

UF gets \$10 million to personalize math

Two grants from the U.S. Department of Education research arm will help University of Florida education scientists personalize online math instruction for students with visual impairments.

The grant will support a new project called Precision Education: Virtual Learning Lab, which pulls together teaching experts to look at new ways to explore massive sets of student data to update and personalize virtual instruction.

The Virtual Learning Lab includes faculty at UF and the University of Notre Dame, and experts from Study Edge, a Gainesville-based online tutoring company, according to a news release about the grants.

Over the next five years, using the emerging discipline known as precision education, which uses education data from prior students — including standardized test scores, school records, personal traits and teaching methods — researchers will personalize the learning experience for future students.

Virtual Learning Lab researchers will test their precision education model on a popular online tutoring tool called Algebra Nation, which the UF Lastinger Center for Learning launched in 2013 in tandem with Study Edge.

Later, researchers will compare test results of students who used the updated, personalized Algebra Nation with the scores of students who used the regular version.

— *Staff report*