



Personalized Professional Learning Leads to More Personalized Student Learning

"My work with BetterLesson is transforming my teaching. Though I am already a motivated and creative educator, it's allowed me to take instruction to the next level. The coaching has provided a structure within which I can stay focused and 'on task.' In addition, the website has been invaluable."

Teacher at The Rashi School (Boston)

Building a Legacy of Personalized Learning

In 2015 BetterLesson began a multi-year partnership with The AVI CHAI Foundation, focused on supporting day school teachers to adopt blended learning strategies in their classrooms. What started as a 43-teacher pilot has expanded to hundreds of participants, including school-based instructional coaches and administrators and several spin-off partnerships with community agencies individual schools, where the work will ultimately be sustained after the Foundation sunsets at the end of 2019. The success of the partnership between The AVI CHAI Foundation and BetterLesson stems from a shared understanding of the importance of building educators' capacity by giving the time, support, and resources they need to implement new pedagogical approaches successfully.

A New Personalized Learning Initiative

In 2010, The AVI CHAI Foundation announced a new initiative to support blended and personalized learning initiatives in Jewish day schools. Increasing educator capacity to individualize instruction was seen as an opportunity to engage day school students more deeply in their learning and to enable them to develop 21st century skills.

The program provided seed funding for three key activities:

1. Integrating online and blended learning in established schools.
2. Incubating low-cost, high-quality new schools to serve as proof points for blended learning.
3. Launching online offerings for Judaic Studies.

A Stalled Adoption

In the first five years of this ambitious initiative, the Foundation launched three low-cost schools and began investing in the creation of online learning resources for Judaic Studies, but AVI CHAI leaders were not seeing a large number of schools adopt blended learning approaches. Even with a multitude of grants, workshops, and programming, the vast majority of students were still learning in traditional ways. The Foundation realized that shifting teacher practice to a personalized learning approach would require a system that empowered teachers to learn new skills, experiment, and be deliberate about change. Creating time to build educator capacity was essential to the success of this new pedagogical approach. With this new clarity in perspective, Foundation leaders began looking for solutions that could accommodate all aspects of their needs.





"I feel so comfortable with (My BetterLesson coach). I look forward to the next session every time. She knows that I am seriously challenged by technology and I never feel less than or diminished. I know that she personalizes the sessions and for that I am truly grateful!"

Teacher at Yeshiva Ketana of Manhattan

A Shared Vision of Investment in Educator Capacity

Rachel Mohl Abrahams, Senior Program Officer at THE AVI CHAI Foundation, met Jeff Liberty, BetterLesson's Senior Vice President of Innovation, at the iNACOL Symposium in the fall of 2015. Mr. Liberty was sharing BetterLesson's first blended learning white paper and discussing the company's professional development program. BetterLesson coaching was designed specifically to provide teachers with the expert support they need to and implement blended learning strategies.

BetterLesson's alignment with AVI CHAI's vision and goals led to a pilot partnership in the spring of 2016. Forty-three teachers with some blended experience from 15 Jewish day schools across the U.S. and Canada received design support and bi-weekly 1:1 coaching for several months in which they engaged in BetterLesson's "Try-Measure-Learn" continuous improvement cycles. Over the course of the spring semester, teachers developed and implemented blended learning strategies to advance student-centered learning in their classrooms.

95%

OF TEACHERS
say that BetterLesson
Coaching had a positive
impact on student
outcomes

97%

OF LEADERS
report that teachers who
received BetterLesson
Coaching improved their
practice

92%

OF TEACHERS
would recommend
BetterLesson Coaching
to colleagues

93%

OF TEACHERS
who received
BetterLesson Coaching
said they were more
likely to stay in the
profession

"BetterLesson coaches are professional, friendly, and model teachers. It has been a pleasure to watch them work and to watch our teachers learn from them. The teachers at our day schools have found the experience extremely powerful."

Rachel Abrahams

Senior Program Officer, The AVI CHAI Foundation

Exponential Growth and a Clear Path to Sustainability

Following the success of the 2016 pilot, the partnership between AVI CHAI and BetterLesson has expanded rapidly each year and now supports hundreds of educators across North America. Teachers, instructional coaches, and school leaders have seen the coaching BetterLesson provides as transformative to their practice. “I love how unique the mentorship is with BetterLesson. It’s honestly better than in-person mentorship I’ve had in the past. (My coach) ‘gets’ what I need and helps me to grow,” explained a teacher from Seattle Hebrew Academy.

Another teacher at RASG Hebrew Academy in Miami found that her new approach to teaching has changed her students’ approach to learning: “While I wanted my students to have agency and feel confident with their voice in my class, I didn’t know how to support them beyond telling them that I cared about their growth as learners. I now have a lot of concrete techniques that I use in the classroom, and they don’t feel gimmicky or out of place - it all feels very natural and genuine.”

Administrators at participating schools have also noticed the impact of BetterLesson coaching on teacher practice and their schools’ professional culture. “Teachers are differentiating more, they are excited about new tools, incorporating more technology, transferring ownership to students, and feeling good about it!” noted Aliza Chanales, Assistant Principal of Yeshivat Noam.

Tracie Glazer, Head of Hillel Community Day School, has seen changes across her school as well. “I was able to witness teachers applying new ideas and innovative practices in their classrooms. My Math teacher started utilizing station approaches and individualizing instruction in his classroom. My Judaic studies teacher for Kitah Aleph has consistently shared how valuable her time with a coach has been for her and her instruction.”

With the partnership now in its fourth year, the focus has shifted to equipping schools and community agencies to continue the initiative after the Foundation sunsets. To that end, AVI CHAI has facilitated partnerships between BetterLesson and the Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education in Miami; Combined Jewish Philanthropies in Boston; and the Samis Foundation in Seattle and is exploring community-based partnerships in several other regions in the United States and Canada as a way of securing the Foundation’s legacy well into the future.

“I love how unique the mentorship is with BetterLesson. It’s honestly better than in-person mentorship I’ve had in the past. (My coach) ‘gets’ what I need and helps me to grow.”

Teacher at Seattle Hebrew Academy

