Moving toward Mastery-Based Education doesn't mean starting over or abandoning the important work you've already done.

National research confirms most teachers already utilize mastery practices!

Organized by the [Framework (Link),](#) the shifts associated with moving to mastery are described below. To help recognize what the shifts look like in a learning environment each shift includes system indicators and student learning indicators. Whether or not you have been using one of the many names for mastery learning, you will probably recognize some of your own practices in these shifts. Eventually, each of these shifts will have practical professional development to better inform and support a transition to mastery-based principles.

Students Empowered: Learning Culture Empowers Students

Description: The transparency in a mastery-based learning system encourages students to play a greater role, and invest more, in their educational success. With the support of teachers, students take productive risks to learn and demonstrate the competencies, as the focus shifts to learning rather than earning a grade. They make important decisions about their learning pathways, providing insight on projects, activities, and the individual support needed to reach their potential. Self-reflection and self-assessment, along with goal setting and progress monitoring, become regular habits. Through meaningful collaboration and routine teacher and peer feedback, learners support one another in their academic growth.

GROWTH MINDSET
Shifting from *Fixed Intelligence* to *Growth Mindset*

Learners' beliefs about their intelligence and ability matter greatly. They are predictive of student behavior in school, and they greatly influence engagement and motivation.

System Indicators

- Learners have a mastery orientation, regularly reflecting on their learning, celebrating their own growth and the growth of others, and demonstrating positive persistence**.**

Student Learning Indicators

- Norms, routines, rituals, and practices create community, foster a strong sense of connectedness, and help learners develop important social and emotional skills and dispositions.

RELATIONSHIPS
Shifting from *Disconnected from Adults and Community* to *Caring Relationships that Sustain and Support*

The quality of relationships between adults and learners has a profound impact on student achievement. Knowing the learners in our classrooms is the foundation of successful personalized learning.

System Indicators
- Adults build deep, caring relationships with students to support their academic and socio-emotional development, advocate for their well-being, and jointly monitor their academic progress as they advance through the learning system.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners feel that they have ongoing opportunities to build strong relationships with adults, who remain formally engaged in their learning, and with peers, who they see as collaborators for learning and co-creators of knowledge.

TEACHER COLLABORATION
Shifting from *Silos and Inequities* to *Collaboration and Calibration*

When schools and systems break down silos around professional practice and create common competencies, assessments, and expectations that promote mastery, learners' benefit.

System Indicators
- Teachers engage in collegial practice to support student learning, such as collaboratively analyzing student work, planning responsive instruction, and coaching or mentoring one another.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners have adult role models for setting goals, ongoing learning, and collaboration with peers; they tangibly benefit from teachers' collegial efforts to improve learning experience and outcomes.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION
Shifting from *Learning Restricted to School Hours and Walls* to *Learning Extends Beyond School Hours and Walls*

Deep connections between school and community support personalization and promote equity. Mastery Learning systems support authentic, real-world learning because the priority is the demonstration of competency, not where the learning took place.

System Indicators
- Schools are meaningfully connected to the broader community, providing expanded learning opportunities for students to learn and apply skills, explore interests, and engage in relationship-building beyond the classroom.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners can articulate opportunities for learning experiences that meaningfully connect formal schooling to the local or global community and that are valued by the learning system. Learners feel safe and connected in the learning community, and can describe ways in which their culture and the culture of their communities are valued in the learning environment.

GRADUATE PROFILE
Shifting from Inequitable, Variable Student Outcome to Shared, Transparent Values and Competencies

The graduate profile articulates a vision for learners that goes beyond K-12 academic excellence. It is defined by competencies that are explicit and measurable with learning objectives that describe specific and observable skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

System Indicators

- A set of high-quality academic and efficacy competencies articulate a distilled, equity-driven, unifying school/institutional vision for learner outcomes in a way that is transparent and accessible to all stakeholders.

Student Learning Indicators

- Learners know what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how it promotes the ultimate goal of their education.

LEARNING PERSONALIZED: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES PERSONALIZE LEARNING

Mastery Learning provides a foundation for personalized learning through flexible pacing and delivery of common expectations and performance-based assessments. Students receive timely, differentiated supports based on individual academic strengths and needs, and the opportunity to share their understanding in multiple ways. Learning experiences offer opportunities to collaborate in meaningful ways by leveraging student interests and connections to their community. Personalized learning, driven by meaningful interactions with teachers and peers, results in higher levels of student engagement and agency.

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES
Shifting from *Delivery of Knowledge* to *Authentic Academic Experiences*

Inquiry is at the heart of powerful academic endeavors. Wondering about something, researching it, developing a point of view, making a case: this is what academic and professional work is all about. Inquiry prioritizes student questions and ideas, which supports their sense of efficacy, their capacity, and their understanding of themselves as agents of their own learning.

System Indicators

- Inquiry-based learning experiences, built with thoughtfully chosen resources and driven by student inquiry, create personal pathways toward competency.

Student Learning Indicators

- Learners are regularly engaged in inquiry, posing questions, investigating answers and solutions, and sharing their results, while simultaneously and continuously synthesizing and reflecting to build schema.

EXPLICIT SKILL AND STRATEGY INSTRUCTION
Shifting from *Focus on Knowledge Transfer* to *Focus on Transferable Skills and Strategies*

Explicit skill and strategy instruction, often in the form of modeling and think-alouds, ensures that students learn how to apply skills and strategies to content and to the processes of learning themselves. Cognitive apprenticeship and gradual release of responsibility prepare students to undertake rigorous tasks and to take ownership of their own learning.

System Indicators
- Teachers provide students explicit skill and strategy instruction through metacognitive modeling, with ongoing opportunities to practice and apply skills and strategies.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners have regular and varied opportunities to develop key cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies, with sufficient time to practice and apply new skills and strategies in collaborative and independent settings; they can describe the connection to the specific skills or strategies they are developing.

EXPANDED DISCUSSION
Shifting from *Teacher Directed Instruction* to *Student-led Academic Discourse*

Expanded discussion creates opportunities for students to listen carefully to others' thinking and to provide responses showing critical engagement with the task. By removing the written word as a potential barrier for meaning-making and synthesizing new learning, student discourse opens the door to deeper student understanding and provides teachers with data to diagnose and respond to student needs in real time.

System Indicators
- Teachers create opportunities for students to listen and respond to others' thinking, demonstrating critical engagement with the task and participating in rich academic discourse.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners listen carefully to others' thinking and provide responses showing critical engagement with the task, opening the door to collaborative meaning-making and deeper understanding.

REGULAR CONFERENCING
Shifting from a *Lack of Transparency in Learning* to *Transparent, Equitable Learning*

Regular conferencing is a powerful instructional tool. It's useful for assessment and differentiation, building relationships with students, and gaining insight into students' perspective of learning experiences. Conferences can provide immediate feedback and set next steps for learning, offer guided practice for metacognition and reflection, and allow students to share their thoughts and feelings about their work and their learning.

System Indicators
- Teachers create frequent opportunities for students to engage in conferences with teachers and peers to reflect on and analyze students' own work, give and receive feedback, and identify next steps for learning.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners regularly confer with teachers and peers to evaluate progress, give/receive feedback, identify actionable next steps, and sharpen cognitive and metacognitive skills.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
Shifting from *Assessment OF Learning* to *Assessment FOR Learning*

Formative assessments keep teacher and student focused on intended outcomes, common understanding of the target, the student's progress, and the next steps for learning. Continuous monitoring of learning allows the student and teacher to adjust course and try alternate approaches in real time.

System Indicators

- Teachers and students use formative assessment to identify and respond to learner needs in real time.

Student Learning Indicators

- Students access their learning data in real time, and can discuss, reflect, and evaluate their work and progress relative to their goals; they benefit from timely, responsive attention to their needs.

FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENTS AND GROUPING
Shifting from *Adult-centric and Static* to *Responsive and Agile*

Flexible learning environments and responsive pedagogical practices are structured to support learning opportunities that optimize engagement, agency, growth, and a sense of community. Each facet of the learning experience is matched to the needs of learners.

System Indicators

- Learning spaces and grouping strategies are flexible, enabling individualized, timely supports based on specific targets and observed needs, while also allowing students to collaborate and engage purposefully with one another independently.

Student Learning Indicators

- Learners participate in an array of learning activities and flexible groupings based on specific goals, needs, and interests.

COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT ENABLE STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE MASTERY.

The Idaho College and Career Readiness Competencies adopted by the State Board of Education provide the foundation for the Idaho-Mastery Based Education Framework. Competencies represent the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes that lead to success. Mastery learning environments focus on competencies through rigorous real-world applications that prepare students for diverse postsecondary pathways. Competencies make learning equitable and transparent through explicit, measurable, and transferable learning objectives.

CONTENT AND COMPETENCY ALIGNED
Shifting from *Content Focused* to *Content and Competency Aligned*

Assessment for learning allows educators to respond to student needs to ensure that all students achieve and demonstrate the content and skill objectives. Assessment also forms the foundation for the clear, actionable feedback that is essential to building students' capacity to take ownership of their learning. This agency-building approach is responsive to both the academic and cultural needs of students, who develop a strong sense of their growth over time and see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

System Indicators

- Curriculum and assessment affirm and build upon learners' interests, cultural backgrounds, and identities, while actively creating well-scaffolded, autonomy-enhancing opportunities to build and demonstrate competence**.**

Student Learning Indicators:
- Curriculum and assessment affirm and build upon learners' interests, cultural backgrounds, and identities, while actively creating well-scaffolded, autonomy-enhancing opportunities to build and demonstrate competence.

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING CYCLE
Shifting from *Opaque Learning Processes* to *Transparent Student-centered Learning*

Learning experiences are informed by an inquiry-driven Learning Cycle grounded in the learning sciences and in child and youth development research. The Learning Cycle serves as a framework for the design of experiences that move students through a transparent learning process. In each stage of the cycle, expanded student choice and a metacognitive approach to learning nurture student agency.

System Indicators
- The Learning Cycle drives learning experiences, engaging learners in meaning-making, investigation, creation, communication, synthesis, and reflection.

Student Learning Indicators
- Learners can describe the underlying structure and processes that support their learning, including both cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies.

PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS
Shifting from *One-size-fits-all Progression* to *Student-directed and Monitored Learning*

When schools and systems break down silos around professional practice and create common competencies, assessments, and expectations that promote mastery, learners' benefit.

System Indicators

- Lessons, units, courses, and classes are flexible, arranged to allow multiple learning pathways and responsiveness to student needs.

Student Learning Indicators

- Learners have both opportunity and capacity to select from a range of developmentally appropriate, meaningful choices within and among culturally responsive units of study; choices are designed to increase relevance, foster self-regulatory capabilities, and support interest-based learning.

SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENTS
Shifting from *Point-in-time Testing and Advancement* to *Multiple Opportunities to Demonstrate Learning*

Assessments are designed to create powerful learning experiences for students and to provide all stakeholders with the data they need to draw accurate inferences about student achievement. Assessments are built on the belief that learners develop skills over time and competence emerges gradually, not spontaneously. The mastery-based design of the tasks hinges on bringing the feedback cycle into the classroom, presenting learners with multiple opportunities for practice, allowing them to revise work as their skills develop, and providing frequent actionable feedback.

System Indicators

- A clearly articulated set of performance assessments allows students to develop and to demonstrate each competency at higher levels of sophistication as they progress toward graduation.

Student Learning Indicators

- Learners can articulate the connections between the competencies or skills they are developing, the content they are learning, performance-based assessments they are working on, and how each of these relates to their learning goals and personalized pathway.

MASTERY RECOGNIZED: POLICIES AND SYSTEMS RECOGNIZE MASTERY.

Coupled with flexibility in pace and delivery, mastery learning is grounded in the idea that students' progress when they demonstrate mastery of key content and skills, regardless of the time spent in class or when instruction takes place. Students also have opportunities to demonstrate mastery in multiple formats. Mastery-based education systems ensure learners have equitable access to supports that promptly identify and address learner need so they can move at their optimal pace through and into new learning experiences.

DRIVERS OF POLICIES AND SYSTEMS
Shifting from a *Lack of Common Set of Values* to *A Common Mission and Vision for Student Competence*

Community values drive the design of policies a nd systems to support a culture of mastery. Policies and systems are the bridge between the statutes and the daily practices in the school. They have to be grounded in the same values that the community wants to manifest in the classroom.

System Indicators

- Policies and systems are grounded in the values essential to Mastery Learning: equity, growth, responsiveness, flexibility, and transparency.

Student Learning Indicators

- Students learn in an environment that is equitable, growth-oriented, responsive, flexible, and transparent.

FLEXIBLE ORGANIZATION OF TIME
Shifting from a *Focus on Adult Needs* to *Flexible Use of Time*

Time is organized to responsively meet the needs of educators and learners. Flexible use of time supports personalized pathways and pacing, and ensures equitable opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

System Indicators

- Flexible, responsive scheduling enables personalized student pacing for developing and demonstrating competence.

Student Learning Indicators

- Learners build and demonstrate their growing competence at the time and the pace appropriate to their needs.

ADULT ROLES
Shifting from *Organized to Meet Adult Needs* to *Differentiated Adult Roles*

Differentiated adult roles responsively meet the needs of learners and leverage professionals' strengths to support personalized pathways and pacing, and ensure equitable opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

System Indicators

- Flexible, differentiated roles enable adults to leverage their strengths to provide responsive supports to ensure all learners develop competence.

Student Learning Indicators

- Students access learning partners, resources, tools, and supports they need when they need them

GRADING, ADVANCEMENT, AND CREDITING:
Shifting from *Gateways and Uncertainty* to *Equitable, Transparent, Performance-based.*

Equitable, transparent, performance-based grading, advancement, and crediting policies enable students to progress to higher-level work and meet important milestones based on demonstrated readiness.

System Indicators

- A clear purpose, with strong ties to the culture of mastery, drives equitable and transparent grading, advancement, and crediting policies and practices, which are agency-promoting, grounded in research, and built on a common understanding of the competencies.

Student Learning Indicators

- Students and adults collaborate to build a shared understanding of the competencies, which they use to equitably identify goals, communicate growing competence, determine advancement, and certify achievement.

TRACKING AND DATA MANAGEMENT
Shifting from *Prioritizing Reporting* to *Prioritizing and Tracking Growth*

Systems to track growth and manage data support student agency and make student progress and achievement clear to all stakeholders.

System Indicators

- Competency-based data management systems enable students, teachers, and families to collaboratively monitor learner progress against individualized goals.

Student Learning Indicators

- Students and adults collaboratively and continuously gather, document, and analyze, in real time, an array of student data to respond to learner needs, supporting their growth.