

Self-Advocacy Skills and Self-Determination in Personalized Learning

Key Considerations from the Research

DEFINING KEY TERMS



Self-advocacy skills—including understanding yourself, your rights, and needs and communicating that understanding—leads to self-determination.



Self-determination is a dispositional characteristic that enables a person to act in service of freely chosen goals and make or cause things to happen in their own life.



Personalized Learning is a process where students' learning experiences are tailored to their individual needs, skills, and interests, and enable them to take ownership of their learning.

Students with disabilities who are more self-determined have:

- Stronger employment outcomes;
- Independent living outcomes; and
- Are more likely to be included in different aspects of community life.

(Source: Wehmeyer and Abery, 2013)

“Despite this knowledge, all available evidence suggests that efforts to promote self-determination remain fringe activities, occurring only when a dedicated educator or administrator decides to elevate such efforts to the forefront.”

– Mike Wehmeyer

Self-advocacy skills and self-determination – including skills like those demonstrated here – are essential for the success of students with disabilities in personalized learning systems:

Cognitive Domain
(Reasoning and Memory)



Intrapersonal Domain
(Managing Your Behavior and Emotions to Achieve Goals)



Interpersonal Domain
(Communicating, Collaborating, and Responding to Messages)



3 ACTIONS TO ADVANCE SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN PERSONALIZED LEARNING SYSTEMS

ACTION 1:

Make self-advocacy skills and self-determination critical priorities in personalized learning systems. We must communicate and demonstrate which skills are valuable in our education system by prioritizing them throughout, such as incorporating them into teacher preparation and assessments of learning.

ACTION 2:

Ensure that personalized learning opportunities are designed to maximize engagement of all students, regardless of disability status. Learning choices should be accessible for all, with a recognition that individuals' strengths and needs differ widely.

ACTION 3:

Provide students tangible opportunities and experiences to practice self-advocacy skills and self-determination in personalized learning. Students should be taught and encouraged to empower themselves, by understanding their needs and their rights, communicating them, solving problems and setting goals.