

**PERSONALIZED LEARNING** is an outcome where a student's daily learning experience is customized to fit his/her personal characteristics and changing academic needs.

To achieve personalized learning, both teacher and student must understand how the student's personal characteristics influence the student's learning. Both must also understand the student's academic needs and – using standards as their guide – work together in a flexible learning environment to customize the path and pace of the student's learning.



A customized fit  
for **EVERY** student  
**EVERY** day

## Know the Learner

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Teachers invest in knowing the learners they teach and in helping learners to know themselves. This means identifying each student's *personal characteristics* and understanding how they influence the student's learning. These needs arise from a student's interests, learning styles, culture, and personality as well as from things like the student's work ethic, willingness to take risks, and capacity for independence.

Knowing the learner also means identifying each student's *academic needs*. These are found by understanding, for each student, which areas of the content are already mastered, which need more work, whether there are any deficits in pre-requisite skills or knowledge, and where enrichment opportunities will be required to sustain challenge and enjoyment. It is only when both teacher and student understand the student's personal characteristics and academic needs that they can work together to customize a learning path and pace that best fits the student.

## Guide with Standards

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Teachers are masters of the content they teach. Furthermore, both teachers and students have a working knowledge of the academic standards and how they guide students' learning. Finally, teachers organize the learning environment around standards so that frequent assessment and feedback can guide the teacher and student to learning resources that target the particular standards the student needs to master next.

## Flex the Environment

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In order for every student to customize the path and pace of his/her learning, the teacher must prepare and curate a learning environment that is flexible enough to accommodate all of the personal needs and academic characteristics represented in a class. These environments are unique to each student population, as well as to each teacher and content area. All of these environments, however, share several important hallmarks.

Most notable among these hallmarks is accountable independence. This means that the learning environment contains enough structure that students can successfully take ownership of their learning and make their own decisions, but that there are enough accountability safeguards in place to ensure that every student makes adequate progress along their customized path.

Other hallmarks of a flexible learning environment include the use of differentiated instructional groupings; multi-purpose classroom spaces that enable a variety of learning activities to occur at the same time; navigational tools that offer students guided choice in their learning; opportunities for students to construct their own authentic learning; a culture of shared responsibility for learning and behavior; as well as the use of technology to expand learning opportunities and make learning resources available anytime, everywhere.