

# Transforming the Factory School

Educators need to transform the way education is delivered in today's information age by providing each student with an individualized education. This transformation must take place to meet the pressures of governmental mandates, increasing globalization, and the changing needs of society. The current one size fits all model of schooling will transform into an individualized model to help each student achieve their potential.

## The One Size Fits All Model

Education is based on a century-old instructional delivery model created upon an assumption that one size fits all needs. This now-familiar assembly line model was characterized by age grading, a uniform course of study and end-of-course examinations. Schools were organized on these principles.

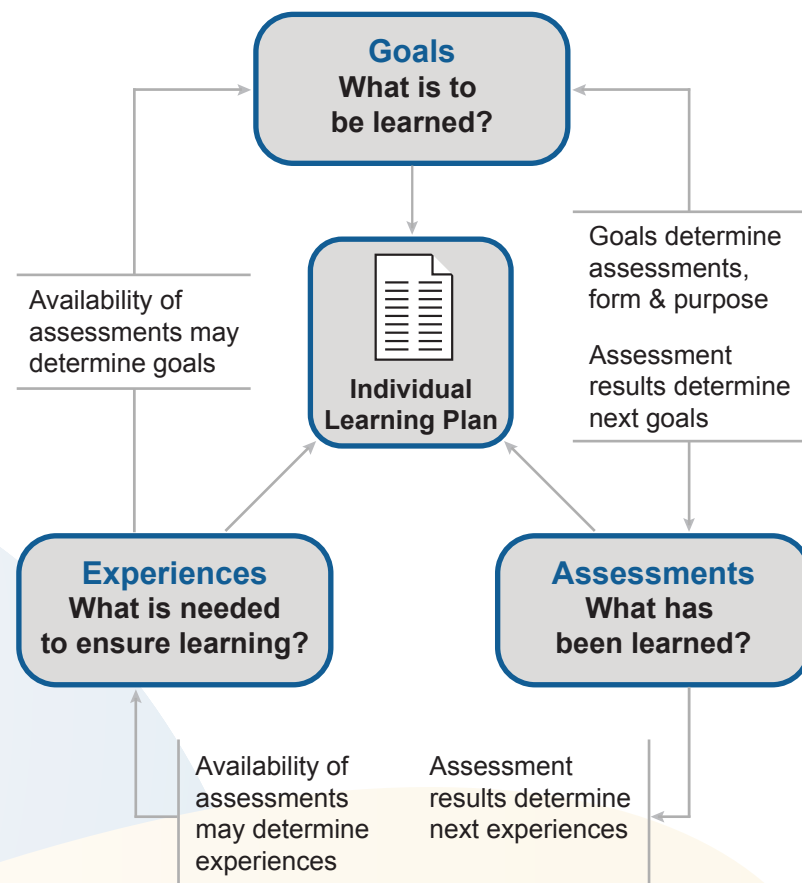
Age grading has created classrooms that categorized students by age and presumed similar abilities. In addition to the division by age, there was a uniform course of study, specifying what subjects were to be taught in each grade, the order in which the material in each grade would be covered, and the activities to be used by teachers. Uniformity was imposed at each grade level throughout the school. Punctuality and obedience were expected and rewarded. Assessment occurred at the end of units spanning many weeks of instruction.

Given the number of students in the classrooms, schools became committed to managing classrooms with a set of factory-like rules. The attention to every aspect of student conduct and the sequencing of classroom activities all contributed to the development of schools as hierarchical, efficiency-oriented organizations.

The result was the socialization of students to the world they would encounter in the workplace. Devotion to organization, punctuality and discipline meant the schools prepared students to work in the factories appearing throughout the country. The same routinization students would face on the job was present in the schools they attended.

## A New Model: Individual Learning Plans

In the 21st century, K12 education needs to prepare students for a world vastly different from the current one size fits all model. This new model stresses individual growth and the key document in this new model is the individualized learning plan (ILP). The ILP exists as the dynamic container for a set of learning experiences designed specifically for each individual and it is envisioned that an ILP is being constantly updated and redesigned.



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An ILP is comprised of three integrated frameworks: goals, assessments, and experiences. The combination of these three frameworks creates the underlying architecture of the ILP. The ILP-centric view of education asks schools to function as custodians of the ILP goals, providers of specific experiences contained in a student's ILP, and assessors of progress toward ILP goals.

The goals framework is the heart of an ILP as it manages what is to be learned by each student. While it is envisioned that an ILP is a life-long document, the state education agency and district-level standards documents are the current articulation of society's ILP goals.

The assessments framework contains the essential questions to determine if the student has achieved the goals established in the ILP. Without frequent, highly-granular assessments it is impossible to determine what goal or experience to deliver next. Schools also use assessment information to fulfill longer-term needs such as accountability requirements (e.g., No Child Left Behind).

The experiences framework consists of the traditional apparatus of the school required for the delivery of learning experiences. This apparatus includes teachers, curriculum, classrooms, textbooks, transportation, food service, network infrastructures, etc. These elements are needed to ensure experiences are provided that allow students to achieve specific ILP goals.

## ILP-Centric Schools

The school intending to deliver an ILP-centric education must be able to assess progress towards goals on demand and redesign experiences in real time. An ILP-centric school requires a sophisticated student information management system and a shift in thinking from the current model of "this is what our school offers this year" to a flexible, dynamic scheduling model informed by highly granular information on what a student knows and can do, matched with equally granular information on available experiences.

The ILP-centric scheduling model draws upon thousands of ILPs being updated continuously to schedule and reschedule the right people (e.g., students, staff) and the right resources (e.g. rooms, curriculum materials) at the right time. This scheduling model is called R<sup>3</sup> or "R-cubed." Without the R<sup>3</sup> scheduling model or something like it, and a real-time decision-support system, it is contended that no significant transformation of education can be expected.

## The Information Management System

The information management system needed to supply the R<sup>3</sup> scheduling model must first manage the alignment of goals, experiences, and assessments. The system must manage each goal, experience, and test item to ensure alignment by producing a link between each item in the database. The information management system must support alignment at a level of granularity useful to teachers as they plan and teach daily lessons.

When teachers understand what each of their students knows, they can adapt instruction in real time to deliver what is needed. Infinite Campus is the information management system that will deliver this transformational change.

Infinite Campus today delivers integrated ILPs, the ability to track assessments and manage outcomes. With a focus on transforming K12, Infinite Campus is focused on delivering the next generation of tools needed for districts to become ILP-centric schools.

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For over a decade, Infinite Campus has successfully implemented its solutions for customers of all sizes. Today, Infinite Campus applications manage more than 1.5 million students in 24 states. Infinite Campus customers range from districts with fewer than 100 students to those with more than 100,000 as well as regional consortia, state departments of education, and the federal government.