



WHAT DOES PERSONALIZED LEARNING MEAN FOR ME?

How is the experience of learning within personalized learning environments different from traditional education? What changes for teachers or parents? We asked people within our learning communities to find out.

WHAT DOES PERSONALIZED LEARNING MEAN FOR STUDENTS?

Randle Green, a senior at Kenowa Hills High School, appreciates the opportunities personalized learning has allowed him to pursue – and the emphasis it places on his relationships with his teachers by breaking down the barriers that might keep him from asking questions or operating on a different page from his instructors.

“As a human, as a person, you don’t know exactly what you’re going to be good at,” said Green. “You’re continually growing. You’re not in class eight hours a day by yourself. You’re working with your teacher, like a partner.”

Personalized, competency-based education can work for students of all ages. When implemented, even children as young as five years old know what they need to learn and how to work independently.

“Most of my kids know pretty much where they stand,” said kindergarten teacher Marie Roy. “If you ask them what they are working on in literacy they can say, ‘I’m doing syllables right now,’ or ‘I don’t need to do my letters anymore because I know them already.’”

This is how one of her students, Grace Mills, explained her schoolwork. “So me and my friend Quinn are in this group and the ‘Ds’ are in this group,” Mills stated as she pointed to different sides of a folder from a literacy station in her classroom. “And those are the papers that we are working on.”

WHAT DOES PERSONALIZED LEARNING MEAN FOR PARENTS?

Jessica McClurg’s son is a senior at TRI Academy in Marysville, Ohio, and he’s considering college for the first time. According to McClurg, it used to be a fight to get him to go to school every day – but TRI Academy’s focus on cultivating student’s sense of ownership over their learning and hope for their futures is an essential part of their push to provide a meaningful, personalized experience for every student.

“Whatever a student is interested in, the teachers try their best to incorporate that so students can get their credits and graduate,” said McClurg. “The teachers at TRI Academy have been so encouraging; they’ve done wonders for boosting his confidence.”

While a personalized, competency-based learning environment might not look like the school parents remember, every parent wants their child’s needs to be recognized and met and their strengths to be celebrated. Personalized learning provides opportunities for educators to tailor instruction to ensure every student realizes their fullest potential, graduating not only with the content knowledge they need, but also the social and emotional skills that will allow them to thrive in a world that is rapidly changing. Transparent communication and practices means parents can be confident in what their children know and know how to do.

WHAT DOES PERSONALIZED LEARNING MEAN FOR TEACHERS?

In a traditional classroom, students might demonstrate mastery of a concept by taking a test. Or maybe the whole class writes reports. Perhaps the teacher assigns a public speaking exercise. Any one of those exercises surely demonstrates mastery by some students, while potentially leaving out others. In a personalized learning environment, each individual student can work with their instructors to develop ways to demonstrate mastery in ways that make sense for them. Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all assessments that work for few.

Ashley Howard works at Navin Elementary School in the Marysville Exempted Village School District in Marysville, Ohio, and has been working with second graders on how they show mastery of non-fiction text features. The ways students chose to demonstrate mastery ranged from creating posters to writing and playing songs.

KnowledgeWorks is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing personalized learning that empowers every child to take ownership of their success. With nearly 20 years of experience exploring the future of learning, growing educator impact and working with state and federal policymakers, our passionate team partners with schools and communities to grow a system-wide approach to sustain student-centered practices so that every child graduates ready for what’s next.

Get more resources to help make personalized learning a reality at [KnowledgeWorks.org](https://www.knowledgeworks.org).