

Personalized Learning in
Special Education:
A Vision and a Journey

MASE Fall Conference
New Leader Cohort

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Why Personalized Learning?

- Original structure of public education met different needs
- *Committee of 10* attempts to standardize education
- Industrial economy
- People could memorize and follow directions to work on assembly line
- Preparing students for jobs that may not yet exist

Why Personalized Learning?

- Skills today's employers and companies are seeking have changed
- Soft skills
- Critical thinking
- Working collaboratively
- Work ethic
- Leadership skills

Why Personalized Learning?

- Technology has changed the way we obtain information
- Teachers no longer the sole source of information
- Information readily accessible in varied formats
- Technology allows for learning outside the traditional classroom

What is Personalized Learning?

- Increases student commitment, ownership, and independence
- Pace and instructional approach optimized for needs of each learner (*Wikipedia 2019*)
- Learning experiences, instructional approaches, and strategies to focus on learning needs, interests, backgrounds of individual students (*Glossary of Education Reform 2015*)
- Learning objectives vary based on learner needs. Learning activities are relevant, driven by student interest, and self-initiated (*US Dept of Education Ed Tech Plan 2016*)

Core Components of PL

- Learner Profiles
- Inform how a student learns best
- Deeper understanding of each learner
- Allows use of individual strengths to determine learning strategies

(Institute for Personalized Learning 2016)

Core Components of PL

- Customized Learning Paths
- Each based on interests, strengths, learning styles
- Address needs as they arise instead of remediating

(Institute for Personalized Learning 2016)

Core Components of PL

- Proficiency-based Progress
- Based on proficiency of agreed upon set of standards
- Movement to another level not based on seat time or credits – tied to student performance

(Institute for Personalized Learning 2016)

A PL Environment

- Purposeful learning
- Learner efficacy
- Ownership for learning
- Flexible pace
- Learner voice
- Learner choice
- Learner a resource for learning
- Flexible learning spaces
- Technology supported
- Collaboration
- Increased learning independence

Benefits and Challenges of PL

Benefits

- Strength-based and student-focused
- Positive, engaging experience
- Increased engagement and 21st century skills
- Support continuous and ongoing for students
- Access content in multiple ways
- Increased inclusion
- Special education principles

Challenges

- Preparing teachers to shift practice and mindsets
- Including students as partners
- Keep sight of accountability
- System sustainability
- Accessibility must be included in early plan development
- Attend to individual student needs
- Thinking flexibly

(National Center for Learning Disabilities 2019)

IEPs and Personalized Learning Plans

- PLPs are not IEPs
- PLPs outline learning experiences shaping a student's path to graduation
- IEPs outline the specialized instruction and services needed to access and progress in the general education curriculum

Role of Special Education in PL

- Varies based on position
- May be similar to general education classrooms
- May be supportive
- May be informative
- Collaboration is key
- No “right way”

Getting Started.....

- *Shared Vision*
- Student-generated vision of purpose of the classroom
- May develop within own classroom/resource room
- May support or share in development in general education classroom
- May support following of the shared vision within a classroom

Getting Started.....

- *Learning Road Map*
- Student-friendly map of learning targets
- Created by teacher for classroom
- Standards written in “I can statements”
- Student choice in how they demonstrate

Getting Started.....

- *Parking Lot*
- Four corners
- Questions
- Suggestions for what could be better
- What went well/what I liked
- What I learned

Getting Started.....

- Learning standards
- MN Reading, Math, Written Language
- Social Emotional Learning
- Functional Skills
- MN Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

Resources

- *Tapping the Power of Personalized Learning: A Roadmap for School Leaders* by James Rickabaugh
- Institute for Personalized Learning
- National Council for Learning Disabilities