reDesign

AUTHOR INFO

Aanika Dalal, Age 18, she/her

From: Austin, TX

Describe yourself in 5 emojis: 🙃 😖

Best learning experience: Writing a paper on curiosity

Most curious about: The relationships and connections between seemingly unrelated knowledge

EXPLORING SCHEDULING

Youth Advisory Council - Paradigms & Possibilities Series

TIME-BOUND/RIGID SCHEDULING: Rigid scheduling not only wastes time, but it reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of learning. I have had the opportunity to attend both a traditional public school and an alternative school that fully embraces the idea of self-paced learning. From this experience, I've realized that the main benefit of self-paced learning is that it gives students agency over their learning. This encourages them to take responsibility for their education and makes them more engaged in the process. Additionally, self-paced learning allows students to build their schedule around learning opportunities. For example, if they have the opportunity to do an internship during the school year, they can do the internship and catch up on their school work later.

CONSIDERING DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Key Resource: Scheduling for learning, not convenience

Acton Academy (HS)

- 8:30-8:45 - Socratic discussion
- 8:45-12:00 - Silent Core Skills (students work independently to meet their goals/assignments)
- 12:00-12:30 - Lunch
- 12:30-12:45 - Socratic discussion
- 12:45-2:50 - Quest work (students work together on a "big project" with daily deliverables)
- 2:50-3:00 - Clean-up
- 3:00-3:15 - Socratic discussion

All synchronous work takes place over 5-6 week blocks. Students have a certain amount of "blocks" they need to participate in to graduate, but when they complete these blocks is up to them and flexible around their schedule.

IN THIS EXAMPLE: This model of education and the flexibility it provides allows students to better pursue interests and projects outside of school. It also leads to greater engagement in learning as it allows students to learn at a pace that is right for them in the way that is right for them.

The major downside of this system is that it is very easy for students to fall VERY behind and not be able to catch up. Self-paced learning can also be taken a little too far to the point where it hinders students ability to get help that they need. Additionally, students can end up pushing themselves too hard or too little without the proper guidance.

GATHERING IDEAS FROM OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE...

Thoughts about school scheduling and self-paced learning?

"I don't think it's possible to do fully self paced or fully not. You have to do some things with other people which requires a schedule- there should be a balance of both."

'i like self paced learning for assignments and stuff but i learn better with lectures in person..."

"It is amazing!"

"It's cool that as I've gotten older Acton lets me do more self paced work."

"Asynchronous work seems to spring mostly from leftover time after the lesson/class (as in time for self paced work is not often set aside purposefully). It also seems like the effectiveness of asynch. work vs. synch work depends on the class; students may just need more individual practice for some classes or more instruction/explanation for others."