

GOOD-NEWS

San Miguel School is a reminder all students learn differently: Commentary

Nancy Wolanski Special to The Journal

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Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

Students learn in diverse ways, yet the education system often uses a one-size-fits-all approach.

Traditional classroom models can disadvantage students who thrive through alternative learning methods.

Failing to recognize diverse learning styles contributes to educational disparities and limits opportunities.

As someone who cares deeply about equity in education, I'm convinced of one simple truth: [No two students learn the same way](#). Yet too frequently, our education system clings to a one-size-fits-all approach. For [students from underserved communities](#) – who often need support the most – failing to recognize and honor different learning styles can have lasting consequences.

The traditional classroom model tends to acknowledge conformity: remain at your desk, follow along, memorize and test. But what if a student thrives through discussion, hands-on activities or is a visual learner? When these ways of learning are not explored, talented, capable students are left disengaged, misunderstood or worse ... left behind.

This disconnect contributes to broader disparities – in academic achievement, graduation rates and, ultimately, life outcomes. When students don't see themselves reflected in the curriculum or feel their needs are met in the structure of their education, school becomes a place of frustration rather than opportunity.

Meeting students where they are isn't lowering standards; it's the best way to raise them. We must invest in flexible teaching approaches, culturally responsive curriculum and mentors who understand the unique challenges our young people face. We need to take a page from [schools like San Miguel](#), which are proving just how powerful it can be to do things differently.

Education should be a gateway, not a gatekeeper. And if we're serious about equity, we must embrace the truth that the path to success does not, and should not, look the same for everyone. Every student's journey is different and unique, and recognizing diverse learning styles is the key to unlocking potential.

In a world where students typically are measured by a pre-defined set of metrics, schools like San Miguel remind us that education can be personal, empowering and rooted in the belief that every child can thrive – when we take the time to understand how they learn best.

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