

# Using Student Data and Learning Analytics to Address Digital Equity

Through the efficient use of data, educators can analyze and act on students' information to identify digital equity needs and create positive change.

## What is Learning Analytics?

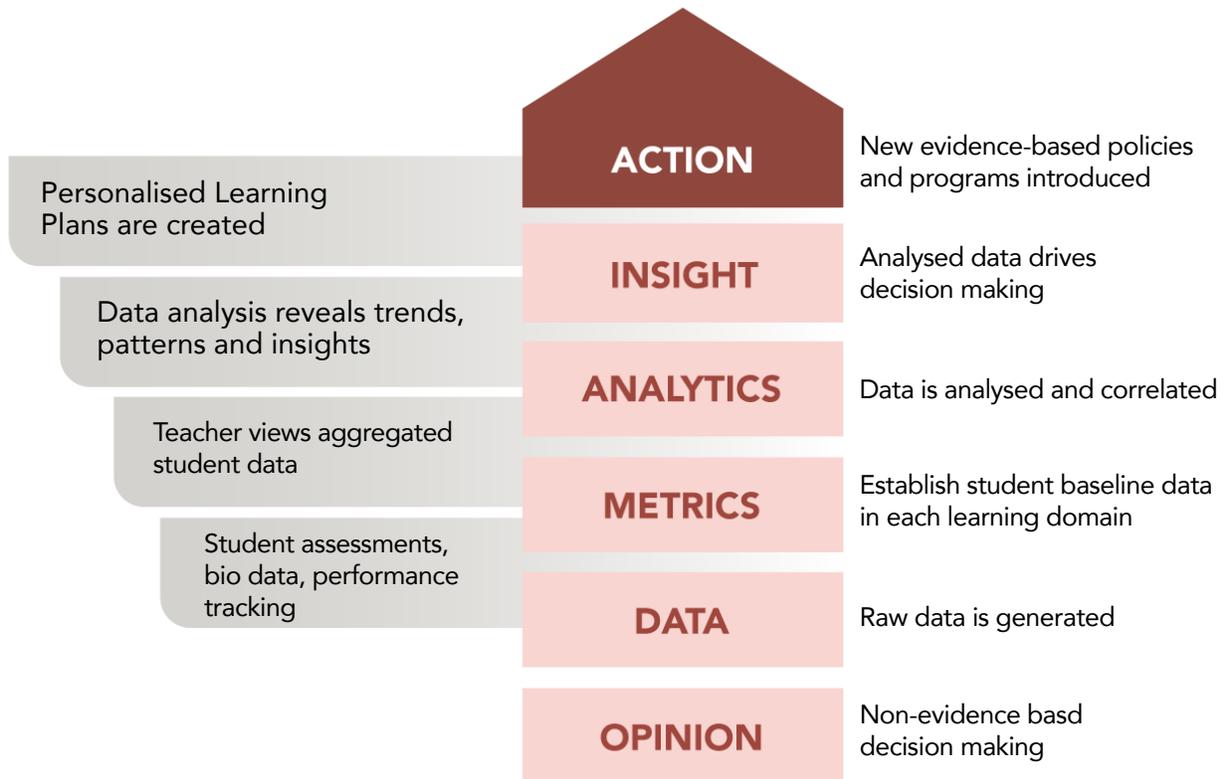
Corporations and government agencies have been using data based analytics for years to help with operational efficiency and to better realize objectives. K-12 education—with its own complications surrounding the security of student data—is only now poised to fully make use of learning analytics tools to improve student outcomes.

**Learning Analytics:** The collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners in order to understand and optimize learning. This collection of data captures a student's academic performance, analyzes it for patterns, and reveals areas which need improvement. [Educase Webinar: The Current State of Learning Analytics and Where to Go from Here](#)

The primary purpose of learning analytics is to empower educational institutions to identify potential challenge areas of each student and take swift action in addressing them. Learning analytics can answer questions like:

- When are students ready to move on to the next topic?
- What students are most at risk for not completing a course?
- What features of the learning environment lead to better learning outcomes?
- Where are there opportunities to improve student equity?
- What students are most at risk for falling into the digital divide?





With large amounts of carefully curated data, school leaders are given a more complete picture of their students, what drives their learning, how they learn best, and what resources or support they need. They are better able to predict which students are at-risk for facing challenges, and use this information to reach out to them with the resources they need.

### Learning Analytics and Equity

The combination of a global pandemic, economic recession, and racial injustice has heightened the focus on pre-existing digital equity and access challenges facing groups of marginalized youth. As a result, there is a growing need in K-12 education to accelerate changes to policy, practice, and pedagogy in order to ensure greater

equity and help close the digital divide. Learning analytics is one of several tools that are helping to drive this change.

Historically, some of the most common uses of learning analytics were to predict student academic success, to measure and compare student performance, or to highlight students requiring additional support. As data becomes more accessible through digital learning and other technology advances, school leaders are exploring learning analytics for more wide-reaching purposes, including [issues of student equity](#).

## Uses of learning analytics for addressing student equity

- Providing evidence on the success of instructional approaches for various subsets of student groups
- Informing and improving equitable teaching practices
- Influencing curricular decisions
- Evaluating and informing institutional outcomes
- Identifying and addressing performance gaps across student groups
- Providing students with personalized learning paths

“What [data] curation does is, it allows you to pick and choose your learning experience and your story and what’s important to you and curate it. You learn a heck of a lot from it, and you share it, and other people might look at it. The beauty of curation is the ability to tell your story as you see it, and then, obviously, you have to convince other people about your story”

— [Randall Sampson](#) Chief Curation Officer, Liberty Leadership Development

## Taking Action: Learning Analytics for Positive Change

Today’s schools seek to provide a student-centered, equity-focused, personalized and customized experience that builds on the identified strengths of each learner. With learning analytics, school leaders can:

- Examine a variety of factors to determine the areas most in need of funds to support digital equity
- Collect and analyze broadband connectivity data to paint a clearer picture of where additional support for connectivity is needed
- Employ technology as a way to personalize learning and provide a source of connection to a broader world

As the technological landscape continues to evolve, so will the possibility of more personalized learning opportunities that increase the chances for each student to learn successfully. Proper investments must be made so educators are able to utilize new digital tools equitably, providing the best possible learning opportunities for every student, both at school and at home.

Armed with data, student leaders can lead the conversation around digital equity and involve students and staff in the creation of policies for equitable technology use both inside and outside of school.



## Voices From The Field

Hear what Dr. Laura Spencer, Chief Innovation Officer at [Elite Academic Academy](#), has to say about what student data has revealed about digital equity in the learning environment.



### How do you see the issue of digital equity coming to the forefront?

During the pandemic, issues of digital equity arose, but unfortunately the solutions did not. Digital equity, in terms of access, is still huge. Instead of creating engaging experiences, we have to thin out the experiences to accommodate a lack of access. We're just not there yet.

### View Additional Resources

Check out the rest of the Digital Equity tools and resources on the [K-12 Blueprint](#).