

What is Personalized Learning?

Policy makers have embraced the concept of personalized learning, but personnel preparation and continuing professional development for most school personnel has not included an in-depth focus on this with respect to content or in its processes.

It is commonplace to see references to meeting learners where they are; analyses indicate the emphasis often is on *individualized* approaches that stress matching individual differences in *developmental capabilities*. In contrast, we define *personalization* as the process of accounting for individual differences in both capability and *motivation*.

Furthermore, from a psychological perspective, we stress that it is the learner's perception that determines whether the fit is good or bad. Given this, personalizing learning means ensuring learning opportunities are perceived by learners as good ways to reach their goals. Thus, a basic intervention concern is that of eliciting learners' perceptions of how well what is offered matches both their interests and abilities. This has fundamental implications for all efforts to improve education.

Discussions of personalized learning also often leave the impression that the process is mainly about incorporating technological innovations. Moreover, discussions of personalized learning often fail to place the practices within the context of other conditions that must be improved in classrooms and school-wide to address factors interfering with student learning and performance.

Based on our work over many years, we have detailed a personalized approach for classrooms. It is highlighted in a set of continuing education modules focused on *Personalizing Learning and Addressing Barriers to Learning*.

See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/personalize.pdf>