

## Chapter 12

# Principals' Corner: Transitioning to the i<sup>2</sup>Flex School Culture

**MaryAnn Augoustatos**

*American Community Schools (ACS) Athens, Greece*

**Catherine Makropoulos**

*American Community Schools (ACS) Athens, Greece*

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter presents and discusses the fundamentals of the i<sup>2</sup>Flex teaching methodology from the perspective of the elementary and middle school principals. First, the Elementary School Principal (Ms. Makropoulos) will present how she has set the groundwork for students and faculty to embrace this new paradigm shift in the teaching and learning at American Community Schools (ACS) Athens. Then, the Middle School Principal (Ms. Augoustatos) presents and discusses the two-year implementation process of the i<sup>2</sup>Flex methodology of instruction.*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the nuts and bolts of the i<sup>2</sup>Flex teaching methodology from the perspective of the elementary and middle school principals. First, the Elementary School Principal (C. Makropoulos) presents how she has set the groundwork for students and faculty to embrace this new paradigm shift in the teaching and learning at American Community Schools (ACS) Athens. The Middle School Principal, (M-A. Augoustatos) follows by presenting and discussing the two-year implementation process of the i<sup>2</sup>Flex methodology of instruction. There is specific reference to what this methodology means for the students, faculty, parents and administrators of an institution at the Elementary School and Middle School level. The chapter elaborates on why the i<sup>2</sup>Flex model is necessary for the continuous refinement of higher-order thinking skills, establishing of safe, intellectually risk-free learning environments and promoting academic conversations that nurture critical thinking. This model of instruction enables faculty to keep up with the way students are currently navigating the world and prepare them for their life beyond school.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0267-8.ch012

## LEADING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PATH TOWARDS i<sup>2</sup>FLEX

Observing young learners today, it is evident that traditional ways of gathering information is something of the past. Nowadays, children are engaged in (to use a better word than engrossed) in technology. They seem to have the answers to any question just by pressing the enter button on their device. How challenging has this become in educational institutions? According to Monkman as cited in Stromquist (2002) globalization has brought change in economics, culture and formal schooling. What kinds of shifts are required in the traditional classroom setting? These are questions that we have come to face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Acknowledging there is a need for change in the traditional educational setting is evident. The bigger question becomes *what kinds of shifts are being made in leadership to discover a new learning design that will develop student learning, and move it forward?*

At ACS Athens we believe genuine life learning takes place when learning is meaningful. Our vision is: *Empowering individuals to transform the world as architects of their own learning*. Students, under the correct guidance, take ownership of their learning as they further process and develop it. This practice allows students to discover more about themselves and their learning style. A model which incorporates face-to-face instruction, personalized learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom, facilitated by technology is reflected in the i<sup>2</sup>Flex methodology aims to improve educational opportunities offered to our student body to ultimately optimize the learning outcomes. It provides individualized learning opportunities on a broader scale supported by means of technology in different grades and subject areas (Avgerinou, Gialamas, & Tsoukia, 2014).

This i<sup>2</sup>Flex model is currently being used in the middle and high schools at ACS Athens. While preparing our students for the middle school and ensuring a smooth transition, we in the elementary school (ES) needed to identify a developmentally appropriate approach to initiate this methodology to our own school faculty, students and parents. The ES setting is the best place to introduce young learners to the i<sup>2</sup>Flex model, preparing them for the middle school. The traditional teaching model of face-to-face and guided instruction should embrace another component including learning supported by technology. This will allow students to work at their own pace and level under the guidance of their teacher. There is much research being conducted to discuss the effectiveness of the use of technology in learning. According to Hattie (2009), effective use of computers takes place when students are in charge of their learning and not the teacher. Students engaged in this form of learning build critical thinking skills as they learn to problem solve, collaborate and analyze their learning in the process.

Furthermore, children today live in a digital society and now have access to the Internet on a mobile device both in and out of school. It is therefore necessary that schools educate children to navigate, communicate and collaborate safely and responsibly the digital world. Digital citizenship is a component that goes hand in hand with introducing the i<sup>2</sup>Flex model in our ES and is addressed in technology class as part of our school-wide focus this year which was to explore citizenship development. Good citizenship requires awareness of what it means to be a good citizen and a reflection on your actions. Being respectful, responsible and ready for school were topics explored in every classroom throughout the year. While exploring the concept of digital citizenship in the technology class, ES students learned about using technology in the appropriate way, protecting personal information and developing awareness of what their actions mean. Furthermore, they learned about reporting anything strange they found on the Internet immediately to an adult.

7 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/principals-corner/157587](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/principals-corner/157587)

## Related Content

---

### 3D Technology in P12 Education: Cameras, Editing, and Apps

Karla Spencer, Lesia Lennexand Emily Bodenlos (2013). *Cases on 3D Technology Application and Integration in Education* (pp. 207-230).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-p12-education/74411](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-p12-education/74411)

### What We Know About Assessing Online Learning in Secondary Schools

Art W. Bangertand Kerry L. Rice (2009). *Handbook of Research on New Media Literacy at the K-12 Level: Issues and Challenges* (pp. 684-701).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/know-assessing-online-learning-secondary/35945](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/know-assessing-online-learning-secondary/35945)

### Automatic Speech Recognition to Enhance Learning for Disabled Students

Pablo Revuelta, Javier Jiménez, José M. Sánchezand Belén Ruiz (2011). *Technology Enhanced Learning for People with Disabilities: Approaches and Applications* (pp. 89-104).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/automatic-speech-recognition-enhance-learning/45504](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/automatic-speech-recognition-enhance-learning/45504)

### Using Second Life® to Teach Collaboration Skills to Pre-Service and In-Service Special Educators

Melissa D. Hartley, Barbara L. Ludlowand Michael C. Duff (2013). *Cases on 3D Technology Application and Integration in Education* (pp. 336-358).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-second-life-teach-collaboration/74416](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-second-life-teach-collaboration/74416)

### Methodologies for Learning and/or Teaching

(2021). *Computer-Based Mathematics Education and the Use of MatCos Software in Primary and Secondary Schools* (pp. 15-27).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/methodologies-for-learning-andor-teaching/260133](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/methodologies-for-learning-andor-teaching/260133)