Personalization in a Traditional Boys' School

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Enduring, false dichotomy

TRADITION
DISCIPLINE
RIGOUR
SERVICE

Personalization
Lifelong learning
Diversity
Student voice

STANDARDS
ACHIEVEMENT
SPORT
COMPETITION

Innovation
New technologies
Learning to learn
Future focus

Central question:

If the school – and the world around it – is already changing, how do you personalize education for boys at the same time as building the strength and the identity of the institution?

Discussion person next to you

Are these priorities both possible and to what degree?

Westlake Boys High
School 2007
Setting the scene

Slide 1

Westlake Boys High School 2007

Known for:

- Academic Achievement
- Competition
- Streaming
- Discipline
- Sports
- Music
- Cambridge International Examinations
- Traditional Models of Learning

Slide 2

Westlake Boys High School 2007

A fuller picture:

- Competition
- Streaming
- Discipline
- Sports
- Music
- Academic Achievement
- Cambridge International Examinations

AND:

- Literacy focus
- ICT stirrings
- Changing staff demographics
- Beginnings of Assessment for Learning
- Changing student population

Slide 3

Curriculum Choices / Options
New technologies
Learning to Learn - metacognition
A range of teaching and learning styles
Excellence in a range of co-curricular activities
Ensuring that managing self is core

Elements of school life that could be considered personalization

Peer and self assessment
Increased guidance and mentoring
Skills-based teaching: key competencies
Targeted streaming
Data mining: intelligent target setting

Slide 4

Personalization: where are we?

Questions for us all to consider:

- Do these elements reflect on what you see as personalisation?
- What do you understand by 'personalization'?

Time for discussion.

Westlake Boys High School

Our answer:

- We needed to personalize what we were doing

  and

- We needed to strengthen the sense of what it meant to be 'Westlake' if we were to personalize successfully: to build the strength of the institution.

Personalizing Westlake

Teaching and Learning

- Literacy across the curriculum
- SCT role
- Junior exams and assessment grids
- PPTPP
- Key Competencies
- Student-centred learning enhanced

Late-Start Internal PD

- Format used
- 80% internally based
- Literacy focus
- Group work
- Peer and self-assessment
- Questioning Techniques
- Assessment for Learning
- Junior Exam writing
- Behaviour management

Personalizing Westlake

Curriculum

- Broadened Cambridge pathway
- More NCEA/CIE flexibility
- Increased Arts and Languages options
- Over 140 separate senior courses
- Multi-level study
- Academic Institute

New technologies

- New Learning Platform – Scholaris:
- Virtual classrooms – blogs - wikis
- Discussion Boards
- Voicethreads

Personalization: what have you done?

Questions for us all to consider:

- How much have we done to personalize the education of our boys? and
- How much do we *want* to do to?
- What some implications for our schools by personalising the education for the boys in our schools?

Time for discussion.

Personalizing Learning

Data Mining

- Enhanced achievement data analysis
- Performance of specific groups
- New 'value-added' Westlake model: 'Fathom'
- Target setting for individual students
- Tracking and intervention strategies

Guidance, targeting and Mentoring

- New mentoring programme
- SLT intervention
- Deans intervention
- New 'Level 1 Achievement' focus

Personalizing Learning

Student Voice

- Academic Council
- Sports Council
- Cultural Council

Cultural Focus

- Whanau Group and Kaiwhakahaere
- Pacific Peoples Group

Personalizing Learning

- Which of these approaches is your school adopting?
- Which might be adopted?
- Which would be inappropriate?
- Have you moved far further in any of the areas?

Strengthening the Institution

The Westlake Way

- Values
- Ethos
- Emphasis on tradition
- Attempt to forge shared identity
- Gym 'skins' – celebration of excellence

Assemblies

- New Auditorium – heart and sole
- Two weekly whole-school Assemblies with enhanced focus on achievement and use of AV technologies
- More focus on Academic excellence
- More focus on cultural excellence

Strengthening the Institution

House System

- Vertical Form Classes
- Re-shaping existing school events
- New events
- Sports
- Arts and Culture
- Academic
- Haka competition

Media and Communications

- Business Awards
- Press coverage
- Examination results publicity
- 'Traditional and Progressive' branding
- BTB
- Strong voice on discipline

Strengthening the Institution

Graduation

- Focus on effort and behaviour
- Rewards for all students
- Carrot and stick
- Parental support

What do you think?

- What approaches would be successful in your school?
- How far would you go to duplicate the dual approach?
- What do you see as the advantages and the potential problems?

Some discussions on this

Westlake 2009

- Scholarship passes have gone from 26 in 2006 to 69 in 2008
- CIE results have improved year-on-year
- NCEA results have been steady: we now have systems to identify, target and mentor students in danger of failing
- School has a clear identity
- Technology is an integral part of teaching and learning
- Assessment strategies are consistent
- Teaching and learning is generally more student-centred

… but there's a long way to go.