LEARNING PERSONALIZED

How do we personalize instruction for mastery learning?

HOW DO WE PERSONALIZE INSTRUCTION FOR MASTERY LEARNING?

In Idaho's student-centered learning approach, flexible learning environments and responsive instructional practices enable teachers to meet students where they are, and are structured to support learning opportunities that optimize engagement, growth, and a sense of community.

Instruction in a well-designed mastery learning system is highly personalized. Students receive timely, differentiated supports based on their individual learning needs because a skilled team of practitioners who are expert diagnosticians, effective facilitators of learning, caring mentors, and fierce advocates work with them to identify those needs and next steps for learning. Learning experiences are meaningful because they leverage student interests and connect to their community.

However, in mastery learning, this is not something done to students, but co-created with students. Learner agency is central, so learners make important decisions about their learning needs and processes, and acquire the skills and metacognitive strategies they need to own their learning.

Competencies and personalization are inseparable, as competencies provide transparent and stable targets for student learning and criteria for evaluating student achievement. They create conditions that allow for personalization while maintaining equity. Competencies define the guaranteed and viable curriculum, ensuring it is not lost in an effort to personalize.

Personalization is grounded in becoming attuned to students' learning needs and interests, then leveraging their interests to effectively respond to these needs. Transparency ensures that students not only understand the "what", but also the "how" and the "why" of learning. The following instructional practices are hallmarks of transparent, responsive learning environments: inquiry-based learning experience, explicit skill and strategy instruction, expanded talk, regular conferencing, moment-by-moment formative assessment, and flexible environments and grouping.

What needs to **shift** within these areas of practice?

And what are the pedagogical **indicators** of a thriving mastery learning environment?

Whether or not you have been using the frame of mastery learning, let's start by identifying where your current practice aligns to and supports instruction for mastery.

KEY SHIFTS TO MASTERY

from   *Where is your team on the journey?*   **to**

from		to
Delivery of knowledge	**INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES** *Inquiry is at the heart of powerful academic endeavors. Wondering about something, researching it, developing a point of view, making a case: this is what academic and professional work is all about. Inquiry prioritizes student questions and ideas, which supports their sense of efficacy, their capacity, and their understanding of themselves as agents of their own learning.*	**Authentic academic experiences**
Focus on knowledge transfer	**EXPLICIT SKILL AND STRATEGY INSTRUCTION** *Explicit skill and strategy instruction, often in the form of modeling and think-alouds, ensures that students learn how to apply skills and strategies to content and to the processes of learning themselves. Cognitive apprenticeship and gradual release of responsibility prepare students to undertake rigorous tasks and to take ownership of their own learning.*	**Focus on transferable skills & strategies**
Teacher-directed discussion	**EXPANDED DISCUSSION** *Expanded discussion creates opportunities for students to listen carefully to others' thinking and to provide responses showing critical engagement with the task. By removing the written word as a potential barrier for meaning-making and synthesizing new learning, student discourse opens the door to deeper student understanding and provides teachers with data to diagnose and respond to student needs in real time.*	**Student-led academic discourse**
Lack of transparency in learning	**REGULAR CONFERENCING** *Regular conferencing is a powerful instructional tool. It's useful for assessment and differentiation, building relationships with students, and gaining insight into students' perspective of learning experiences. Conferences can provide immediate feedback and set next steps for learning, offer guided practice for metacognition and reflection, and allow students to share their thoughts and feelings about their work and their learning.*	**Transparent, equitable learning**
Assessment OF learning	**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT** *Formative assessments keep teacher and student focused on intended outcomes, common understanding of the target, the student's progress, and the next steps for learning. Continuous monitoring of learning allows the student and teacher to adjust course and try alternate approaches in real time.*	**Assessment FOR learning**
Adult-centric, static	**FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENTS AND GROUPING** *Flexible learning environments and responsive pedagogical practices are structured to support learning opportunities that optimize engagement, agency, growth, and a sense of community. Each facet of the learning experience is matched to the needs of learners.*	**Responsive, agile**

INDICATORS OF MASTERY

SYSTEM INDICATORS

STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Inquiry-based learning experiences, built with thoughtfully chosen resources and driven by student inquiry, create personal pathways toward competency.

Learners are regularly engaged in inquiry, posing questions, investigating answers and solutions, and sharing their results, while simultaneously and continuously synthesizing and reflecting to build schema.

EXPLICIT SKILL AND STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

Teachers provide students explicit skill and strategy instruction through metacognitive modeling, with ongoing opportunities to practice and apply skills and strategies.

Learners have regular and varied opportunities to develop key cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies, with sufficient time to practice and apply new skills and strategies in collaborative and independent settings; they can describe the connection to the specific skills or strategies they are developing.

EXPANDED DISCUSSION

Teachers create opportunities for students to listen and respond to others' thinking, demonstrating critical engagement with the task and participating in rich academic discourse.

Learners listen carefully to others' thinking and provide responses showing critical engagement with the task, opening the door to collaborative meaning-making and deeper understanding.

REGULAR CONFERENCING

Teachers create frequent opportunities for students to engage in conferences with teachers and peers to reflect on and analyze students' own work, give and receive feedback, and identify next steps for learning.

Learners regularly confer with teachers and peers to evaluate progress, give/receive feedback, identify actionable next steps, and sharpen cognitive and metacognitive skills.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Teachers and students use formative assessment to identify and respond to learner needs in real time.

Students access their learning data in real time, and can discuss, reflect, and evaluate their work and progress relative to their goals; they benefit from timely, responsive attention to their needs.

FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENTS AND GROUPING

Learning spaces and grouping strategies are flexible, enabling individualized, timely supports based on specific targets and observed needs, while also allowing students to collaborate and engage purposefully with one another independently.

Learners participate in an array of learning activities and flexible groupings based on specific goals, needs, and interests.

LEARNING PERSONALIZED | *explore*

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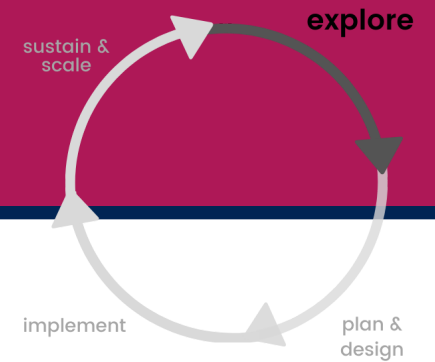
There are so many ideas about what personalized learning is. First, let's agree on what personalized learning is *not.* It is not centered on technology. An online learning management system might be part of the learning system, but technology is merely a tool. It's not focused on students moving at their own pace. Students move at their own pace because they know what their goals are and they have a road map to get there. It's not anchored in independent online work like a study hall. Personalized learning is anchored in the real world and relies on a connected community of learners. Students must have opportunities for collaboration, presentation, debate, and feedback. Communication is an essential skill required for every field of professional work!

OUTCOMES

- Identify a specific instructional practice to develop.
- Establish a goal for classroom, school, or system instructional practice.

**Explore instruction that supports personalized learning.**

KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Explore the highly personalized practices that enable teachers to meet students where they are, and provide timely, differentiated supports based on their individual learning needs. Start with a broad introduction for your team: *Idaho Mastery Learning Explore Series: Instruction*.
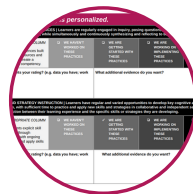
Complete the Self-Assessment
Use the *Instruction Self-Assessment* to assess current instructional practice and to identify an entry point for your work.
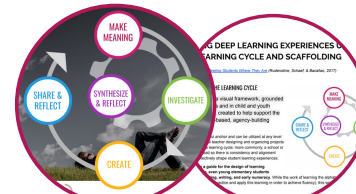
Explore the Learning Cycle
If you haven't explored the Learning Cycle yet, start with this Overview. If you are familiar with it, dig in deeper with: *Designing Deep Learning Experiences Using a Learning Cycle and Scaffolding*.
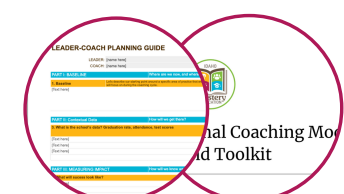
Collect baseline data about pedagogical practice to make informed choices about which pedagogical practices to prioritize. A tool like the **Admin Baseline Data and Plan** in the *School-based Coaching Plan* can support your observation and data capturing work. To learn more about the tool, read Part 2 of the *IMEN Coaching Toolkit*.

For **Recommended Reading** check out Appendix C.

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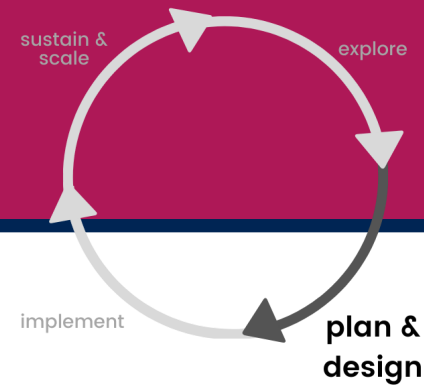
plan & design

Plan, design, and build capacity in mastery-based instruction.

This stage is all about building instructional capacity in personalized learning. Allow teachers time and support to develop their practices. Provide professional development and follow-up coaching/mentoring to deepen practice.
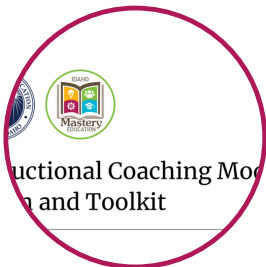
OUTCOMES

- An actionable plan to meet the goal for classroom, school, or system instructional practice identified in the EXPLORE Stage.

- A common understanding of the instructional practice(s) that supports personalized learning.

KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS

Develop plan to build capacity
Plan an arc of learning for the focus instructional practice, creating opportunities for educators to deepen their knowledge. Establish continua for professional practice aligned to the core teacher standards, and design tools to measure professional growth. Adopt a model for teacher coaching, such as the one described in the *IMEN Coaching Toolkit*.
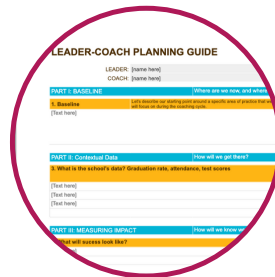
**Develop a system for accountability**
Instructional leaders commit to supporting teacher learning by establishing goals for themselves directly tied to improving teacher practice. *School-based Coaching Plan Template*'s *Goal-setting* and *Admin Log* support this work.

Connect mastery learning to work you are already doing with the *Idaho Mastery Learning Crosswalk*. It's important to see that mastery learning isn't something new. Instead, it is the hub that brings everything together, *and* it aligns closely with work that is already taking place in schools and districts around the state. Check out the connections between the Idaho Mastery-Based Education Framework and frameworks you may already be using: Danielson, Marzano, and PLCs.
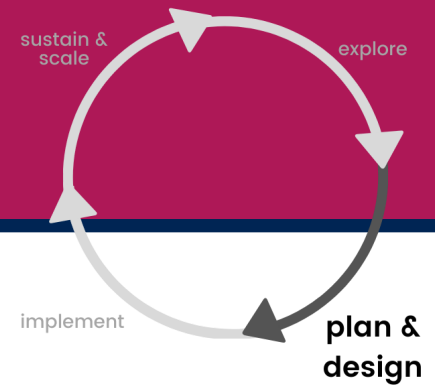
KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS, CONTINUED

Build capacity in key personalized learning practices. Create professional development opportunities for educators to deepen their knowledge of pedagogy in:

Inquiry-based learning experiences
Use student-led inquiry to design experiences built around the learning cycle that engage students in meaningful and authentic learning.

Regular conferencing
Conferences are a powerful instructional tool. They provide teachers with more time for assessment and differentiation, building relationships with students, and insight into their own work from the perspective of the student.

Expanded student talk
Student discourse becomes a powerful data stream that enables teachers to diagnose and respond to student needs and understandings in real time.

Flexible environments and grouping
Flexible learning environments are a structure to support and enhance flexible student grouping and multiple modalities for teaching and learning.


Moment-by-moment formative assessment
Let's expand our thinking about how we provide responsive supports to learners based on a real-time diagnostic formative assessment process that ensures timely intervention before gaps develop.

Explicit skill & strategy instruction
Students learn a lot from seeing and hearing teachers demonstrate thinking, processes, and strategies. The most skillful teachers are often the ones who are metacognitive about their own processes and can communicate them to students: metacognition is at the root of explicit skill and strategy instruction.

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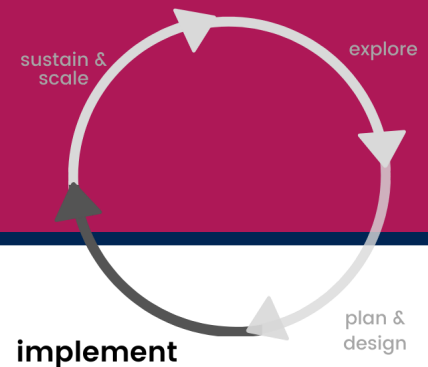
Implement plan, provide feedback and support, engage in action research

The implementation work involves trying new practices in a safe and supportive environment, getting and giving feedback, iterating on practices, and deepening practices with additional training and mentoring.
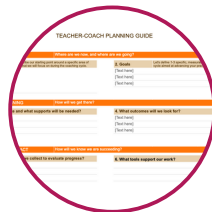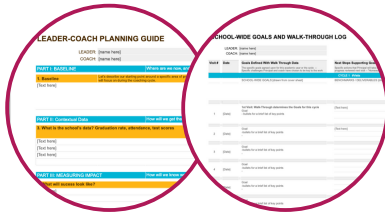
OUTCOMES

Data to inform
1) evaluation of goals identified in your plan to align content and competencies with curriculum and assessment; and
2) development of new goals and plans.

KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS

Implement plan for capacity building - Deliver an array of professional learning opportunities, followed up with opportunities for learners to practice and receive feedback. The **School and Leader Plans** and **Teacher Plan** in the *School-based Coaching Plan* are designed to support this work.

Measure professional growth - You can use the Coaching Plan to collect data about changes in pedagogical practice, and use data to respond to unanticipated needs.

Reflect - Use insights gathered during implementation to inform the approach to the next area of instructional focus. Within the School-based Coaching Plan, the **Evidence of Impact** and **Coaching Cycle Report** organize data in a way that allows users to see the big picture, which is helpful for reflecting and charting next steps.

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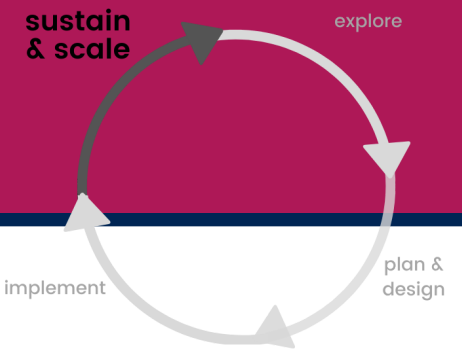
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Establish systems for sustained implementation and collaborative practice.

As new instructional practices take hold in your classroom and school community, celebrate and share what is working well. Highlight excellent practices (video is great for this!) so they can spread throughout the learning community. Having a system set up to onboard new team members will be critical to bringing them into the ongoing work.
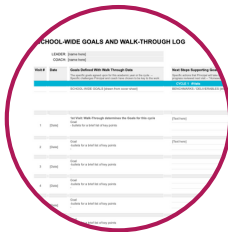
OUTCOME

Formalized, sustainable, and scalable systems for continuous improvement of instructional practice.

KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS

Systematize processes for promoting ongoing improvement
Ensure formal structures are in place to provide teachers with opportunities to deepen their pedagogical practice and receive ongoing feedback, for example by adapting the *School-based Coaching Plan* to incorporate teacher-to-teacher observation and coaching.

Induct new teachers into existing practices
Create a system to ensure new teachers have the opportunity to learn, practice, and receive feedback on key pedagogical practices that involve both instructional leaders and colleagues. Background knowledge can be built by sharing introductory tools like the *Idaho Mastery Learning Explore Series: Instruction*.
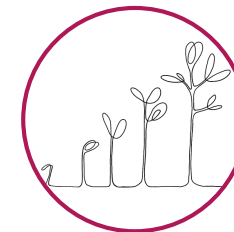
Share results
Document practice and collect data to identify high-leverage practices, and share results within and outside the system.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

Click on the section of the Staging Guide you want to explore.

INTRODUCTION

STUDENTS EMPOWERED

LEARNING PERSONALIZED

COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED

MASTERY RECOGNIZED

APPENDICES