



Roadmap for Educators

General educators, special education teachers and specialized instructional support personnel play critical roles in personalized learning systems—roles that are always changing and expanding. Educators track competencies, set goals and support students along their individual journeys.

What is PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Students learn at their own pace with structure and support in challenging areas. Learning aligns with interests, needs and skills, and takes place in an engaging environment where students gain a better understanding of their strengths.

Personalized learning may sometimes include specific practices, such as:

- Competency-based progressions
- Flexible learning environments
- Project-based learning
- Learner profiles
- Personal learning paths
- Blended or online learning



5 BENEFITS of Personalized Learning

1. Increases student engagement and achievement
2. Encourages growth mindset
3. Builds decision-making and self-advocacy skills
4. Reduces the stigma of special education
5. Gives students who think differently multiple ways to show what they have learned



5 CHALLENGES of Personalized Learning

1. Students with disabilities have widely varying needs and if these are not met, they may fall behind
2. Assessments and accountability systems must be aligned with personalized learning and equitable for students with disabilities so they produce valid and reliable data on performance and progress
3. Students with disabilities must have access to appropriate technology
4. Parents of students with disabilities must be included, informed and empowered
5. Educators must be aware of the great demand that personalized learning systems place on students' executive functioning skills and be ready to support students in this environment

What is EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING and how does it relate to PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Executive functioning includes skills related to impulse control, emotional control, flexible thinking, working memory, self-monitoring, task initiation and organization. Students with executive functioning issues may struggle with tasks that require planning, organization or reflection on performance—features of many personalized learning systems. But with supports they can thrive. It's important for educators to be sensitive to how this dynamic might impact their students and be ready to provide extra support and assistance.

How can educators MAXIMIZE PERSONALIZED LEARNING for STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

PLANNING

Collaborate with colleagues and experts in your school.

- Share expertise and find strategies to support students with disabilities.

Proactively engage and connect with parents.

- Engage with parents as partners by setting aside time to communicate about personalized learning in your classroom and receive feedback. Explain to parents what personalized learning means for their child and how all students' needs will be met. Incorporate personalized learning highlights into your regular school-to-home communications.



PREPARING

Create opportunities to support and foster self-advocacy and decision-making skills in students.

- Build on the self-awareness that students gain from personalized learning to foster self-advocacy skills. Use explicit instruction and activities that will help students develop these skills in a safe, supportive environment.

Optimize technology and ensure accessibility for all students, adapted and tailored to meet their individual needs.

- Ask your district for opportunities to receive professional development training on the use of technology to enhance learning for students with disabilities.



PERFORMING

Provide opportunities for all students to learn through UDL.

- For students with disabilities to succeed in a personalized learning environment, educators must provide students with multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge. UDL is a framework that can help educators to implement this.

Monitor progress and provide interventions to keep students on track to meet their goals.

- MTSS is one framework that can be used to monitor, respond to, and make decisions about students' needs. This is one way educators can ensure students with disabilities get supports they need to stay on track and move at their own pace.

Where learner profiles are used, be sure they inform a student's IEP and guide learning.

- The IEP team should use the learner profile to inform the process of creating and updating the IEP each year. IEP teams should incorporate a strengths-based and student-driven approach to instruction and learning, modeling it on successful learner profile components where appropriate.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give every student the opportunity to learn. UDL addresses:

- How information is presented (representation)
- How students demonstrate what they know (expression)
- How students interact and engage with the material (engagement)

MULTI-TIER SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is an evidence-based and system-wide practice that uses data-based progress monitoring to make decisions and respond to students' academic and behavioral needs through access to instruction delivered in varying intensities.