

Dr Cam McDonald — Harnessing Individual Strength to Team Success

Dr McDonald argued that schools must stop treating behaviour, student outcomes, wellbeing, educator wellbeing and leadership as separate silos. He demonstrated a precision approach that uses student learning profiles (biologically driven strengths such as learning style, energy/movement needs, risk-taking, social dynamics, motivation, focus, environment and emotional needs) to tailor teaching, behaviour supports and the learning environment.

Precision learning means using those individual profiles and insights from precision medicine to design targeted instruction and supports create lesson plans for different groups/individuals, deliver strength-based assessments, adapt the classroom to enable flow, and identify triggers that influence behaviour. Practical examples included precision behavioural strategies (e.g. an “Activator/Adrenaline” student benefits from movement and snacks to re-engage).

Student Learning Profile + Insights from Precision Medicine & Health	
BIOLOGICALLY DRIVEN STRENGTHS	Student 1 Activator - Adrenaline - Do First Think Later
Learning Style	Learn best by doing and thrive in adventurous, experiential activities. Prefer dynamic, fast-paced environments.
Energy & Movement	MUST MOVE - intensely - in short bursts. Struggle with sitting still. EARLY TYPE & HANGRY
Risk-Taking & Adaptability	Natural risk-takers , adapt quickly to new situations, and learn by doing
Social Dynamics	Expressive, charismatic . Direct & blunt
Motivation	Challenges, competition , and opportunities to showcase their abilities.
Focus & Variety	Need variety to stay engaged; repetitive tasks lead to boredom.
Strengths	Quick thinkers, proactive problem-solvers, excel in fast-paced decision-making.
Environment	Thrive in stimulating, dynamic settings with opportunities for movement and interaction.
Emotional Needs	Feel most confident when they can express themselves and take initiative

“Guardian/Prolactin” student needs reassurance and acknowledgement) and the educator expectations slide (understand individual needs, plan differentiated lessons, use strength-based assessment, adapt environment, know individual triggers).

Student Learning Profile + Insights from Precision Medicine & Health

BIOLOGICALLY DRIVEN STRENGTHS

Student 2

Guardian - Prolactin - 'You First'

Learning Style

Thrive in structured, predictable environments. Prefer clear expectations and well-defined roles.

Energy & Movement

Prefer steady-paced physical tasks over intense activities. Very strong - 2-3 meals/day

Risk-Taking & Adaptability

Stability over rapid shifts; methodical learners who favour consistency.

Social Dynamics

Sociable and value deep, meaningful relationships. Generous, caring

Motivation

Motivated by recognition and acknowledgment of their efforts.

Focus & Variety

Prefer steady, uninterrupted focus; comfortable with familiar, predictable methods.

Strengths

Dependable, loyal, hardworking, and excel in roles requiring patience and long-term commitment.

Environment

Perform best in calm, stable settings with minimal stress or chaos.

Emotional Needs

NEED EVERYONE TO FEEL SAFE BEFORE ENGAGING

He framed this as four leadership priorities: lead precision learning (what you are leading), manage the intersection of behaviour/wellbeing/outcomes, adopt precision leadership practices, and prepare for the AI-driven paradigm shift that will accelerate personalised approaches. The core message: harness individual strengths to improve student outcomes and team success.