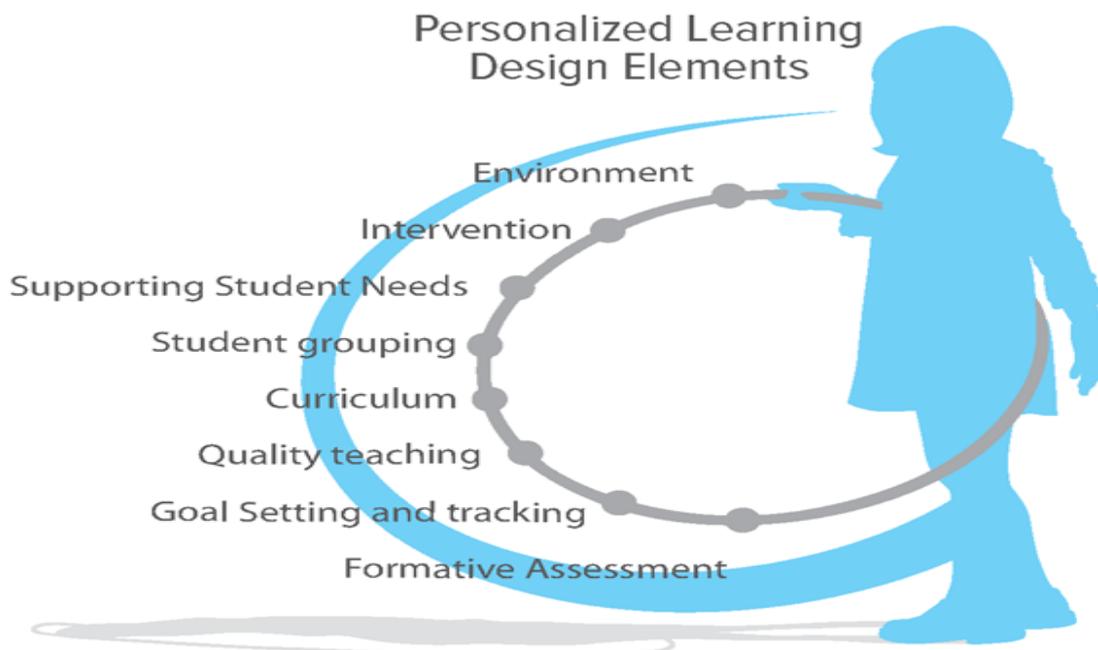


WHAT IS PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

- Personalized learning is an educational approach that aims to customize learning for each student's strengths, needs, skills and interests.
- Each student gets a learning plan that's based on what he knows and how he learns best.
- To get an idea of what personalized learning is, try to picture a classroom that doesn't have a "one size fits all" approach to education. The teacher doesn't lead all students through the same lessons. Instead, the teacher guides each student on an individualized journey. The what, when, where and how of learning is tailored to meet each student's strengths, skills, needs and interests.
- Kids learn in different ways and at different paces. Personalized learning is a teaching model based on that premise. Each student gets a "learning plan" based on how he learns, what he knows, and what his skills and interests are. It's the opposite of the "one size fits all" approach used in most schools.



Personalized learning is...

- ✓ An educational approach that tailors the what, when, where and how of learning to meet each student's abilities, needs and interests.
- ✓ A customized process that includes giving students a say in how they learn and in how they demonstrate their learning.
- ✓ A potential game-changer. If done well, students are more engaged and get help as soon as they need it. If not done well, struggling students can get left behind.

Personalized learning is not...

- ✗ All about technology. Tech is helpful but not required. The big resource teachers need is time to learn new skills and time to plan and strategize on a regular basis.
- ✗ An excuse to lower expectations. Kids may learn some skills at different paces, but all are held to rigorous standards.

Developing a personalized learning plan

So, how can curricula be designed to do create greater efficiency and personalization at the same time? It has to be designed 'backwards' from the goal. It's important to ascertain the variety of ways that a student may arrive at an answer or understanding, how they got there, how much time it took, whether they asked for help or not, and then tailor the experience

A look at the personalized learning classroom environment

After assessing each student academically and understanding 'where they are' in their learning progress, it's important to learn about their strengths, weaknesses and learning style. The classroom can have different areas or stations based on needs and abilities to accommodate auditory, visual, and kinesthetic style learners. For example, some stations may support inquiry-based, independent learning; while there can be a separate area for group activities. Groups can be based on content, ability and assessment results.

Social-based learning, which gives students the opportunity to collaborate with each other, is important to the new personalized learning classroom. In many cases, the classroom may not be a 'room' at all.

Technology and personalized learning

In a blended learning environment that leverages technology, students are not bound by their classroom walls in terms of access to information, knowledge, and experts. A digitally-rich learning environment provides students with the context and relevancy for learning that they want. Most children today are technologically fluent and make daily use of laptops and mobile devices. Learning programs that offer a rewarding gaming environment that younger and older students play with on their own time is a good way to engage learners by making their learning work feel like play. In any

case, techno-fluency is important to the development of 21st century skills to ensure a successful academic and work life.

So, the keys to personalized learning are providing access to appropriate technology, for the teacher to provide appropriate support when it's indicated, and to give students flexibility around physical space, learning time frames, and instructional modalities.

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