Needs Assessment

MEDT 8462 Learning and Managing Technology Programs

Summer 2019

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Hernández – Needs Assessment Report

This Needs Assessment Report is organized in five (5) parts, as outlined below:

- Setting
- Purpose
- Data Gathering
- Analysis of Findings
- Recommended Next Steps

Setting

The setting of this needs assessment is Ridgeview Charter Middle School in Atlanta, GA. I, Leyda Hernández, teach at this school. I have 7 hears of seniority at Ridgeview Charter School, and started teaching in the district in 2006. This school is part of the Central Cluster of Fulton County Schools in the Metro Atlanta area. It is a charter school and its charter is the International Baccalaureate program for middle years (MYP). Currently the school is upwards of 1400 students with a 52% population of free or reduced lunch students, it is a Title 1 school. The current teacher to student ratio is 17:1. The ethnicity of students breakdowns as follows: Asian – 2.5 %, Black - 16.5 %, Hispanic - 48 %, White – 30.8 % and Bi-racial - 2.2 %. This information was gathered directly from current administrative staff and the National Center for Educational Statistics. This school has a 1:1 iPad student ratio, whose implement-tation began 4 years ago. Stakeholders in the school: 88 teachers, 9 para-profes-sionals and 26 non-teaching staff members.

Current Technology: Every classroom is equipped with a Smartboard® projector. Students and teachers are all in a 1:1 iPad environment with the latest Apple operating system. This

was started in 2014. Classroom teachers also have a Dell computer, which has a Microsoft® operating system: Windows 10®. Students have Access to their iPads 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The school adopted Google Classroom® as the school wide LMS (learning management system) for the past two (2) school years and this will continue for the foreseeable future. Teachers supplement the Google Classroom® site with their original work, textbook ancillaries as well as Youtube® videos, and many other commercial applications such as Duolingo®, Kahoot®, Quizziz®, Powtoon®and various websites set up on our county's on Safari Montage®.

Purpose

The purpose of this needs assessment is to further identify and define the needs of the school in progressing along the four areas of focus identified in a prior needs assessment, generally, and specifically in areas 1 and 2. These four (4) areas are:

- Focus 1: IB Middle Years Program
- Focus 2: Personalized Learning
- Focus 3: Approaches to Learning through AVID
- Focus 4: Intervention & Support (RTI, PBIS, ESOL, SEC)

Data Gathering

A prior needs assessment from last year was consulted to determine the direction of this needs assessment. While the four (4) areas of focus are all important for our school's success, teachers overwhelmingly identified Focus 1 – IB Middle Years Program and Focus 2 – Personalized

Learning as the top two areas for forth coming concentration. New data was gathered via surveys and interviews specifically on these two areas and generally on the other two areas of focus.

Analysis of Findings

In reviewing and identifying needs of implementing personalized learning, the data illustrated that in these two areas of focus, teacher training was needed to begin or continue to implement MYP® and Personalized Learning. Our school has a MYP dedicated staff person whose sole obligation is to the school's implementation of MYP. There is also one person dedicated to AVID and another person that spearheads the PBIS endeavor. Along with these identified personnel, dedicated resources are earmarked for these endeavors and have the responsibility for carrying out these tasks. I forwarded the data collected to the appropriate person for their review and I concentrated my efforts in digging into the data on personalized learning.

Previous management data revealed that our school focused on training and implementing two approaches for personalized learning; varied strategies and choice for demonstrating learning, while encouraging teachers to try any of the seven (7) areas of personalized learning as defined by our district. Our school's goal is for personalized learning to be implemented 4 to 5 times per week in each teacher's lesson plans.

The data gathered demonstrated that 18.3% of responding teachers use personalized learning with one of the two focused areas at least 4 – 5x per week. These teachers are meeting the school's goal. By contrast, 51.3% responding teachers did not use personalized learning at all or only used it 1-2 times per week. Further data revealed 46.2% of responding teachers are using choice

for demonstrating learning only 1-2 times per month and only 26.3% are using varied strategies for learning only 1-2 times per month.

The data is clear! There is a large deficiency in teachers using the personalized learning strategies per the goals of the school (81.7%). The overall view of the data shows in rough estimates that 1 (46.2%) in 2 teachers responding did not use personalized learning or used it only once per month. In contrast, only 1 (18.3%) in 5 teachers responding used at least one strategy of personalized learning 4-5 times per week (the school's goal). The use of personalized learning in lesson plans 4 – 5 times per week is the goal administration has set for our school. The school is falling short of this goal by a gap of 81.7%.

There were several reasons given for not using the strategies as set forth by administration. The theme emerging from the data is that teachers don't know how to apply it to their content, have not been trained on personalized learning, or do not have time in their day to keep up with all the school initiatives and meetings to spend time in researching and including personalized learning in their rigorous lesson plans. Other observations include stating the training on this has been "broad- brush", "umbrella", or "big picture"; focused on <u>what</u> personalized learning is (defining), without practical application on <u>how</u> to incorporate (implementing) personalized learning in specific content, with applied examples.

Needs	Causes	Consequences	Difficulty to Correct (low, medium, high)
Initial training in personalized learning	● Teachers who missed the training when initially offered or ● Newly hired teachers	None Implementation of the (PL) method as defined by the administration/district	Low

Applied training in personalized learning strategies and examples of teaching by content	● Has been identified as a need in current needs assessment survey	Implementation of PL in classroom are hap hazard or none existent	Med
Practice PL planning in content, during daily planning time to become proficient in including PL 4-5 x week in teacher plans.	● Teachers'planning time is absorbed by adminis-trative meetings (staff, grade level, content, PLC, and inter-disciplinary) ● new initiatives meetings, ● district required meetings ● and teacher/parent conferences,	Implementation of PL in classroom are hap hazard or none existent	High

Next Steps

The next steps are broken down into three areas: instructional, administrative, and operational. The instructional step in this needs assessment is to share with administration the findings of this needs assessment specifically in the area of personalized learning to show the tremendous gap between the goal of using this teaching style 4-5 times a week in each classroom and the reality of only 18.3% of teachers actually meeting this goal consistently. Further, teachers, staff and administration need discuss and deliberate on the reasons why the gap exists. Then, administration has to lend support in two areas; teacher hands on, workshop style training in implementing personalized learning in content, and curtail the use of teachers' planning time for meetings. Once, these steps have been completed and the majority of these stakeholders are onboard, the operational portion of this assessment is established. A committee of teachers, staff and administration is established to find in-house and external sources that can best provide this

specific training/workshop. Funding needs to be outlined. This group will also have to negotiate how this training is to be implemented. Some of the questions the group must answer are:

Does the district already have this type of training available? If so, how is the training executed? How much time does it require?

Does something off the shelf meet our needs? Or do we need to develop something specific?

Can this training – whatever it is, be completed in one session? or are multiple sessions needed?

Do the personal development days allotted in the school calendar available for this training?

Could our school benefit from a core group of teachers doing a "train-the-trainer" sessions and being available to complete the training ourselves?

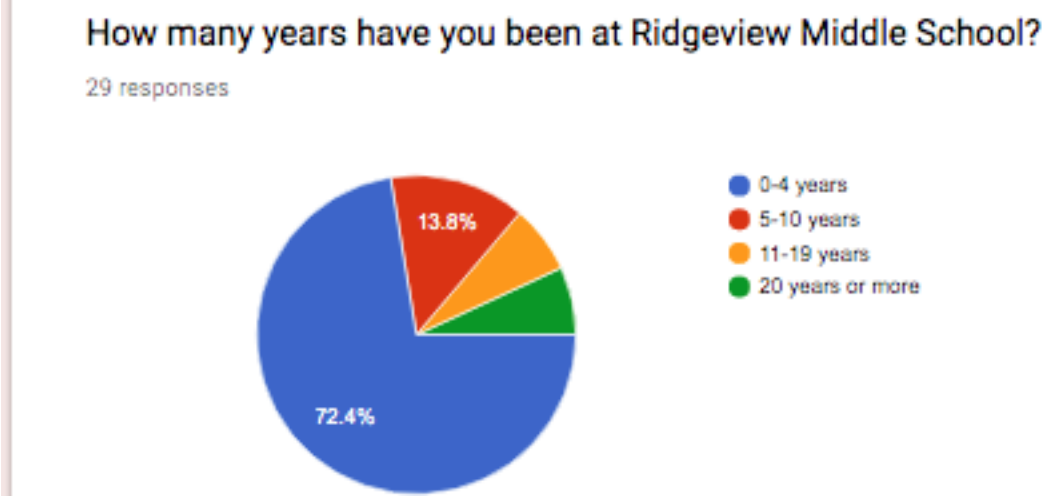
What is the actual funding needed for this?

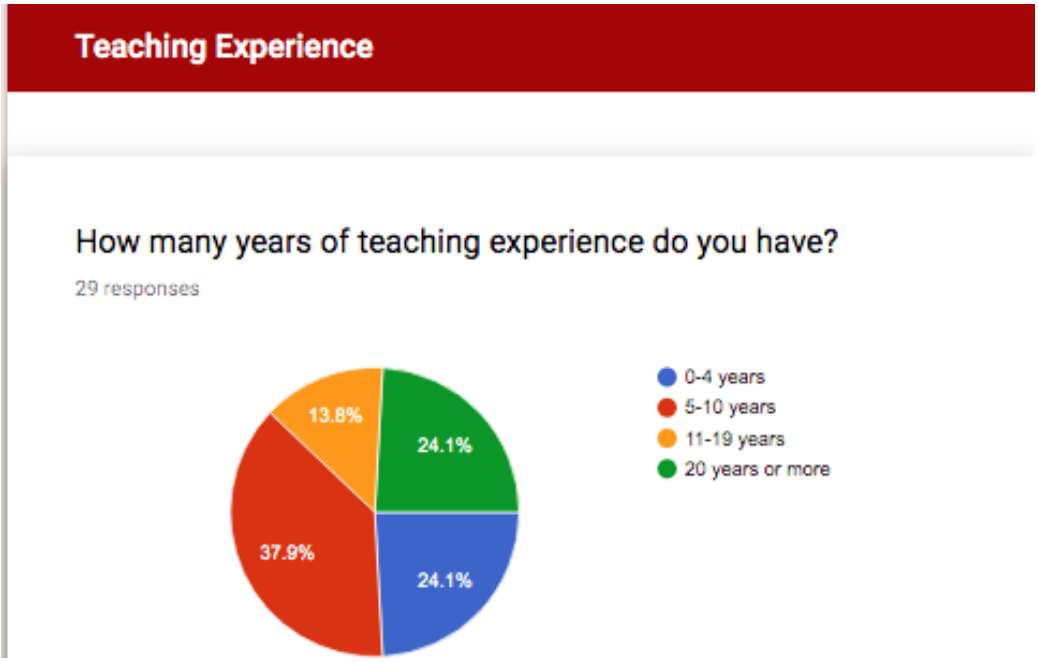
Is there money in the budget to complete this training? If not, where can funding be obtained?

Once these questions are answered and this committee finds the right training for our school, any teacher who has not received the initial training on personalized learning, must complete it during the pre-planning days before the 2019-2020 school year.

Appendix

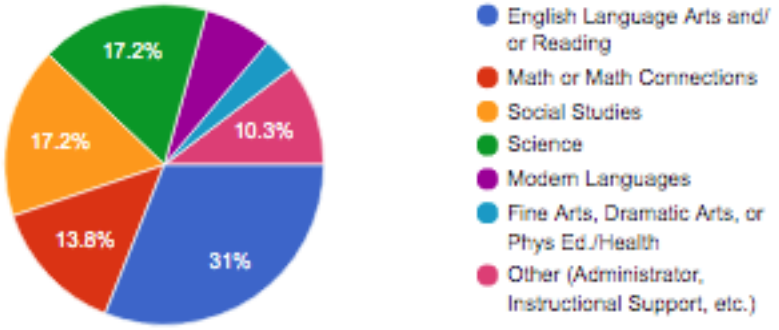
Survey Results





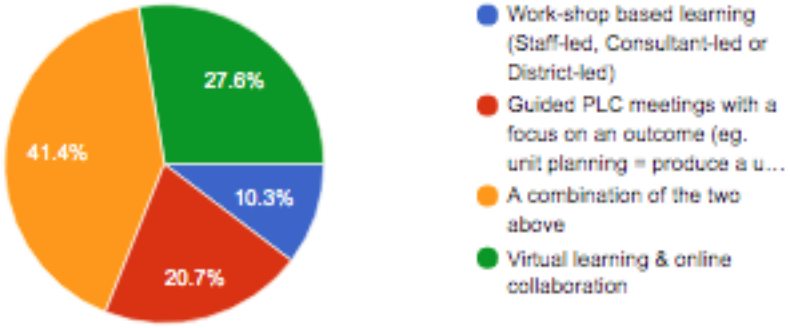
Which content area do you teach? (this year)

29 responses



Which PL delivery format do you prefer?

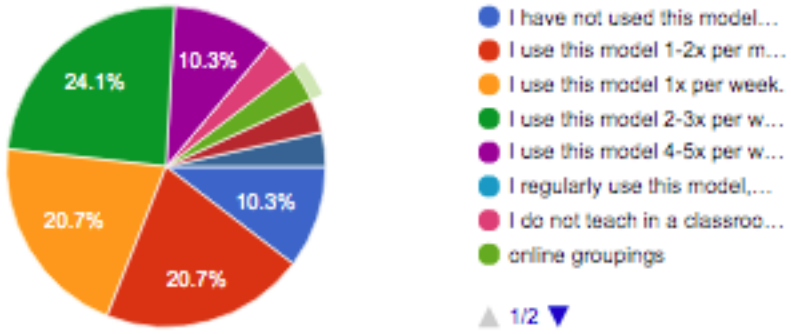
29 responses



Focus 2: Personalized Learning

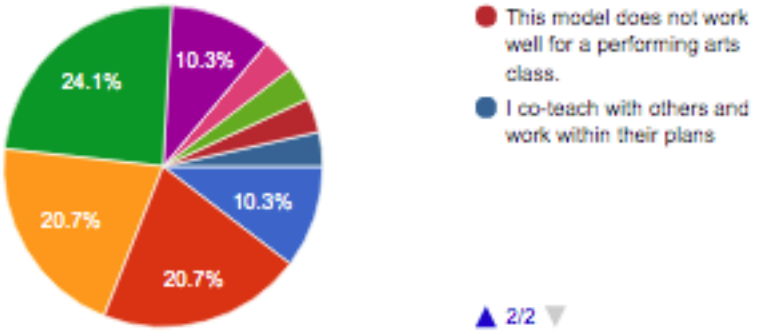
Please indicate how often you use the "introductory personalized model" (or one similar to it.)

29 responses



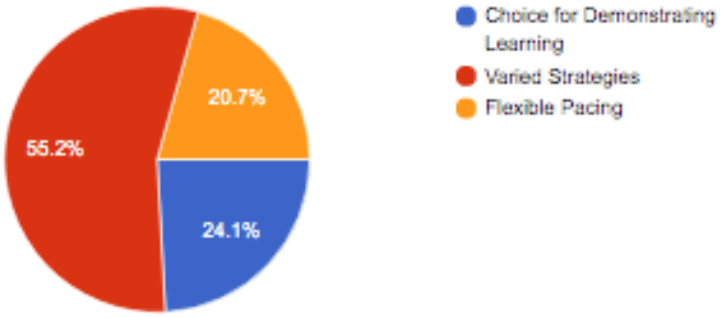
Please indicate how often you use the "introductory personalized model" (or one similar to it.)

29 responses



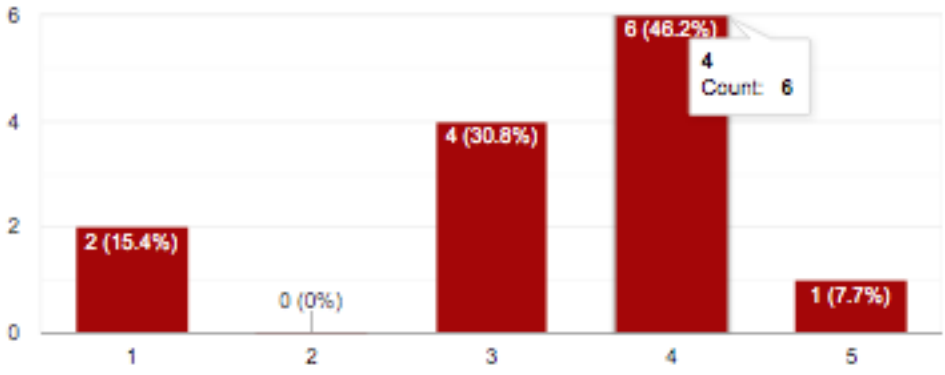
Which principle of personalized learning will be a primary area of focus for you this year? (Identify your first PL professional goal)

29 responses



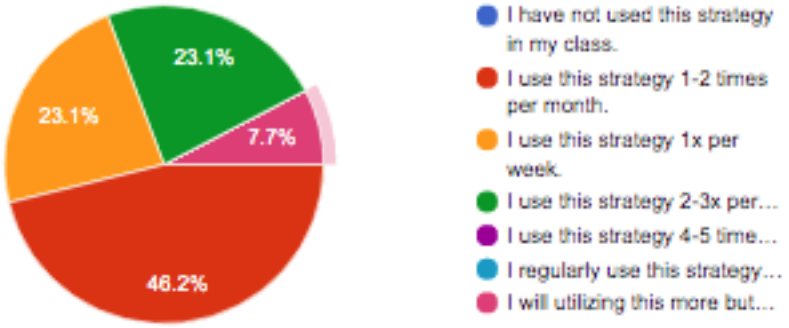
Rate your current skill level in using Choice for Demonstrating Learning.

13 responses



Please indicate how often you use "Choice for Demonstrating Learning" in your classroom.

13 responses



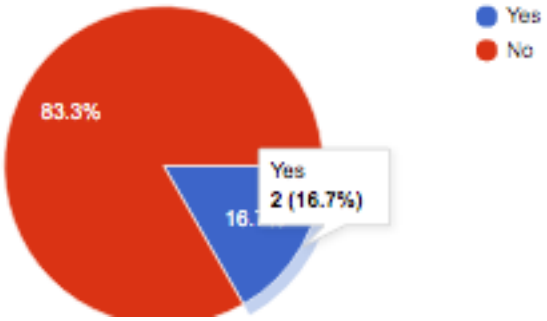
What type of instructional support/PD do you need to implement "Choice for Demonstrating Learning" in your classroom?

6 responses

Would like to have PD suggestions and exemplars of instruction and template for explaining expectations.
More examples of grading and implementing
IDK
More examples
Nothing...it's pretty self explanatory
financial

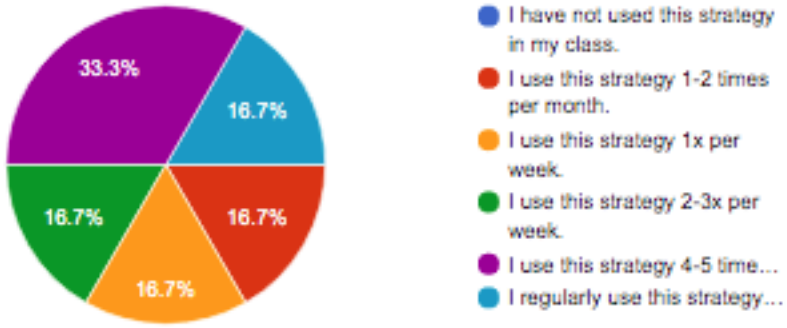
Do you have an additional personalized learning goal?

12 responses



Please indicate how often you use "flexible pacing" in your classroom.

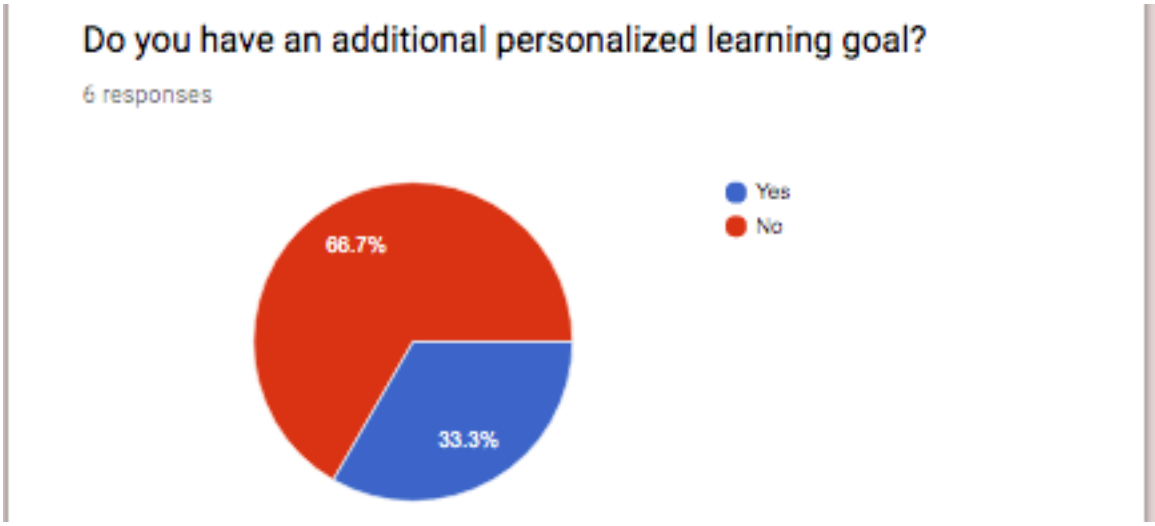
6 responses



What type of instructional support/PD do you need to implement "flexible pacing" in your classroom.

3 responses

none
N/A
How exactly should "flexible pacing" look like in the classroom?

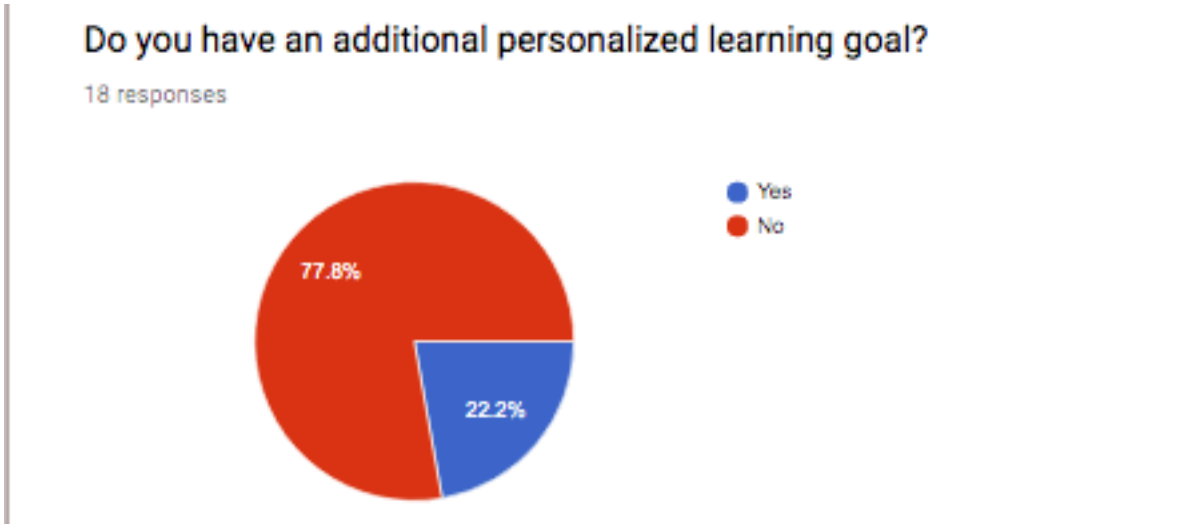

Do you have an additional personalized learning goal?
6 responses
66.7%
33.3%
Yes
No

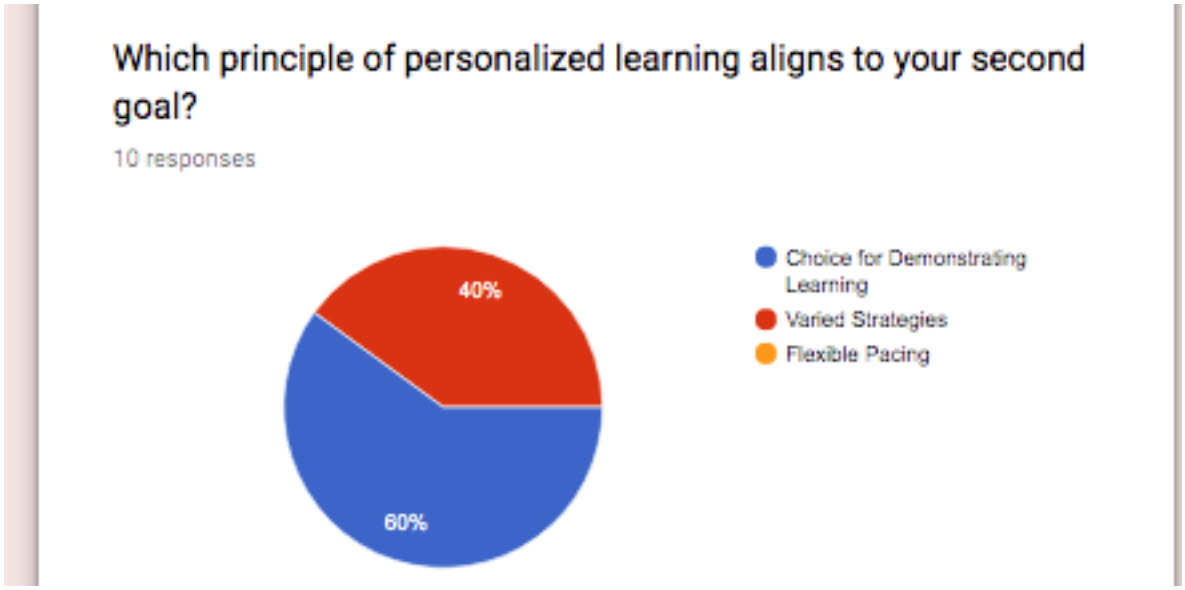

Please indicate how often you use "varied strategies" in your classroom.
19 responses
10.5%
15.8%
47.4%
10.5%
I have not used this strategy in my class.
I use this strategy 1-2 times per month.
I use this strategy 1x per week.
I use this strategy 2-3x per...
I use this strategy 4-5 time...
I regularly use this strategy...
admin

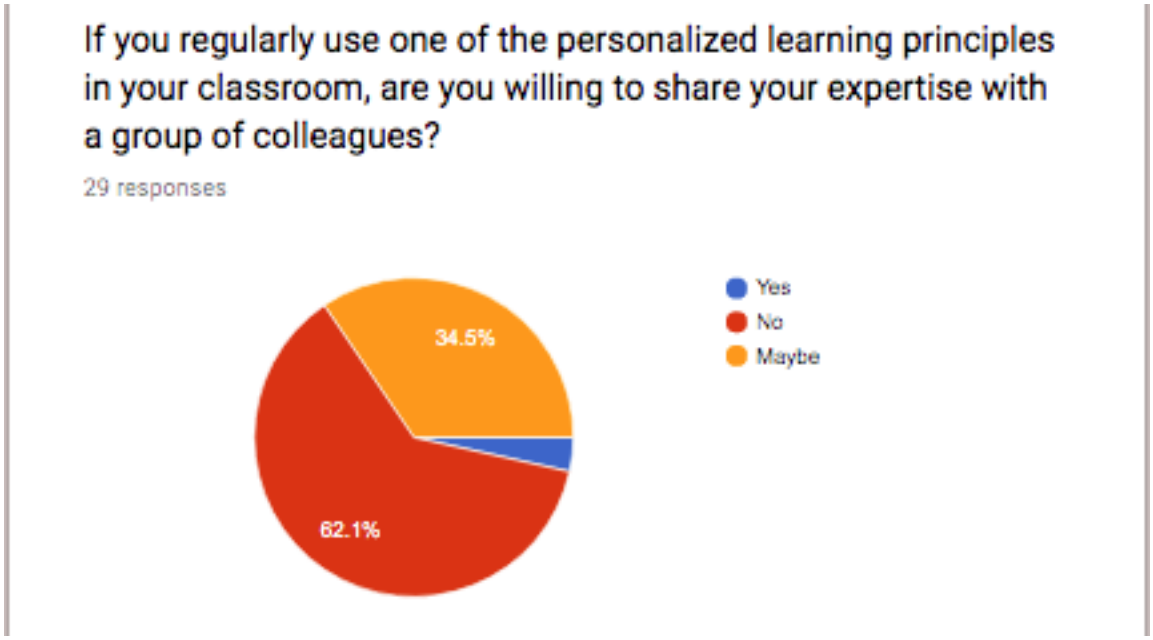
What type of instructional support/PD do you need to implement "varied strategies" in your classroom?

19 responses

none
Models/examples
AVID strategies have been important to my success.
technology
I would like advanced training
x
I feel like varied strategies is what every well trained teacher automatically does.
Examples of varied strategies outside of stations
None
More collaboration with performing arts teachers.
More examples
Just like more information on types of strategies to use.
AVID training
time given to plan, reflect and create fun, rigorous, engaging lessons with varied strategies
I always like hearing about new tools
I would like to look at the standards and find unique and engaging strategies/activties to teach the standards.
Varied Strategies for Special Ed students
financial


Do you have an additional personalized learning goal?
18 responses
77.8%
22.2%
Yes
No


Which principle of personalized learning aligns to your second goal?
10 responses
40%
60%
Choice for Demonstrating Learning
Varied Strategies
Flexible Pacing


If you regularly use one of the personalized learning principles in your classroom, are you willing to share your expertise with a group of colleagues?
29 responses
34.5%
62.1%
Yes
No
Maybe

References

Levin, B. B., & Schrum, L. (2012). Leading technology-rich schools: Award-winning models for success. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

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