

Affiliated Schools Research Program Final Report

Using Action Learning as a Tool for Developing Effective Student-Centred Personalised Learning Experiences - (AL4PL)

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USING ACTION LEARNING AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE STUDENT-CENTRED PERSONALISED LEARNING EXPERIENCES (AL4PL) 2021 - 2023

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Personalised Learning for enhanced student engagement and agency is a key priority of the ACT Government's Future of Education Strategy (2018). Personalised learning involves the designing of learning in response to students' needs, strengths, interests, and identities. However, how this is achieved across the diversity of school settings is complex. The AL4PL project aimed to develop a collaborative professional learning model for teachers, following the processes of Action Learning. The intention was to engage in professional learning to enhance and enact personalised learning. The project was structured into three distinct stages to achieve its purpose. Firstly, baseline data was gathered from two ACT Education Directorate schools. Secondly, professional learning using the action learning cycle was delivered. And finally, a model of professional learning to share learnings from the action learning cycles was delivered to one whole school community.

THE RESEARCH TEAM



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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

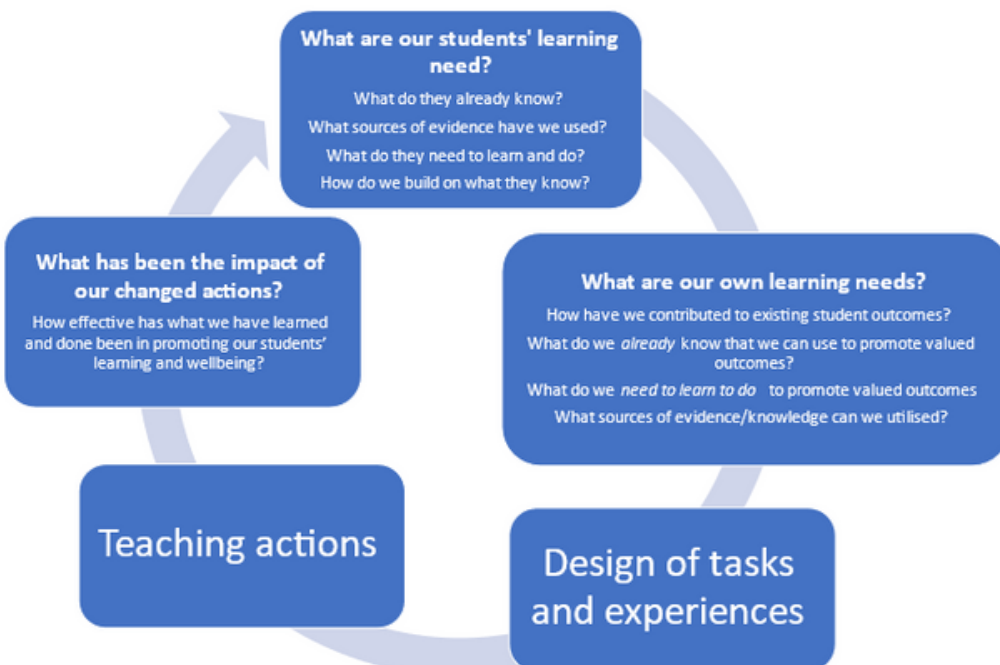
1. What challenges do teachers face with regards to designing and implementing Personalised Learning?
2. What are teachers' experiences and views on the Action Learning process in designing Personalised Learning?
3. What advantages does Action Learning offer in comprehending teachers' perspectives on personalised learning?
4. What is the suggested process for Personalised learning and what are the constraints?

RESEARCH METHODS



- 5 semi-structured interviews with teachers
- 6 focus group discussion with teachers
- 8 hours of observation in school communities

THE ACTION LEARNING CYCLE



Gold Creek School



- 9 semi-structured interviews with teachers
- 2 Action Learning Iterations with 9 teachers
- Student questionnaires with 46 students

WHAT THE TEACHERS SAID



"I think the challenge with personalised learning with larger numbers is to make sure that the student's don't get lost. They don't slip through the cracks"

"I suppose the biggest challenge would be , how would we implement personalised learning in the timetable"

"Personalised learning is great, but the biggest hindrance to personalised learning is to have students who are not self-motivated"

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Personalised learning is complex and chaotic
- Teacher perceptions are positive
- Teachers required more support to enact personalised learning
- The study identified six significant teacher roles to render teacher professional development

FOR MORE DETAILS

**PLEASE CONTACT THE
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Please also see information regarding the [Personalised Learning Symposium here](#)

Access free personalised learning resources at [the resource hub here.](#)

RESEARCH IMPACT

- Peer Reviewed Publications in High Quarterly Journals
- Ongoing Professional Learning for Teachers
- Local and International Research Collaborations
- Hosting a Personalised Learning Symposium
- Professional Dialogue
- The Article in The Conversation
- ABC Radio Interviews

Part 2: Executive Summary

2.1. The research context and purpose of the project

Personalised Learning for enhanced student engagement and agency is a key priority of the ACT Government's Future of Education Strategy (2018). Personalised learning involves the designing of learning in response to students' needs, strengths, interests, and identities. However, how this is achieved across the diversity of school settings is complex. In contemporary classrooms, teachers are accustomed to using whole class teaching approaches. They are becoming more familiar with approaches to differentiation that suit diverse learners and have adopted measures suggested in productive models such as the Universal Design for Learning (Rose, 2000) and models such as the Tomlinson's model for differentiation (Tomlinson, 2000). Whilst such approaches have been shown to work well for some students, there are still other students who are not able to access and engage with learning through these approaches to teaching.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how 'Action Learning' can be utilised as an approach for teachers to enact personalised learning. The study took place across two ACT Education Directorate Schools, Gold Creek School (P-10) and Margaret Hendry School (P-6). The study at Gold Creek School (GCS) included three distinct stages: gathering baseline data; professional learning using Action Learning; and developing a model for wider application. At Margaret Henry School (MHS) research was conducted to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by teachers when designing and implementing personalised learning.

Previous research has demonstrated gaps in pedagogical practices when enacting personalised learning (Li et al. 2021; Callaghan & Collins 2021; Walkington & Bernacki, 2020). The present study was conducted to address these gaps and to identify strategies for teachers to enact personalised learning by specially addressing the following research questions:

2.2. Research questions

1. What challenges do teachers face with regards to designing and implementing personalised learning?
2. What are teachers' experiences and views on the Action Learning process in designing Personalised Learning?

3. What advantages does Action Learning offer in comprehending teachers' perspectives on personalised learning?
4. What is the suggested process for personalised learning and what are the constraints?

2.3. Project approach (in brief)

The study was mainly qualitative in nature. At Gold Creek School, data was collected through conducting one-on-one interviews with seven teachers and two action learning meetings with teachers. At Margaret Hendry School, six focus group interviews with 38 teachers were also conducted. Data was analysed through a thematic analysis by following Braun & Clarke (2006) and coded using NVIVO software to derive central themes. Once the themes were generated, and the data were coded, they were collectively analysed using Complexity Theory as an analytical framework. At the same time, a systematic review of literature surrounding personalised learning was conducted to draw insights and implications for teachers to enact personalised learning.

2.4. Project outcomes

Interviews with the teachers who volunteered to join the study demonstrated that personalised learning is an attractive concept, but it is not only complex but also complicated and chaotic. Therefore, Action Learning iterations at Gold Creek had to be halted until participating teachers developed their knowledge, dispositions, and skills to enact personalised learning. Focus group discussions with 38 teachers also demonstrated teachers' passion but gaps in their dispositions about personalised learning. The systematic literature review that was carried out analysed relevant literature between 2015 – 2021 and provided the study with six significant teacher roles for enacting personalised learning (see Figure 1 in the appendix). The study found that teachers' thorough understanding of these teacher roles (data analyst, partners and collaborators, negotiators and guides, student empowerers, assessors and advisers and co-regulators) and their application can assist them enacting personalised learning in their classrooms. Researchers already initiated professional learning workshops based on these roles at Gold Creek School which need further research and investigation.

Part 3: Detailed Report

3.1 Aims and context

This project sought to better understand and then implement personalised learning which was proposed as a key educational strategy to improve learning outcomes for all students in ACT schools (ACT Strategic plan – 2021-2025). Personalised learning has been found to be a useful approach to engaging disengaged students from diverse backgrounds by customising learning to suit their interests and skills (Ewen & Topping, 2012; Ronksley-Pavia & Neumann, 2020). Its importance is further evidenced by the emphasis placed on the concept of personalised learning within the Future of Education Strategy proposed by the ACT Government in 2018 (ACT Government Future of Education). However, it is complex. As a result, designing meaningful personalised learning requires knowledge and skills from teachers. This includes having a deep understanding of all students' current levels of learning, and the ability to create personalised learning pathways for each student. Additionally, teachers must have the capacity to evaluate and adjust the learning pathways in response to student learning and progress.

Research Questions

To investigate the concept of personalised learning in ACT schools, the following questions were posed:

1. What challenges do teachers face with regards to designing and implementing personalised learning?
2. What are teachers' experiences and views on the Action Learning process in designing personalised learning?
3. What advantages does Action Learning offer in comprehending teachers' perspectives on personalised learning?
4. What is the suggested process and what are the constraints?

The initial aims of the project were to conduct a comparative case study to understand how teachers create personalised learning experiences for their student; to examine the ways in which personalised learning can be more meaningfully implemented in ACT schools; to assist teachers with developing personalised learning alongside their students; to raise teacher awareness of personalised learning through Action Learning; and to empirically test a framework for personalised learning.

3.2 Approach and methods

A key objective of the study was to establish meaningful personalised learning practices through Action Learning at the selected schools. At the commencement of the study, Gold Creek School and Melba Copland Secondary School were engaged in the co-design of the investigation. However, in response to staffing shortages and post-COVID pressures, Melba Copland Secondary School chose to withdraw from the study. At this stage, Margaret Hendry School was approached to engage in the study, and we were able to conduct the study at Gold Creek School and Margaret Hendry School.

The below figures illustrate the research processes (more details in [Table 4 in Appendix C](#)) undertaken at Gold Creek school and Margaret Hendry School. Initial ethics application and amendment to ethics application was submitted to University of Canberra Ethics Committee and approval (number 9262) was obtained before gathering data in both school contexts.

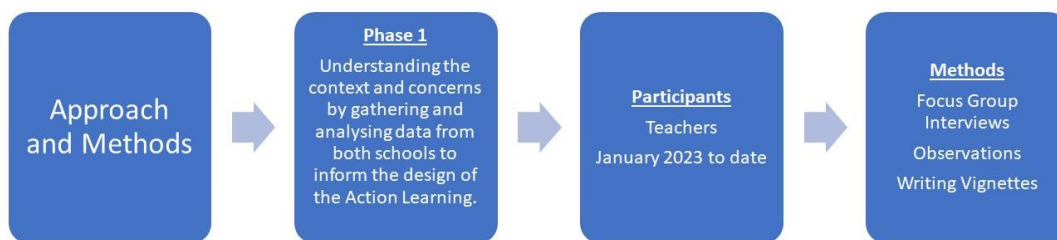


Figure 4 Research approach and methods used at Gold Creek School

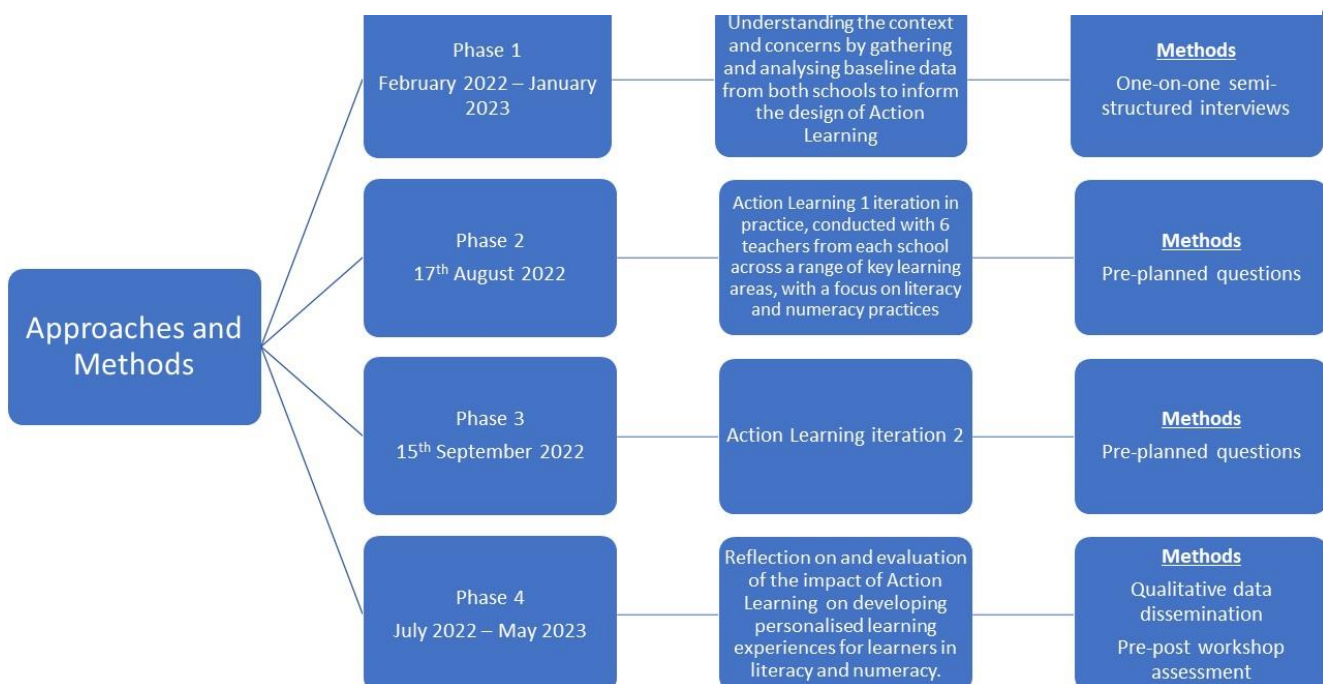


Figure 5 Research approach and methods used at Margaret Hendry School

3.3 Key findings and outcomes

As the study progressed, both participating schools began to engage in professional learning tailored based on the teacher roles ascertained via the systematic literature review. The implications show that teacher professional learning must involve a culture shift which requires a slow and adaptive process for learning and evolving to transform teachers to lead creating a student driven learning culture considering learner assets.

Findings pertaining to Research Questions

Research question 1 - What challenges do teachers face with regards to designing and implementing Personalised learning at Gold Creek and Margaret Hendy school

The analysis of teachers' discussions during Action Learning meetings provided a clearer understanding of the challenges associated with personalised learning in the context of time constraints, student preferences, progress monitoring, coping with change, large class sizes, reporting and accountability, and striking the right balance between instruction and independence. While the teachers generally shared similar concerns and challenges regarding personalised learning, there was a slight disagreement on the impact of reporting and accountability processes. One teacher highlighted the reporting process and the need to adhere to specific achievement standards as a major obstacle to personalise learning. They mentioned that teachers often face difficulties in providing evidence of personalised instruction when they are required to report against standardised criteria. This reporting-driven accountability system can discourage teachers from fully embracing personalised learning. Another teacher discussed other challenges, such as time constraints and student preferences. This suggests a difference in perspectives regarding the extent to which reporting, and accountability processes hinder personalised learning.

Findings from the study suggest that teachers' understanding of personalised learning was varied, and they found personalised learning to be complex. Teachers had different perspectives on personalised learning and acknowledged its potential benefits but also highlighting challenges such as standardised evaluation, time constraints, diverse student needs, and the mindset of teachers. Thus, they need assistance from experts to enact it. Action learning iterations at Gold Creek suggested that expert intervention is necessary to increase teacher cognition and confidence in relation to personalised learning.

During the initial data collection phase, it became apparent that teachers had several concerns regarding the implementation of personalised learning. These ranged from

defining personalised learning to determining how it could be implemented. To address these concerns, a series of workshops were organised to discuss and debate the different aspects of personalised learning. These workshops enabled teachers to gain a better understanding of the concept. Following a review of the requirements of teachers and school leaders of the participating schools, we conducted further workshops to facilitate teacher professional development. These workshops were grounded on the findings of the systematic review of literature conducted pertaining to the identification of teacher roles in personalised learning ([See figure 1 in appendix D](#)). Our objective was to provide teachers with clarity around the definition of personalised learning and to then support them to gradually implement personalised learning in their classrooms.

Research Question 2 - What are teachers' experiences and views on the Action Learning process in designing personalised learning?

During the Action Learning iterations conducted on 17th August 2022 and 15th September 2022, it was identified that teachers have differing views and interpretations about what personalised learning entails and how it may be enacted. This variation in knowledge is understandable as personalised learning is still a relatively new concept that has not been widely implemented in many educational settings in Australia. However, it is important that teachers understand the benefits of personalised learning and how it can improve student outcomes.

"The question's been raised lots of times, what is personalised learning? And if we can't even decide what personalised learning is, there's no way we are gonna walk out this meeting and then start going and implementing stuff to be personalised learning. But perhaps we need to look at, from the other perspective, what isn't personalised learning. And is there anything we can do, short term strategies, that might change that?" (Action Learning Iteration 01 - 17/08/2022).

The research team realised the importance of addressing this knowledge gap related to personalised learning. Therefore, we set out to explore teachers' experiences and views on their experiences and practices of personalised learning. A series of interviews were conducted with teachers who had implemented personalised learning in their classrooms to understand their experiences and views. The interviews revealed that teachers who had attempted to implement personalised learning in their classrooms found it to be both challenging and at the same time rewarding. Within such a background, we were able to

discern that personalised learning is not only a complex construct, but also a chaotic one that needs unpacking prior to using Action Learning as a tool to design personalised learning practices. We concluded that teachers need to be supported with resources and training to help them understand the complexities and nuances of personalised learning. This will, in turn, allow them to reap the full potential of this powerful educational practice.

Research Question 3 - What advantages does Action Learning offer in comprehending teachers' perspectives on personalised learning?

As previously stated, to implement Action Learning as a tool for personalised learning, it is important that teachers are provided with the necessary professional development. Therefore, it was concluded that it may be premature to implement Action Learning as a tool to design personalised learning practices at any school in the ACT until further learning is undertaken to help teachers better understand personalised learning in their school contexts.

“If we are talking about something different and doing pedagogy in a different way, and delivering curriculum in a different way, I would like to see really concrete examples. I'd like to have like a toolkit.”

“If I can have some more tools to help my kids, then I'd be putting my hands up for it. And if this would be something that would work, then I'd put my hand up for it. But I don't feel like I'm any more enlightened as to how to do it than I was before”
(Action Learning Iteration 02 – 15/09/2022)

As these quotes suggest, teachers are still struggling to clearly define personalised learning for themselves and desire further clarity to enact it before they can engage in Action Learning as an approach to developing their future practice.

Research Question 4 - What is the suggested process for personalised learning and what are the constraints?

Action Learning is regarded as a powerful tool that can help teachers create a more personalised learning experience for their students. It involves working in teams to solve real-world problems and reflecting on the learning process to improve performance. However, to fully benefit from this approach to professional learning, teachers require structured professional learning. Without this learning, teachers may not be able to effectively implement Action Learning in their classrooms and gain the full benefit of their efforts. Hence, providing teachers with the necessary professional development is crucial to

the successful implementation of Action Learning as an approach to develop personalised learning practices. This training can include workshops, seminars, and online courses that focus on developing the skills and knowledge required to effectively use Action Learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to invest in professional development for their teachers before implementing Action Learning as a tool for personalised learning. By doing so, teachers will be better equipped to create a more engaging and personalised learning experience for their students.

Key Outcomes

The project has yielded clear measurable outcomes that are listed below (details of these outcome are also presented in [Table 2 in the appendix B](#)).

Outcome 1: The team has completed writing two journal papers to disseminate research findings to wider community and submitted them to Q1 journals in teacher education (see details below). The team is currently working on two research publications which will be submitted in due course.

- 1) Personalised learning: the simple, the complicated, the complex and the chaotic (revision submitted to *Teachers and Teacher Education*) (main author - Maya Gunawardena: co-authors: Penny Bishop & Kithmini Aviruppola
- 2) Insights into Personalised Learning Research and Practice: A Systematic Review (Under review by *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education* (Main author: Maya Gunawardena: co-authors: Sitti Pathahuddin & Kithmini Aviruppola

Outcome 2: Generating an opportunity for international collaboration in research and practice: an expert in research on personalised learning, Professor Penny Bishop joined the team and working in collaboration in our future research and professional development.

Outcome 3: Establishing a long-term collaboration with the participating schools: We have run several professional development workshops for teachers. Maya Gunawardena and Emily Hills are in the Action Plan of Gold Creek school (please see the attached action plan)

Outcome 4: Initiating dialogue and discussion with the public about personalised learning: publishing an article in *the Conversation* followed by three interviews with ABC radio channels.

Outcome 5: Initiating dialogue and discussion with university academics, schoolteachers, and leaders about personalised learning.

Outcome 6: Hosting a symposium on personalised learning at University of Canberra on 8th June 2023 and it was attended by teachers in the ACT, NSW and Victoria and professionals from the ACT Education Directorate and university academics from Australia and overseas.

3.4 Impact

The project has yielded intentional and unintentional impact promoting a strong collaboration between school leaders, teachers, and university researchers both locally, nationally, and internationally. The below are key impact of the project and a detailed description is provided in [Table 4 in appendix C:](#)

- Professional development for teachers and sustainable research collaboration between University of Canberra academics and teachers in the ACT Education Directorate
- Yield sustainable collaboration between co-investigators from ACT Directorate and University of Canberra teachers educators
- Provided professional development opportunities for teachers at Gold Creek and Margaret Hendry School to participate in the Action Learning process that informs their design of personalised learning
- Develop a systematic and empirically tested model for designing personalised learning in ACT schools that could be applied in all schools in the future
- Inform the practices of the University of Canberra Education Faculty Affiliated Schools programs such as Teachers as Researchers, as well as provided multiple Master class opportunities.
- Provided measures to meet the Affiliated Schools Strategic objectives

3.5 Engagement, Dissemination and Sustainability

Professional development of teachers

This project has provided more opportunities for professional development for teachers than it predicted at the proposal stage. Through collaboration between University of Canberra academics, US scholars and the two schools, teachers were able to receive professional learning and guidance on what personalised learning is, and the role of the teacher in the implementation of personalised learning. It has allowed the teachers to develop new skills, gain new knowledge, and improve their teaching practices to align with personalised learning. Through various workshops and training sessions, teachers were able

to improve their understanding of personalised learning and how it can be implemented in a classroom. At the point of writing this report, two further professional development sessions are scheduled to continue learning at Gold Creek School. Through this professional development program, we will be able to contribute directly to the betterment of education in the ACT in the future.

Sustainable partnerships in ACT Schools

The project has successfully established a sustainable research collaboration between University of Canberra academics and teachers in the selected schools in the ACT. This collaboration has allowed for the exchange of ideas and knowledge between the two groups, leading to the development of new teaching methods and techniques (Attach the Action Plan of Gold Creek). This collaboration has the potential to lead to the implementation of evidence-based personalised learning practices in the classroom, which may lead to the eventual improvement of the overall quality of education.

International Scholars

As part of this project, a sustainable partnership has also been established between international scholars from the USA (as personalised learning is legislated as a school model in 31 states in the USA) to illuminate discussions related to this topic that is outlined in the ACT government's Future of Education Strategy.

Dissemination

The results of the research carried out in the ACT and necessary provocations have been published or are currently under review for publications in Q1 journals. The results were also disseminated through presentations at various forums. Attached as Annexure is a list of research publications currently under review, those in progress, as well as those that are planned publications. In addition, to deliver the research results of the project and promote discussion and knowledge regarding personalised learning, an article has been published in 'The Conversation' which has reached an audience of 17,000 both locally and internationally. Moreover, a resource hub has been created (subject to updates) with free public access to the personalised learning resources to facilitate the spread of knowledge on personalised learning.

Sustainability

Despite the focus of the proposal being on using Action Learning as a tool to implement personalised learning in ACT schools, the research team has succeeded in cultivating an ongoing interest in personalised learning among teachers and school leaders. This has resulted in a recognition of the importance of addressing the teacher knowledge gap to effectively implement personalised learning in ACT schools (please find Gold Creek School's Action Plan attached to this report) The research team has provided workshops and resources that can be used to support and guide teachers in implementing personalised learning. The team also created opportunities for networks and forums for teachers to share their experiences and knowledge with the Symposium on personalised learning. The research team has identified the need for schools to receive research-led support in implementing personalised learning and has already submitted another application for an internal research grant to implement the second phase of this study – “Experimentation on Culturally Adaptive, Cohesive, and Sustainable Teacher Empowerment Program (CAC-STEP): Personalised Learning Intervention”, which could lead to an ARC Linkage grant in the future. In this proposal, further collaborative work in the development of professional development to support more teachers to engage in the various teacher roles associated with personalised learning is proposed as a way forward in continuing to build the capacity of ACT teachers to engage in personalised learning practices.

3.6 Wider implications

This project holds significant implications for education in the ACT and beyond. Its objective was to implement Action Learning as a tool to design and implement personalised learning practices in classrooms. Personalised learning is regarded as the future of education in ACT schools, as it has been observed to effectively engage disengaged students from diverse backgrounds by tailoring learning experiences to their individual interests and abilities (ACT Government Future Education Strategy).

The project identified several challenges faced by teachers in designing and implementing personalised learning in schools despite their interests. To enhance teacher cognition and provide the necessary support for implementing personalised learning, action learning iterations were conducted. However, teachers exhibited a limited understanding of personalised learning and found it to be a complex concept. They required assistance from experts to effectively implement personalised learning strategies.

Through interviews, the study explored teachers' experiences and perspectives on personalised learning. The findings revealed that teachers perceived personalised learning to be both challenging and rewarding. It was acknowledged that personalised learning is a multifaceted and intricate concept that necessitates careful comprehension and unpacking. To fully grasp the complexities of personalised learning and implement it effectively in their classrooms, teachers need to be supported with resources and training (Bishop et al., 2019). The findings indicate that implementing Action Learning as a tool for personalised learning necessitates adequate professional development and training for teachers (Gunawardena et al., under review-a, b). Hence, introducing Action Learning as a design tool for personalised learning in schools without providing the necessary support and resources to teachers may be premature.

Moving forward, the research team will continue to work with Gold Creek School and Margaret Hendry School in providing professional development workshops on the role of teachers in the enactment of personalised learning. These workshops will be continuously adapted and collaboratively designed alongside teachers within each of the schools to ensure that the learning meets the teachers at their point of need and supports them to continue to strengthen their knowledge, skills and dispositions towards personalised learning. In addition, a submission has already been made to present the findings of the current project at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) as part of a larger symposium on the impact of the Affiliated Schools partnership. Finally, a future application for funding to deepen and broaden the learning and impact of this research has been submitted as part of the latest round of Affiliated Schools funded research projects.

3.7 Conclusion and reflections

Our research found that whilst teachers have some understanding of the concept of personalised learning, they required further support to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively design learning experiences that are tailored to the individual needs of students. The need for further learning can be a barrier to the implementation of personalised learning and must be addressed if personalised learning is to be successful. In summary, the project contributes to raising teachers' awareness of personalised learning. It underscores the importance of providing ongoing support, training, and resources for teachers to successfully implement personalised learning strategies. The project's findings and recommendations have broader implications for educational practices, emphasising the

need for a comprehensive approach to personalised learning and the significance of equity and social justice in education. In particular, the research team found that professional learning is necessary, but traditional professional learning where teachers are simply told what to do is not appropriate for learning about a complex phenomenon such as personalised learning. Hence, the study proposes a culturally adaptive model in which learning, purposeful dialoguing, collaborating, co-designing, enacting, and reflecting are essential elements of the adaptive process which begins in compliance, but leads to co-evolving.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Table 1: Financial Report (project R01295)

Specific Budget item	Allocation of Funds			Balance
	Funds	In-Kind	ACT Education	
UC Personnel				
Assistant Prof Maya Gunawardena (FTE=0.2)	\$66,286.00			
Assistant Prof Sitti Patahuddin (FTE=0.05)	\$16,572.00			
Assistant Prof Emily Hills (FTE=0.05)	\$13,116.00			
Research Assistant (TBC) 780h across 10 months (assist with literature review, data collection, data analysis, report writing)		\$45,670.00	\$46,205.55	-\$535.55
ACT Teachers				
Exec Teacher Tamsyn Terry, Gold Creek HS (58 hours)		\$6,032.00	\$6,000.00	\$32.00
<i>Margaret Hendry School</i>		\$22,680.00	\$12,000.00	\$3,710.00
<i>Gold Creek HS</i>			\$6,970.00	
Project activities and research dissemination				
Keynote address – Penny Bishop		\$6,032.00	\$9,660.50	-\$3,628.50
Transcription Services (transcribing interviews, focus groups and action learning conversations)		\$1,500.00	\$1,499.00	\$1.00
Symposium - Venue, Catering, x 50 participants 1 day		\$3,000.00	\$2,890.00	\$110.00
Video Production (creating video resources)		\$2,500.00	\$1,320.00	\$1180.00
Miscellaneous - Stationery materials		\$1,000.00	\$559.17	\$440.83
Videographers (capturing videos of the Action learning)		\$2,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
Editorial Services (editing journal papers and other publications)		\$1,200.00	\$1,176.00	\$24.00
Workshop (Action Learning sessions) catering (tea, coffee for action learning sessions with teachers)		\$800.00	\$518.91	\$281.09
Conference- Research Dissemination - Registration ONLY		\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	\$0.00
Total for year 2021 & 2022 (excluding GST)	\$95,974.00	\$94,514.00	\$85,198.09	\$2,614.87

Appendix B – Table 2: Key outcomes in details

Outcome	Description of Outcome
<p>A journal paper publication (under-review)</p> <p>Personalised learning: the simple, the complicated, the complex and the chaotic (Gunawardena, M; Bishop, P; Aviruppola, K)</p>	<p>The study conducted 8 semi-structured interviews with the teachers at Gold Creek School: each interview ranged from 40-50 minutes of time. Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed using a software named “Descript”. Upon transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions were subjected to coding and generated themes by using NVivo. Using complexity theory as a theoretical framework, the data were analysed, and examined the participants’ responses to interviews and used NVivo to code data according to the classifications of simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic. Applying the four classifications of complexity theory helped to delineate how participants perceived personalised learning and offered entry points into potential implementation. Findings showed that personalising the learning is not only complex, but it is complicated and chaotic for teachers to enact, despite their keen interest.</p>
<p>Insights into Personalised Learning Research and Practice: A Systematic Review (Gunawardena, M; Patahuddin, S; Aviruppola, K).</p>	<p>This study investigated how personalised learning is defined and implemented by conducting a systematic review of twelve reviews on personalised learning published between 2016-2021. This qualitative analysis highlighted that personalised learning maximises student-centred education when students have voice, choice, and flexibility in meeting desirable learning outcomes. This paper highlights the characteristics of personalised learning, teacher roles and implications for future research on personalised learning in modern education to ensure equity and social justice.</p>
<p>A journal paper publication in progress (Hills, E., Gunawardena, M., & Aviruppola, K.)</p> <p>A holistic approach to personalised instruction: An ethnographic case study (Gunawardena, M., Wood, K., Aviruppola, K.)</p>	<p>The study conducted six focus groups discussions with 38 teachers at teachers at work at Margaret Hendry school. Each group ranged from 05 – 10 teachers. Data were transcribed using a software named “Descript”, coded, and subsequently subjected to thematic analysis by using NVivo software. This provided implications for developing professional learning for teachers.</p> <p>This paper reports on our ethnographic inquiry about the practices at Margaret Hendy School (MHS) in Canberra. This paper presents a literature review of the principles that supported the design of MHS’s approach to personalised learning. Finally, the paper illustrates our key findings with insights into the application of personalised learning as a holistic approach in primary school settings.</p>
<p>A journal paper publication (Planned)</p> <p>A systematic literature review on PL and Mathematics education (Patahuddin, S., Gunawardena, M., Terry, T., Aviruppola, K.)</p>	<p>There are five main research questions that will be addressed in this potential publication.</p> <p>(i) How is personalised learning defined within the field of mathematics education?</p> <p>(ii) What has been the practice of personalised learning in the mathematics classroom?</p> <p>(iii) What are the factors involved in successful personalised mathematics learning practices?</p> <p>(iv)How can personalised learning be utilised to improve students' mathematics performance? (v) What are the challenges in personalised mathematics learning? This study is intended to be carried out using factor analysis. A survey distributed to students will be analysed to ascertain whether the items in our survey</p>

Students' needs of personalised learning: A factor analysis (Patahuddin, S., Gunawardena, M., Aviruppola, K., Terry, T., & Hills, E.)	instruments were appropriate and relevant; whether the items drawn from the self-regulation study might be included in the PL instrument. Through this study, we intend to establish variables or dimensions to gauge how students felt about their learning and the need for more personalised support.
Generating an opportunity for collaborations with international experts.	Due to the intent and quality of the project, an international expert, Professor Penny Bishop, a scholar in personalised learning and Dean of the College of Education, University of Maine joined the team. Chief investigator Dr. Gunawardena spent time at Maine University exploring US approaches to personalised learning while conducting the study in the ACT with other team members.
Initiating dialogue and discussion with the public about personalised learning.	Dr Gunawardena, the chief investigator, published an article titled Personalised learning is billed as the 'future' of schooling: What is it and could it work? in The Conversation. This article has reached over 17,000 local and international audiences. The purpose of this article was not only to raise awareness among teachers, but to speak to a wider audience about the affordances of personalised learning. Following the publication of the Conversation article, Dr Gunawardena was interviewed by three ABC radio channels: ABC Perth, Adelaide, and Canberra.
Initiating dialogue and discussion with university academics, schoolteachers, and leaders about personalised learning.	Findings were presented at local and international forums as stated below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation at the Affiliated Schools Conference held on 22nd October 2021- Using Action Learning as a Tool for Developing Personalised Learning Experiences presented by Maya Gunawardena, Tamsyn Terry, & Sitti Patahuddin. 2. Presentation at Affiliated Schools Conference held on 12th October 2022- Teachers' Role in Personalised Learning: Lessons from a Systematic Literature Review presented by Maya Gunawardena, Sitti Patahuddin & Kithmini Aviruppola 3. Presentation on the 2nd of September 2022 - Insights into personalised learning: Co-creating a practical guide to enhance teacher cognition and professional development. Learning and Teaching Research Brown Bag, University of Maine, USA by Maya Gunawardena 4. Presentation on the 20 August 2022 - Personalised learning through digital and non-digital resources; professional development for teachers and school leaders in Indonesia by Maya Gunawardena 5. A Learning and Teaching seminar at University of Canberra Faculty of Education on the 30th of May 2023: Personalised learning: the pursuit of possibility and practicality by Maya Gunawardena 6. Presentation at University of Canberra research festival. At Pints and insights on the 5th of June: 2023 - Can you really personalise learning at school? by Maya Gunawardena
Offering a series of professional learning workshops on personalised learning for all teachers (approximately 150	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional learning on 27th February 2023: Professional Development on Personalised Learning: School Leaders at Gold Creek School by Maya Gunawardena, Emily Hills, Kithmini Aviruppola and Sitti Patahuddin. 2. Professional learning on 28th February 2023: Professional Development on Personalised Learning: Teachers – Critically Evaluating the Role of the

teachers) at the request of the executive team at Gold Creek school.	<p>Teacher as Data Collector/Analyst at Gold Creek School, by Maya Gunawardena, Emily Hills, Kithmini Aviruppola</p> <p>3. Professional learning on 23rd May 2023: Professional Development on Personalised Learning: Critically Evaluating the Role of the Teacher as Partner, at Gold Creek School by Maya Gunawardena, Emily Hills, & Kithmini Aviruppola</p> <p>4. Two future professional learning workshops scheduled be held at Gold Creek school to further unpack teacher roles in personalised learning in terms 3 & 4 of 2023.</p>
Hosting a symposium on personalised learning at University of Canberra on 8th June 2023.	<p>The Personalised Learning Symposium aimed to generate rich dialogue between researchers, school leaders and teachers in relation to the complex landscape of personalised learning. The symposium was delivered in hybrid mode and was well attended by delegated from both local and national schools. A total of 180 participants attended the symposium. The keynote speaker, Professor Penny Bishop, Dean of the University of Maine, College of Education and Human Development, explored the concept of personalised learning as a partnership between learners and teachers and addressed the common myths associated with personalisation. In addition to the keynote address, two panel discussions were hosted on various perspectives on personalised learning. Panel One: Conversations with education leaders & pioneer researchers, was chaired by Emily Hills and panellists included Professor Penny Bishop, Kate Wood (Principal, Margaret Hendry School), Alex Nagy (ACTED – Director, Enabling Pedagogies), and Fiona Senior-Conroy (NSW Department of Education – Director, Educational Leadership – Queanbeyan Network). Panel two: Provocations for practicing teachers, was chaired by Dr Tamsyn Terry and Dr Sitti Patahuddin with panellists Amelia Machen (Educator, Gold Creek School), Steve Sengstock (Educator, Gold Creek school), Shannon Birch (Deputy Principal, Margaret Hendry School), and Lachlan Ferguson (Acting SLC, Margaret Hendry school). To finish the symposium, the workshop titled Personalised learning: Demystifying the myths for practicality, possibility, and improved success was led by Professor Penny Bishop and Dr. Maya Gunawardena and 30 teachers and school leaders were in attendance.</p> <p>The personalised learning symposium generated rich dialogue between researchers, school leaders, and teachers in relation to the complex landscape of personalised learning. It revisited the discourses surrounding personalised learning and provoked and encouraged active discussion around what this means for the key stakeholders in education. With this symposium, the research team brought together policy and decision-makers, school leaders, and teachers from multiple Australian jurisdictions, with leading international and national researchers in the space of personalised learning. This event was marked as informative and engaging experience for all attendees.</p>
Developing a Graduate Certificate or micro credential (currently in draft)	<p>The two years of empirical research and practical experiences working with two schools and experiences with US partners provided the research team with opportunities for developing teacher education programs. A draft Graduate Certificate is currently under development in collaboration with Matthew Brown, Duncan Driver, and Penny Bishop.</p>

Appendix C – Table 3: Detailed information on Approach and Methods

Stages of the project	Timeline	Key activities	Research methods
Conducting a systematic review of literature on personalised learning (the studies from 2016-2021)	December 2021 – July 2022	The aim of the task was to identify how personalised learning is defined and implemented. The paper highlights the characteristics of personalised learning, teacher roles and implications for future research on personalised learning in modern education to ensure equity and social justice.	Searching – Defining search strings and the types of data bases Inclusion and exclusion of studies based on pre decided criteria. Assessment of the eligibility of the studies Synthesising the data Analysis of the study where the results were narrated, and the conclusions were reached.
Conducting 7 interviews with schoolteachers at Gold Creek School.	February 2022 – January 2023	Writing of a paper titled “ Personalised learning: the simple, the complicated, the complex and the chaotic (Gunawardena, M; Bishop, P; Aviruppola, K) This qualitative case study inquired into the perspectives of seven Australian secondary school teachers who reported interest in implementing personalised learning.	Semi-structured interviews with the teachers. One on one interviews were conducted with the teachers, and each interview ranged from 40-50 minutes of time. Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed using a software named “Descript”. Upon transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions were subjected to coding and generated themes by using NVIVO. Using complexity theory as a theoretical framework, the data were analysed, and examined the participants’ responses to interviews and used NVIVO to code data according to the classifications of simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic. Applying the four classifications of complexity theory helped to delineate how participants perceived personalised learning and offered entry points into potential implementation.

<p>Conducting workshops and Action Learning Meetings with teachers at Gold Creek School</p>	<p>First workshop on 19th July 2022 First Action Learning workshop was conducted on 17th August 2022 Second Action Learning workshop was conducted on 15th September 2022. Second workshop (for school leaders) on 27th February 2023 Third workshop (for schoolteachers) on 28th February 2023 Fourth workshop (for schoolteachers and leaders) on 23rd May 2023</p>	<p>The first workshop for teachers was conducted to stimulate their understanding of personalised learning. Action learning iterations were conducted with teachers with the intention of establishing practices to implement personalised learning. The second workshop for Gold Creek School leaders was conducted to discuss the needs and wants of teachers on the improvement of practices of personalised learning. The third workshop was catered to teachers on the teacher’s role of personalised learning as data collector/analyst (Figure 2) The fourth workshop was conducted to examine how the teachers implemented the activities presented in the previous workshop, and to explain the second role of teachers.</p>	<p>First workshop – Post workshop assessment. First Action Learning workshop – pre-planned questions, transcribing audio recordings. Second Action Learning workshop – pre-planned questions Second workshop – qualitative data dissemination Third workshop – Qualitative data dissemination Fourth workshop – pre workshop assessment</p>
<p>Conducting focus group interviews with teachers at Margaret Hendry School</p>	<p>January 2023 – up to now</p>	<p>Writing of a journal paper titled “A holistic approach to personalised instruction: An ethnographic case study” (Gunawardena, M; Wood, K; Bishop, K; Aviruppola, K) This paper reports on our ethnographic inquiry about the practices at Margaret Hendry School (MHS) in Canberra. This paper presents a literature review of the principles that supported the design of MHS’s approach to personalised learning. Finally, the paper illustrates our key findings with insights into the application of personalised learning as a holistic approach in primary school settings.</p>	<p>Conducting six focus group interviews with teachers where each group ranged from 05 – 10 teachers. Transcribing the focus group interviews by using a software named “Descript”. Coding and subsequent thematic analysis by using NVivo software. School visits as a part of the ethnographic inquiry and writing of vignettes for analysis.</p>
<p>Symposium on Personalised Learning</p>	<p>January 2023 – June 2023</p>	<p>A symposium was organised on personalised learning which attracted a wider audience ranging from schoolteachers to school leaders,</p>	<p>Pre workshop Assessment - https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&FormId=R1GvHUOIB0ei</p>

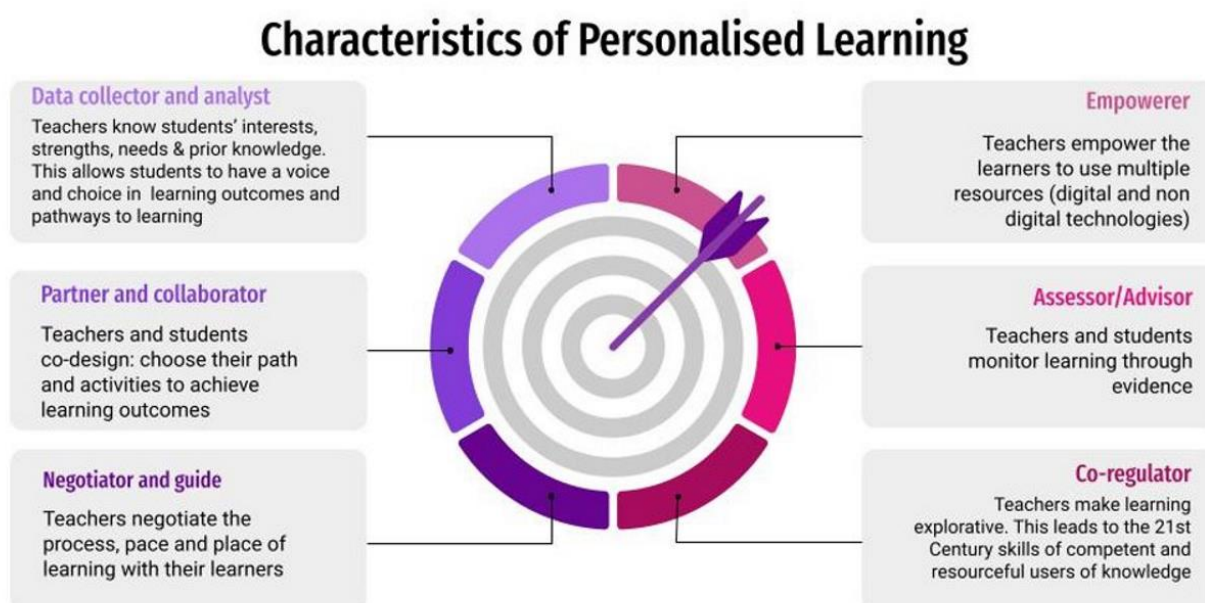
	<p>executives in education, and scholars. For more information on the symposium, please find the below link attached.</p> <p>https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties/education/affiliated-schools/as-research-program/symposium-personalised-learning</p>	<p>- yrPCyo5Np_4KuLHo3pPjmhg_pLCtidUM0c2TUMyTINJS0s2UVgxTk0WfQwS1RHRy4u&Token=9e793db3aa674353b5507501da03156e</p>
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Appendix D – Table 4: Research impact

Activity	Impact
<p>Professional development for teachers and sustainable research collaboration between University of Canberra academics and teachers in the ACT Education Directorate</p>	<p>University of Canberra academics and teachers and school leaders in the ACT Education Directorate collaborated with a group of American scholars and teachers.</p> <p>(i) Professor Penny Bishop (Dean, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine)</p> <p>(ii) Dr. John Downes</p> <p>Prof. Penny Bishop attended the Symposium on personalised learning on the 8th of June 2023. This symposium provided opportunities not only for teachers in the ACT but also teachers in NSW, Melbourne (who attended the symposium both online and in person), to establish partnerships with professionals from the University of Canberra and the US and to collaborate with them. The project has therefore impacted collaborations and partnerships with international colleagues, making it necessary to expand its scope to achieve greater success.</p>
<p>Yield sustainable collaboration between co-investigators from ACT Directorate and University of Canberra teacher educators</p>	<p>The project has created numerous opportunities for teachers from the ACTED and University of Canberra researchers to develop sustainable collaborative relationships. For example, Maya Gunawardena and Emily Hills are critical friends at Gold Creek, their names are mentioned in their annual plan. Maya also works closely with Margaret Hendry School to support the ongoing implementation and improvement of personalised learning practices across the school.</p>
<p>Provide professional development opportunities for teachers at Gold Creek and Margaret Hendry School to participate in the Action Learning process that informs their design of personalised learning</p>	<p>The project has offered professional development more than it proposed in the initial project proposal. Offering workshops for teacher professional development for 150 teachers at Gold Creek school is one example. Please see the list of presentations under the key outcomes section in this report.</p> <p>The project team has compiled professional development modules for teachers in consultation with Prof. Penny Bishop and Dr. John Downes.</p> <p>It is anticipated that these professional development activities will be further revised and modified in the next iteration of the project. A website with resources for professional learning has also been created in consultation with US scholars.</p>

<p>Develop a systematic and empirically tested model for designing personalised learning in ACT schools that could be applied in all schools in the future</p>	<p>Due to issues experienced with the complexity of personalised learning, proposed Action Learning did aid in understanding the challenges in facilitating personalised learning for diverse students and in developing a model for professional development. However, the project has seen potential professional learning that needs a cultural shift and an adaptive model (proposed in publications 1 and 2)</p>
<p>Allow opportunities for extending the research into other school contexts in the ACT and beyond</p>	<p>The project has presented research findings and propositions at numerous forums. In particular, the symposium on 8th June 2023 allowed opportunities for extending the findings of this research into other school contexts in ACT and beyond. Further, it opened an avenue for teachers from ACT, NSW, and Melbourne to connect and share their experiences.</p>
<p>Inform the practices of the University of Canberra Education Faculty Affiliated Schools programs such as Teachers as Researchers, as well as provide multiple Master class opportunities.</p>	<p>Graduate Certificate in personalised learning, which is currently at the draft stage, is intended to be introduced as a micro credential course offered by the University of Canberra.</p>
<p>Provide measures to meet the Affiliated Schools Strategic objectives</p>	<p>In addition to aligning with the strategic objectives of the Affiliated Schools, the current project outcomes are also complementary to the Future of Education Strategy of the ACT government (more fully described above).</p> <p>In disseminating research, Dr. Gunawardena presented the research completed so far at the Research Festival of the University of Canberra “Pints and Insights”.</p>

Appendix E: Figure 1: The six teacher roles



Gold Creek School

Network: North Canberra/ Gungahlin

Action Plan 2023

The purpose of this document

This is a *working document* and should be read in conjunction with, and flows directly from, our School Improvement Plan which articulates:

- a commitment to the Education Directorate's three Strategic Indicators for 2018-2021
 - > *To promote greater equity in learning outcomes in and across ACT public schools*
 - > *To facilitate high quality teaching in ACT public schools and strengthen educational outcomes*
 - > *To centre teaching and learning around students as individuals*
- our priorities, as informed by the Directorate's Strategic Indicators and analysis of multiple sources of evidence, are:
 - > Increase students' connection to community through building school pride
 - > Build students' ownership of learning through increased agency
 - > Improve students' achievement through evidenced based personalised learning

This Action Plan (AP) translates the actions to be taken in the current year of our five-year school improvement cycle, continuing the emphasis on:

- improving student outcomes
- monitoring and implementation of an inquiry approach to action school improvement
- monitoring and inquiry to inform daily teaching
- identification and mitigation of risks to the delivery of our five-year School Improvement Plan.

Changes affecting our school's annual planning

- 2023 is the second year of the new School Improvement Plan 2022-2026 cycle. The beginning of this cycle follows an ACER School Review and an International Baccalaureate Evaluation which were undertaken at the beginning of 2021.
- The school commenced use of the new IB Standards and Practices in 2022, aligning current strategic action plans to the new IB framework elements of purpose, culture, learning and environment, to successfully integrate the IB philosophy within our school's unique context.
- 2022 saw some strategic actions impacted by the prevalence of COVID related restrictions. These actions will be carried over to the 2023 annual action plan

Our school's approach to inquiry and professional learning communities

- The school commenced using the Spiral of Inquiry as a tool for PLCs in 2021. The school's PLC model will continue to be developed and refined in 2022 to drive the new strategic priorities.

Strategies and actions

Priority 1: Increase students' connection to community through building school pride

Strategies

1. Continue to implement a whole school approach to developing a safe and respectful learning environment through Positive and Inclusive Education (Formerly PBL)
2. Reinvigorate Service as Action in the senior school to build community connections (Community Action)

Actions

What is the intended impact on student learning?	What will be produced ?	Who will lead this?	What resources will be allocated?
ACTION: Continue to implement and strengthen Positive Education approach for learning through PBL Dashboard data and token systems			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A whole school focus on acknowledging and celebrating positive behaviours towards learning engagement. ▪ An increase in the number of positive incidents recorded where students are engaging with their learning. ▪ A reduction in the number of negative incidents recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The token system and data systems for tracking and measuring positive behaviour will be strengthened and embedded in the student wellbeing data collection. ▪ Whole school expectations will be defined and communicated through essential agreements. ▪ Consistent strengths based practices based on Berry Street Education Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Positive Education Working group ▪ School leadership team. ▪ All staff ▪ Berry Street Education Model trained staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PBL Data Tracker training is provided by the Directorate. ▪ A PBL budget line has been established in this year's budget considerations. ▪ PL during staff meeting time ▪ Excursion costs
ACTION: Reinvigorate Service as Action in the senior school to build community connections			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will participate in service as action as a way to form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will present their projects/approaches to peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MYP Coordinators ▪ Year Executives ▪ Senior Site Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budget line for projects ▪ MYP planning time allocation

What is the intended <i>impact</i> on student learning?	What will be <i>produced</i> ?	Who will <i>lead</i> this?	What <i>resources</i> will be allocated?
connections to and give back to community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will understand the importance of working toward positive common goals to promote community connection. 			
ACTION: Establish baseline data on the proficiency level of staff to establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all students, create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks, establish clear expectations with students and incorporate the safe and responsible use of ICT in learning and teaching. through the School based survey based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers descriptors 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.5			

Priority 2: Build students' ownership of learning through increased agency

Strategies

- Increase student **agency, voice, and choice** explicitly within in the learning program and learning environment (pedagogy) (NSIT)
- Establish student led focus groups/forums

Actions

What is the intended <i>impact</i> on student learning?	What will be <i>produced</i> ?	Who will <i>lead</i> this?	What <i>resources</i> will be allocated?
ACTION: Increase opportunities for students to develop or exercise agency through taught units			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in student agency, voice and choice across the whole school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A whole school definition of <i>agency as student voice at GCS</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning delivered by AP Nicole Jagers. Associate Principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PL learning time allocated during staff meeting time

What is the intended <i>impact</i> on student learning?	What will be <i>produced</i> ?	Who will <i>lead</i> this?	What <i>resources</i> will be allocated?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A greater professional knowledge of the principles of student agency. ▪ An increased level of engagement from students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A shared understanding of how to promote agency. ▪ Unit planners including opportunities for agency ▪ Student feedback included in planners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Leader Cs ▪ Staff ▪ Students 	
ACTION: Establish student focus groups/forums to provide baseline data for each of the SIP priorities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increased level of engagement from students. ▪ A greater understanding of what students see as important about their school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple data sets that relate to the GCS School Plan ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principal ▪ Associate Principals ▪ School Leader Cs ▪ Staff ▪ Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timetabled sessions ▪ Staffing considerations
ACTION: Establish baseline data on the proficiency level of staff to set challenging and achievable learning goals for all students and provide timely and appropriate feedback through the School based survey based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers descriptors 3.1 and 5.2			

Priority 3: Improve students' achievement through evidenced based personalised learning

Strategies

5. Continue work with critical friend Maya Gunawardena, Assistant Professor of Teacher Education and Emily Hills from UC on embedding an approach to personalised learning at GCS
6. Enhance and promote our processes around providing feedback to students and families.

Actions

What is the intended <i>impact</i> on student learning?	What will be <i>produced</i> ?	Who will <i>lead</i> this?	What <i>resources</i> will be allocated?
ACTION: Establish and begin to embed a shared understanding of the key characteristics of personalised learning at GCS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increased understanding of Personalised Learning ▪ An increase in student engagement in learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A whole school approach to embedding a Personalised Learning approach at GCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critical friends, Maya Gunawardena and Emily Hills ▪ Executive team ▪ Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PL budget considerations ▪ Allocation of resources for future PL ▪ Staff meeting time
ACTION: Create working groups to take carriage of reviewing current feedback practices and trial and adopt innovative practices to provide feedback to students			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through working groups, review current feedback processes ▪ Adopt and promote innovative approaches to providing explicit feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A whole school approach to embedding a Personalised Learning approach at GCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive staff ▪ Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff meeting time ▪ Budget considerations
ACTION: Establish baseline data on the proficiency level of staff to differentiate instruction in numeracy to meet specific learning needs through the School based survey based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers descriptors 1.5 and 2.5			