

PERSONAL LEARNING AGENT

ASPIRATION STATEMENT:

To personalise learning through negotiation

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW:

Mr Nielsen is science tutor to a class of mixed ability students. As part of his teaching role he acts as a learning designer – that is, he negotiates a personal programme of study with each of his students based on their initial understanding and preferred choices for working. However, the individual learning programmes are designed to fulfil the curriculum requirements.

Birgitte, along with the rest of her class, took a pre-test at the start of term. She then had a meeting with Mr Nielsen to work out what was required for her to complete that term's chemistry curriculum requirements and relevant milestones to show these had been reached. The personal learning agent, which also calculated what was required to complete the curriculum, suggested a variety of tasks that Birgitte could use to complete her goals, including some designed by Mr Nielsen. She discussed these with Mr Nielsen and together they agreed a programme of work.

Depending on the topic methods suggested could include individual self-study, practicals, small group work, pair-work, lectures and seminars. However, the teacher is still needed as facilitator to ensure that a student selects realistic goals and an appropriate method to achieve their learning goal.

Once Mr Nielsen had his students' various learning plans he arranged a timetable so that students requiring certain practicals had access to the laboratory and the equipment at a mutually convenient time. However, only a few people chose a lecture to learn about the carbon molecule so along with those students Mr Nielsen negotiated a seminar for those interested allowing the others to complete the work as a self-study module. Mr Nielsen is required to move between different roles as the situation requires: traditional presenter of content, facilitator, mentor and so forth.

Once she had her personal agreed programme of work Birgitte can access her e-portfolio used to record tasks and progress at any time. As she works through the various activities she meets Mr Nielsen regularly to check on progress, which will be formally examined at the end of term.



TECHNOLOGY / RESOURCES:

The personal learning plan is interactive and acts like a “personal learning agent” automatically searching databases of learning resources and activities on the basis of the goals Birgitte and Mr Nielsen have agreed. These include self study, individual work, tutorials, whole class lectures, and research. It then prompts them as choices to Birgitte, who further negotiates with Mr Nielsen in order to choose the ones more appropriate to the learning goals. It also requires an online e-portfolio structured to record the various work and milestones.