Supporting every student with individualized learning paths

Gwinnett Online Campus uses D2L Brightspace to Deliver Personalized Learning

Gwinnett Online Campus has developed personalized learning courses that empower students to exceed their potential through individualized learning paths designed to support and enrich every learning outcome. With the teacher as the analytical engine, students receive purposeful and targeted instruction based on their individual strengths and needed areas for growth. This powerful instructional design maximizes learner-focused flexibility and positively contributes to the graduation rate of Gwinnett Online Campus.

At a glance

Client: Gwinnett Online Campus
Learners: 1720 enrolled in Personalized Learning
Industry: K-12
Website: gcpsk12.org

Platform/Features:
- D2L Brightspace Grade Book
- Release Conditions

Highlights:
- Personalized learning has positively impacted the students, staff, and overall school climate
- Fall 2020 pass rate across all full courses delivering Personalized Learning courses was 90.8%
- Personalized Learning courses are now being offered to supplemental students, at-risk students, special education students, and summer school students
Opportunity

**Personalized Pathways to Meet Student Needs**

Serving over 10,000 students each year, Gwinnett Online Campus continuously works to improve the student experience and success rates. The future of online learning at Gwinnett Online Campus is through the development of personalized learning courses. The vision for this instructional framework is to empower students to exceed their potential through individualized learning paths designed to support and enrich every learning outcome. Over the next two years, all middle and high school courses will be developed utilizing personalized learning.

With the teacher as the analytical engine, students will receive purposeful and targeted instruction based upon their individual strengths and areas for growth. Advanced content and review material are released to students based upon formative assessments and student interaction with the digital content.

Each personalized learning course includes formative assessments, instructional lessons and activities, and supplemental resources that support three to four potential pathways for students to follow, depending on their individual needs. These pathways include standard, review, enrichment, and mastery options. In addition to the online course development, developers also create a robust collection of activities and engagement tools to be used during weekly face-to-face learning opportunities; these activities align with the learning targets and are designed to meet a variety of student needs.

This powerful instructional design helps maximizes learner-focused flexibility and positively contributes to the graduation rate of Gwinnett Online Campus. In the three years since inception, the personalized learning courses have been implemented across middle and secondary grades as well as in various academic settings and programs including gifted and talented, special education, full-time, supplemental, and summer school environments.

Most recently, the personalized learning courses have been incorporated into Graduate Gwinnett, a program designed for at-risk students who are off-track for graduation. Because these students often have varying degrees of prior knowledge, the flexibility and personalization afforded by the personalized learning courses have been critically impactful.
Gwinnett Online Campus partnered with D2L to create a personalized learning experience using D2L Brightspace designed to deliver courses in grades 6 through 12 that help empower students to exceed their potential through individualized learning paths designed to support and enrich every learning outcome.

Solution

**Personalization Enriches Learning Outcomes**

Gwinnett Online Campus partnered with D2L to create a personalized learning experience using D2L Brightspace designed to deliver courses in grades 6 through 12 that help empower students to exceed their potential through individualized learning paths designed to support and enrich every learning outcome.

Through the utilization of release conditions, students work through content tailored to meet their individual learning needs. Release conditions often include several triggers, such as accessing content items and scoring within a range on an assignment or quiz. Teachers have deftly woven these conditions with multiple quiz attempts and individualized submission views to provide each student with an individualized learning experience throughout the course, releasing this tailored content based upon formative assessments and content access.

Gwinnett Online Campus overcame the challenge of diversifying instructional tasks and enrichment/remediation opportunities by incorporating a variety of third-party programs such as H5P, an open-source content collaboration framework. H5P activities are embedded directly into the New Content Experience; these activities provide students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities, formative assessments, and real-time application of knowledge.
Grades to Reflect Mastery

Another challenge faced by the personalized learning initiative was automating the grades so that the students' mastery grades are reported to the grade book in the D2L Brightspace. Specifically, because students can redo assignments or complete new assignments in order to capture a higher grade, Gwinnett Online Campus needed a way to ensure that the highest grade would be captured in the grade book automatically. The personalized learning courses utilize formula grades to calculate each student’s mastery of course topics. By setting up formula grade items for the different standards, teachers can vary the delivery of course content while also providing different tasks for different students.

Grades then better reflect true mastery of course material, rather than successful completion of a single assignment. This solution has been effective for both the teacher and student experiences. For the teacher experience, the teacher can track all student activity throughout the course; this view provides valuable insight into trends and areas of needed instructional support. For the student experience, only the highest attempt is visible in the grade book and the student is only aware that the content released to him/her is appropriate to the student’s specific learning needs (students do not know if they are receiving remediation or enrichment content).
Exponential Growth
The implementation of personalized learning has positively impacted the students, staff, and overall school climate. The courses were designed with state and district standards explicitly in mind, and the tasks focus on the mastery of those standards. By designing the courses this way, Gwinnett Online Campus has instruction that is more aligned with mastery learning rather than merely putting students through content that they may already know or need to look at more closely.

Personalized learning has provided students with flexibility in pacing as they work through the course. It also offers additional content for students without teachers having to go hunt down extra resources on the spot. While the courses require a great deal of time on the front end to develop and set up, they provide the teacher with the ability to focus specifically on students who need additional support. Gwinnett Online Campus is currently in the third year of Personalized Learning implementation and continues to see exponential growth and gains.

During the first year, five courses were developed, along with the initial framework. Currently, in Gwinnett Online Campus’ third year of offering Personalized Learning, there are 19 live courses. Additionally, the Personalized Learning courses have rapidly been expanding into various instructional settings beyond the full-time environment. Specifically, Personalized Learning courses are now being offered to supplemental students, at-risk students, special education students, and summer school students.

Data regarding these opportunities reveals that students who participate in reteaching demonstrate, on average, a 20-point gain in mastery. Another positive data point from the Personalized Learning initiative is the course pass rate. The fall 2020 pass rate across all full courses delivering Personalized Learning courses was 90.8%; this pass rate is encouraging as we continue to expand this initiative into other courses across all curriculum areas and grade levels.
One Gwinnett Online Campus student shares, “I love the fact that I am in complete control of my learning. In my other classes, I am often bored and finish my work really quickly. With my GOC math class, I feel like I'm challenged and have work that keeps me challenged without frustrating me. Sometimes I need extra help and sometimes I get to skip ahead, but I like that it's different every day.”

Another Gwinnett Online Campus student shares, “I have anxiety, so being in a personalized learning course was very good for me because the pace is consistent. Additionally, I'm neurodivergent and it can be very hard for me to tie myself to a course structure and certain assignment types, so it helps me a whole lot being able to decide what I do and how I present what I've learned.”

Pathways for Individual Students
Some of the most powerful gains from the Personalized Learning courses come in the form of individualized learning outcomes. When considering the number of individual pathways within any given Personalized Learning course, there is 100% differentiation. All students either receive a totally differentiated pathway or a uniquely shared pathway; not a single Personalized Learning course, however, has all students moving through the same instructional experiences. In addition to the extensive differentiation present in the Personalized Learning courses, students are also provided an opportunity to participate in relearning opportunities in full support of mastery learning.