

**Blended learning?**  
**Personalized learning?**  
**Competency-based learning?**  
**Student-centered learning?**  
**Self-directed learning?**



## **Facts about EdTech:**

### **What those buzz words (and others) are really all about**

OK, so now Bill Gates, ALEC, and the Walton family are all on board with alternative assessments including performance tasks and gathering information from multiple sources over time, and have agreed that end-of-year high-stakes tests are just so “NCLB” -- so, what's really going on?

Well, we didn't defeat the billionaire boys' club. We're not even sure that our strong opt out numbers and the “too much testing” line popping out in several State of the Union addresses weren't all a part of their diabolical master plan. Because what we have now is a headlong rush to EdTech, to every day testing, heavy use of digital devices, and, of course, massive collection of student data by vendors.

Let's unpack the terms.

**Blended learning:** Your child will no longer spend his or her day with a caring adult. They will be tied to a digital screen which will replace large chunks of human interaction with prepackaged programming. It's blended in the same way as Star Trek's Data was blended – you know, he cried that one time.

**Personalized learning:** No, persons are not an important part of this program, so it should really be called **depersonalized** learning. It's “personalized” in exactly the same way that your online shopping becomes “personalized” when ads for stuff you just ordered start showing up on your Facebook page and everywhere else on your screen.

**Competency-based learning:** Competent means efficient and capable but not outstanding, and in this context it just means that your child has answered x number of questions correctly and can move on to the next set of questions. It's just like earning a Girl Scout badge. But Girl Scouts also get to go camping and learn the best ways to sell cookies. Your child will just get to go to the “next level” of the EdTech video game.

**Student-centered learning:** This implies but does NOT actually mean that learning will take place in a way that is most supportive of children and the way they learn. In fact, it will do the opposite by denying them the two things they need the most – hands-on experiences and caring adult attention.

**Self-directed learning:** It's **self**-directed because the student will have to fend for him or herself. There will be no experienced, trained adult to guide learning. This will allow the actual situation of many existing EdTech ed companies such as Rocketship that hold “school” sessions of 150 children in one room, each on a computer.