



# Chapter 11


## Advancing Equity in Digital Classrooms: A Personalized Learning Framework for Higher Education Institutions

**Lakshmi Shankar Iyer**  
*Christ University, India*

**Vertika Verma**  
*Christ University, India*

**Sonika Bharadwaj**  
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2510-436X>  
*Christ University, India*

**Malmarugan Devanathan**  
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3210-0255>  
*Christ University, India*

**Shilpa H. Shetty**  
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0048-4645>  
*Christ University, India*

### ABSTRACT

*Since the introduction of technology-enabled education systems, personalizing the learning process has become more regarded as a promising methodology for revolutionizing the academe. Acknowledging the difference in the learning capability of students across various levels of the academic segment, a personalized learning approach is of paramount importance, especially when teachers cannot efficiently monitor each student (e.g., during emergency remote education). This chapter focused on the necessity for higher education institutions that offer courses from various streams to adopt a personalized learning initiative as a means of offering better online education services. For the successful creation of a personalized online learning experience, this chapter likewise developed a framework that provides a step-by-step guide to educational institutions in moving in this direction. As online education is a trend for future learning, this blueprint could be valuable as well in the post-pandemic era.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of attaining knowledge and know-how through study and guidance. It is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. Education not only provides better opportunities to an individual but also contributes to nation-building as education improves the ability of a person to demarcate between good and evil (Bereketeab, 2020; Garcia, 2017). Education, especially higher education is no longer something about sticking to books to secure good marks. It means entering the dark world of the unknown to discover and explore things, to enhance our knowledge and skills.

Learning has always been and will always remain to be a fluid activity. Each student has a unique way of learning and own pace of learning. This idea forms the basis for the evolution of personalized learning. In personalized learning, each student is provided with a tailor-made learning path that suits his/her specific needs and interests. So, each student gets a learning plan based on an analysis of how they learn, what they know, and what their skills and interests are. It is just the opposite of the traditional approach which follows “*one size fits all*”. In this methodology students and their teachers work as a team to set both short-term and long-term learning goals for themselves. This process enables each student to take ownership of his/her learning. Personalizing education by adapting learning opportunities and teaching to meet the needs of individual students has always been the aim of educators (Holmes et al., 2018; Magoulas & Chen, 2006; Meeuwse & Mason, 2018). Personalization of the learning process often includes the following tenets:

- Learning is competency-based, with students moving on once they have demonstrated mastery of a concept.
- Learning is flexible and is not restricted to traditional schooling structures or timetables.
- Students are encouraged to demonstrate agency and to take a level of ownership over their learning journey.
- Students’ interests, strengths, and passions are incorporated into their learning.

Every teacher would agree that in a class there are students who are quick learners, slow learners, and students who lack interest in learning (Altun, 2019; Varghese & Aneesa, 2021; Yusoff et al., 2017). This disparity is due to the wide range of factors such as needs, skills, abilities, and interests among students. Besides, there are different types of learning styles like verbal, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, logical, social, and solitary. Different students find different types or combinations of different types of learning styles useful. This calls for the use of personalized learning strategies in education. personalized learning aims at customizing the students’ learning experience by focussing on each student’s needs, skills, abilities, and interests (Shemshack & Spector, 2020). There is scope for personalization in curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and feedback. One-on-one tutoring, coaching, mentoring, experiential learning, and technology-assisted learning are some of the forms of personalized learning. A personalized learning environment significantly improves the student’s learning.

A personalized learning Environment (PLE) is a system that enables users to manage all their learning activities (Lockyer et al., 2009). Under this system, the learners take control of their learning by setting their own goals, deciding the process, managing the content, communicating with communities to create and share materials, and so on. Learners differ in their characteristics. Designing an effective personalized learning environment requires an understanding of the learners and their characteristics.

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