

Principal Sabbatical Report

Practical ways that schools can **Personalise Learning** for their students

Simon Williams

**Principal – Waiiau Pa School
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Purpose:

To further develop my professional knowledge and understanding of practical ways schools personalise learning for their students.

Identified the following areas / questions:

- What does personalised learning mean?
- What are the benefits of personalised learning?
- What are some of the practical ways schools plan and implement personalised learning within their schools?
- Are there variations in levels of personalisation between schools? If so, is there a commonality in these variations based on school, size, decile, location, ethnicity etc.
- Determine if there is a commonality between schools with high levels of personalisation.

Executive Summary:

Personalised Learning requires the adaption of the curriculum, teaching pedagogy and learning environment to meet the needs of the learner. There is an acceptance amongst educators that the educational systems need to change in order to become more flexible and adaptive in responding to the diverse needs and interests of students as well as an attempt to engage students who are at risk of not achieving within the current system.

A synthesis of the body of work associated with the theme of personalised learning as well as visits / observations at schools who are attempting to achieve a personalised learning environment has identified six critical areas that contribute to achieving a personalised learning environment:

- Locus of Control
- Knowing Students as Learners
- Student Engagement
- Collaboration
- Effective Use of ICT
- Classroom Culture

The role of the teacher within a personalised learning environment cannot be understated. Effective teacher-student relationships are central to achieving an environment where personalising learning is achieved. Understanding the student as a learner as well as an individual allows learning to be personalised to the needs of the student.

PERSONALISED LEARNING

What is Personalised Learning?

The term Personalised Learning has been discussed in educational research and policy papers for over 20 years. A wider approach to personalising learning has also been defined in various ways by educationalist such as; Howard Gardner, Benjamin Bloom, Édouard Claparède, Victor Garcia Hoz as well as recently by Dr. David Hargreaves, Dr. Michael Fullan and Dr. David Hopkins who all argued that there are differences in the ways humans learn, which promotes the need for variation in curriculum delivery and engagement.

The concept of personalised learning has been defined in various ways. At the most fundamental level the principle of “Putting the learner at the heart of the education system” (Leadbeater, 2008) applies. Personalised learning sets out to meet the need and abilities of every individual through tailoring curriculum and learning activities to the individual.

The terms Personalisation, Differentiation and Individualisation are often used to describe a framework for learning. There is little agreement on what exactly they mean beyond the broad concept that each is an alternative to the one-size-fits-all model of teaching and learning. For example, some education professionals use personalisation to mean that students are given the choice of what and how they learn according to their interests, while others suggest that it refers to instruction that is paced differently for different students.

“Putting the learner at the heart of the education system”. (Leadbeater, 2008)

The U.S Department of Education defined the terms: Individualisation, Differentiation and Personalisation, in the 2010 Education Technology Plan (pg 12) in the following way:

Individualisation refers to instruction that is paced to the learning needs of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but students can progress through the material at different speeds according to their learning needs. For example, students might take longer to progress through a given topic, skip topics that cover information they already know, or repeat topics they need more help on.

Differentiation refers to instruction that is tailored to the learning preferences of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but the method or approach of instruction varies according to the preferences of each student or what research has found works best for students like them.

Personalisation refers to instruction that is paced to learning needs, tailored to learning preferences, and tailored to the specific interests of different learners. In an environment that is fully personalized, the learning objectives and content as well as the method and pace may all vary (so personalisation encompasses differentiation and individualisation).

Bray and McClusky, (2012) argued that this definition focused on the method of instruction rather than learning and the learner. They defined the significant difference being “The main difference

between personalization, differentiation and individualization is that one is learner-centred and the others teacher-centred.” Bray and McCluskey, defined the differences;

| Personalization | Differentiation | Individualization |
|--|--|--|
| The Learner... | The Teacher... | The Teacher... |
| drives their learning. | provides instruction to groups of learners. | provides instruction to an individual learner. |
| connects learning with interests, talents, passions, and aspirations. | adjusts learning needs for groups of learners. | accommodates learning needs for the individual learner. |
| actively participates in the design of their learning. | designs instruction based on the learning needs of different groups of learners. | customizes instruction based on the learning needs of the individual learner. |
| owns and is responsible for their learning that includes their voice and choice on how and what they learn. | is responsible for a variety of instruction for different groups of learners. | is responsible for modifying instruction based on the needs of the individual learner. |
| identifies goals for their learning plan and benchmarks as they progress along their learning path with guidance from teacher. | identifies the same objectives for different groups of learners. | identifies the same objectives for all learners with specific objectives for individuals who receive one-on-one support. |

Cited <http://barbarabray.net>

The commonality between these three terms is that they all adopt a student centred pedagogical approach where the needs of the students are assessed and catered for.

For the benefit of this report personalised learning will be define as a process in *which knowledge of the student as a learner is used to tailor future teaching and learning.*

A common assumption is that personalisation is simply created by giving students greater choice. Campbell, Robinson, Neelands, Hewston and Mazzoli, (2007) argue that deep personalisation is required for lasting change. They define deep personalisation as an action where students are “co-authors of learning” (pg. 138) and have access to information and develop confidence to self-manage. *This would lead to students setting their own learning targets, adopting continuous self-assessment for learning and to the development of flexibility beyond the school and outside traditional school hours* (Campbell, Robinson, Neelands, Hewston and Mazzoli, pg. 381.)

“In a Personalised Learning environment students are co-authors of their learning”. (Campbell et al.,2007)

The ultimate aim of a personalised learning environment is, to create and educational system that responds directly to the diverse needs of individuals rather than imposing the same solution on all students. This will result in the raise the rate of personal investment in education where the learner is engaged in the process of learning.

Learning should be a deeply personal experience. Children have a huge appetite and capacity to learn, yet all do not learn as enthusiastically or effectively at school. Children come into education from different starting points, with different resources and expectations. They often learn in different ways, at different paces and styles. Therefore the challenge is for the education system to adapt and adjust to the variation of needs, interests and differences.

What are the features of an environment where Learning is Personalised?

A number of descriptions and definitions of personalising education have emerged at national and international levels. The approaches range from a holistic child centred approach to a prescriptive set of actions to achieve greater personalisation of students.

A synthesis of the body of work associated with the theme of personalised learning as well as visits / observations at schools who are attempting to achieve a personalised learning environment has identified six critical areas that contribute to achieving a personalised learning environment. While these areas have been defined into six headings within this report, these topics are interwoven and often overlap.

The following themes were evident within both these learning environments as well as the body of work associated with a personalised learning approach:

Locus of Control

The role of the teacher within a learner-centred environment is critical and cannot be overstated.

Students being 'co-authors' of their learning requires a shift in the locus of control within the classroom. This student centred approach empowers students with the ownership and control of their learning. Within this environment the teacher allows the students to have greater involvement in the planning and construction of learning activities to ensure the students

“The teacher’s role within a
Personalised Learning Environment is
critical”.

understand the framework for learning as well as the limits and expectations.

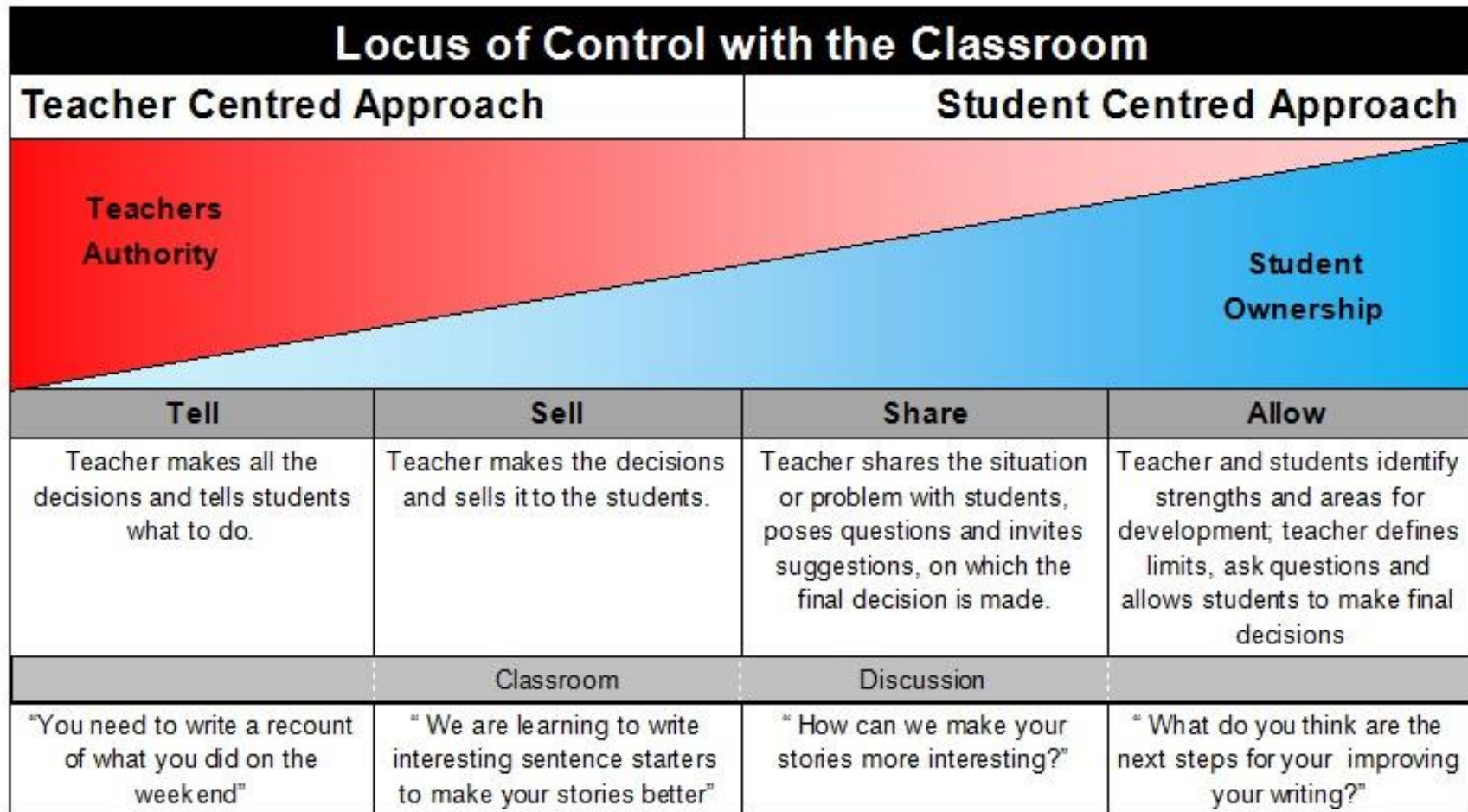
Diagram1 shows the shift of locus of control with the classroom from that of teacher direct authority to greater student ownership.

Staff within a personalised learning environment share a clear vision of learning which is embedded in their teaching practice. They focus on creating an environment where students feel empowered with their learning and understand their role in the process of learning.

A learner centred approach will not succeed without a committed shift toward sharing the ownership of learning with students. Successful teachers within a personalised learning environment do more than just providing deliberate acts of teaching such appropriate feedback, modelling etc. Successful teachers within a personalised learning environment possess the 'soft skills' that allow them to build positive relationships with their student. These skills create an environment where students feel supported and are prepared to take risks, persevere and ask questions about their learning and feel trusted. This high level of trust is achieved through on-going interactions. In a teacher centred classroom, the dominate method of instruction is the teacher delivering information and knowledge to students. Within a student centred classroom the students take a more active role in and have more ownership of the learning process and therefore may be required to source, interpret and create new knowledge.

Locus of Control Model – (Diagram 1)

The diagram indicates the cultural shift from a teacher centred approach to a student centred approach. This diagram is an adaptation of one developed by New Zealand Football in its development of a player centred coaching philosophy. The four stages of tell, sell, share and allow define how the interaction between teacher and student alters as the locus of control shifts.



Adaption from New Zealand Football Coach Development -Junior Level 1 Coaching Award Handbook (Pg 26)

Knowing Students as Learners

A clear knowledge of the attainment of each pupil and the progress they are making is pivotal to the development of a personalised learning environment. Individual student assessment information is used to tailor future learning to the needs of the student.

Knowledge of the learner encompasses knowing about the pathway of progress for each student as well as the interests, backgrounds and intrinsic motivation of each student as a person and a learner. This knowledge is used within a personalised learning environment to structure future learning.

Helen Timperley (2009) states;

“Fundamental to teachers becoming responsive to student learning needs is the availability of detailed information about what students know and can do. High-quality assessment data can provide that information, but much more is needed to improve teaching practice in ways that have a substantive impact on student learning” (Pg. 21)

Many schools and teachers have significant amounts of formative and summative student achievement data. The effective use of this assessment data to provide both the students with feedback on their learning as well as guide future learning is essential.

“Personalised – learner centred instruction focused on meeting students ‘where they are at’ and helping them to develop the knowledge and skills they need.

In a personalised learning environment, the learner has access to assessment information so they can build a clear picture of the current state of their learning. Through the assessment for learning process, teachers can help students become more aware of not only what they are learning, but how they are learning it. This enables students to take control of their learning and develop self-regulation skills. Independent learners like this have the ability to seek out and gain new skills, new knowledge and new understanding, according to their own needs and learning goals.

The use of progressions or exemplars are a successful way of creating student ownership and understanding of where their learning is currently at and what is needed in order to achieve the next level. For example; the use of writing progressions to allow students to see what is needed in order to progress their writing from a 2p to a 2a.

Professor John Hattie (2003) suggests in his that it is essential that students have the information required or are given effective feedback in order to answer the following questions;

- Where am I going?
- How am I going?
- Where to next?

Effective teaching within a personalised environment involves knowing clearly and specifically what each student can or cannot do, followed by tailoring intervention that engages the student in the particular learning focus.

Student Engagement

Engagement means participating activity and with understanding rather than being passive within the learning process. Learners engage more readily when they know their learning goals, expect to succeed, and see worthwhile challenge in their learning tasks. In any learning context, engagement has intellectual, emotional, and cultural aspects which differ depending of the cultural capital of the learner.

Authentic learning experiences are widely used by educators as a means of engaging students in the learning process. Authentic experiences provide the learner with purpose and motivation to gaining new knowledge and skills. These authentic experiences also allow students to see that learning extends beyond the classroom and text books into the daily lives of adults and professionals, therefore creating purpose / relevancy to the learning.

Research shows, that we learn best when we are at the centre of our own learning. Giving students the control over the direction, focus and pace of the learning can have a positive effect on the level of engagement and understanding. The use of 'passion projects' and 'inquiry-based learning' have been used effectively by schools and teachers to engage students in their learning. Inquiry-based learning is a learning process through questions generated from the interests, curiosities, and perspectives/experiences of the learner. When investigations grow from our own questions, curiosities, and experiences, learning is an organic and motivating process that is intrinsically enjoyable. This pedagogical approach allows students to have greater ownership and control of the direction of their learning.

"Learners engage more readily when they know their learning goals, expect to succeed, and see worthwhile challenge in their learning tasks."

This responsibility can extend from the method of presentation to the total control of the context of knowledge and how this new knowledge is applied. The role of the teacher within this learning becomes that of a guide and coach to ensure the student remains within the agreed structures and limits.

A sense of control over the direction of their learning can also have a positive effect on the psychological position of students. Students can experience a sense of increased self-esteem and a greater feeling of academic achievement due to having control over the direction and pace of their learning. For example; Research has shown that people are more likely to persist at doing constructive things like exercising, quitting smoking or weight loss when they have some choice about the specifics of such programmes, opposed to receiving simply rewards or punishments.

Engagement within a personalised learning environment can be achieved with a pedagogical shift towards allowing students to have greater control over their learning. Creating a classroom environment that has a positive culture is collaborative and where students feel supported to take risks.

Collaboration

Personalised learning environments have a highly collaborative ethic. They foster a culture where learners see themselves as both participants and contributors to the learning process.

Collaboration within a personalised learning environment means more than just working co-operatively. The role of learner and teacher is interchangeable between all classroom members with individuals provided with opportunities to run 'workshops' to share their knowledge with others.

"The role of teacher and learner are interchangeable within a collaborative environment."

In a personalised learning environment, teachers share authority for learning with students by the promotion of developing personal learning goals with students. The 'co-authoring' of these learning goals allows the student to become invested in the goal as

well as allowing for collaboration and clarification between the teacher and student for the next steps. This goal setting process is a two way process with the student having equal share in the ultimate goals as the success criteria to be achieved.

Collaborative teaching within a personalised learning environment has been implemented within some future focused schools. Within these environments, teachers work collaboratively to teach a larger group of students eg Three teachers working in an open plan space with 90 students. This environment encourages collaboration among educators to share and learn from each other. The Alliance for Excellent Education report (2012) states that:

"When teachers collectively engage in participatory decision making, designing lessons, using data, and examining student work, they are able to deliver rigorous and relevant learning for all students and personalize learning for individual students" (Pg. 16).

Collaboration with 'experts' or an audience beyond the classroom or school is used effectively within a personalised learning environment. The use of technology to video conference or email experts in the area of learning allows students to collaborate beyond the knowledge within the classroom group. This wider collaboration in turn creates engagement and relevancy to the learning task.

A key element within a collaborative environment is that of developing self-regulated learners. Students need to be supported to take more responsibility for monitoring, adjusting, self-questioning, and questioning each other. These enable to students to collaborate more effectively with others as students will become engaged in the group activities rather than being just participants.

Effective use of ICT

The range of support for enabling a personalised learning environment provided through the effective use of ICT and E-learning is significant to the point where a whole report could easily be dedicated to the benefits, methods and programmes used.

Effective ICT use and E-Learning classrooms are a key element to creating a personalised learning environment. Technology and digital learning can support the culture shift required for a student-centred approach by providing tools, resources, data, and systems that increase teaching options and opportunities as well as promoting more efficiency both with learning and teaching.

The role of technology within a personalised learning environment can be separated into two broad areas;

- 1) Providing the infrastructure to support personalised learning (data, information, rich learning resources)
- 2) Direct learning needs for students (video tutorials, online resources, blended learning activities)

Many schools have been successful in developing the infrastructure needed to support personalised learning through the use of student management data bases, online testing programmes such as E-asttle, Studyladder or Mathletics. While these programmes can assist teachers with developing an understanding current state of learning for an individual student, **personalisation is only achieved when this data is used to adjust and develop learning programmes suited to the student.** It is

a common misconception that a personalised learning programme can be achieved simply through the use of the internet and other technologies. Leadbetter (2008) argues, however that:

“Technology can accelerate a transformation, but technology can not cause a transformation.”

Jim Collins (2001) Good to Great

“The key issue for this century is whether schools can provide more children with relationships that support learning. What tools, policies, and institutions we use to achieve that goal is secondary.”

Therefore the challenge is to use technology as a tool for enhancing relationships and for enhancing the direct learning needs for students.

Students today have all grown up in a world where technology has increased the speed and quantity of information available. The use of social media now provides a range of platforms for communicating with a wider audience. Many schools have embraced this technology to allow their students to communicate with an authentic audience. The use of wikispaces / blog pages for students to present information on allows for a worldwide audience rather than student work remain on classroom walls or exercise books. Social media also

It is the use of student achievement information in ‘co-authoring’ discussions with students about their learning that creates powerful personalisation.

allows for communication with parents, students in other schools, and even world experts. These platforms allow for greater personalisation for individual students. Students are able to communicate with a wider audience in a variety of ways.

Technology allows for instant feedback from various sources. The use of Google docs allows for greater collaboration both between students as well as allowing students to receive instant feedback from both the teacher and the intended audience.

As mentioned previously, technology allows for the infrastructure to support a personalised learning environment. Student achievement data base systems and online testing programmes make it easier and quicker for teacher to collect, analyse and understand student data. Programmes can plot student progress against standardised testing across time periods, therefore providing teachers information about a students learning and previous understanding. While these systems provide teachers with a wealth of information about a student's current state of learning the key for future personalisation is for this information to be used to set future learning intentions. In addition to providing the data foundation for personalised learning, such systems also free teacher to spend more time in dialogue with their students. It is the use of this information in 'co-authoring' discussions with students about their learning that creates powerful personalisation.

The internet now provides online access to an infinite number of topics and issues. Learners are no longer limited to just a few text books on a particular topic. They now have access to video tutorials, podcasts, infographics, and webchats just to name a few possible formats on a particular topic. For example technology makes it possible for a 10yr student in rural New Zealand to video conference with an international expert in CGI – computer generated imagery. The internet and technology gives learners access to research and information, and provides a mechanism for communication, debate, and recording learning achievements. As a result greater personalisation can be achieved as technology allows students to research and present information in a variety of ways.

Technology allows for an anywhere, anytime, anyone approach to learning. No longer are learners restricted to a single source of information at a particular time, and through an

online learning environment are given greater flexibility with their learning. This opens up learning opportunities to students with disabilities or to students who have been previously restricted due to isolation or special learning needs. Some personalised learning environments are utilising the use of shared Google docs timetables or blog pages to share learning plans and resources with students. These resources allow students the framework and guidelines for their learning without having to rely upon the teacher to be free to access further learning activities. Students can then set their own pace and framework for learning. The use of video tutorial such as Kahn Academy allow students to revisit and revise previous learning. Online video tutorials also allow the learner to pause, rewind or review the tutorial at their own pace allowing for personalisation with the learning by setting the time, place and pace of their learning. Teachers have also embraced this flexible approach by providing students with online tutorials and feedback about their learning.

“With Digital learning tools students have to opportunity to work at their own pace in a variety of contexts.”

The variety of online and ICT resources available can provide high levels of motivation and engagement for learners. Learning intentions can be presented in a range of multimedia formats including videos, online games, quizzes as well as using interactive technology such as ipads or mobile phones. These digital tools can engage students who often 'switch off' during traditional style of teacher instruction lessons.

Classroom Culture

The culture within a personalised learning environment emphasizes the relationship between teachers and students as an integral part of personalising the learning experience and meeting the needs of each student, including interests, learning styles, and readiness. Teachers must understand how to identify the learning needs of the individual and plan and deliver programmes that support the learning in gaining new skills or knowledge. They also need to be skilled at creating a classroom environment that supports learning.

Many attempts have been made by educationalists to define the characteristics of an effective teacher and classroom culture. Several rubrics and lists of qualities of an effective teacher have resulted from this particular research focus. Adrienne Alton-Lee in her 2003 report *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)* identified ten research-based characteristics of quality teaching. These were;

1. *Quality teaching is focused on student achievement (including social outcomes) and facilitates high standards of student outcomes for heterogeneous groups of students.*
2. *Pedagogical practices enable classes and other learning groupings to work as caring, inclusive, and cohesive learning communities.*
3. *Effective links are created between school and other cultural contexts in which students are socialised, to facilitate learning.*
4. *Quality teaching is responsive to student learning processes.*
5. *Opportunity to learn is effective and sufficient*
6. *Multiple task contexts support learning cycles.*
7. *Curriculum goals, resources including ICT usage, task design, teaching and school practices are effectively aligned.*
8. *Pedagogy scaffolds and provides appropriate feedback on students' task engagement.*
9. *Pedagogy promotes learning orientations, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies and thoughtful student discourse.*
10. *Teachers and students engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment.*

While this list of ten characteristics for quality teaching outlines the broad areas required there is still debate or the finer details of what is 'effective', 'sufficient', and 'appropriate'. Effective teaching

also means creating positive relationships with students. The Effective Literacy Practice –Ministry of Education 2006 states that;

The “Partnership” between teacher and student is probably more important than any other in contributing to improved outcomes for the student. Teachers need to know and understand their students as unique people with individual backgrounds, interests and apparitions in order to develop caring and honest relationships with them and to understand each student’s pathway of progress”.

This statement reflects the importance of the teacher within personalised learning environment. A true shift to a learner-centred environments requires a positive classroom environment where learners feels supported to take ownership and risks with their learning. This culture takes time to develop the high levels of trust required from all involved. The wider school culture must also encourage this shift to a learner centred approach. While the principal / leadership team play a critical role in establishing the culture within the school it is the connection among all the stakeholders that sustains and dictates the strength of that culture.

Challenges Personalised Learning:

Personalisation of learning should not be seen as a ‘silver bullet’ approach to solving issues associated with schooling and the tail of under achievement. Structural reforms may not be enough to increase personalisation in schools unless they are focused on improving teaching and learning, as well as the thoughtful incorporation of improved curricula and pedagogy.

Some schools can be guilty of continually adding further demands upon students and teachers without taking stock of the effects of these new developments. As educators it is important to balance these new initiatives with some of the concerns associated.

The Educators who are implementing a personalised learning environment need to be aware of the following issues regarding a personalised learning environment;

Deepness of Learning–

Drs. Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley (2009), warn about a potential negative aspect of some dimensions of personalised learning in their book entitled *The Fourth Way: The Inspiring Future for Educational Change*. They argue that while there are advantages in students being able to access information instantly on-line, one should not mistake such processes for "something deeper, more challenging, and more connected to compelling issues in their world and their lives." Therefore personalised approach to learning requires teacher guidance and input to ensure students learning achieves the depth and challenge required.

The role of the teacher is critical to ensuring students develop the depth of understanding required. A shift of the locus of control to students having responsibility for their own self-management and learning requires regular teacher / mentor contact to ensure that student’s remain within the structures and limits defined by the both the teacher and student. Autonomous learners still require

critical feedback and reflection to ensure their learning activities develop the depth of understanding required. Some students will require greater guidance and scaffolding to ensure they can work independently and achieve the depth of understanding required.

Movement out of 'Comfort Zone' –

Professor Guy Claxton argues in his article *Expanding Young People's Capacity to Learn* that “being an effective, powerful real-life learner is a useful thing to be; and that twenty-first century education should be aiming to help young people develop this generic capacity to learn.”

Therefore this learning to learn requires students to be moved outside of their comfort zones and be challenged with new experiences in order to provide the learner with challenge and reflection. The challenge for teachers is to provide a personalised learning environment where students are prepared to move outside their 'comfort zone' rather than remaining in the 'sweet spot of learning' where they are learning in a way that is comfortable for them on a topic that they are passionate about. For example some students may always prefer to work independently rather than contribute to collaborative group exercises. Achieving an effective personalised learning environment requires teachers to understand their students as learners and challenge them to work within areas and topics outside of their 'personal comfort zones'.

Students don't know what they don't know -

As mentioned previously, Campbell, Robinson, Neelands, Hewston and Mazzoli state that deep personalisation is achieved when students are “co-authors of learning.” In order to be co-authors of learning students need an understanding of the next steps for their learning. Teachers need to be involved in the discussion with students to explain, demonstrate or guide future learning as students don't know what they don't know. The use of exemplars, shared matrix and learning progressions are essential in order for students to see the learning progression and how they can achieve the next level of learning.

Ability to deliver a Student Centred Pedagogy –

A critical element in a personalised learning environment is the role of the teacher. Prof John Hattie suggests in his article *Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?*, that the skills of the teacher account for about 30% of the variance in student achievement. He states that “It is what teachers know, do, and care about which is powerful in this learning equation.” This is reinforced further in his statement that “excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on teaching”.

Critical to achieving a child centred pedagogical approach is the willingness of the teacher to shift teaching practice toward this approach. The teacher needs to be willing to share the control of learning with students from the traditional approach where the teacher sets, monitors and controls learning. A child centred approach does not mean that the teacher divorces all responsibility for student learning, in contrast the involvement of the teacher is critical in creating a classroom culture that supports personalisation.

Conclusion

Many teachers personalise school every day by; greeting students by name, providing extra assistance to specific students, adapting learning activities for individuals, and providing emotional support for students with personal issues. Such acts provide students with personal support and help them feel connected to the school and help build relationships with students. However, most efforts to personalise learning for individual students fail to achieve a major difference. This is often due both to the restraints of the traditional school systems as well as an attempt to apply a personalised learning environment within a teacher centred classroom.

A synthesis of the body of work associated with the theme of personalised learning as well as visits / observations at schools who are attempting to achieve a personalised learning environment has identified six critical areas that contribute to achieving a personalised learning environment;

- **Locus of Control.** Students need to be 'co-authors' of their learning. This requires teachers to give students greater involvement in the planning and construction of learning to ensure students understand the framework for learning as well as the limits and expectations.
- **Knowing Students as Learners.** Effective teaching within a personalised environment involves knowing clearly and specifically what each student can or cannot do, followed by tailoring intervention that engages the student in the particular learning focus.
- **Student Engagement.** Engagement within a personalised learning environment can be achieved with a pedagogical shift towards allowing students to have greater control over their learning. Creating a classroom environment that has a positive culture is collaborative and where students feel supported to take risks.
- **Collaboration** Personalised learning environments have a highly collaborative ethic. They foster a culture where learners see themselves as both participants and contributors to the learning process.
- **Effective Use of ICT.** Technology and digital learning can support the culture shift required for a student-centred approach by providing tools, resources, data, and systems that increase teaching options and opportunities as well as promoting more efficiency both with learning and teaching.
- **Classroom Culture.** A shift to a learner-centred environment requires a positive classroom environment where learners' feel supported to take ownership and risks with their learning.

In conclusion, personalised learning, at its most fundamental level, requires that teachers and school systems to engage students in their own learning. This requires a deep understanding of students as both learners and individuals and a willingness to involve students in the learning process.

Implications for the Classroom

One of the specific aims of this report was to investigate and provide practical suggestions of ways that learning can be personalised for students. The focus is on determining what classroom practices and pedagogy can be applied by all staff in order to make a positive shift in the level of personalisation achieved within the classroom.

While some staff may have a natural tendency towards a learner centred philosophy and could quickly make a significant shift towards a personalised approach to learning, for many teachers this shift to a learner centred philosophy would require a radical rethink of how learning and teaching would be constructed within their classroom. A teacher centred philosophy where the teacher has control and is the “font of knowledge” will not achieve the levels of personalisation required in order to deeply engage and empower students in their learning.

The following suggested actions are changes that are possible within any classroom regardless of class level or teacher. The three implications for the classroom for all staff are;

- 1. Increased student access to assessment information**
- 2. Shifting teacher control – Tell – Sell – Share – Allow.**
- 3. Quality teacher–student discussions.**

1. Making student assessment information clear and accessible to all students.

As stated in the body of this report, in a personalised learning environment, the learner has access to assessment information so they can build a clear picture of the current state of their learning. Through the assessment for learning process, teachers can help students become more aware of not only what they are learning, but how they are learning it.

The use of rubrics and learning progressions allow students to identify the current state of their learning as well as allowing students to identify their next learning steps. Creating clear files or plastic pockets containing this information is one way of allowing students access to information about their learning. These documents would be kept in a box accessible to all students at all times. Students would then use these to conference with the teacher about learning objectives as well as reflecting where they need to improve further.

Sharing assessment information with students assists in developing greater levels personalisation as students are empowered with greater ownership and are in a better position to co-author future learning. Students need a clear understanding of the learning progressions in order for to make decisions about future steps.

2. Shifting teacher control – Tell – Sell – Share – Allow.

Shifting the locus of control within the classroom is a vital component of increasing levels of personalisation within the classroom. Professional development, discussion and deliberate acts of teaching to promote “selling” the learning activity rather than simply telling students what to do will help to develop greater student ownership and ultimately personalisation within the classroom.

This can be achieved simply by teachers reframing instructions to include the reasons for the learning activity- the learning intentions! This shift allows students to understand the purpose of the learning and how it will benefit their future learning.

Further progress can be made by teachers sharing a learning problem with students and allowing them the shared responsibility of solving this.

3. Improving the quality of teacher –student discussions.

Creating teacher practice where teachers spend quality time with individual students listening to what they say about their learning can have huge benefits in both terms of levels of personalisation as well as student engagement in the learning process. This discussion needs to be led by the student as the purpose is to develop greater student ownership and personalisation. This is supported by Black & Wiliam, (1998) who suggested that;

*What is essential is that any dialogue should evoke **thoughtful reflection** in which **all students** can be encouraged to take part.*

The development of a “Powerful Learner Pit Stop” is one way of increasing the quality of teacher-student conferences. The analogy of a ‘Pit Stop’ describes the roles within the learning conversation.

- Student—driver of the discussion. Telling the teacher (pit crew) what support is needed and how learning is progressing.
- Teacher– Pit crew. Supports the student with suggestions and advice.

Students would prepare for Pit Stop by completing a Pit Stop discussion sheet. This would include reflective questions that would be used to guide the discussion. The teacher would prepare for PL Pit Stop by informing individual students of their Pit Stop time and providing them with time to prepare for this learning discussion. The teacher would also ensure the remaining students are managed in order for quality time to be spent conferencing with individual students without distractions.

Classroom culture is critical to achieving successful PL Pit Stops. Students need to be empowered with the ownership of their learning. Therefore the discussion must be led by the student with the teacher supporting with appropriate questions and support. Students understanding of the learning goal, what successful learning looks like and future steps is critical. Classroom culture also needs to allow for the Pit Stops to occur while the remaining students working with some independence.

These three strategies are simple steps that can be taken in order to increase the level of personalisation within classroom. The aim of this section was to provide practical ways that greater levels of personalisation can be achieved within the classroom.

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