



### **Students at the Center Alignment tool**

The *Students at the Center Alignment Tool* is designed to help determine whether certain tools and resources align with the four key tenets of student-centered approaches to learning. Drawn from the mind/brain sciences, learning theory, and research on youth development, when implemented together, the four tenets of student-centered approaches to learning—**personalization**, **competency education**, **anytime, anywhere**, and **student-owned**—comprise the components of education experiences essential to students' full engagement in achieving deeper learning outcomes on the path to college, career, and civic readiness. Learn more about the four tenets can be found at: [www.studentsatthecenter.org](http://www.studentsatthecenter.org).

We realize that few tools or resources will touch all four of the tenets. The goal of this alignment tool is to help a reviewer gauge how closely the resource aligns with the Students at the Center four tenets, determine applicability, and highlight where customization or revision is needed.

## **CLARIFICATION ON THE TERMS, “TOOLS” AND “RESOURCES”**

For the purposes of this alignment tool, we are defining tool as an item or group of items that are action-oriented (e.g., a matrix with essential questions; rubric; graphic organizer; a lesson, unit or curriculum; a video that demonstrates specific practices with steps to implement) and a resource as an item or group of items that can be used to provide information (e.g., a report; tip sheet; guide; a video that has students or teachers talking about practices or beliefs).

## **WHO SHOULD USE THIS ALIGNMENT TOOL?**

Educators who:

- Need some clarification about what should be specifically included in a tool or resource to help foster or support a student-centered environment,
- Need guidance around how aligned a tool or resource is to student-centered approaches to learning, and
- Need a way to keep track of tools that have promise, but need revision or customization.

## **HOW TO USE THE ALIGNMENT TOOL**

As you review a tool or resource, look for whether the item facilitates or supports learning experiences that are personalized, competency-based, anytime/anywhere and encourages student ownership. There is a checklist for each tenet, but we don't expect any tool or resource to correspond to all tenets. You may find that you only use certain sections of the checklist due to the focus of what you are reviewing.

Use the alignment tool as a graphic organizer to organize your thoughts and ideas on how to best use the tool or resource.

Though this tool provides a good guide for alignment with student-centered approaches to learning, you will need to make a judgment about whether—if used correctly and implemented well—the tool/resource you are reviewing will support your ability to meet the ideas presented in the organizer.

Name of Tool/Resource	
Source ( <i>Include website if applicable</i> )	
Brief Tool/Resource Description ( <i>For example: grade, content area, potential use, etc.</i> )	
Date of Review	

**PERSONALIZED LEARNING:** Together educators, parents, and students customize learning experiences—what they learn, and how, when, and where they learn it—to students’ individual developmental needs, skills, and interests. Although where, how, and when they learn might vary according to their needs, students also develop deep connections to each other and their teachers and other adults. Many applications of personalized learning emphasize the use of technology to enable the level of differentiation at scale.

The tool or resource supports the ability to:	Tool (T) or Resource (R)	Yes	Yes with some adaptation needed (describe below)	No	N/A	Notes (may want to include audience, time needed, group vs. individual use)
P1. Formatively assess student’s existing skills and knowledge						
P2. Address the student’s needs and interests						
P3. Enable learning through relationship building, for example: collaborative group work						
P4. Deepen learning through increasingly complex and authentic problems and projects						
P5. Deepen learning through relationships and community structures in a larger learning environment						

**COMPETENCY EDUCATION:** Students move ahead based primarily on demonstrating key learning milestones along the path to mastery of core competencies and bodies of knowledge, rather than based on a student’s age or hours logged in the classroom (often represented by the phrase “learning is the constant, time is the variable”). Tasks and learning units might be either individual or collective, and students have multiple means and opportunities to demonstrate mastery through performance-based and other assessments. Each student is assured of the scaffolding and differentiated support needed to keep progressing at a pace appropriate to reaching college, career, and civic outcomes. *(Closely related: proficiency-based learning/education, mastery-based learning/education)*

The tool or resource supports the ability to:	Tool (T) or Resource (R)	Yes	Yes with some adaptation needed <i>(describe below)</i>	No	N/A	Notes <i>(may want to include audience, time needed, group vs. individual use)</i>
C1. Advance students ahead based primarily on demonstrating key learning milestones along the path to mastery of core competencies						
C2. Provide students multiple means and opportunities to demonstrate mastery through performance-based and other assessments						
C3. Ensure each student has the scaffolding and differentiated support needed to keep progressing at a pace appropriate to reaching college and career and civic outcomes						

**ANYTIME/ANYWHERE:** Time is fully utilized to optimize and extend student learning and to allow for educators to engage in reflection and planning. Students have equitable opportunities to learn outside of the typical school day and year in a variety of settings, take advantage of the variety of digital technologies that can enhance learning, and can receive credit for this learning based on demonstration of skills and knowledge. The school’s walls are permeable—benefitting from multiple community assets and digital resources, as well as being informed by meaningful community input.

The tool or resource supports the ability to:	Tool (T) or Resource (R)	Yes	Yes with some adaptation needed (describe below)	No	N/A	Notes (may want to include audience, time needed, group vs. individual use)
A1. Time is fully utilized to optimize and extend student learning opportunities						
A2. Educators, students, and external partners engage in reflection and planning time together						
A3. Provide students equitable opportunities to learn outside of the typical school day and year in a variety of settings						
A4. Use a variety of digital technologies can enhance learning						
A5. Take advantage of multiple community assets through meaningful community engagement to provide learning opportunities.						

**STUDENT-OWNED LEARNING:** Students understand how to get “smarter” by applying effort strategically to learning tasks in the different domains. They have frequent opportunities to direct and to reflect and improve on their own learning progression toward college and career ready standards through formative assessments that help them understand their own strengths and learning challenges. Students take increasing responsibility for their own learning, using strategies for self-regulation when necessary. Students also support and celebrate each other’s progress and experience a sense of commitment and belonging to the learning group.

The tool or resource supports the ability to:	Tool (T) or Resource (R)	Yes	Yes with some adaptation needed (describe below)	No	N/A	Notes (may want to include audience, time needed, group vs. individual use)
S1. Help students understand how to get “smarter” by applying effort strategically to learning tasks						
S2. Provide students opportunity to direct, reflect and improve on their own learning						
S3. Have students take responsibility for their own learning, using strategies for self-regulation when necessary						
S4. Encourage students to support and celebrate each other’s progress and/or enhance the sense of commitment and belonging to the learning group.						
S5. Provide opportunity for student voice and choice in the classroom						