

Using Data to Enhance Blended Learning



Introduction

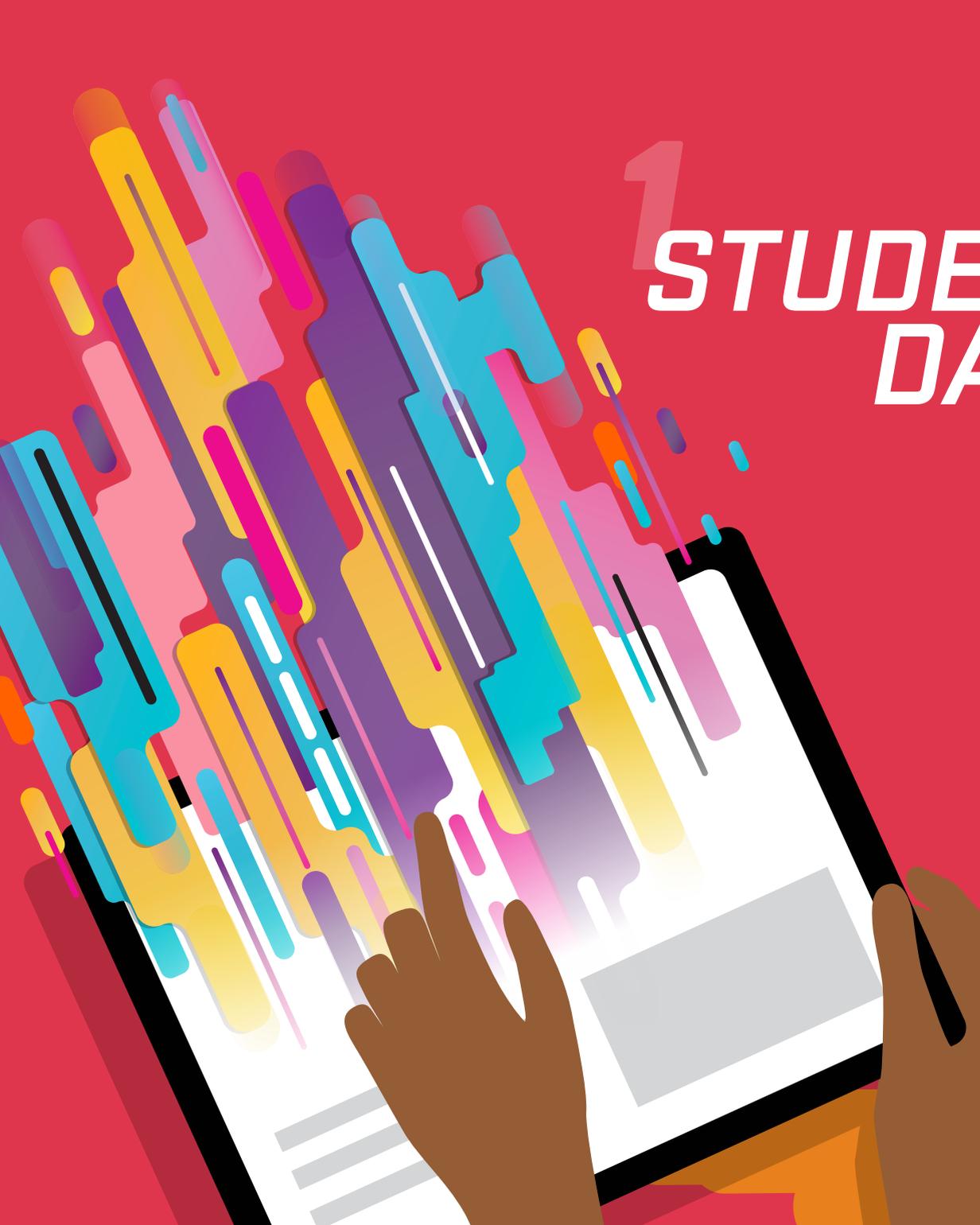
As an administrator, using data to inform instruction is key to implementing personalized blended learning in your school. Data enables teachers to personalize instruction and unlock the potential of blended learning, because it gives them comprehensive, immediate knowledge about each individual student. **That's the true foundation of blended learning: empowering teachers to offer personalized instruction through technology and data.**

It's often assumed that technology in the classroom is all you need – and boom, you've got blended learning! But this misconception overlooks the two most important aspects of blended learning: relevant data, and effective data-based tools to help teachers deliver customized instruction.

Blended learning empowers students as well as teachers. With customized blended learning, students benefit from individualized lessons, targeted instruction, and adaptable assessment. And when teachers have the data-based support of a strong blended learning program, they have more control over how they use their valuable time, energy, and resources.

However, not all blended learning platforms are capable of delivering the quality resources and valuable insights your school requires. **Here are four crucial things to consider carefully when you're choosing a blended learning program:**





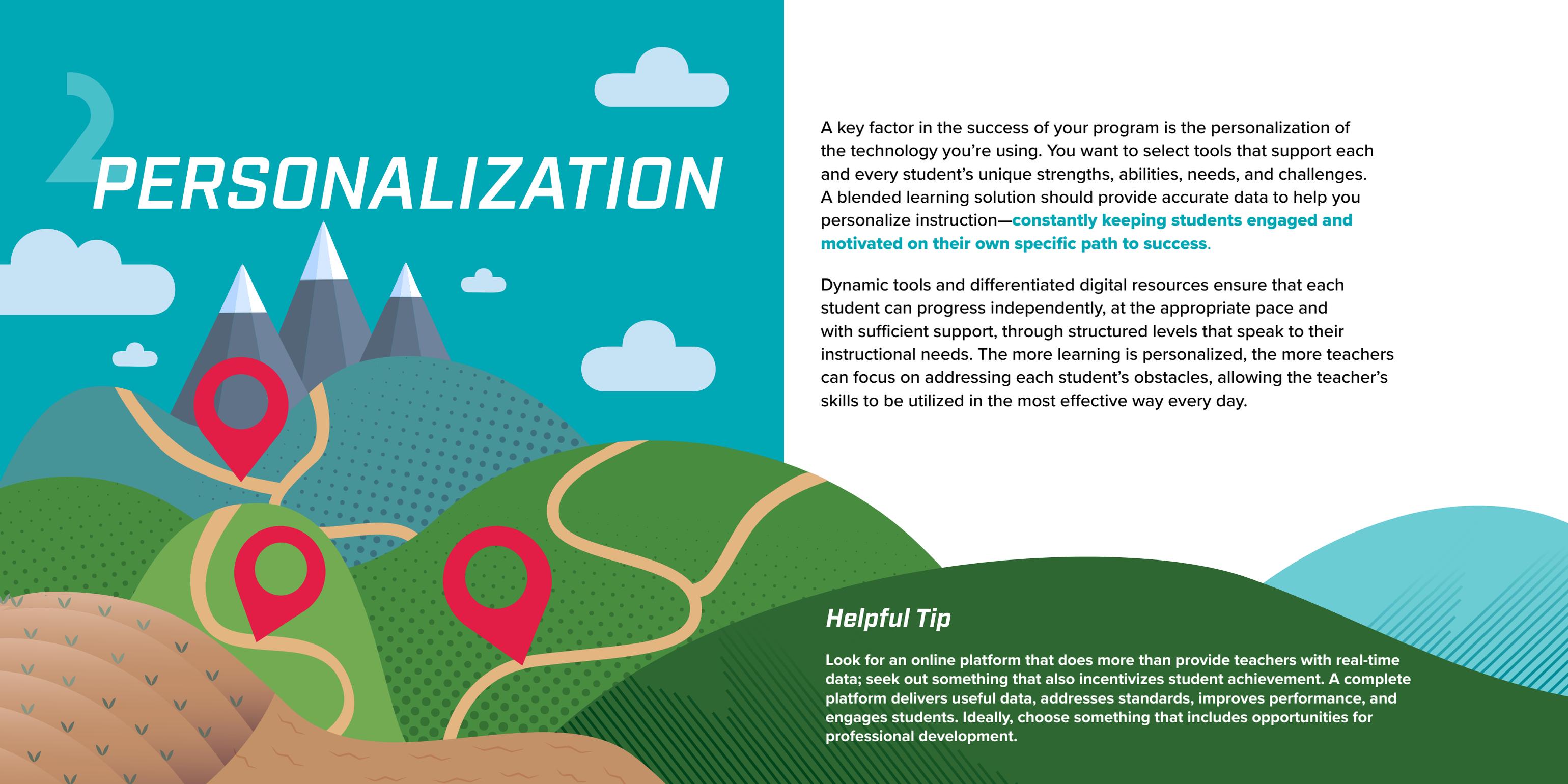
1 STUDENT DATA

Digital tools are essential to blended learning, but not all of these tools actually capture data. Make sure you're choosing programs and platforms that capture relevant data throughout usage, recording student challenges and progress in an analyzable way. **Without accurate, detailed data about each student's journey, a blended approach can't achieve its most basic goal: helping each student progress through levels of skill.**

With the right advanced tools and technology, teachers can monitor each student's experience in real time, observing their progress in each skill and viewing completion rates for tasks and assessments. When students have difficulty, teachers know who needs one-on-one support or small-group instruction. The teacher's time is used efficiently, focused on each student's specific needs.

Helpful Tip

Free online apps may expose students to certain concepts and skills, but they lack the important capabilities required to record and report data back to teachers and parents. Failing to capture data means these free apps miss the whole point of the blended approach: a personalized learning experience. Student learning isn't differentiated, teachers can't monitor progress, and work done at home isn't tracked. Ultimately, free apps like these end up requiring more time and work from teachers, who have to gather and analyze data on their own.



2 PERSONALIZATION

A key factor in the success of your program is the personalization of the technology you're using. You want to select tools that support each and every student's unique strengths, abilities, needs, and challenges. A blended learning solution should provide accurate data to help you personalize instruction—**constantly keeping students engaged and motivated on their own specific path to success.**

Dynamic tools and differentiated digital resources ensure that each student can progress independently, at the appropriate pace and with sufficient support, through structured levels that speak to their instructional needs. The more learning is personalized, the more teachers can focus on addressing each student's obstacles, allowing the teacher's skills to be utilized in the most effective way every day.

Helpful Tip

Look for an online platform that does more than provide teachers with real-time data; seek out something that also incentivizes student achievement. A complete platform delivers useful data, addresses standards, improves performance, and engages students. Ideally, choose something that includes opportunities for professional development.

3 TEACHER SUPPORT



Strong tools make a teacher's work easier and better, not more difficult or time-consuming. The right kind of technology in a blended learning classroom provides informative data that helps teachers identify and plan the next steps to take for each and every student.

Effective tools help teachers access granular information about each student's progress and performance in real time, while also analyzing data and transforming results into appropriate strategies for individuals and classrooms. Such tools can dramatically improve a teacher's effectiveness, supporting the implementation of assessment-based recommendations, and resulting in personalized learning.

Helpful Tip

Because blended learning is all about meeting each student at the ideal learning level, a teacher's job could become overwhelmingly complex. But individualized learning technology should use data to identify areas of weakness and mastery for each student and direct the teacher accordingly, actually saving teaching time and resources that teachers can then direct toward catering to each student's needs.

4 GREAT RESOURCES



Strong instructional resources allow a blended learning program to remain flexible, empowering each student to progress along their own path. Data enables teachers to more effectively plan lessons, organize activities, and build a targeted curriculum; but without superb resources organized to correspond with that data, the burden is on teachers to choose the best materials to address each student's unique struggles.

Carefully designed, data-based, differentiated instructional resources are absolutely essential to effectively implementing blended learning.

The key is choosing a technology-based program that connects data to resources and provides customized strategies for personalized instruction, saving the teacher time and energy every single day.

Teachers become more effective when their energies and talents can be focused where they're needed most. Technologies that support blended learning share progress data to help teachers assess each student's needs, helping guide the teacher to apply an ideal customized instructional plan for every individual. Personalized lessons, both face-to-face and online, combined with one-on-one or whole-class support improve overall student performance.

Helpful Tip

Be sure to choose a program that goes beyond just telling the teacher which students need additional assistance or specialized support. Look for a program that helps teachers understand every detail about the process of providing that support by offering a learning path that customizes to each student's progress, with differentiated resources to suit every learning level.

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