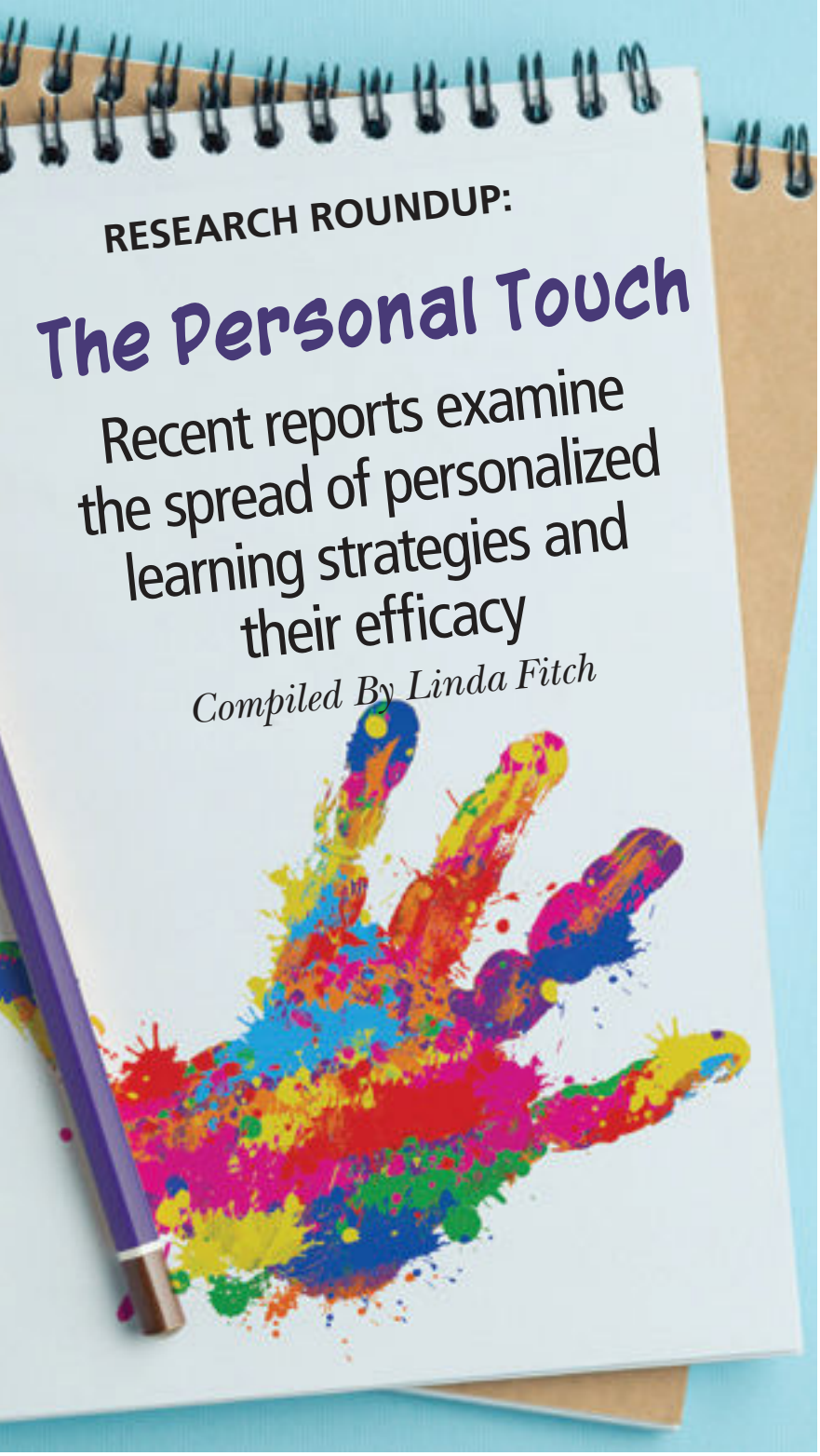

RESEARCH ROUNDUP:

The Personal Touch

Recent reports examine the spread of personalized learning strategies and their efficacy

Compiled By Linda Fitch

Personalized learning is a strategy that offers flexibility in the curriculum and addresses student variability by helping each learn in the most effective manner possible. Variability exists among program implementations, too, however, so while personalized learning is taking root in schools throughout the United States, what it looks like often differs from school to school.

Check out the following resources for more information on personalized learning in theory, practice, and implementation. They can help inform you and your staff as you seek ways to bring the pedagogy into your schools.

Educational Technology

Drawing on interviews with leaders in personalized learning and a survey of relevant research, "Using Technology to Personalize Learning in K–12 Schools" is designed to help educators, leaders, policymakers, developers, and researchers become informed consumers and designers of technology-enabled personalized learning tools.

SRI Education (2018). Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2X9JDSW**

"Student-Centered Learning: Functional Requirements for Integrated Systems to Optimize Learning" examines how technology can be used by students and educators to support personalized, student-owned, and collaborative learning, focusing on a framework that addresses the needs of learners, educators, parents/families, administrators, and other stakeholders.

Liz Glowa and Jim Goodell (2016). International Association for K–12 Online Learning. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2KMFkv5**

Middle Schools

"Advancing a Shared Understanding of Personalized Learning: Insights From Eight Middle School Classrooms in Rhode Island" says that implementation of diverse learning often plays out differently in different contexts. Teachers must tailor classroom experiences to address diverse learning preferences and needs, as well as the specific interests of individual learners.

Julie Coiro, Wendy Espinoza Cotta, Terry Deeney, Jay Fogleman, and Annice Correia Gabel (2018). Rhode Island Education Innovation Research Network (RI-EIRN). Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2W8Ic6Z**

Many reforms to expand personalized learning are practices that long have been recommended by advocates of middle-grades philosophy, says "An Instrument to Measure Teacher Practices to Support Personalized Learning in the Middle Grades." Surveying almost 400 teachers, the article explores practices for personalized assessment, out-of-school learning, whole-group learning, and technology implementation.

Mark W. Olofson, John M. Downes, Carmen Petrick Smith, Life LeGeros, and Penny A. Bishop (2018). RMLE Online: Research in Middle Level Education. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2WtKkeI**

Program Evaluation

"Personalized Learning and the Digital Privatization of Curriculum and Teaching" examines the promise and limitations of personalized learning by reviewing its history, identifying its key assumptions, and assessing the roles and possible impacts of digital deployments to help policymakers craft guidelines for initiatives and help educators evaluate products.

Faith Boninger, Alex Molnar, and Christopher M. Saldaña (2019). University of Colorado Boulder, National Education Policy Center. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2WI7KMn**

How can school officials know that they're investing in a personalized learning plan that truly departs from the norm and isn't just an overhyped version of what they're doing now? An online summit and "Pathways to Personalized Learning: Online Summit Takeaways" discuss what questions district leaders and educators need to know.

Michelle R. Davis and Michele Eaton (2018). *Education Week*. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2IhdHXp**

Program Implementation

Although the transition toward personalized learning has been documented in numerous case studies and narratives, the field lacks a broad-based understanding of how it is emerging in classrooms across the United States. "A National Landscape Scan of Personalized Learning in K–12 Education in the United States" summarizes what teacher and student surveys reveal about how personalized learning is—and isn't—taking hold.

Betheny Gross, Sivan Tuchman, and Susan Patrick (2018). International Association for K–12 Online Learning. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2WlQkpu**

In 2012, the 3,900-student Galt (California) Joint Union Elementary School District was awarded a $10 million federal Race to the Top-District (RTT-D) grant to implement personalized learning for students and educators through the districtwide "Bright Future" initiative. In only three years, "Journey to Personalized Learning" says, the district made profound changes to district, school, and out-of-school policies and practices to support every K–8 learner's strengths and needs.

Betsy McCarthy and Karen Schauer (2017). WestEd. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2ETsUNL**

"Observations and Guidance on Implementing Personalized Learning" says that although personalized learning focuses on supporting the learning needs of each student flexibly, no program looks as different from a traditional school as theory might predict. However, students have experienced positive achievement effects and closed gaps relative to national norms.

RAND Corp., funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2017). Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2KmmgD8**

Underserved Students

English-language learners (ELs) underperform in reading compared to other students, and "Efficacy of a Blended Learning Approach to Elementary School Reading Instruction for Students Who Are English Learners" says a personalized, adaptive blended learning approach can support reading development in ELs and non-ELs simultaneously. Studying hundreds of students, the approach produced notable reductions of those at risk for reading failure.

Elizabeth R. Kazakoff, Paul Macaruso, and Pam Hook (2018). Educational Technology Research and Development. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2XpteL6**

Amid growing concerns that personalized learning may not meet the needs of students from historically underserved groups, "Equity and Personalized Learning: A Research Review" looks at the existing literature on how to deliver personalized learning with equity. Focusing on five groups of historically underserved students, the report illuminates common barriers to successful implementation, educational practices that improve student achievement, and policies that may improve personalized learning.

Rashawn Ray, Lynne Sacks, and Janet S. Twyman (2017). Council of Chief State School Officers. Read the full report here: **bit.ly/2WeBjkm**

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