

What is personalized learning?

Personalized learning, unsurprisingly, starts with the person, or individual student. Rather than viewing education as a curriculum-centered or teacher-centered endeavor, personalized learning envisions educational experiences as wholly student-centered. A student's background, needs, preferences, goals, motivations, dispositions, skills, knowledge, and progress drive what, how, and when content is presented. Personalized learning can be realized in a number of ways. For example:



- **Adaptive pathways:** With adaptive pathways, students' preexisting knowledge and performance during a given lesson, series of lessons, or assessment determines what they learn next. If students already demonstrate mastery of fundamental concepts of a given course in a pre-assessment, for example, they may be directed to more advanced concepts immediately. If they struggle with a certain type of problem on a mid-lesson formative assessment, they may receive additional instruction on that content before moving on, perhaps in a different way (more customized to individual needs and preferences) than they originally did.
- **Competency-based progression:** Related to adaptive pathways, competency-based progressions allow students to work and proceed through curriculum and instruction at their own pace. Competencies—that is, what students know and are able to do—are developed and defined at the start of a given course or educational experience, and progressive mastery of these competencies determines when students advance, rather than simply the passage of time. Even the competencies themselves may be tailored to students' individual needs and goals.
- **Mixed methodology:** Mixed methodology provides students with a variety of approaches for learning and demonstrating learning. While some students may thrive on reading texts and listening to lectures in order to gain understanding of topics, others might excel at taking an inquiry-based approach. Moreover, a traditional classroom environment might meet some students' needs, while others might learn more effectively in a flipped classroom, or in an environment that blends in-person instruction with digital instruction and collaboration.

Many other practices and methods exist to achieve personalized learning. How can you use personalized learning in your school or classroom to boost student outcomes and engagement? Stay tuned for our upcoming blog about personalized learning.

