

Introduction to SAL

Sequence Adapted Learning (SAL) is a method of ensuring that students follow the school's defined scope and sequence of curricula while addressing the widely variable capabilities of each student.

SAL ensures that all students learn **sequentially**, never putting the 'cart before the horse.' SAL also adapts to the student's individual needs through assessment and placement to address learning gaps. SAL **adapts** to the student, so that the student can achieve greater success by learning sequentially.

SAL is Unique

SAL differs from personalized learning in that the student follows the scope and sequence that is the hallmark of the school itself, there are no student-directed education choices. SAL also differs from personalized learning in that there is no focus on differing learning styles. Students are expected to learn the material as developed and identified by the school. However, SAL does address learning gaps at its core, so in this understanding of personalized education, SAL is indeed personalized and adapts to the student's individual needs.

Sequential learning requires a mastery approach in the core competencies required to continue up the education ladder. Fundamentals are advanced according to the school's sequence of learning. However, SAL does not tie competencies strictly to grade level, so students may progress in grade levels but still progress logically through the sequence of competency. SAL establishes periodic gates in a student's academic development where core competencies must be evidenced in order to proceed to more challenging courses.

Regarding project-based learning, SAL really does not address this concept, but does not preclude it. Further, SAL does not address Social-Emotional Learning, except in its outstanding ability to achieve excellent academic outcomes, which produces happier, less anxious, and more confident students without the therapy training. When students are more successful at school, there is less emotional pressure on the classroom.

Readiness

SAL address the main challenge to getting all students to achieve, their course readiness rather than their differing learning styles. Grade Level is basically a student's age, and so in traditional education approach, students are assigned material mostly based on how old they are, not how ready they are for that material. SAL treats readiness as the primary driver of successful achievement outcomes.

Consider a group of high school freshmen planning to take Algebra 1. If a school gives an Algebra readiness exam, experiences teachers would not be surprised to find a small set of students who are actually ready to take Algebra, many students who are almost ready, and most others would not have a basic understanding of arithmetic. After just the first week of school, it is sad that it is

no mystery to the Algebra teacher which students will likely fail the class.

No student is bad at math, but most students are not ready for the math class they are taking. SAL does not assign courses to students who do not have the fundamentals to be successful in those courses. This principle is obvious, but given that we have a system of education that requires transcripts, units, credits, grades, certifications, standards and more, it can be quite complex to achieve in practice.

Rate and Dedication

Some students are more dedicated than other students, some put in the time into their studies, others less so. If a student is ready for the course, it is the time that a student puts into a course that drives the outcome more than any other factor. SAL considers that the first driver of outcome is readiness, but that the second driver is dedication.

Differing course dedication introduces the problem of variable time to complete the course. If a student is not putting in the time, the student will not get to the competency level needed for the next course in the same amount of time as the diligent student. For this reason, for mastery based learning system to be implemented, it must be flexible in the time allotted to a student to complete the work required. Of course, this quickly becomes an administrative nightmare when considering how to create a student transcript.

Additionally, many students have complex medical issues which reduce the total amount of time they can spend on a course. These students not only face the challenge of their medical problems, they also get penalized academically. While SAL does not directly address the proposed issue of learning styles, there certainly are those students who are always going to require more time to complete their work on account of a wide set of diagnosed learning challenges.

If all students are required to complete the same course in the same amount of time, the whole purpose of mastery-based learning is defeated for those students who did not complete the course in the time allotted.

SAL Embraces Computer-Based Learning

There is no practical way to ensure readiness, gap learning, and rate flexibility without computer-based learning. Traditional classroom-based teaching can in no way adapt to the highly-varied readiness of incoming students, nor provide flexibility in the rate of completion of the learning material. SAL effectively uses computer based learning for assessment, placement, individualized gap learning and completion rate flexibility.

However computer-based learning does not mean that all students are remote. Just like a modern office settings, school can establish learning centers, like a 'school-office' where students gather to learn valuable social interactions and get as-needed help from teachers and teaching paraprofessionals.



Revision #5

Created 6 July 2024 13:16:43 by Victoria

Updated 7 July 2024 09:50:40 by Victoria