

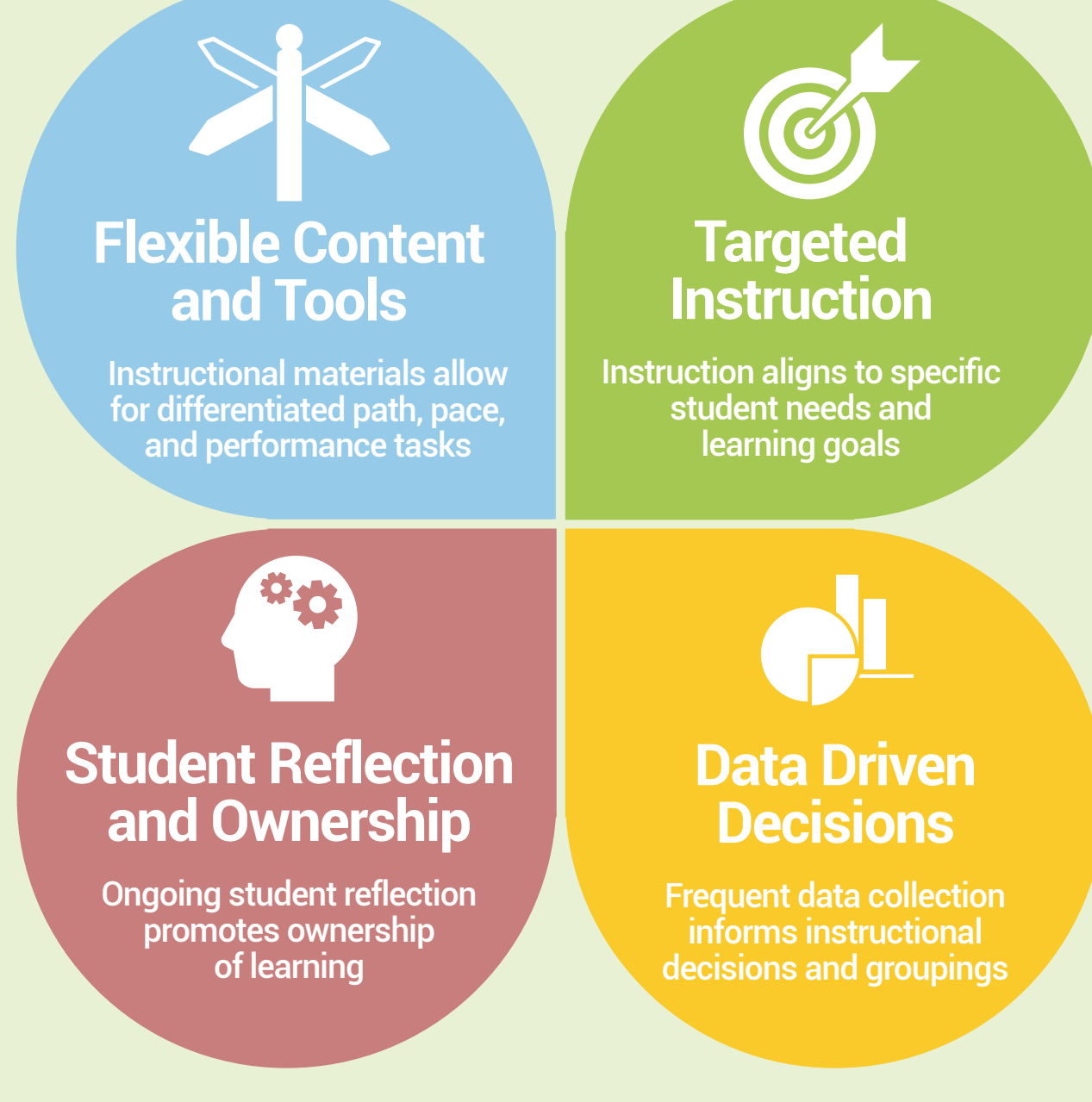
How-To Guide: Setting Design Parameters for Personalized Learning

As schools and districts shift to personalized learning, creating alignment across classrooms and schools is essential. To facilitate this alignment, school leaders can establish parameters for personalized learning. These parameters can be used both to ensure teacher autonomy is considered throughout the process and to create synergy across classrooms and schools. Feel free to use this guide as you begin your personalized learning journey with your school or district!

STEP 1

Identify Guiding Principles

THE CORE FOUR ELEMENTS OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING



KEY QUESTION: How will you define personalized learning?

Develop guiding principles for personalized learning at your school or district. These guiding principles act as an operational definition and should describe the key areas of focus for teachers as they implement personalized learning. Guiding principles can take different forms based on your needs; many schools and districts have leveraged the Core Four of Personalized Learning as guiding principles.

See the [Core Four White Paper](#) and [Continuum](#) here.

STEP 2

Scope of Implementation

Note: If you select an opt-in model, we advise that teachers in similar grade levels and/or subjects partner together in the implementation. This ensures that teachers can collaborate throughout the process.

KEY QUESTION: Who will implement personalized learning?

While some schools and districts implement personalized learning across all teachers at once, others may need a different approach. School and district leaders should carefully consider the needs of their school environment before identifying the scope of implementation. Each of the options below has proven effective based on the needs of the school or district.



Timing of implementation

- Teachers have greatest autonomy to choose when they will begin their implementation

- Departments or grade levels can decide when they would like to opt into personalized learning

- Teachers may have limited opportunities to provide input in timing

High Teacher Autonomy in Timing

Low Teacher Autonomy in Timing

Teacher Support

- Administrators and support staff may face difficulty supporting teachers across various grade levels or subjects

- Teachers within a grade level or department benefit from systematic support working alongside colleagues

- Entire staff within a school benefits from school-wide, systematic support through aligned approach

Low Teacher Support

High Teacher Support

Student and Teacher Equity

- May create inequity as only a limited number of students and teachers engage in personalized learning

- May create equity as students and teachers across a similar grade or within a similar department engage in personalized learning

- Creates systematic equity as all students and teachers engage in personalized learning together

Low Equity for Students & Teachers

High Equity for Students & Teachers

STEP 3

Selecting Personalized Learning Strategies

KEY QUESTION: How will teachers use the guiding principles?

After you have identified your system's guiding principles, selected who will design your instructional models, and developed an implementation plan, we recommend a careful consideration of specific personalized learning strategies that are important to your school or district. These specific strategies should align to the guiding principles you have identified.

Choice 3A: Selecting Guiding Principles

KEY QUESTIONS: Will teachers focus on all, a subset, or a single guiding principle? Who will make this decision?

Several potential benefits can result from this decision. As teachers have more autonomy, buy-in into the process will likely increase. On the other hand, aligning on the initial guiding principles will create synergy as educators develop a common focus. Consider the table below.

High Teacher Autonomy

Low Teacher Autonomy

- Teachers have autonomy to select a specific guiding principle or multiple guiding principles to focus on for a specified amount of time (e.g. first semester of implementation)

- Subsets of teachers (grade level or department) select a specific guiding principle or multiple guiding principles to focus on for a specified amount of time (e.g. first semester of implementation)

- School or district selects a specific guiding principle or multiple guiding principles to focus on for a specified amount of time (e.g. first semester of implementation)

Low Alignment

High Alignment

Choice 3B: Common Commitments for Guiding Principles

KEY QUESTION: Will teachers have common commitments for the guiding principles they will focus on?

School and district leaders can provide additional guidance to teachers as they implement personalized learning by creating common commitments for the guiding principles. These can range from the amount of time or frequency of specific activities to the use of technology or digital tools. These common commitments can be set either at the school or district level. See a few examples below of common commitments for guiding principles based on the Core Four of Personalized Learning.

Flexible Content and Tools

- Teachers will use **x** provider for **y** minutes daily/weekly.
- Teachers will use **z** tool to support **w** purpose.
- Teachers will select from a portfolio of content providers to include in their instructional model at their own discretion.

Targeted Instruction

- All students should receive **x** for **y** minutes daily/weekly. (Note: **x** could entail small group instruction, project-based group projects, or other instructional strategies that are a focus area for the district.)
- Targeted instruction should occur in groups of no more than **v** students.

Student Reflection & Ownership

- All instructional models should include student reflection.
- All teachers should conference with **x** students for **y** minutes daily/weekly.
- All teachers should provide students with **z** tool (e.g. journal, peer review protocol, etc.) to support reflection daily/weekly/monthly.

Data Driven Decisions

- All teachers should use **x**, **y**, or **z** data to determine topic and groups for targeted instruction (e.g. exit ticket, pre-assessment, etc.).
- All departments should use **x**, **y**, or **z** data to reflect on student progress weekly/monthly/quarterly.

STEP 4

Determine Level of Autonomy in Instructional Models

Check out Elementary and Secondary Infographics.

KEY QUESTION: Who will design the personalized learning instructional models?

Instructional models can be used to help facilitate the shift to personalized learning, such as the station rotation, flex, or flipped models.

Potential Benefits to Consider

District selects a single model to be used by all teachers

- Schools develop alignment across the entire system as teachers can coordinate lessons, activities, and ideas

Teachers choose from a menu of instructional models

- Teachers have autonomy to choose from a portfolio of models that meet student needs

Each school designs their own models

- Schools have autonomy to design around the needs of their students and create alignment throughout their school

Teachers design models with their department or grade level

- Teachers have autonomy to align with their colleagues and design models that meet the needs of students

All teachers design their own model

- Teachers have autonomy to design around the specific needs of their students

Low Teacher Autonomy

High Teacher Autonomy

High Opportunities for Alignment

Low Opportunities for Alignment

Review & Update Your Design Parameters

Periodically throughout the implementation, schools and districts should take time to reflect on their current design parameters, consider the needs of their stakeholders, and iterate. These iterations can be used to provide greater alignment or autonomy for teachers as they seek to enhance their practice.