personalized learning experiences ideabook

Introduction to Personalized Learning

Designing for Personalized Learning Experiences

K–12 Applications

Personalized Learning Characteristics

Personalized learning is an instructional approach that varies learning objectives, instructional strategies, content and sequencing based on a student's individual needs.

Personalized learning per se isn't a new concept. Every day, educators adapt lesson plans to ensure students meet learning objectives. However, a fully realized expression of personalized learning has three main characteristics:
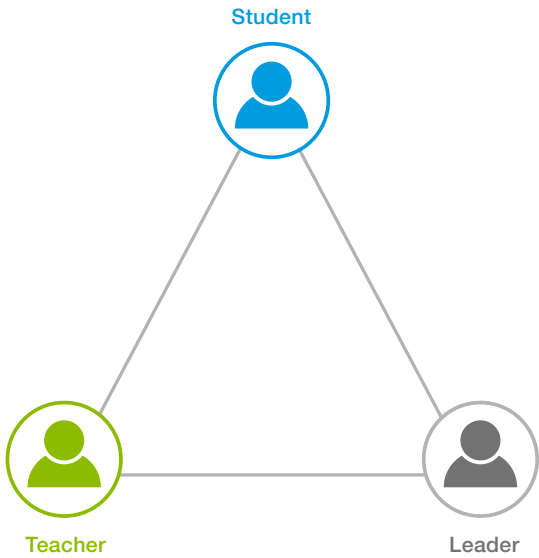
Student-Led

Personalized learning experiences are driven by how student needs, goals, interests, preferences and strengths are discovered and enabled.

Character + Community Development

Developing traits like empathy and curiosity, as well as interacting with peers within the school and the surrounding community, can better prepare students for a successful future.

Dynamic Use of Resources

Through diverse workspaces, more flexible blocks of time and technology resources, students choose where and how to best use their time to complete tasks and achieve their learning objectives.

Shifting Roles + Responsibilities

Central to planning for personalized learning experiences is understanding how the roles of students, teachers and school leaders all markedly shift in a personalized learning environment.

The student shifts from being a passive consumer in their education to one of an active citizen, where they have agency over a multiplicity of factors in their educational experience.

The teacher shifts from being on center stage in the classroom to being a truly responsive, adaptive coach, mentor and resource for student learning.

School leaders shift from being solely a chief decision maker to being a facilitator and enabler of teacher and student voices.

Some educators and administrators equate personalized learning with self-paced, adaptive courseware. Although these technologies can be an element of personalized learning experiences, they're not a requirement.

Student-to-Student

Peers play critical roles in each other's learning: audience, critic, mentor, teacher, collaborator, among others.

Teacher-to-Teacher

Teachers collaborate across disciplines and share responsibilities, allowing everyone to know students from multiple perspectives.

Student-to-Teacher

Teachers support and coach students as needed.

Students have freedom and opportunity to make choices, reflect, fail and succeed.

Leader-to-Teacher

Leaders encourage freedom and agency among teachers, allowing them to respond to student learning needs, and provide support throughout the process.

Leader-to-Student

Leaders encourage and support students on their learning journeys, taking interest in their progress and encouraging individual expression and exploration.

# Designing for Personalized Learning Experiences

Key Elements

Environments that support personalized learning share spatial characteristics similar to art galleries, playgrounds, workplaces and homes.


Art Gallery
Sharing + Display

Displaying projects and written reflections in a gallery format is a tangible way for students to share their learning journeys. Peers, educators and community members are encouraged to participate, comment and reflect on the learning process.
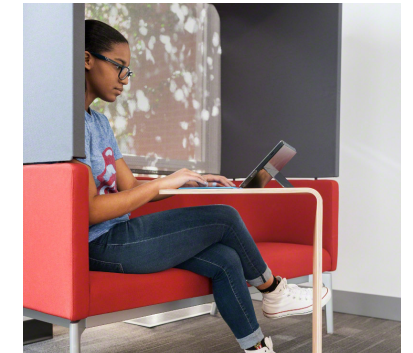
Home
Comfort + Ownership

Bringing elements that resemble the best parts of home, from soft lighting to comfortable lounge seating to individual getaway spaces, can create environments where students feel comfortable and have a sense of ownership.
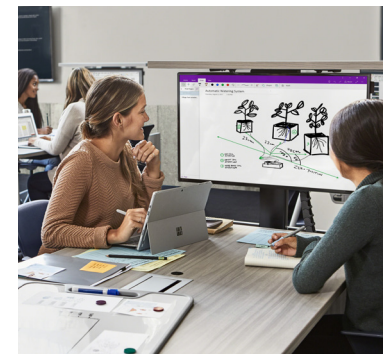
Workplace
Collaboration + Focus

Think of the school campus like a professional working environment with an ecosystem of spaces – from assigned workspaces to project rooms, from open collaboration areas to private offices – that support different work modes.

Playground
Self-Discovery + Curiosity

Providing multi-sensory learning spaces with a variety of materials, tools and resources encourages students to physically, cognitively and emotionally engage in self-discovery and curiosity around learning.

Design Principles

We identified seven design principles that support personalized learning experiences in the classroom and across a school. These principles recognize that spaces can best support personalized learning experiences when they are designed as part of a holistic, integrated system.

01

Design for Choice Among a Variety of Settings

- Empower student voice and choice at all stages of learning.

- Expose and expand student options for how they want to work.

- Develop and nurture relationships among students and teachers.

- Enable reflection and feedback through conferencing.

02

Design Spaces That Students Can Manipulate + Maintain

- Instill a sense of ownership in students.

- Help students develop meta skills like responsibility and self-awareness.

- Allow students to create the setting they need based on their task.

03

Integrate Teachers into Student + Communal Educator Space

- Make the students the center of learning.

- Establish teacher role as guide.

- Develop community and relationships with students and other educators.

Spatial Attributes

These attributes help you deliver and execute the design principles to build successful personalized learning environments.

Create differentiated zones for students to find their best place
- Use flexible furniture to design indoor and outdoor spaces that support multiple postures and activities.

Design for individual focus spaces
- Integrate spaces for students to minimize distractions or work alone.

Design for small groups + conferencing
- Consider areas that support informative, evaluative and generative meeting needs with options for enclosed, open or shielded areas.

Design for large community gatherings
- Create flexible multi-purpose spaces that include storage, extra seating and audiovisual equipment.

- These spaces can allow students to assemble as a community for discussion or social bonding, then transition back again into a more typical transition or circulation space.

Design environments to evolve over the course of learning
- Offer flexible furniture that can be controlled and manipulated by students, allowing them to build and name different configurations.

Support building student character + habits
- Provide ways for students to manage their materials, even food or messier supplies, with recycling, composting and cleaning options.

- Invite and encourage experimentation by displaying visible permission to fail.

Organize shared tools + resources
- Use accessible storage to create zones and provide ways to store media and materials.

Make teacher spaces accessible + collaborative
- Minimize the teacher zone and consider placement within the classroom.

- Provide for visual tools and information persistence to share ideas.

Design interaction space for teachers
- Include a common area for teachers to share knowledge and insights with one another and build community between them.

04

Allow New and Various Technology to Be Used Everywhere

• Let students use technology as a dynamic resource.

• Help students develop meta skills like responsibility and self-awareness.

• Allow students to use technology resources based on their task.

• Enable curiosity and exploration.

05

Leverage the Vertical Plane

• Demonstrate learning.

• Allow learners to represent themselves and their work visually.

• Enable group accountability by displaying work in progress.

• Develop a sense of community through visual representation.

• Reinforce community values and principles.

06

Create a Home-Like Environment

• Empower student voice and choice.

• Support all stages of learning.

• Expose and expand student options for how they want to work.

• Develop and nurture relationships among students and teachers.

• Enable reflection and feedback through conferencing.

07

Design for Degrees of Visibility + Distance from Educator

• Foster trust.

• Build meta skills like responsibility and self-awareness.

Design for all users to be connected

• Mix digital and analog technology throughout learning spaces in a way that supports maximum connection between students, teachers and content.

• Bring power to students wherever they need it.

Design for VR/AR/MR immersive learning

• Provide ways to support collaborative distance learning.

• Consider agile furniture arrangements that change when technology changes.

Leverage vertical planes throughout the building to celebrate the learner and the learning process

• Consider ways to utilize the entire wall, even ceiling zones.

• Make principles visible through words, art and various means of communication.

• Provide spaces to display student work and explore ways to honor student differences.

Provide storage to display project work

• Include shelving and closed storage to exhibit student work, showcase creative thinking and create a sense of pride when students see their work on display.

Emulate the rooms of a home

• Consider how spaces like the kitchen, dining room, living room, bedroom, porch and backyard can be integrated into the classroom or common areas.

• Offer visual cues to encourage students to use the space as intended.

Leverage lighting and materiality to create comfortable learning environments

• By integrating multiple textures, classrooms can become sensory-rich environments.

Design trust zones

• Include a mix of age-appropriate spaces near and far away from teachers for students to work, meet and play. Age-appropriate ideas may vary from a cozy corner on the other side of the classroom to a place down the hallway.

• Use furniture to create nooks that provide visual privacy and serve dual duty as storage or work surfaces.

• Use transparent boundaries, like windows into a hallway, to balance trust and safety considerations.

• Use materials and furniture to create degrees of visible and acoustic openness throughout the space.

Personalized Learning Applications

While personalized learning spaces have many of the hallmarks of a traditional classroom, like individual desks and whiteboards, they use new design principles to create novel and expressive spaces. Explore these applications for ideas on how to incorporate elements from art galleries, playgrounds, homes and the professional workplace into personalized learning for K–12 learning spaces. For additional planning ideas, please visit Steelcase.com/planningideas.

Blended Learning Classroom

Students are encouraged to find their best learning space within this varied classroom. Traditional settings are replaced with options for individuals and small and large group gatherings.

01 Multiple zones provide spaces for students to choose to work based on their task, mood or personal preferences.

02 Abundant storage makes it easy to display work and access shared tools. Easily movable furniture allows students to divide large and medium settings into smaller workgroup areas.

03 In this classroom, students experience many home-like elements: a dining room table, living room area and cozy corner. Materiality and soft lighting support the home-like atmosphere and create a colorful, energetic space.

04 Students can choose from work areas near and far from the teacher. Storage can also be used to create trust zones, areas for students to work while shielded from the teacher's direct view.
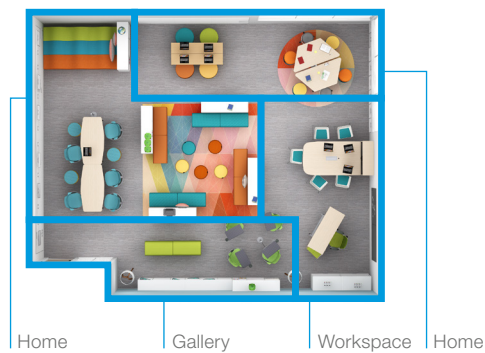
Home | Gallery | Workspace | Home

Featured Products

Node® school chairs

Verb® tables + personal whiteboards

Verb® Active Media table

Airtouch® height-adjustable desk

Turnstone Alight® ottomans

Turnstone Buoy® active sitting chairs

Turnstone Campfire® Slim table

Coalesse Ripple™ bench

Turnstone Depot storage

Turnstone Scoop stools

Smith System Oodle™ stools

Steelcase Series 1® chair

Verge™ stools

Transformable Classroom

This classroom space supports several small groups working simultaneously. The space can evolve as students gain trust to work in a more self-directed manner.

01 Students can choose their place based on the task at hand and their individual preferences — working alone or in groups. Conferencing, either student-to-student or student-to-teacher, can happen nearly anywhere.

02 Students can reconfigure this classroom to meet changing needs over the course of a day, week or even the school year. Movable tables and chairs encourage students to build, deconstruct and arrange as needed.

03 Instead of a traditional desk, the teacher in this space can move to wherever students need them. A stool-height chair gives visibility to the entire classroom when needed.

04 Vertical planes are used to share information, provide storage for whiteboards, display student work and make classroom principles visible to everyone.
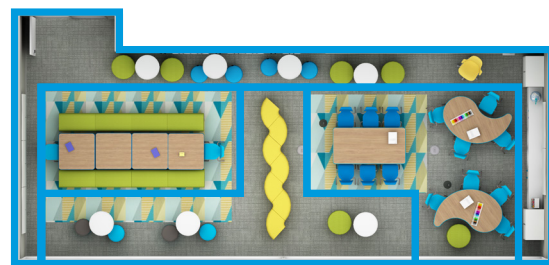
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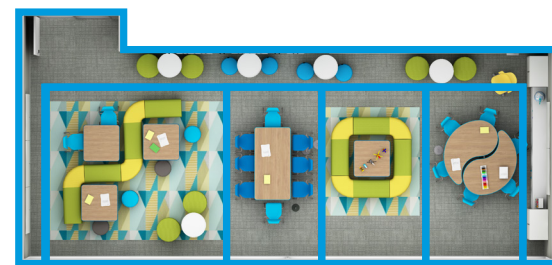
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Featured Products

Verb® personal whiteboards

Turnstone Alight® ottomans

Brody™ footrests

Turnstone Campfire® Paper tables

Turnstone Depot storage

PolyVision a³ CeramicSteel Motif™

Smith System Elemental™ tables

Smith System Flavors® chairs

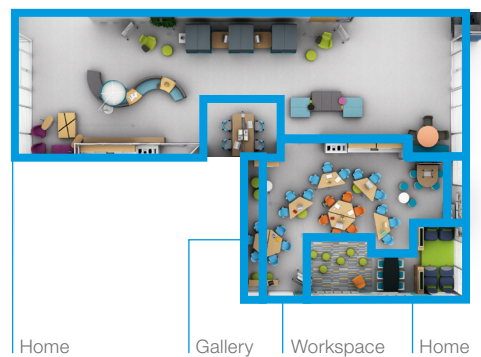Smith System Oodle™ stools

Active Learning
Classroom + Corridor

Students are given choice and trust to work independently or in groups, near or far away from the teacher.

Corridor

Classroom

Home   Gallery   Workspace   Home

01 Inside and out of the classroom, individual and small group work is supported. The corridor space can be used for larger gatherings to build community and relationships.

02 The in-classroom sink and recycling center supports student character-building by allowing students to be responsible stewards of their space. Students or teachers can easily rearrange the spaces to meet specific learning objectives and changing preferences.

03 Portable power allows mobile technology to be used anywhere in the classroom and corridor. Comfortable swivel seating supports a safe virtual reality experience. Accessible display technology makes it easy to share learning or gather feedback.

04 Storage, shielded meeting areas and open collaboration spaces create trust zones and make the corridor an inviting environment. Students can choose to work independently or with peers in spaces with varying distance from the teacher.

Featured Products

Node® school chairs

Verb® tables + personal whiteboards

Turnstone Bivi® Rumble seats with Hoodie and Depot storage

Brody™ footrests

Turnstone Buoy® active sitting chairs

Turnstone Campfire® Big lamp

Coalesse Circa™ lounge system

Coalesse Hosu® lounges

Coalesse Massaud lounge

Turnstone Depot storage

media:scape® collaboration technology

Turnstone Scoop stools

Victor2® recycling center

Creative Classrooms

Students are encouraged to practice creativity in these versatile classrooms. Rich technology and analog resources make it easy to display thinking.

01 Individual work, small groups and large, all-classroom gatherings are possible in these rooms. A choice of seating encourages movement throughout the day. Whiteboards can be used by students and teachers to display their in-progress learning.

02 Chairs and tables are on casters for students to reconfigure, and lightweight lounge seating can be regrouped as needs evolve.

03 Teachers can have their own individual workspace and join students anywhere for conferencing, mentoring, 1:1 instruction and community-building.

04 These rooms offer home-like elements, from a shielded living room for more personal reflection to large tables to gather at in community.

Home   Gallery   Playground

Gallery   Playground   Home   Workspace

Featured Products

Node® school chairs

Verb® Active Media tables

Verb® tables + personal whiteboards

Airtouch® height-adjustable desk

Turnstone Alight® ottomans

Turnstone Bivi® table

Turnstone Buoy® active sitting chairs

Turnstone Campfire® lounges + Paper table

Coalesse Ripple™ bench

Turnstone Depot storage

PolyVision a³ CeramicSteel Motif™

Reply® chair

Victor2® recycling center

Learning Commons

This learning commons offers comfortable spaces for students to socialize, build community and learn. Meeting areas encourage collaboration while individual focus areas support independent work.

01 Students can work in small and medium-sized groups. Comfortable lounge and café seating, as well as private desks, gives students choices for how to conduct their independent work.

02 Open shelves make shared tools and resources easily accessible. Students are responsible for keeping the learning commons tidy. The space can be rearranged to support evolving needs and encourage new ways of thinking.

03 Vertical planes can be used for students to work out problems and share information. Values and learning principles can also be displayed for all to see.

04 A variety of colors, materials and soft lighting create a relaxed yet energetic atmosphere. Living room lounge and café settings create a comfortable learning environment.


Home | Playground | Workspace
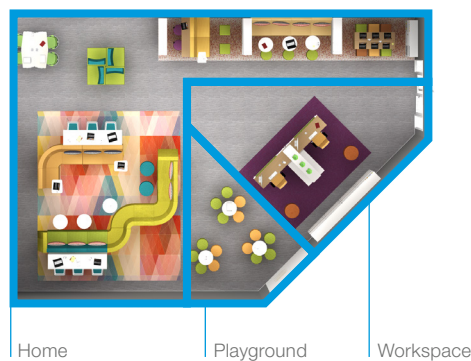
Featured Products

Turnstone Alight® ottomans

Turnstone Campfire® half-depth Big table

Turnstone Campfire® lounges + paper tables

c:scape® desks

Turnstone Campfire® Skate tables

Turnstone Depot storage

PolyVision a³ CeramicSteel Motif™

Turnstone Scoop stools

Universal storage

Makerspace + Student Study Center

A student study center and makerspace offers abundant opportunities for individual focus, mentoring help, creativity and exploration. Traditional desking and lounge settings encourage students to focus or collaborate as needed.
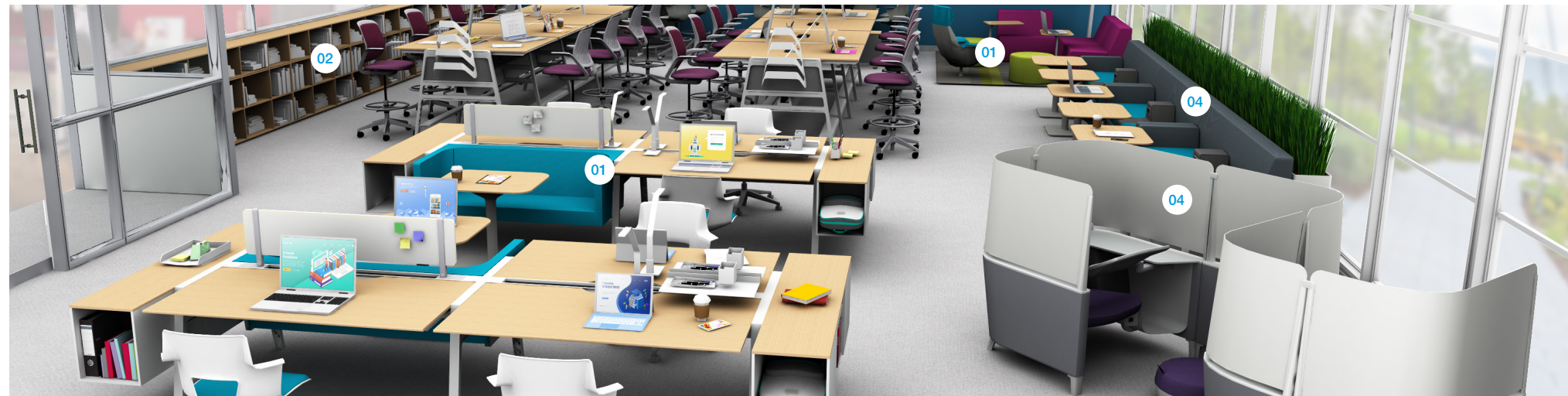
01 Students can select their best place and posture for work. Stool- or desk-height work tables, open or shielded seating and active technology collaboration are all available.

02 Shared tools and resources are accessible by all students in the open storage bookshelves and mobile storage cabinets.

03 Collaborative technology makes it easy to share information or review work with peers or instructors. Access to power keeps students productive throughout a work session.

04 Students are encouraged to choose the space that best meets their needs. By providing comfortable lounge options and shielded focus areas along with space to explore and experiment, teachers demonstrate trust in students to do their best work.
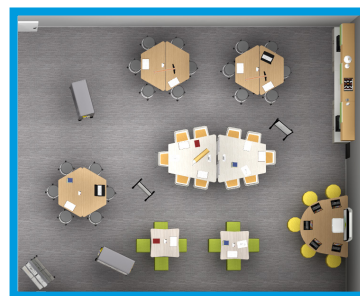
Playground

Workspace   Home

Featured Products

Verb® tables

Turnstone Alight® ottomans

Turnstone Bivi® desks, canopy + rumble seat

Brody™ WorkLounge

Cobi® stools

Turnstone Depot storage

Groupwork® mobile easels

Coalesse Massaud lounge

media:scape® collaboration technology

Regard® modular lounge system + work tables

Turnstone Scoop stools

Shortcut® chairs

Smith System Cascade™ storage

Verge™ stools

Teacher Hub

As learning has evolved, so has the need for new ways to collaborate. In this combination café and collaboration area, teachers can gather to connect informally, build relationships and discuss student progress.

01 Soft lighting, artwork and comfortable seating evoke a home-like environment that encourages relaxation and respite and provides a place for teachers to recharge.

02 At this large table, teachers can work independently or connect across disciplines, allowing them to better understand student needs through different perspectives.

03 Mobile whiteboard and monitor, along with markerboard wall panels, elevate teacher collaboration and sharing through a mix of digital and analog technology.
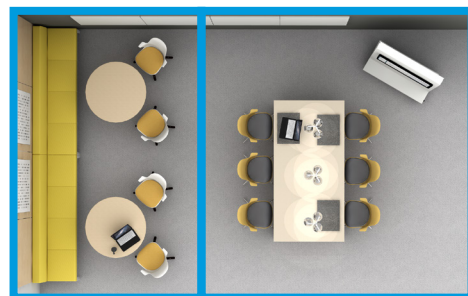
Featured Products

Node® stools and chairs

Turnstone Campfire® Big table

Coalesse Enea™ tables

Coalesse Exponents whiteboard + mobile display

PolyVision a³ CeramicSteel Motif™

Regard® modular lounge system

Home   Workspace

Steelcase®
EDUCATION