it because

self-paced learning has been perceived to show higher levels of learning across affective, cognitive, and behavioral components (Watson et al., 2018).

Empowered Learning

The research about personalized learning and self-paced learning led the literature review in another direction which was to research how to teach learners about themselves and empower them to take ownership in their learning. Netcoh (2017) believes and has shown that learners need to have structure and scaffolding in order for personalized learning to work and the best form of structure is the pre-teaching of social emotional skills. It has been shown that self advocacy, self discipline and self regulation have to be learned before any type of personalization can begin (DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019). Student choice and autonomy are also central to personalized learning and learners need to be taught how they learn, how they like to learn and how those two things are different (Netcoh, 2017).

Cognitive engagement is a necessary skill when it comes to personalized learning. Learners must invest in their learning and understand that challenging tasks provide more learning opportunities (Fredricks et al., 2004). Farrington et al. (2012) recognized four psychosocial attributes necessary for personalized learning: relevance, growth mindset, self-efficacy and a sense of belonging. Without these four skills, learners are not equipped to deal with the control that personalized learning gives them. Kallick and Zmuda (2017) identified 16 Habits of Mind that are needed in order to successfully implement personalized learning as well as empower learners. Of those sixteen habits, there are three that fit with this empowered learning theory the best: thinking flexibly, persisting, and thinking about your thinking (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017).

Demink-Carthew & Netcoh (2019) found that teachers need to give learners opportunities to take increased responsibility for their learning through voice and choice. However, this needs to be done

authentically by focusing not only on the content they are learning but also on learner voice in the learning process and the final product produced (DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019). It is also important to remember that not all learners are going to want to go through this alone and some crave teacher support. Having opportunities for feedback and questions both from teachers and from peers need to be readily available, visible and accessible in order to support all learners (DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019).

Valencia (1990) found that learners often can do the work but that they often don't choose to do so on their own and decided to make ownership a curriculum goal just as comprehension or a math skill would be. In a study done on ownership in the classroom, teachers filled out a survey describing different aspects of their classroom and four themes emerged: teacher dominance and control, teacher modeling and facilitation, personal experiences inform pedagogy and practice and teachers value ownership and authorship (Stone & Surmitis, 2018). This study found that there was a large discrepancy between definitions of ownership and self-authorship but nearly all of the teachers found that ownership was extremely important in the classroom but that it was somewhat unlikely that learners are going to show ownership in their classroom. This led the researchers to believe that educators didn't have the knowledge to facilitate learner ownership and the knowledge gap needs to be confronted and filled (Stone & Surmitis, 2018)

Stefanou et al. (2004) observed a fifth and sixth grade classroom for learner autonomy and proposed that there are typically four different types of lessons: low organizational and low autonomy support, low organizational and high autonomy support, high organizational and low autonomy support and high organizational and high autonomy support. They found that most lessons that involved choice for procedural or organizational matters were often not powerful enough to support high autonomy or

ownership (Stefanou et al., 2004). In order to provide high autonomy or ownership supports, they need to be the originator of the ideas and strategies for learning. Learners need to make more than simple choices about tasks to become cognitively engaged in their learning and to take ownership over it (Stefanou et al., 2004).

Transformational Teaching

Transformational teaching can be defined as "the expressed or unexpressed goal to increase students' mastery of key course concepts while transforming their learning-related attitudes" (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p.576). Transformational teaching brings relationships, learner empowerment, personalized learning and self-paced learning all together. It promotes positive attitudes, beliefs and values about learning while enhancing skills for learning as well as discovery (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). The core methods of transformational teaching are to establish a shared vision between the learner and the instructor, to provide modeling and mastery experience, to challenge and encourage learners, personalize attention and feedback, create experiential lessons and promote reflection at all stages of learning (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically speaking, Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory is very interesting. Transformative learning theory is focused on adult education and the frame of reference that adults have from their formative years. This research is interested in how the learners have already been given a frame of reference of how school is supposed to look and therefore struggle to personalize their learning. Mezirow (1997) identified that points of view and habits of mind encompass an adult's frame of reference. Habits of mind speak to the goal of empowering learners and personalizing the learning experience which is shown in *Students at the Center* (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017) The research that was

conducted based on this literature review will try to fill in some of the gaps between how utilizing

empowerment and personalized learning effects learner engagement.

Research Question

How does the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind change the level of ownership learners

take in a personalized learning model?

Conclusions

This chapter reviewed literature that supports my research question in determining the impact

that personalized pathways and pacing has on learner engagement and empowerment. This information,

along with the data that was collected, will hopefully lead to a better understanding of how personalized

learning and self-pacing benefits learners in both their academics as well as their social and emotional

competencies. In the following chapter, the research done was used to design a study that measures the

change in ownership that the learners experience after being explicitly taught social emotional skills.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

Personalized learning is a large piece of the school district's vision, however throughout this research it has been discovered that a specific definition is not defined so that all staff and students are using the same language. They pride themselves on innovation, relationships and personalization for the learners. However, it did not feel like what was being done was effective for the fifth and sixth grade learners. Throughout the research that was done on personalized learning, engagement and self-paced learning, it was discovered that teaching learners three specific Habits of Mind was a key factor in being successful at personalized learning.

Therefore, the research focused on how the Habits of Mind persisting, thinking about your thinking and thinking flexibly influence the engagement the learners have throughout their personalized, self-paced learning experience (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). This is important because it has been found that by the time learners get to middle school, they are often just "doing school" and checking off the boxes as they go. They no longer are enjoying what they are learning and are more focused on just finishing the assignment in order to get the grade, rather than truly learning the material. In the school district the research was conducted in, they believe it is much more important for learners to take ownership of their learning and understand what the point of learning is. Ownership is difficult to measure quantitatively, therefore it was decided that a qualitative study would be more effective.

Research Question

How does the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind change the level of ownership learners take in a personalized learning model?

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design in order to collect information about the thoughts and feelings of the students' ownership of their learning. A survey combined with journaling was used for this study. The survey was chosen in order to see how the students' beliefs about ownership changed over a period of time through an open-ended survey given at the beginning of the study and at the end. The journaling was added to include observations and thoughts of the researcher to fill in the blanks in between each survey.

Setting

This study took place in a small, rural community in west central Minnesota. The school district is made up of three small towns, population sizes 1,048, 219 and 702 respectively, that pride themselves in their community. This is a community that people do not leave, or if they do, they nearly always come back to work in the local community. Therefore, everyone knows everyone and nearly everyone is related to someone. There is a local millwork distributor that is nationally recognized as well as a large farming community, both agricultural and livestock. The community has a lot of support in our district which leads to many donations towards different initiatives.

My school district is made up of two schools in two different towns. The high school is currently a seventh through twelfth grade building that currently enrolls 320 learners but will be changing to a sixth grade through twelfth grade building soon in the future. The elementary school, located seven

miles down the road, has learners from six weeks through sixth grade in it currently. The daycare center currently has an enrollment rate of 88 and the elementary school has an enrollment of 258. The district is a four day per week school district, and has been for the last ten years. This is a budgetary decision that our community completely supports, with 91.2% of families were in favor or neutral to continuing with a four day week rather than change back to a traditional five day per week schedule in 2012.

The ethnicity of the school district is 94% caucasian, 1% African American and 4% Hispanic. There is a large number of migrant learners, due to the agricultural community, that enroll in the fall, leave in the winter and come back in the spring which changes those numbers dramatically for a few months of every year. 3.4% of our learners have a disability and 30.2% receive free and reduced lunches. Our families range from upper middle class to working class and there are not many in between in the middle class.

Participants

The learners in this study were 15 second through fifth grade learners who were all enrolled in summer school by their parents. This class is made up of seven females (47%) and eight (53%) male learners all between the ages of 8 and 12. There is only one learner who comes from a single parent household because their mother passed away a few years ago while the remaining 14 all live with both of their biological parents. These learners were all enrolled in summer school by their parents, most of which were referred to by their elementary school teacher at the end of the school year because of their academic needs.

Sampling.

The study sample was composed of 15 learners who were enrolled in summer school by their parents after being referred by their teacher during the last school year. The learners are a convenience

sample because they are learners in the assigned class for summer school. Summer school was open to all learners but invitations were specifically sent out to learners based on teacher recommendation. Parents decided whether or not to enroll their learner and it was not required for any learner.

Instrumentation

The instruments that were used for data collection are a survey and an ethnography. The survey consisted of six open ended questions and was given at the beginning of the study as well as at the end, after the implementation period. The student version of this survey measures six different topics in education: personalization of learning, learning standards and competencies, anytime, anywhere learning, student agency and ownership, data use, and contextual conditions supporting student centered learning. The survey created for this study was based on the questions in the student agency and ownership section of the MISCL student survey and can be found in Appendix B. The ethnography was completed throughout the study recording observations, learner interviews and personal thoughts in a Google Doc. The date and time will be recorded, at least two learner interviews each day as well as three to five sentences with the researchers personal thoughts each day. They will be recorded after each class period when there is a prep period for the researcher.

Data Collection.

Baseline data was collected in one class period through an open response survey that included six questions. After the baseline data was collected and while teaching the three Habits of Mind, the implementation period, the researcher was also interviewing learners and observing their behaviors to collect more data. The implementation period was done by teaching one habit each week, fifteen minutes per day, for a total of one hour of instruction for each of the three Habits of Mind. After the

implementation period was over (three weeks), the survey was given again during a single class period to see the change in the learners' responses.

Data Analysis.

After the baseline data was collected, responses were analyzed for levels of ownership and a description of where the class was at was created based on the responses of the survey as well as the observations and interviews done. All three pieces were read through multiple times in order to code and categorize the data, identify themes and then create larger constructs. After the implementation period and the survey was given again, the data was once again analyzed for levels of ownership and a second description of the class was created. This description was done with the survey, observations during class and interviews of learners in mind. An analysis of the change in levels of ownership was then done comparing the first description with the second description.

Research Question(s) and System Alignment.

The table below (i.e., Table 3.1) provides a description of the alignment between the study Research Question(s) and the methods used in this study to ensure that all variables of study have been accounted for adequately.

Table 1

Research Question Alignment

Research Question	Variables	Design	Instrument	Validity & Reliability	Technique	Source
How does the explicit	DV: The dependent	Longitudinal survey and	For this study, a	A test-retest	Learners were given	Approximately 18 5th

teaching of three Habits of Mind change the level of ownership learners take in a personalized learning model?	variable in this study was the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind: persisting, thinking about your thinking, thinking flexibly (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). IV: The independent variable in this study was the degree of ownership that the learners felt they had in a personalized learning setting.	ethnography to see how the learners' beliefs in their ownership change over time.	survey was used to collect information about how the learners feel about the ownership of their learning before teaching the Habits of Mind as well as after.	method will be performed because the learners will take the same survey twice after a time interval. The data from that survey will be looked at to see the relationship between the two.	a survey before being explicitly taught three Habits of Mind and then given the same survey afterwards to see the change in ownership. The survey consisted of six open ended questions.	grade learners in my first math class of the day.

Procedures

At the beginning of the study, the researcher spent the first week just observing the learners, making notes in the ethnography and interviewing learners to see what they thought about the learning process. The class is already self-pacing and personalizing our learning through learner centered grids so a typical class period begins with a warm up question that is done as a whole class and then the learners

decide what they are doing for the day. They can either work with the teacher for an in person seminar which keeps them on pace or they can work on their own utilizing video lectures to self-pace either slower or faster than the teacher. During that week, the learners completed a survey to measure their agency and ownership through a Google Form. The survey consisted of six open ended questions.

The next three weeks were spent explicitly teaching about three of the sixteen Habits of Mind: thinking flexibly, persisting, and thinking about your thinking (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). Each week focused on a different habit for about fifteen minutes each day and did a lot of modeling and peer coaching during these fifteen minutes with many different real life scenarios coming up that will give them ideas in the future. The ethnography continued throughout these weeks making notes about how learners were responding to the social and emotional skills. After teaching these three Habits of Mind, the learners took the same survey again to gauge how ownership has changed since explicitly teaching the social and emotional skills as well as continuing self-pacing and personalized learning. The ethnography was also implemented in the third week with many notes taken about learner agency and ownership as well as learner interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study posed no greater risk than any other school day. The school district prioritizes personalized learning and self-pacing in our fifth through eighth grade program so this study did not impact the opportunity to learn or cause harm to the learners. They are still children, however, so it needed to be kept in mind when they were being interviewed and observing their behavior that they are a vulnerable population. All data was kept confidential in a password protected digital file, Google Drive, will be kept for two years and no identifying information about participants were shared in the study, instead utilizing a code that only the researcher had knowledge of and access to. The

researcher will seek MSUM's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to ensure the ethical conduct of

research involving human subjects (Mills & Gay, 2019) (See Appendix C).

Conclusions

This chapter explained the logistics of the action research that was conducted to observe the

changes in the level of ownership learners have after being explicitly taught three social emotional skills.

Ownership was observed through open ended surveys, interviews and class observations. In the chapter

that follows, the results of the research will be presented as well as the conclusions that can be drawn

from it.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine the effects that the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind has on student ownership in a personalized learning environment. In this study, fifteen learners between the ages of eight and twelve took a six question open ended survey before being taught three specific Habits of Mind and then took the same survey at the end of the study in order to compare the results. A journal was also kept throughout the process in order to gain insights into the behavior of the learners throughout the teaching of the habits.

This research was conducted using a qualitative format through the use of an ethnography with open ended surveys taken by the learners and a journal completed by the researcher. The open ended survey used can be found in Appendix B. After the surveys had been completed, the researcher sifted through the results and grouped similar answers together to then create graphs and tables. The journal was done by the researcher through a daily, digital journal that reflected on how each class session went. It began on June 14th, 2021 which was our first day of the summer school session and completed on July 9th, 2021 which was our final day of the summer school session, each being written as close to 11:00 AM as possible, depending on the speed at which learners were picked up for the morning. Observations were done for one hour per day for four weeks for a total of twenty entries. These journal entries range in length from three sentences on the very last day when we took the post survey and twenty-three sentences on June 30th when we had an amazing day utilizing personalized learning. An analysis of the qualitative data was performed by reviewing the journal and coding it line by line to gain a sense of common topics throughout the four week time period. The coded lines were then reviewed and used to make four common themes to summarize the ethnography.

Results

Journaling Data

Qualitative analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, as cited in Wildemuth, 2017). After analyzing the text data coming from the notes by interpreting the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns, the following four major themes emerged: organization, social and emotional, personalized learning and choice, and engagement (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, as cited in Wildemuth, 2017).

The first theme, organization, appeared the most at the beginning and the end of the study when the researcher had to organize the learners but it also appeared throughout when the learners were organizing their learning or figuring out how they wanted to learn that day. The theme of social and emotional as well as personalized learning were obvious themes throughout the journal because it was the basis of the entire research question. The last theme, engagement, was often discussed throughout the journal based on how the learners were responding to the three Habits of Mind being taught and how it was effecting their engagement. Figure 4.1 below provides a visual representation of the frequency that each theme was noted in the qualitative data presented in the ethnography journal.

Figure 4.1.
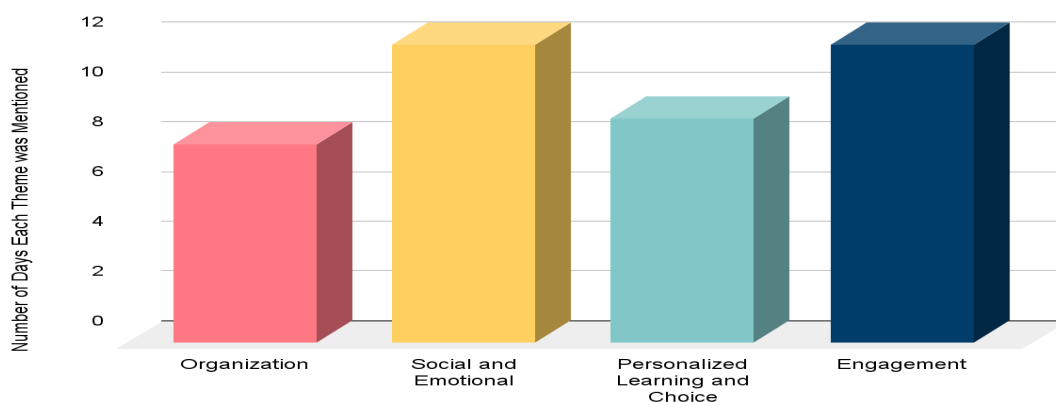
Frequency of Themes per Day

Table 2 below provides quotes from the journal itself for each of those four themes.

Table 2

Four Themes of Journal

Theme	Quote(s)
Organization	1. "explained my research to them and handed out permission slips" 2. "read them the questions" 3. "we talked about personalized learning and what it is today" 4. "learner didn't want to be in school and we chatted about why summer school was right for them, why it was helpful and where they should see a difference in the fall" 5. "This summer I learned so much about how to learn and I can't wait for school to start so that I can be in your class again!"
Social Emotional Skills	1. "they seemed very embarrassed that they didn't know how to do most of the work but also didn't know how to ask for help" 2. "This could be because they were afraid to ask questions or they didn't want to look stupid." 3. "He told me that he doesn't even bother trying anymore because he knows the teacher will just give him the answer anyway." Sometimes, I will read the directions and my brain will tell me that I don't know how to do it so I won't even try and I will just ask for help." 4. "When I get stuck, I just have to persist and think about my choices. Sometimes asking for help is the best choice but it doesn't have to be the very first thing I try."
Personalization	1. "many of the younger learners hadn't really had any experience with it (Personalized Learning)" 2. "the learners were really confused at first" 3. "No choices were made based on anything other than their friends!" 4. "I observed the learners making choices for themselves" 5. "three of them were really struggling with the choices that they made because they weren't being successful" 6. "They picked their choices and all of them chose a choice that wasn't too easy for them!"
Engagement	1. "They came from a fifteen minute recess and many complained walking in that they had to sit and listen for an entire hour" 2. "We really struggled to stay focused as a whole group so that our other classmates could continue working." 3. "They all were very social today." 4. "10 of the 16 students were fully engaged for the entire time period" 5. "I could have easily sat in a chair and just watched them for thirty-five minutes because they didn't need my help. They didn't need me there at all."

A journal entry from the second week of data collection can be found in Figure 4.2 below where

personalization, social emotional skills and engagement were tagged as themes. This is a typical journal

entry throughout the twenty entries.

Figure 4.2.

Journal Entry from June 23rd

| 6/23 | Another day with personalized learning and another day with struggles. This time though I was able to refer my learners back to the persisting circles that we made yesterday so that they had ways to work through their problems without just quitting. The persisting circles definitely helped the younger learners the most because they had a visual representation of how they could move through their frustration and "persist" through their hardship. The biggest struggle that my learners had today was focus. We really struggled to stay focused as a whole group so that our other classmates could continue working. There were many periods that I had to stop working with an individual student, redirect the class and then begin working with the student again. I also felt like I was saying "Look at your persistence circle and see if you can find a strategy to use" a million times in the 45 minute class period. Hopefully it will get better! No choices were made based on anything other than their friends! They all were very social today. | Personalized Learning Engagement SEL |

Theme 1: Organization

The first theme that was noted was all about organization. Teachers and learners both

understand that a successful classroom, especially a personalized learning model classroom, needs a

certain level of organization. Without organization, there are more questions than answers about where

things go, what should be done next, and countless other minor details that turn into major

interruptions if not thought through and implemented. The more organized a classroom is setup both

with materials as well as structures such as bathroom breaks, the more easily it will run. The first few

days that were reflected upon during the study mentioned organizational aspects of teaching and

learning frequently such as "explained my research and handed out the parent permission slips" but as

the journaling continued, the organization comments changed to be more learner based, instead of student based. Organization is very important in order to run a successful classroom but it is also important for a learner to be successful, especially as they get farther along in their education. Learners need to figure out how they learn best and how they can be successful learners. At the end of the journaling an entry states "A learner came up to me and thanked me for teaching her how to think about her thinking. She said "I have never thought about what I was thinking before because I thought teachers were supposed to tell me what I was thinking. This summer I learned so much about how to learn and I can't wait for school to start so that I can be in your class again!"

Theme Two: Social and Emotional Skills

The second emerging theme was social and emotional which fits well with the research question because the explicit teaching of social and emotional skills was done each day. However, this theme has more to do with the learners reactions to and implementation of the skills than the actual skills themselves. The first day's entry in the journal states "they seemed embarrassed that they didn't know how to do most of the work but also didn't know how to ask for help." On the third day the researcher wrote "I also had a problem with two learners who were laughing at a peer who said the wrong answer." At the beginning of the journaling, entries such as these were very common. However, after we began the explicit teaching of three distinct Habits of Mind, the entries changed. On June 22nd a learner said "Sometimes, I will read the directions and my brain will tell me that I don't know how to do it so I won't even try and I will just ask for help." but in the last week of the ethnography the same learner said "When I get stuck, I just have to persist and think about my choices. Sometimes asking for help is the best choice but it doesn't have to be the very first thing I try." As the journaling continued, these types of entries were much more common. Learners were struggling with their emotions when it came to their

learning at the beginning of the study but as the study wrapped up, they had strategies in place that they

could use and understood how to use.

Theme Three: Personalized Learning

A big piece of this research was the fact that it was being done in a personalized learning

environment. The amount of ownership a learner needs of their learning is very different when they are

in charge of their own learning than in an environment where the teacher is the vessel of all knowledge

and the learners sit and get that knowledge. Therefore, it makes complete sense that a major theme of

the journaling would be personalized learning and choice. The very first entry that has a personalized

learning code on it is on June 17th, the fourth day of summer school, and it states "I was surprised how

many of the younger learners hadn't really had any experience with it (personalized learning). I thought

this was a district initiative?" At that point, the researcher knew that they were going to have to go

backwards in order to go forward because more scaffolding was needed in order for the learners to be

successful with personalized learning. The very first day we began actually personalizing our learning

states "They are all making choices based on their friends and what they can get done fast in order to

have free time." As the three social emotional skills were taught (persisting, thinking flexibly and thinking

about your thinking), the entries began to change (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). On June 25th, there were

many learners absent so there was a lot of one on one time available which is noted in the journaling

here "This gave me the opportunity to really discuss with each learner about their choices and guide

them in the right direction. Of the 8 learners in class, 4 of them actually ended up switching their choice

and persisted in their learning without giving up and asking for help." The researcher found that

discussing the choices before letting the learners go really improved their choice making because they

got to really think about each one for themselves before just picking one with their friends. The second

to last entry states "They picked their choices and ALL OF THEM chose a choice that wasn't too easy for them! Two learners chose a pretty difficult choice for them but I would prefer that."

Theme Four: Engagement

The final major theme that emerged from the journaling was engagement which goes hand in hand with ownership of learning. At the beginning of the ethnography there were many comments like this "We really struggled to stay focused as a whole group so that our other classmates could continue working." There were also a few days where the learners weren't even engaged in the whole class social emotional learning activity that we were doing. "Finally, two pairs didn't want to participate at all and hardly figured out the easy groups to sort them into." However, as the research continued, there were more good days and the journaling had comments like this "I observed the learners making choices for themselves as well as staying engaged in their work for longer periods than in the past." On the final day of personalized learning observations, the researcher noted, "I could have easily sat in a chair and just watched them for thirty five minutes because they didn't need my help. They didn't need me there at all." Although teachers are still necessary, when learners are able to stay engaged in their work and take ownership of their learning, the teacher doesn't have to do as much behavior management, they can just teach which helps both the teacher and the learner.

Student Survey Data

On the first day of summer school, learners were given a six question, open ended survey (Appendix B) in order to get a baseline of the level of ownership that they take of their learning. They took this survey through Google Forms and it was completely anonymous. Since these were open ended questions, learners were able to type whatever answers that they wanted and were not given any sort of instruction on how many answers they were expected to put. They all put one answer for all of the questions and were allowed to ask questions throughout the survey. On the final day of summer school,

the exact same survey was given in order to gain insight about how the learners' views about ownership

had changed. The survey was still given through Google Forms and was once again anonymous, it was

also still an open ended question so the learners were able to type any answer that they wanted. They

were not given instruction about how many answers they should put down per question and a few

learners wrote multiple answers for some questions and they were allowed to ask any questions that

they might have throughout the survey. Figure 4.3 below shows two student answers for all six questions

for both the pre survey as well as the post survey.

Figure 4.3.

Sample Student Survey Responses

Pre-SEL Skills						
Student #	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
2	Ask teacher	Do IT!	Get help	To get better do smart	Do it right away	G
7	Ask for help	As soon as you get it do it	Ask for help	Ok	By doing it	I don't know

Post-SEL Skills						
Student #	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
8	Ask a classmate or try again	Focus On work	Try again then ask a classmate then ask a teacher	learn best	Do it	Happy
12	ask for help keep trying	do it before it is do	keep trying ask for help	to try somthing that you like because every one is differnt	do it	take control of learning happy

The first question in the survey asked learners what they can do if they don't understand a topic

in class. Table 3 compares the data from the first survey given on the first day of summer school with the

second survey given on the last day of summer school, after the three habits were explicitly taught. In

the first survey, the majority of learners, nine learners, responded that they would ask a teacher if they

didn't understand a topic while three said they would raise their hand, one responded that they would

think and two said they didn't know what they would do. While in the second survey, six learners

responded that they would ask a friend first and four responded that they would try again before asking

a teacher which two learners wrote down as a choice. Three learners wrote down multiple answers for

this question the second time they took it while in the first survey, not a single learner wrote more than

one answer.

Table 3

Results of Question 1 Before and After Habits of Mind (HOM) were Explicitly Taught

Question 1	Survey 1 - Pre-HOM	Survey 2 - Post-HOM Skills
Ask a teacher	9	2
Ask a friend	N/A	6
Pay attention	N/A	1
Try again	N/A	4
I Don't Know	2	N/A
Think	1	N/A
Raise Hand	3	N/A

Question two asked students what they do to complete their work on time. As shown in Table 4

below, before the explicit teaching of the three habits, six learners responded something along the lines

of work hard, four wrote something about time management skills, two wrote pay attention and three

said something else entirely. However, in the second survey, after they had been taught the skills, three

said that they would do it right away, five responded that they would stay focused and four believe that

doing their best is how they complete their work on time. One learner did state that they do their work

right away and stay focused in order to get it done on time.

Table 4

Results of Question 2 Before and After Habits of Mind (HOM) were Explicitly Taught

Question 2	Survey 1 - Pre-HOM	Survey 2 - Post-HOM Skills
Work Hard	6	N/A
Time Management	4	N/A
Other	3	N/A
Pay Attention	2	N/A
Do Right Away	N/A	3
Stay Focused	N/A	5
Do Your Best	N/A	4

The third question asked learners what they should do if something is hard and in the first survey

that they took, an overwhelming majority said ask for help with just three learners saying either try again

or raise your hand. However, as shown in Table 5 below, after the learners had been explicitly taught

three Habits of Mind, eight said they would ask for help while six said they would try again. Multiple

learners wrote that they would both try again and ask for help.

Table 5

Results of Question 3 Before and After Habits of Mind (HOM) were Explicitly Taught

Question 3	Survey 1 - Pre-HOM	Survey 2 - Post-HOM Skills
Ask for Help	12	8
Raise Hand	2	N/A
Try Again	1	6

The purpose of question four was to see if learners knew what the purpose of personalized learning is and to gauge how their perceived purpose changes over the course of a personalized learning unit. As shown in Table 6, before the learners were taught the habits, most thought it was just to be smart while a few knew that it had to do with learning and independence and two learners actually didn't know at all. However, after they had been taught using a personalized learning model, only one person responded that they didn't know what the purpose of personalized learning was and the other ten knew that it was to learn and because everyone is different.

Table 6

Results of Question 4 Before and After Habits of Mind (HOM) were Explicitly Taught

Question 4	Survey 1 - Pre-HOM	Survey 2 - Post-HOM Skills
Be Smart	6	N/A
Be Independent	4	N/A
Learn	3	4
I Don't Know	2	1
Everyone is Different	N/A	5

Table 7 below shows the results of question five which asked learners how they take responsibility for their work. Twelve of the fifteen responses were either don't cheat or just do it which doesn't really take responsibility for your work completely while two people responded with work hard which would be closer to what the researcher was looking for. However, the second time the learners took the survey four of the eleven responses were just do it which once again does not show responsibility while the other seven responses were to work hard or take care of it which would show responsibility of their learning.

Table 7

Results of Question 5 Before and After Habits of Mind (HOM) were Explicitly Taught

Question 5	Survey 1 - Pre-HOM	Survey 2 - Post-HOM Skills
Work Hard	2	4
Do It	6	4
Don't Cheat	6	N/A
Other	1	N/A
Take Care of It	N/A	3

The final question, as shown in Table 8 below, asked learners what they think ownership looks like, sounds like and feels like and since this is the most subjective question, it was also the most difficult for learners to answer. They didn't understand what ownership even meant and many asked questions about how to answer this question. The researcher did their best to answer the questions without leading them toward any specific answer and four of them still said that they didn't know while seven said that it felt good and four others gave a completely different answer entirely. If questions would have

been guided through analogies or helped in other ways, it would have skewed the data towards what the researcher hoped the result would be. The second time learners took the survey, they were much more quick to answer and didn't ask any questions before answering this time. There was also not a single learner who wrote an answer that didn't make sense or that they didn't know what ownership was. Four of the learners wrote that it feels good or happy while the other seven said that they are taking control of their learning.

Table 8

Results of Question 6 Before and After Habits of Mind (HOM) were Explicitly Taught

Question 6	Survey 1 - Pre-HOM	Survey 2 - Post-HOM Skills
Feels Good/Happy	7	4
I Don't Know	4	N/A
Other	4	N/A
Take Control of Your Learning	N/A	7

Data Interpretation

In analyzing the data, the majority of students increased their level of ownership throughout the four weeks that data was collected. Analyzing the student survey data was very beneficial to see how the ownership of their learning through the lens of the learner changed from the beginning of the summer school session to the end. However, the journaling data allowed the researcher to use a teacher lens to analyze how the learner ownership changed throughout the four week span. When analyzing the

student surveys, each question showed a change in the level of ownership but questions one, three and

six really showed a major improvement of the class's level of ownership.

Question one asked learners what they should do if they don't understand a topic in class.

Before the learners were taught the three Habits of Mind, nine of them immediately chose to ask a

teacher and two even said that they didn't know. However, after the habits were taught, all of them had

a strategy that they would use and some even had multiple strategies that they wrote down which

shows that, in general, the class had improved their persisting, flexible thinking and thinking about their

thinking skills.

The third question on the survey asked learners what they do when things get hard and before

the learners were taught the Habits of Mind of persisting, thinking flexibly and thinking about your

thinking, twelve out of the fifteen said they would ask for help (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). The goal of this

action research was for learners to change that thought process so that when things get hard, the

learner would take ownership of their learning work by trying a different strategy or two before asking

for help. In the post survey, there were still eight out of fourteen learners who said they would ask for

help. However, six of those eight actually wrote that they would try again before asking for help which

shows the level of ownership changing. With more modeling and instruction, the hope would be that

there would be even more strategies listed before asking for help.

Finally, question six explicitly asked learners what they thought about ownership: what it looks

like, sounds like and feels like. At the beginning of the summer school session, only seven of the fifteen

learners wrote anything that even remotely matches ownership while the other eight either wrote that

they didn't know or something else entirely. However, at the end of the summer school session, all

eleven learners had an idea of what ownership should look like, sound like and feel like with the majority

writing something along the lines of it meaning they are taking control of their learning. As like with

question three, the hope would be that with even more modeling and instruction, learners would continue to grow in their ownership of their learning.

The data supports the conclusion that teaching Habits of Mind explicitly increases student ownership because at the beginning of the ethnography there were multiple quotes about learners not trying when things get hard or immediately asking for help from the teacher. However, as the weeks went by and the learners were taught the three habits, there were less and less quotes that portrayed the frustrations of teaching and instead there were quotes that showed the learners trying to work through problems that they encounter on their own. The very last week of the data collection, the data showed that the researcher didn't even need to be in the room anymore because the learners were working independently so well. This will change day to day depending on the many factors that influence a classroom but is a glimmer of hope that the teaching of persisting, thinking flexibly and thinking about your thinking does improve student ownership levels (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017).

Conclusion

After reviewing the student survey results and coding the journaling that was completed throughout the research period, it can be concluded that the learners' level of ownership did increase throughout the four weeks that data was collected and the Habits of Mind were taught. The student survey clearly showed the growth of ownership with the increase in strategies for when learners get stuck but the journaling was an even more clear example of how social emotional skills increased student ownership. With even more instruction and modeling, the researcher believes that learners' level of ownership would continue to increase and instruction and learning would become even more fluid with higher levels of engagement. The personalized learning pathway that these learners encountered also increased their ownership because it gave them choice about how they are going to learn each day.

CHAPTER 5

ACTION PLAN AND PLAN FOR SHARING

Action Plan

After observing the learners throughout the process of explicitly teaching them three Habits of Mind persisting, thinking flexibly and thinking about your thinking while in a personalized learning pathway, the plan is to continue this process with every single new class (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). The surveys will be more informal with fewer questions or differing questions throughout the school year but the student voice that is reflected is very powerful. I also think it would be helpful for these surveys to not be anonymous in the future so that I can chat with specific learners about their answers and see the growth of each student throughout the year. Since the surveys were anonymous, the journaling proved even more valuable and effective in seeing the student ownership levels change during the research. They also reminded me how far we can come in such a short amount of time and I would love to continue journaling throughout a school year to see the growth of the learners from September to May.

Since the level of ownership improved so much in the four weeks that the research was conducted during, it would be a detriment to the learners not to continue teaching the other Habits of Mind. However, every class is different so the exact same strategies may not work for each class that comes through so it would be good to look into a few different strategies for these three habits. There are 13 other Habits of Mind that would be beneficial to explicitly teach the learners as well after the base of persisting, thinking about your thinking and flexible thinking have been established (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). It doesn't make sense to teach the three first skills at the beginning of the school year and then never bring them up again. The three original skills as well as the 13 new skills need to continue to be discussed, modeled and implemented throughout the entire school year: the first day to the last day.

Through the data that was collected, it is obvious that learner ownership and engagement increases with the explicit teaching of Habits of Mind but it needs to be continued throughout the entire school year and even their entire academic careers.

Like most teachers, a new class comes into the room every year but this is done on a two year rotation because of the departmentalizing that is done in the school district. Since one grade level per year would have already had practice with both personalized pathways and Habits of Mind, there would be a dramatic difference between what each grade level would be learning. This forces both new ideas and personalization each year but also allows for a huge amount of growth from the beginning of the first year to the end of the second year in the personalized learning setting. It also helps the learners moving into high school because they implement a personalized learning model there as well.

Plan for Sharing

With the knowledge that I have gained throughout the research I have conducted, I feel like the next natural step would be to share it with my colleagues. I am a part of what my district is calling a "School Within A School" where we will be getting rid of grade levels for grades four through eight. This is a brand new initiative that I believe will be greatly impacted by this research. There are teachers, interventionists, support staff, specialists and administrators on this team so it would be very beneficial to share this research with them and then encourage them to utilize the Habits of Mind in their classrooms as well. If we are all using the same language and setting the same guidelines, the learners will only benefit. Through sharing this information, I am looking forward to starting conversations with my colleagues about personalized learning and Habits of Mind.

I also discovered throughout my research that although personalized learning is a district initiative, many learners don't actually know what it is. I don't know if this is because we aren't being

clear as a collective staff or if there are staff not utilizing the term but I think it is important to bring this information to the attention of my administration. The next step would be to make sure there is common language surrounding personalized learning in our district so that every single staff member knows what it is and then can explain it to their learners in the exact same way. Each grade level may utilize it differently or at a different level depending on their grade level but there should not be a learner that gets to fifth grade without being able to explain what personalized learning is and why we do it in our district, especially if it is an initiative.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Participation in Research

Title: Empowering Learners through Habits of Mind and Personalized Pathways: An Ethnographic Study

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to determine whether the explicit teaching of three Habits of Mind skills geared toward self-advocacy, self-management, and self-direction lead to higher levels of ownership and engagement in their learning.

Study Information: This study will compare the ownership and engagement that learners show in their learning before being explicitly taught three different Habits of Mind as well as after. They will take a short, open ended survey at the beginning of the summer school term and then they will be given fifteen minutes of social emotional learning each day before their literacy instruction begins. At the end of three weeks, they will take the same short, open ended survey so that the results can be compared to the first survey. The teacher will also record observations throughout the three weeks that will be used concurrently with the survey results to determine whether the Habits of Mind were effective or not.

Time: The participants will complete the study during their homeroom time and literacy time during summer school of 2021.

Risks: Participation in this study involves minimal risk.

Benefits: Participation may help improve participants ability to make decisions about their learning and stay focused while working at their own pace as well as improve their self-advocacy, self-management and self-regulation skills.

Confidentiality: Participant's identity will not be shared with anyone beyond the principal investigator, Dr. Ximena Suarez Sousa, and the co-investigator, Megan Amundson. All individual information will be recorded and tracked under an identification number and not the participant's name.

Participation and Withdrawal: Participation in this study is optional. Students can choose not to participate or choose to withdraw at any time without any negative effects on grades, relationship with the instructor or relationship with their school.

Contact: If you have any questions about this study, you may contact any of these people:

Megan Amundson

Co-Investigator

Ph. (320) 254-8211 EXT 1104

Program

Email: mamundson@bbejaguars.org

Dr. Ximena Suarez Sousa

Principal Investigator

Professor/Educational Leadership Doctoral

Lommen Hall 211C

School of Teaching and Learning

Minnesota State University Moorhead

Email: suarez@mnstate.edu

Any questions about your rights may be directed to Lisa Karch, Ph.D., Chair of the MSUM Institutional Review Board, at 218-477-2699 or by lisa.karch@mnstate.edu. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

"I have been informed of the study details and understand what participating in the study means. I understand that my child's identity will be protected and that they can choose to stop participating in the study at any time. By signing this form, I am agreeing to allow my child to participant in the study. I am at least 18 years of age."

_____

Name of Child (Print)

_____   _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions:

1. What can you do if you don't understand a topic in class?

2. What do you do to complete your work on time?

3. What should you do if something is hard?

4. What do you think the point of personalized learning is? Why do we do it?

5. How can you take responsibility for your work?

6. What do you think ownership in the classroom looks like, sounds like, or feels like?

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MOORHEAD.

DATE: July 6, 2021

TO: Ximena Suarez Sousa, Principal Investigator
                   Megan Amundson, Co-Investigator

FROM: Lisa Karch, Chair
                   Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB

ACTION: **DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS**

PROJECT TITLE: [1768616-1] Empowering Learners through Social Emotional Skills and
                   Personalized Pathways
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
DECISION DATE: July 1, 2021

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Minnesota State University
Moorhead IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal
regulations under 45 CFR 46.104.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact the Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB. Please include
your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been issued in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within
Minnesota State University Moorhead's records.