WHAT ROLE DOES TECHNOLOGY PLAY IN A PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT? Can you personalize learning without technology? Yes, absolutely. But just as technology plays an increasingly important role in all of our lives – from using the GPS in our phones, to electronic medical records to being able to order groceries online – it plays a role in teaching and learning. Technology is a tool; it is not the primary driver of personalized learning.

At the center of strong, effective teaching and learning is the relationship between a student and a teacher. And technology can’t replace that.

*Personalized learning is driven by good teaching and strong student supports centered on the needs of each student.*

Technology is additive. Whether it’s a specific device like a tablet or laptop, or a program, app or platform like a learning management system or an online class, technology should support great teaching and learning.

Simply having access to a device is not personalized learning. Teachers are the guides that shape educational experiences for their students, helping them engage with learning tools that will enrich and support deeper learning, including different types of technology.
Personalized learning means meeting each student at their own level, challenging them with high expectations for academic achievement and growing student agency through:

» Instruction aligned to rigorous academic standards and integrated social-emotional skills students need to be ready for college, career and life

» Customized instruction and supports that allow each student to design learning experiences aligned to his or her interests

» Varied pacing of instruction based on individual student needs, allowing students to accelerate, go deeper or take additional time based on their level of mastery.

» Real-time differentiation of instruction, supports and interventions based on data from formative assessments and student feedback to ensure every student is making adequate progress towards graduation and career aspirations

» Access to clear, transferable learning objectives and assessment results so students and families understand what is expected for mastery and advancement

Technology is a tool that can be used to support student activities and to meet each student where they are by providing engaging instruction, just-in-time supports and key real-world learning opportunities

TECHNOLOGY DOESN’T REPLACE TEACHING.
It’s a powerful tool for experiential, interdisciplinary learning, formative assessments and reviewing student data. Technology can deepen the education experience for learners and teachers in a personalized setting, but only when it is used thoughtfully and intentionally.

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.