

Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.108 Personalized Learning Endorsement: Guidance Document

<https://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/EducatorPreparation/505-3-.108.pdf>

Table of Contents

<i>Rationale</i>	3
<i>Overview</i>	4
<i>Creating a Common Language</i>	5
Personalized Learning Defined	5
Defining Supporting Terms	6
<i>Georgia Professional Standards Commission Rule 505-3-.108</i>	7
Standard 1: Prioritized Executive Function.....	7
Standard 2: Learner Agency	8
Standard 3: Asset-Based Dispositions.....	8
Standard 4: Growth and Mastery Mindset.....	8
Standard 5: Authentic and Adaptive Assessment.....	9
Standard 6: Flexible Educational Resources.....	9
Standard 7: Individualized Path.....	10
Standard 8: Dynamic Communication	10
Standard 9: Expanded Collaboration	11
Standard 10: Life-Long Professional Learning.....	11

Rationale

The work of Kuhn (1970) on paradigm shifts helps to understand that challenges and barriers in understanding do exist. Brought about by a paradigm shift, or a change in the underlying assumptions of how a system works, the new educational paradigm is emerging as one that is focused on personalized experiences. As with all shifting paradigms, time will prove whether this new paradigm will be correct. It is essential that all educators and stakeholders understand that innovation of an entire system takes time, prototyping, and iteration.

This emergent and innovative paradigm has been described more and more frequently as Personalized Learning (PL). PL is not a new ‘approach’ or strategy that lives in the current paradigm...it is a completely new environment with new assumptions which require new policies, procedures, and attitudes. In his book, Yong Zhao (2018) described this new paradigm:

“The new paradigm is no longer about imposing prescribed content and knowledge on all students. It is about enabling students to have personalized educational experiences...In this paradigm, students are owners of their learning enterprises, instead of employees working to satisfy external standards. Students are driven by passions and interests. These learning enterprises are about enhancing students’ strengths, not fixing their deficits.”

Overview

This document will address several areas that support understanding and help to move all stakeholders closer to actualizing this innovation. Here is what you can expect from this guidance document:

- **Increased understanding of personalized learning and the supporting research and literature.** This emergent paradigm is rife with multiple interpretations and definitions. Creating a common language goes a long way towards understanding and shifting towards research-based best practice.
- **An interactive reading experience.** Rather than a typical document that calls for the reader to simply ingest, this document will guide you towards activities and resources that can support you as you learn more about personalized learning. *While a number of resources are included, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) in no way endorses any program/resources. These are simply a sample of resources that may support your work.*
- **To be better equipped as an advocate for teaching and learning.** It is impossible to do the best for students and teachers if we are not consistently looking at our practices and policies and adjusting for new and emergent theory.

Creating a Common Language

As a first interaction with the term ‘personalized learning’, it is often helpful to understand what personalized learning is NOT, rather than to seek first a consolidated definition (Mercadal, 2015). Personalized learning is NOT a) teachers creating individualized learning plans for each student, b) something that can only occur with technology, c) the same as differentiating instruction, or d) something that can fit into a ‘neat’ definition...because that standardization of a model is the antithesis of personalization.

It is, of course, very natural for us to quest after a structured and organized model to follow. We as educators certainly want to understand what is being asked of us, and to have the knowledge and support to be successful. We must remember that every educator, classroom, student, school, and community is different, so retaining a mindset of flexibility and fluidity is essential. “Personalized learning is more than a pedagogy or a new curriculum, it marks a shift in the way we educate students. It encompasses a number of pedagogical methods and curricular choices as well as school cultures” (Rhode Island, 2016).

In order to progress the work towards personalized learning forward in the state of Georgia, a working definition was created. Lokey-Vega and Stephens (2018) define personalized learning as a paradigm shift, and suggest that there are nine ‘essential conditions’ that support an effective personalized learning environment.

Personalized Learning Defined

“Personalized learning is an educational paradigm shift that values learner differences and harnesses technology to allow the educator and learner to co-plan an individualized educational experience” (Lokey-Vega & Stephens, 2018).

Existing research and cognitive science are the backbone of the personalized learning paradigm. Above all else, a prioritization of learner agency and demonstrated executive function becomes requisite in a PL environment. Executive Function (EF) is the umbrella term for the complex cognitive processes that serve ongoing, goal directed behaviors, and Sulla (2018) posits the highest level of EF is Leadership-inspiring and influencing others. It becomes our duty, then, to assure that our students can exhibit this level of leadership within their learning journey.

Defining Supporting Terms

It is essential to understand the supporting terms and language used within this new personalized learning paradigm. Below, are listed some supporting terms that are found not only in the vision for Georgia, but also in the language of GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.108, Personalized Learning Endorsement Program.

- **ASSET BASED LANGUAGE:** language or speech that expresses value for individualities, differences, and diversity of peers and other educators rather than emphasize differences as deficits.
- **COMPETENCY OF FOCUS:** individual competency which the learner and the Learning Coach have prioritized for immediate focus.
- **DIGITAL CONTENT ECOSYSTEM:** any dynamic and changing collection of instructional content accessed by either a teacher or a learner using a digital system.
- **EDUCATOR AS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER:** the designer of instructional curricula within his/her content area of expertise.
- **EDUCATOR AS LEARNING COACH:** the learner's co-planner and guide within the learning environment.
- **EXECUTIVE FUNCTION:** an umbrella term for the complex cognitive processes that serve ongoing, goal-directed behaviors.
- **GROWTH AND MASTERY MINDSET:** a perspective or attitude toward learning that views it as an ongoing progression of continuous growth and improvement towards new understanding and mastery of interdependent competencies, and not an end point of either success or failure.
- **LEARNER AGENCY:** when learners advocate for their own needs, preferences, and interests to plan and drive their learning.

- [RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN](#): considers user feedback and data to make real-time, high impact adjustments to the learning environment, curricula, and resources.

GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.108

This rule consists of 10 standards, which will inform the education and preparation of future and current educators in Georgia. Within each of the standards below, resources, examples, videos, and suggestions are linked. There is often a disconnect between expected practice, and the support for developing the explicit skills required for educators (and learners) to actualize these expected practices (Clarke & Miles, 2003). While this document can act as a support, a deep commitment to coaching, support, discourse, and reflection is requisite for success for both the educator and the learner and such a commitment must be reflected in endorsement program coursework and learning activities.

Standard 1: Prioritized Executive Function

The candidate explicitly teaches students the skills of executive function (self-regulation, emotional responsibility, task completion, working memory, cognitive flexibility, time management, reflection, etc.), [teaches practices of metacognition](#), and prepares the learning environment to promote learner agency. The candidate will:

- (i) prepare learners to take responsibility for their learning through the acquisition and practice of executive function;
- (ii) design and transform curricula that supports learner acquisition and practice of executive function by considering the cognitive development of the learner; and
- (iii) [measure and report growth in learner executive function](#) to coach learners towards independence.

Standard 2: Learner Agency

The candidate teaches and encourages learners to advocate for their needs, preferences, and interests to plan and drive their learning. The candidate will:

- (i) support learners in [identifying and advocating for their preferred](#) modalities, talents, and interests when co-planning experiences that support mastery;
- (ii) create a [flexible or innovative learning environment](#) that supports learner agency; and
- (iii) ensure [learning experiences reflect preferred modalities](#), talents, and interests when co-planning experiences that support mastery.

Standard 3: Asset-Based Dispositions

The candidate [uses asset-based language and classroom practices](#) to serve all learners. The candidate will:

- (i) encourage all learners to value his/her own individualities and the diversity of peers and other educators as assets;
- (ii) [practice responsive pedagogy and curriculum design](#) in a way that promotes diverse learner characteristics as assets; and
- (iii) value diverse learner characteristics and demonstrate a belief that all students can learn any competency given adequate resources and time through asset-based language.

Standard 4: Growth and Mastery Mindset

The candidate defines learning as an ongoing progression by embracing a growth and mastery mindset, rejecting the binary of success and failure. The candidate will:

- (i) [prepare learners](#) to monitor their own pace and progress and persevere towards mastery, embracing mistakes as learning opportunities;

- (ii) [identify causes of learner struggles](#), prescribe solutions, and co-plan with learners to set short and long-term goals for growth; and
- (iii) design and implement adaptive tools, strategies and learning experiences to support growth towards mastery for all learners.

Standard 5: Authentic and Adaptive Assessment

The candidate co-plans with the learner to collect evidence of mastery using varied and data-rich performances that are on-going, authentic, flexible, and relevant. The candidate will:

- (i) [prepare learners to self-assess](#) by identifying, documenting, and defending formal and informal learning experiences to build an assessed portfolio as evidence of mastery;
- (ii) consider multiple [means of demonstration when co-designing assessments](#) aligned to competencies; and
- (iii) assess learner experiences (formal and informal) in diagnostic, formative and summative ways as they align to mastery using authentic and adaptive assessments.

Standard 6: Flexible Educational Resources

The candidate provides the learner access to flexible resources when co-planning unique ways to master competencies. These include, but are not limited to the resources available in the [digital content ecosystem](#). The candidate will:

- (i) provide opportunities for learners to seek or select content from a curated menu of [educational resources](#) that address the competencies;
- (ii) employ engaging pedagogies and research-based best practices of instructional design to curate, mine, create, and organize high impact educational resources and make them accessible to learners; and

- (iii) [monitor and observe the effectiveness of educational resources in real-time](#) and suggest or seek alternatives as needed.

Standard 7: Individualized Path

The candidate prepares learners to be aware of [competency-based learning progressions](#) and to make informed choices in co-planning a [unique pathway](#) and pace towards mastery of the curriculum. The candidate will:

- (i) co-plan and co-design with the learner a challenging learning pathway towards mastery while considering the interdependencies within and across content(s);
- (ii) use data of previously assessed competencies to coach and co-plan current and future learning paths; and
- (iii) facilitate and [coach the learner towards independence](#) in mastering the content.

Standard 8: Dynamic Communication

The candidate [facilitates communication](#) that flows multi-directionally from all stakeholders to meet learner needs in a [variety of flexible formats](#). The candidate will:

- (i) coach learners to initiate communication with all stakeholders as s/he [advocates for her/himself](#) and others;
- (ii) communicate curricula to ensure resources are leveraged for best outcomes; and
- (iii) model and nurture effective communication strategies to build relationships with all stakeholders.

Standard 9: Expanded Collaboration

The candidate values learners as equal contributors in the planning process. The candidate will:

- (i) [coach learners to effectively collaborate](#) in all interactions (group work, instructional conversations, sharing ideas, critical feedback, roles, peer feedback, etc.);
- (ii) collaborate using tools and strategies to acquire real-time feedback and data from all stakeholders to inform curriculum design and improvement;
- (iii) build relationships with all stakeholders that foster success, and
- (iv) commit to timely personal interaction (co-plan, [monitor progress, provide feedback](#), reflect and celebrate, etc.) with all learners.

Standard 10: Life-Long Professional Learning

The candidate perceives his/her own learning as a lifelong pursuit. The candidate will:

- (i) value and participate in professional learning communities and networks for ongoing growth in personalized learning;
- (ii) keep abreast of [innovative strategies and technologies](#) that hold potential to support personalized learning; and
- (iii) seek and create opportunities as a teacher leader, mentor, coach or content expert within the school, district or state to promote personalized learning.

GaPSC staff wish to extend sincere appreciation to members of the 2018 Rule 505-3-.108 Task Force, listed below, who contributed significant time and expertise to the development of this rule and the accompanying guidance document.

Traci Reddish	Public University representative
Diane Rice	P-12 representative
Tasia Ellis	P-12 representative
Monica Roberts	P-12 representative
Karen Cliett	Georgia Department of Education
Daniella McLean	P-12 representative
Patrick Wallace	Georgia Department of Education
Karen Perry	P-12 District
Meghann Farmer	P-12 representative
Stephane Stephens	Public University representative
Anissa Vega	Public University representative
Cat Flippen	P-12 representative
Jon Floresta	P-12 representative
Sarah Kimbrell	GaPSC Certification
Patti Crane	P-12 representative
Kimberly Richards	P-12 representative
Marissa Wesker	P-12 representative
Susanne Couey	P-12 representative
Sabrina Byrne	P-12 representative
Bobbi Ford,	GaPSC facilitator

References

Clarke, J. H., & Miles, S. (2003). *Changing systems to personalize learning*. Providence, T.I.: The Education Alliance.

Creating a Comprehensive Personalized Learning Strategy. (2014, May 1). *District Administration*.

Georgia's Path to Personalized Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved from

https://gosa.georgia.gov/sites/gosa.georgia.gov/files/related_files/document/DLTF_GA-Path-to-Personalized-Learning_2_11_13.pdf

Georgia Professional Standards Commission. (2018). 505-3.108 *Personalized Learning Endorsement Program*. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/Rules/Proposed/Download/20181031/505-3-108.pdf>

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd enl. ed. University of Chicago Press.

Jenkins, S., Williams, M., Moyer, J., George, M., & Foster, E. (2016) *The Shifting Paradigm of Teaching: Personalized Learning According to Teachers*. KnowledgeWorks. Retrieved from <http://www.knowledgeworks.org/sites/default/files/u1/teacher-conditions.pdf>

Mercadal, T. (2015). *Personalized Learning. Research Starters: Education*. Retrieved from

<https://login.proxy.kennesaw.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=108690542&site=eds-live&scope=site>

Personalized Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://bagwell.kennesaw.edu/personalizedlearning>

Rhode Island Office of Innovation, (2016). *Creating a Shared Vision in Rhode Island for Personalized Learning*. White paper retrieved

from <http://eduvateri.org/projects/personalized/personalizedlearningpaper/>

Stephens, S., & Lokey-Vega, A. (2018). P-12 Personalized Learning: A New Paradigm. *INTED2018 Proceedings*. doi:10.21125/inted.2018.0063

Sulla, N. (2017). *Building Executive Function: The Missing Link to Student Achievement*. Routledge: New York.

Zhao, Y. (2018). *Reach for greatness: Personalizable education for all children*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, a SAGE Publishing Company.

Zmuda, A., Ullman, D., & Curtis, G. (2015). *Learning personalized: The evolution of the contemporary classroom*. John Wiley & Sons.