Case Study: Cesar E. Chavez Multicultural Academic Center Designs Innovative Learning Spaces for English Language Learners in Chicago, Illinois

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The following case study represents promising practices in the field using personalized, competency-based learning specifically for ELL students. Each case study in this blog series is considered promising in that they incorporate many of the core principles for next generation learning to support ELL student success. All case studies are examples of programs taking a longer view and a more holistic approach to student outcomes over time – defining the goal as helping students to achieve at high levels over the course of their schooling – in addition to becoming English-proficient.

Each case study addresses the core principles for next generation learning for ELL students that were discussed in previous blog posts:

- Redefining success for ELL students
- Assessments of and for learning
- Personalized learning approaches
- Building educator role and capacity

Cesar Chavez Multicultural Academic Center

Location: Chicago, IL
Grades Served: 1–8

Cesar Chavez Multicultural Academic Center is located in Chicago, Illinois, with a 99% low-income and 95% Hispanic student population, and 50% are classified as ELL students. Cesar Chavez continuously innovates to create personalized student pathways and multiple assessments to measure student progress and growth.

Redefining success for ELL students: Chavez provides personalized learning plans, multi-grade cohorts and extended time for students, and students are able to advance in certain subjects, like math and English, upon demonstrating mastery. Students receive bilingual instruction, self-directed learning time and continuous push-in and pull-out support from ELL educators, as needed. Chavez also allows multi-age groups as fifth- and sixth-graders are grouped together and seventh- and eighth-graders are grouped together. The latter group is also able to dually enroll in upper-grade courses through passing course exit exams.

Assessments of and for learning: Student-led conferences determine ELL student progress and areas they could improve on; this information is stored in their personalized learning portfolios and students are expected to use this information to guide next steps in their learning. Students are graded based on performance assessments created by Chavez teachers who share a strong mission and vision in personalizing instructional curriculum for students and tracking student progression.

Personalized learning approaches: Personalized learning profiles help create a clear path for individual students and consist of the goals, action steps and competencies to guide students toward their learning goals. At Chavez, educators work with each student to develop a personalized learning plan. Each plan captures students' progress in language and content learning and allows students to know where they are in their learning and where they need to improve. Chavez educators also create playlists for students with real-time feedback, enabling teachers to plan for personalization and for students to become more deeply engaged in their learning since it is catered to their pace and progress.

Educator role and capacity: ELL students are guided by content educators and ELL educators trained to provide highly differentiated instruction and supports based on students' personalized learning profiles. From pre-K to third-grade students, Chavez provides bilingual certified teachers who offer native language supports in every classroom. For students in fourth grade on up, each ELA educator is either bilingually certified or will receive help from an ESL teacher to offer native language support to students daily. Educators provide additional language and content push-in and pull-out services in addition to direct whole-group and cooperative-group instruction.

This is the eleventh blog post in a series that explores how personalized, competency-based education can advance learning for English Language Learners from iNACOL's report, *Next Generation Learning Model for English Language Learners: Promising Practices and Considerations for Teaching and Learning*. The next and final post provides recommendations for educators and education leaders to consider as they plan to design, implement, and advance personalized, competency-based learning models for ELL students in their schools and programs.

Follow this blog series for key insights on promising practices for ELL students:

- Blog 1: Next Generation Learning Models for English Language Learners
- Blog 2: Moving from Current Models of Teaching English Language Learners to New Learning Models Designed to Meet the Needs of All Students
- Blog 3: Promising Practices for Teaching English Language Learners
- Blog 4: The Promise of Next Generation Learning Models for English Language Learners
- Blog 5: Personalized, Competency-based Education for English Language Learners
- Blog 6: Case Study: International High School in Langley Park Creates a Learner-Driven System for English Language Learners in Maryland
- Blog 7: Case Study: Distinctive Schools Leads Personalized Learning for English Language Learners in Illinois and Minnesota
- Blog 8: Case Study: UCLA Project Exc-EL Schools Designs Learning Progressions for English Language Learners in Connecticut and New York
- Blog 9: Case Study: Lindsay High School Transforms Learning for ELLs with Personalized, Competency-Based Education in California
- Blog 10: Case Study: Westminster Schools Advances Learning for English Language Learners Through Personalized, Competency-Based Learning in Colorado

Resources:

- iNACOL – *Next Generation Learning Model for English Language Learners: Promising Practices and Considerations for Teaching and Learning*
- *CompetencyWorks* – What is Competency Education?
- iNACOL – *Mean What You Say: Defining and Integrating Personalized, Blended and Competency Education*
- iNACOL – *What's Possible with Personalized Learning? An Overview of Personalized Learning for Schools, Families & Communities*