

Personalized Learning
Effective Practices and Indicators
Center on Innovations in Learning

Personalized learning is “paced to learning needs (i.e., individualized), tailored to learning preferences (i.e., differentiated), and tailored to the specific interests of different learners. In an environment that is fully personalized, the learning objectives and content as well as the method and pace may all vary.”

—U. S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 12

According to the Center on Innovations in Learning, “Personalization refers to a teacher’s relationships with students and their families and the use of multiple instructional modes to scaffold each student’s learning and enhance the student’s personal competencies. Personalized learning varies the time, place, and pace of learning for each student, enlists the student in the creation of learning pathways, and utilizes technology to manage and document the learning process and access rich sources of information” (Twyman & Redding, 2015, p. 3)

Effective Practices and Indicators

A. Digital Learning— Effective Practice: Using appropriate technological tools and programs to enhance student learning.

Indicators

Professional Development

1. Administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders participate in an organized training and support system incorporating program methodologies (including the use of online tools and curricula) and the proper use of the learning management and student management systems.

Leadership and Decision Making

2. Instructional teams determine which digital learning tools (hardware) are appropriate based on device availability, Internet and broadband access, and device use policies (such as “bring your own device”).
3. School leaders and peer mentors regularly observe and measure instances of online, hybrid, or blended teaching to ensure instruction is implemented fully and with fidelity.
4. Online programs generate accessible and actionable student data about their use, performance, and progress.

Classroom Instruction

5. All teachers use appropriate technological tools to enhance instruction.
6. All teachers use online curricula with content, assignments, and activities clearly aligned to identified standards (state or national).

7. All teachers use online curricula whose goals are measureable and clearly state what students will know or do at the end of instruction.
8. All teachers regularly add new content and teaching suggestions to the online learning content catalog.
9. All teachers use online, hybrid, or blended learning as a part of a larger pedagogical approach that combines the effective socialization opportunities within the classroom with the enhanced learning opportunities available in online instruction.
10. All teachers enable students to place selected work into a digital portfolio that is updated throughout the student’s school experiences and provides a picture of interests, skills, competencies, and growth over time.

B. Blended Learning— Effective Practice: Mixing traditional classroom instruction with online delivery of instruction and content, including learning activities outside the school, granting the student a degree of control over time, place, pace, and/or path.

Indicators

1. All teachers receive initial and ongoing training and support in effective use of blended learning methods.
2. Instructional teams determine which blended learning model is appropriate for the school or individual classroom.
3. All teachers build students’ ability to learn in contexts other than school.
4. All teachers connects students’ out-of-school learning with their school learning.
5. Hardware, web browser and software requirements are specified to students and parents before the use of online instruction outside of school.
6. All teachers employing blended learning methods make sure that technology and data enhance relationships, but do not pretend to substitute for them.
7. Instructional teams and teachers use fine-grained data to design for each student a learning path tailored to that student’s prior learning, personal interests, and aspirations.

C. Cognitive Competency— Effective Practice: Intentionally addressing students’ accessible background knowledge to facilitate new learning.

Indicators

In the School Community

1. The School Community Council ensures that all parents understand the purpose of a standards-aligned curriculum, their own children’s progress, and their role in supporting learning at home.
2. The School Community Council ensures that all volunteers understand cognitive competency and their roles relative to its enhancement in students.

In the School (curriculum and school culture)

3. All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction based on the aligned and expanded curriculum that includes rich reading, writing, memorization, and vocabulary development.
4. All staff conducting co-curricular programs fulfill the purposes of the programs including appropriate elements of the aligned curriculum and other cognitive competency activities.
5. The school's key documents explain the value of cognitive competency and how it is enhanced through specific roles and relationships.
6. The school promotes cognitive competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions.

In the Classroom (instruction, classroom culture, classroom management)

7. All teachers reinforce elements of mastered knowledge that can be retained in memory through recitation, review, questioning, and inclusion in subsequent assignments.
8. All teachers include vocabulary development (general vocabulary and terms specific to the subject) as learning objectives.
9. All teachers assign rich reading and the application of the reading in written work and discussion.

- D. Metacognitive Competency— Effective Practice:** Providing instruction and modeling of metacognitive processes and strategies to enhance student self-management of learning.

Indicators

In the School Community

1. The School Community Council ensures that all parents understand metacognitive competency, learning strategies, and ways they can support their children's self-management of learning at home.
2. The School Community Council ensures that all volunteers understand metacognitive competency and their roles relative to its enhancement in students.

In the School (curriculum and school culture)

3. All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction based on the aligned and expanded curriculum that includes objectives for student management of their learning.
4. All staff conducting co-curricular programs fulfill the purposes of the programs including appropriate elements of student management of learning.
5. The school's key documents explain the value of metacognitive competency and how it is enhanced through specific roles and relationships.
6. The school promotes metacognitive competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions.

In the Classroom (instruction, classroom culture, classroom management)

7. All teachers teach and model the metacognitive process (goals, strategies, monitoring, and modification) and specific learning strategies and techniques.
8. All teachers include self-checks, peer-checks, and documentation of learning strategies as part of assignment completion.
9. All teachers teach methods of logic, synthesis, evaluation, and divergent thinking.
10. The teacher builds students' metacognitive skills by teaching learning strategies and their appropriate application.
11. The teacher builds students' metacognitive skills by providing students with processes for determining their own mastery of learning tasks.
12. The teacher builds students' ability to use a variety of learning tools.

- E. Motivational Competency— Effective Practice:** Promoting a growth mindset, stretching students' interests, connecting learning to student aspirations, and differentiating instruction to enhance students' engagement and persistence with learning.

Indicators

In the School Community

1. The School Community Council ensures that all parents understand motivational competency (a growth mindset, the value of mastery, and connecting learning tasks with students' personal aspirations) and how they can enhance motivational competency at home.
2. The School Community Council ensures that all volunteers understand motivational competency and their roles relative to its enhancement in students.

In the School (curriculum and school culture)

3. All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction with a curriculum guide that includes methods to enhance student motivation to learn.
4. All staff conducting co-curricular programs fulfill the purposes of the programs including appropriate elements of student motivation to learn.
5. The school's key documents explain the value of motivational competency and how it is enhanced through specific roles and relationships.
6. The school promotes motivational competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions.

In the Classroom (instruction, classroom culture, classroom management)

7. All teachers promote a growth mindset by attributing learning success to effort and self-regulation and insist upon (and reward) persistence to mastery.

8. All teachers encourage self-direction by giving students choice in the selection of topics and the application of learning strategies.
9. The teacher helps students articulate their personal aspirations and connect their learning to the pursuit of these aspirations.
10. All teachers stretch students' interests to find value in new topics and connect learning tasks to students' personal aspirations.
11. All teachers differentiate assignments to provide the right balance of challenge and attainability for each student.

F. Social/Emotional Competency—Effective Practice: Providing instruction, modeling, classroom norms, and caring attention that promotes students' self-respect, management of emotions, concern for others, and responsibility.

Indicators

In the School Community

1. The School Community Council ensures that all parents understand social/emotional competency and their role in enhancing their children's growth in (1) understanding and managing emotions, (2) setting and achieving positive goals, (3) feeling and showing empathy for others, (4) establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and (5) making responsible decisions.
2. The School Community Council ensures that all volunteers understand social/emotional competency and their roles relative to its enhancement in students.

In the School (curriculum and school culture)

3. All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction with a curriculum guide that includes objectives for social/emotional competency.
4. All staff conducting co-curricular programs fulfill the purposes of the programs including appropriate elements of social/emotional competency.
5. The school selects, implements, and evaluates evidenced-based programs that enhance social/ emotional competency.
6. The school's key documents explain the value of social/ emotional competency and how it is enhanced through specific roles and relationships.
7. The school promotes social/ emotional competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions.

In the Classroom (instruction, classroom culture, classroom management)

8. All teachers teach and reinforce positive social skills, self-respect, relationships, and responsibility for the consequences of decisions and actions.

9. All teachers establish classroom norms for personal responsibility, cooperation, and concern for others.
10. All teachers are attentive to students' emotional states, guide students in managing their emotions, and arrange for supports and interventions when necessary.
11. All teachers use cooperative learning methods and encourage questioning, seeking help from others, and offering help to others.

References

Redding, S. (2014). *Personal competencies in personalized learning*. Philadelphia, PA: Center on Innovations in Learning at Temple University.

U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *Transforming American education: Learning powered by technology*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010>

For more on personalized learning and personal competency, see Research Syntheses and Practice Guides at: www.centeril.org