PowerSchool

Personalized Education for Every Journey

An Interactive Flowchart

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What is Personalized Education for Every Journey?

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What is Personalized Education for Every Journey?

Every student deserves the opportunity to learn in a way that matches who they are, where they are in life, and what motivates them through their journey.

But with the demands on educators, school systems, and families, truly personalizing the educational experience has not been possible—until now. More and more school systems are choosing to lean into the offerings of modern technology that enable a fully personalized education pathway for each learner.

Technology can help connect the dots of siloed information that educators often needed to piece together manually in the past. With the right technology, teachers can see a clearer image of each student's unique needs quickly. The right blend of K-12 educational and operational technology makes it easier to create and deliver the right educational experience for each learner at the right time.

What does personalized education really mean?

Personalized education addresses the need for every student to learn in a way that's right for them.

It uses data to provide an educational strategy, mindset, and approach to education that sets each student on a customized path to realizing themselves as learners and contributors based on their strengths, challenges, skills, and passions.

What it is and isn't.

Personalized education is an approach to education that allows educators to meet students where they are. It's a shift from a more traditional one-size-fits-all education toward authentic engagement where students can embrace and understand their strengths and needs.

Leaders from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) have defined personalized education as "learning that is tailored to the preferences and interests of various learners, as well as instruction that is paced to a student's unique needs. Academic goals, curriculum and content—as well as method and pace—can all conceivably vary in a personalized learning environment."

They differentiate individualized instruction from personalized learning, saying that the latter "relies more heavily on a student's personal interests and innate curiosity."
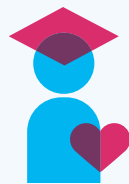
Personalized learning is not something given to students, but it is something they do for themselves with facilitation from a teacher. Since teachers cannot often give one-on-one instruction to students for extended periods of time, ISTE leaders suggest that personalized learning is an "instructional method that incorporates adaptive technology to help all students achieve high levels of learning."

There is no shortage of instructional approaches and pedagogies for educators to apply in the classroom. In fact, with such a plethora of ways to impact the learning experience—especially in the age of digital learning—it's easy to get confused.

People often use the terms differentiated learning and personalized learning synonymously, when in reality, they have a number of differences. At a high level:

- **Differentiated learning** is a step in the direction away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach to teaching and considers the content, process, product, and learning environment. This approach takes the needs of students into account—whether that's determining the content best suited for their learning needs, how they best process information, or what product will best demonstrate their understanding.

- **Personalized learning** provides the most student autonomy. Students have an active role in designing lessons and projects that are meaningful and relevant to them based on their interests, aspirations, and passions.

Personalized Learning

- Provides more student autonomy
- Students have active role in designing lessons and projects
- Lessons based on what's meaningful to students, including their interests

Differentiated Learning

- Considers each student's process, product, and learning environment
- Creates customized content based on learning needs, how students process information, and best products

Examples and Best Practices

An effective personalized education foundation includes an integrated education technology ecosystem and a community of informed, dedicated people working to ensure students feel connected to their learning experiences. **That foundation includes:**

A full set of PK-12 capabilities

to guide students throughout their learning journey, enabling educators and parents to fully engage and make an impact at every step

Connected Technology

to create a comprehensive understanding of the individual student that allows for tailored learning experiences in the classroom and beyond

Student-first approach

bringing best-in-class edtech to students, families, teachers, and administrators

Personalized Learning Keeps It Flexible

- **Flexible pacing—**One way to incorporate flexible pacing into your personalized learning environment is by providing various ways for students to access and process information in a place that makes sense for them, according to the Aurora Institute. That might be a video that can be rewatched or paused, a set of online activities that allow students to move as quickly or slowly as needed, or reading selections that students can process at their own speed.

- **Anywhere, anytime learning—**Technology allows students to access, practice, and produce anywhere, anytime, and on their own terms. This type of blended learning works best within your learning management system (LMS), which can be used to assign, assess, and collaborate in and out of school, no matter the type of devices your students are using or where they are learning.

Empower Students
with Personalized Choice and Voice

- **Student agency**—Centers, flipped learning, and playlists all promote and support student autonomy. Structures that offer students "choice and voice" build student agency and confidence. Students choose which resources they need to gain knowledge and understanding. In some cases, they can suggest or provide their own plan for understanding concepts.

- **Deeper learning and problem solving**—Project-based learning (PBL) and group tasks challenge students to understand the assignment, identify and assign roles, and maintain momentum as they produce evidence of authentic learning.

- **Performance-based assessments**—Performance-based assessments go beyond traditional methods of assessing students, as they involve students demonstrating knowledge, understanding, and proficiency in an authentic way—and in a way that encourages students to choose how they will accomplish a task. Performance tasks are open-ended and allow for different responses to the task that still meet success criteria. These tasks are also open in terms of process (i.e., there is typically not a single way of accomplishing the task). Since feedback is a key component in personalizing learning, it's crucial to help students understand how and why they earned the score they received. This way, they are empowered with an understanding of what they need to focus on.

Feedback is a key component in personalized learning.

Tailor Instruction to Individual Students

- **Differentiated instruction—**To effectively differentiate instruction, consider the content, process, product, and learning environment. How you present the content to students, how they interact with the content, and how they produce evidence of their learning is wide open.

- **Individual student profiles—**Individual student profiles are tools for customizing learning and addressing learning loss. Student profiles capture information about the performance history and personal interests of each student. That information can be used to develop and plan personal learning pathways that include the support and services each student needs to master content at their own pace.

Personalized Learning Focuses on Mastery

- **On-demand and immediate interventions and support for each student—**Assessing and addressing student progress as learning is happening helps inform the appropriate next steps for each student.

- **Frequent feedback from both instructors and peers—**Feedback comes in many forms and helps students stay on track. Classroom structures that build in peer feedback—like students commenting on peer rubrics or sharing ideas in small conference groups—keep students informed of their progress and aware of the learning process.

- **Standards-based knowledge and skills—**Standards-based instruction and grading help take the guesswork out of what the curriculum will cover and how student progress will be measured. Providing the standards for a lesson or unit ahead of time—in student-friendly language—helps the students understand what they are learning and how to begin engaging with the content.

What Do We Mean by Every Journey?

A student's journey in education and life is personal and unlike anyone else's path. That's why technology and support need to be there every step of the way to help students succeed in their own way.

A school system is on a journey as well. This journey has always included the education of every student, yet in modern times, this has become a journey toward personalization. Schools and educators have found themselves on the path toward personalized education across a broad continuum of smaller and larger steps that involve using data to boost individual student growth.

How does each school role need support on their journey?

Everyone has a journey. According to your school role, this could be about understanding student successes and areas for support. It could be about engaging students or finding resources to help you do that.

For students, it may be about feeling empowered for success. Apart from understanding concepts in class, students need empowerment to act on information and easily access support. Students need choices about what types of tools work for them. This helps build their overall agency. It's important to keep in mind that the catalyst for this change comes from an adult mentor like a family member or educator.

For families, it may be a journey that involves staying on top of feedback and understanding how to best support their child. In all cases, the big picture of someone's journey involves data that helps them understand student strengths and areas for growth.

School leaders need support on their personalized journey when it comes to seeing the big picture of student success. For administrators, it's important to feel confident in the solutions they offer to teachers and students to support their individual roles. That's what data does, and that's how technology can personalize administrators' journeys through AI, which helps their data become clear, accurate, and actionable.

Educators need support on understanding student successes and areas for support so that they can best personalize learning for their students. For teachers, finding sources of content for instruction, assignments, and assessment are an important factor, as well as being able to prepare model texts for exemplary learning. All these facets are aided through AI, which helps personalize learning for students and classrooms based on needs and grade levels.

Learn how AI models support your own journey through education.

As education evolves quickly, AI will play an increased role in personalizing education, supporting curriculum development, and encouraging experimentation with new styles of teaching and learning.

AI personalizes learning in a similar way to teachers: by adapting educational content and experiences to meet individual students' needs and preferences. **Here are a few ways AI does this.**

Adaptive Learning and AI

AI systems use data analytics and machine learning to assess a student's past academic performance and learning style. Based on this data, the system can adjust the difficulty level of assignments and tailor the content to match the student's current skill level. If a student excels in a particular area, the system can provide more challenging material, and if they struggle, it can offer additional scaffolded resources.

Personalized Content Creation and AI

AI can generate custom learning materials, such as quizzes, flashcards, and even entire lessons tailored to a student's strengths and weaknesses that it discovers through data points like classwork, homework, and assessment scores. This personalization ensures that students focus on the topics they need the most help with, maximizing their learning efficiency.

AI and Interactive Experiences

AI-driven interactive tools, like virtual reality and gamification, engage students in a more personalized and dynamic way. These experiences adapt to the learner's progress and preferences, creating a more immersive and enjoyable learning environment.

Data Analysis, Predictive Analytics, and AI

AI can quickly analyze a vast amount of student information to gain insight into their learning patterns and progress. This analysis allows educators to intervene as necessary by providing extra support or more challenges when they see a student struggling or excelling. Predictive analytics can also forecast a student's future performance and help educators take prompt and proactive measures based on data.
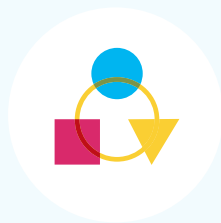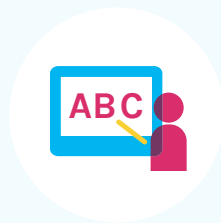
5 Examples of AI in Education

| Translation & Language Learning | Writing | Early Childhood Education | Teaching | Tutoring |

How PowerSchool Supports Personalized Education for the Whole Child

Today, we know more than ever about students. Schools and districts collect data on academic performance, attendance, behavior, extracurricular activities, and information on external conditions. Together, these facets show a picture of the whole child.

As the leading provider of cloud-based K-12 software, PowerSchool is uniquely qualified to help schools and districts deliver successful personalized education experiences. We provide the tools and information so that classroom teachers, administrators, principals, and counselors can easily access critical student data tailored to their role. The key is having a comprehensive and systematic view of the whole child and putting it all on one screen so educators can focus more of their valuable time and energy on what students need.

PowerSchool understands K-12 education and supports educators' need for customizable, connected solutions that help them drive student outcomes. Only PowerSchool has the tools that provide the comprehensive data teachers need for a complete view of the student that informs personalized learning.

We are committed to:

- Supporting every part of the learning journey with a breadth of educational and operational tools that impact every student's experience

- Connecting information across the educational ecosystem—from the central office to the classroom to the home—to enable educators to understand the unique needs of each student

- Bringing the people and the best of K-12 technology together to make it easier to achieve our shared goal of delivering a learning experience designed specifically for each student

PowerSchool's Personalized Learning Cloud offers a comprehensive set of assessment, curriculum and learning management, and instructional content tools that enable your teachers to create customized learning experiences for each student.

With one integrated solution, educators can better support outcomes by connecting curriculum, student performance data, and instructional delivery in a central location.

Personalized Education for Every Journey

Learn how to empower educators to engage every student to learn in a way that's right for them.

LEARN MORE

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