

CASE STUDY

SOUTHERN RIVER COLLEGE

Examining Teach For Australia's contribution to leadership progression and school improvements at Southern River College

2022



CONTENTS

About this project	4
About Lirata	4
Acknowledgement of Country	5
Acknowledgements	5
Suggested Citation	5
Introduction to Southern River College	6
Southern River College partners with TFA	8
Improvement focus	9
Pedagogy and excellence in teaching and learning	9
Academic achievements and student pathways	11
Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR)	12
National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)	14
Additional learning support	15
STEM improvements	16
What has been critical to success?	17
Challenges along the way	18
How have TFA teachers contributed?	19
References	22

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This is one of four case studies that have been developed as part of a research project that aims to identify the impact, at school level, when a school partners with Teach for Australia (TFA). The research will identify the range of improvements and achievements experienced in each school since partnering with TFA. There are many factors which influence change in schools, and the case study data collection will seek evidence that indicates how and whether TFA's work is connected with educational change. This research seeks to build our understanding of the factors relating to both TFA's program, and the school context, that help or hinder improvements and achievements. We specifically explore how TFA associate and graduate teachers contribute to those improvements and achievements. The project also looks for ways in which TFA can improve its support of teachers, schools and communities facing educational disadvantage.

The findings of the research will be important to TFA and to the case study schools through providing insight into school change and impact, both as a source of evidence to inform program or educational improvement, and as useful source material for communications and advocacy at school and system level. Common themes arising from the four case studies, pathways of impact in relation to TFA's program logic and opportunities for program improvement will be presented to TFA in a clear and well-evidenced research report at the conclusion of these studies.

TFA contracted Lirata to conduct this research project.

ABOUT LIRATA

Lirata (www.lirata.com) is a small, independent not-for-profit organisation based in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia. We support the work of individuals and organisations who are responding to those in need. We partner widely to develop constructive solutions to social issues.

We specialise in the health, community services, education and development sectors, within Australia and internationally. We work with all tiers of government, service providers, peak bodies, advocacy organisations, socially engaged businesses and many others to assist them to:

- Become more effective in achieving their goals
- Achieve greater sustainability
- Adopt more ethical and empowering approaches.

We operate as a social enterprise, delivering our work through consultancy, capacity building and systems advocacy. We assist our partner organisations with monitoring and evaluation, organisational and program review, strategic and operational planning, organisational development, data systems development, training and mentoring. We also develop new approaches, tools and frameworks for social justice work.

The Lirata team for this research has been led by Pam Kennedy and includes Karen Rosauer, Dr Leannda Read, Mark Planigale and Celia Clapp, with Dr Dorothy Bottrell providing expert advice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of all the lands and waters throughout Australia on which our work takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Lirata team would like to acknowledge and thank the Principal of Southern River College, Ms Everal Eaton, the Leadership Team and the many teachers we interviewed for their valued contribution to this case study. Their enthusiastic willingness to be involved, to share their insights, to chase up data as evidence and to reflect on their school's journey enabled a powerful story of change and improvement to emerge. We wish them well as they continue to inspire students, teachers, leaders and community to excel and achieve.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Kennedy, P., Rosauer, K., Read, L. & Clapp, C. 2021. Case study – Southern River College. Melbourne: Lirata Consulting.

INTRODUCTION TO SOUTHERN RIVER COLLEGE

To provide context for findings of the case study, Southern River College's Vision, Values, College Priorities and school data are presented here.

OUR VISION

We inspire every child, every day in everything we do.

OUR RIVER VALUES

RELATIONSHIPS | CARING COLLABORATIVE COURTEOUS

Without positive relationships with students, teachers and our community we will only have a limited impact on changing school culture. We are the prime role models for driving positive relationships and driving positive relationships within the College. This needs to be at the forefront of everything we do and as a team.

IDENTITY | CONFIDENCE INDIVIDUALITY PRIDE

Who are we as a College and what identity do our students hold of themselves? We need to challenge the status quo through our programs and our pastoral care of students. Each student needs to matter, each student needs to have a positive identity that contributes to the overall image of the College and we need to empower our teachers to have the same expectations that we have of a positive identity at Southern River College. Know all students we are responsible for!

VIRTUES | HONEST RESPONSIBILITY TRUST

As a team we already live and breathe this. Our challenge is for us to empower our students and colleagues to trust us and engage with what we are trying to achieve so that they take on responsibilities for student success.

EXCELLENCE | ASPIRATION DILIGENCE MOTIVATION

We need to have an invested interest in student success and what this looks like. Through our programs and our interactions with students and staff it is important that we aim to provide our students and colleagues with aspirations and the ability to achieve.

RESPECT | APPRECIATION EQUALITY UNDERSTANDING

Taking the time to acknowledge others and to understand the whole picture before we make judgements or decisions to assist staff or students with pastoral care. We also need to find the time to find the positives where we can and acknowledge our successes and efforts and the successes and efforts of others.



SCHOOL LOCATION:
METROPOLITAN



2021 STAFF COMPLEMENT:
73



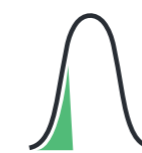
2021 STUDENT POPULATION:
950



INDEX OF COMMUNITY SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE SCORE:
937



ENROLMENT GROWTH OVER LAST FIVE YEARS:
DOUBLED



DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS:
52% IN BOTTOM QUARTILE



INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS:
9%



PROPORTION OF ENROLLED STUDENTS WHO SPEAK EALD:
30%

COLLEGE PRIORITIES 2021 – 2023

INSPIRED STUDENTS

We support every student to develop holistically and engage positively with their school community. We inspire students to be challenged, to grow and succeed, to achieve their full potential on their individual learning journey.

INSPIRING TEACHERS

We engage our knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy to inspire creativity, collaboration, empathy and innovation in a safe and supportive environment. We celebrate progress and achievements throughout the school community.

INSPIRE CULTURE

We believe that the culture of our school is the foundation of our practice, driven by outstanding governance, strong leadership, students and their aspirations.

INSPIRATIONAL COMMUNITY

We value and protect our sense of community, interest, action and country, that value the past, present and future of our students. Our community inspires and nurtures students with partnerships, pathways of connection and learning for the future.

SOUTHERN RIVER COLLEGE PARTNERS WITH TFA

When Southern River College became an independent public school in 2015 and first had contact with Teach for Australia (TFA), the college had already begun its improvement journey. This case study conveys their progress since then – it tells the story of a college in the city of Gosnells that sits in the bottom 20% of educational advantage in Australia and demonstrates that the college lives by its vision of, and commitment to, making a difference for its students and community.

Southern River College partnered with TFA to assist in achieving its goals and vision, and carefully established a warm environment where their first cohort of six TFA teachers could thrive. The college recognised the value in the collegiate support of having several TFA teachers in place, backed by strong, committed mentoring and leadership from senior staff and encouragement from their peers to succeed. In turn, Southern River College would benefit from having teachers with knowledge and expertise in key focus areas where gaps existed, such as Science and Mathematics, as well as bringing up-to-date, evidence-based teaching and learning methods to school practice (Southern River College [SRC], 2015).

In the period 2016-2020, the college has employed 26 teachers completing their teacher training under the TFA model, and plans to employ a further six TFA teachers who will undertake their Master of Teaching (Secondary) (Leading Learning) while teaching at the college in 2021-22. TFA applies a rigorous selection process for its teachers, which focuses on leadership potential and high levels of competence in their chosen fields. Fourteen of the 26 TFA teachers employed by the college remain in teaching or leadership positions in 2021 and, along with the new recruits, make up some 20 per cent of the teaching staff at Southern River College.



IMPROVEMENT FOCUS

One thing that stands out about Southern River College is their commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in all that they do; college leaders have established an environment in which efforts to improve student outcomes, school programs and culture can flourish. A range of improvements identified by the college have been grouped into three key related improvement areas. The first of these is exemplary teaching and learning practice being embedded across the curriculum, which has in turn enabled the second area of improvement, the development and ongoing commitment to a broader range of student pathways and improved academic achievements across pathways. The final focus area relates to the development of STEM as a pathway and as a part of the learning philosophy of the college.

PEDAGOGY AND EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Pedagogy describes how students will be taught and supported to learn, and “*combines the conceptual knowledge, practical skills and reflective capabilities which constitute the ‘art and science’ of teaching*” (WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority). Southern River College aims to ensure that its staff adopt best-practice, evidence-based teaching and learning practice across the curriculum, customised to the learning needs of students (SRC, 2016a). To that end the college has developed strong relationships with TFA, the Fogarty Foundation, Corwin and other bodies to provide its students the best teaching and learning opportunities and experiences.

This commitment to excellence in teaching and learning has seen the college introduce and embed a number of approaches to augment teaching and learning excellence since 2016. These include, but are not limited to:

- introducing the Fogarty Edvance Learning program to school leaders (2016 – 2018)
- implementing Explicit Instruction learning models (2017)
- staff mentoring with high performing schools (2018)
- implementing Visible Learning approaches (2019)
- introducing the Stanford Design Thinking Model (as used in the Inspire program for Years 7-10 students) (2019)
- the introduction of peer observation, critical reflection and learning communities among teachers (2019)
- introducing the Berry Street Education Model (2020)
- introduction of new whole-of-school pastoral care and pedagogical model (2020 – 2021), building on earlier improvements.

THE RIVER ROAD CENTRE caters for complex behaviours supporting students who require Tier 3 interventions and case management and is aligned to Berry Street modelling.

THE CENTRE FOR PEDAGOGY targets teachers leading and learning together to support Classroom Management Strategies (CMS), instructional strategies, frameworks for learning, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) practices

and is aligned to Visible Learning and John Hattie's work.

THE WELLBEING CENTRE team targets positive culture aligned to proactive pastoral care activities, celebration and sense of place for all staff and students using a growth mindset approach.

Southern River College plans to extend this model to include **THE CULTURAL CENTRE**, aligned with The River Road Centre and the college's Community and Aboriginal programs.

Staff have developed and adopted a shared language and understanding of good practice teaching and learning. One teacher commented: *"Explicit Instruction has been brilliant, really successful"*. Others noted how it had assisted in developing different behaviour management approaches.

Communication and collaboration within and across departments has improved; one of the outcomes of this has been a move towards more consistent, whole-of-school measurement of teaching and learning outcomes, attendance and engagement (SRC, 2019a). A greater emphasis on feedback, from other teachers, students and families, has been noted to influence practice improvement. Teachers now see the capabilities of their students in a very different light, and longer-tenure teachers note the very different aspirations that students have now, compared to students of the early years of this journey. One of the leadership group commented *"it's amazing, an exponential shift in aspirations. And the aspirations of community have changed for these kids"*.

**"Whatever you are doing in that school,
keep doing it."**

- Parent

A parent recently made this comment to the Principal, noting not only changes in the school community, but also the flow-on effect this had into the broader community. He went on to reflect, *"if the school had been able to do twenty years ago what it is doing now, the whole community would be different today"*.

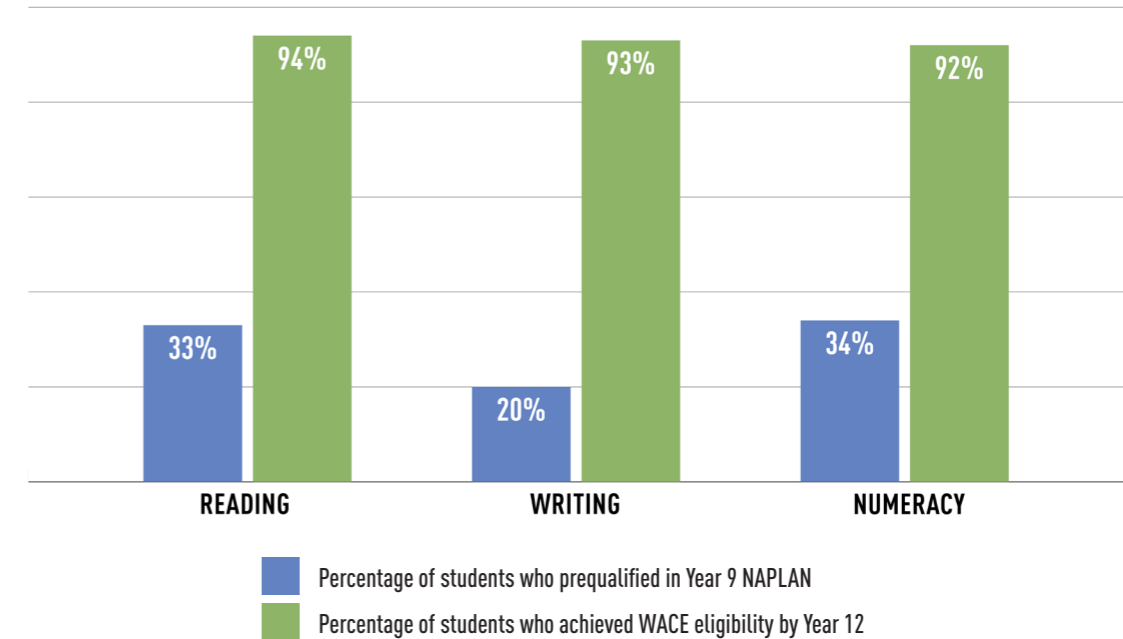


ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND STUDENT PATHWAYS

Southern River College recognises the many different pathways that students can take to achieve their unique aspirations, and has committed to providing those pathways and enabling success. Students now have a greater understanding of the variety of pathways open to them, and of the importance of the various assessment elements that are gateways towards them – for example, the Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA). While improvements in OLNA performance are a work in progress, teachers noted improvements in OLNA scores since 2018, with students now seeking opportunities to upskill for OLNA.

ACHIEVING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (WACE)-ELIGIBLE* PERFORMANCE

2020 YEAR 12 COHORT



* Note: Students become WACE-eligible through achieving the required Reading, Writing and Numeracy Standards in their Year 9 NAPLAN performance or through OLNA performance in Year 10, 11 or 12 (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2020).

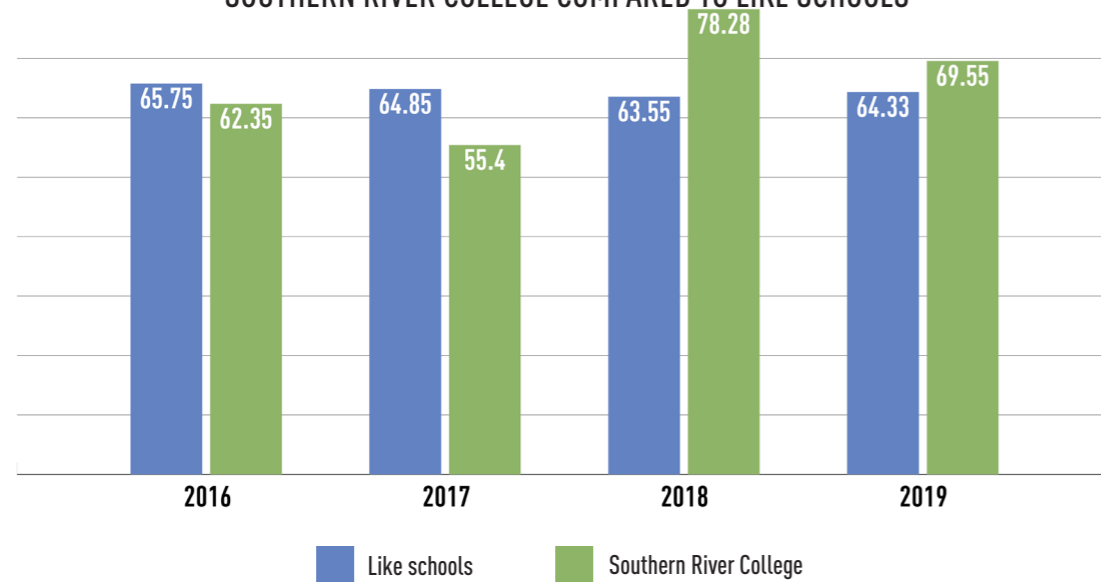
Teachers set high expectations for their students and hold them accountable for their learning. TFA teachers in particular were noted for this, and for building relationships with students that fostered tailored and accountable teaching and learning.

AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY ADMISSIONS RANK (ATAR)

Deliberate effort has been made to attract students of higher achievement potential to the college and provide appropriate ATAR pathways for these students, while maintaining a sound balance between ATAR and general pathways. The ATAR student cohort has grown from 2% to now more than 20% of senior students.

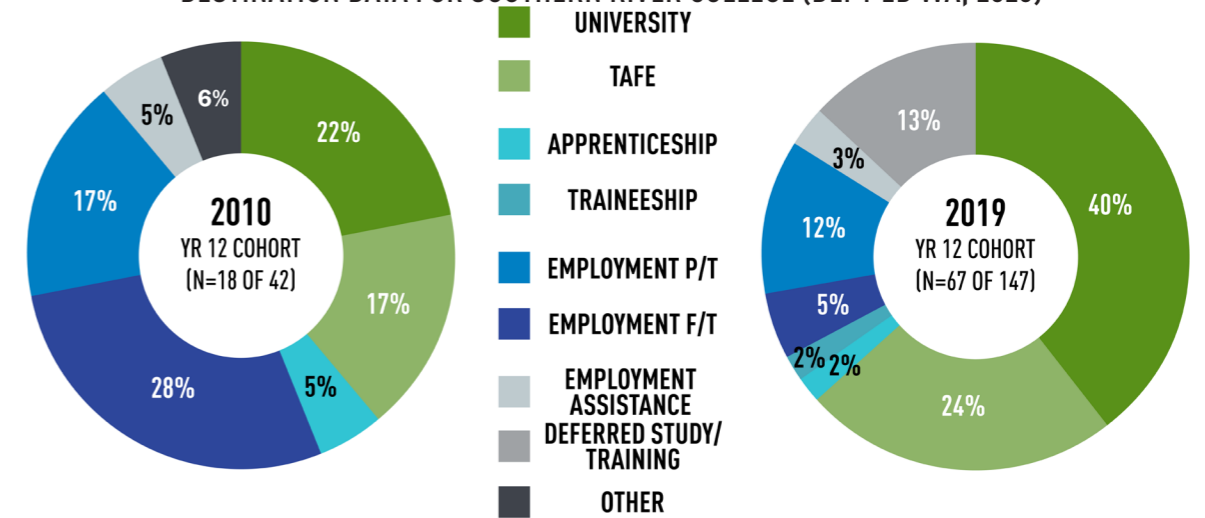
Southern River College achieved a breakthrough in terms of ATAR performance in 2018 and has continued to strengthen improvement strategies for ATAR students over time. College leaders noted that consistent methods of teaching practice across all learning areas as well as improved teacher-student collaboration and connection were critical to success. In 2018, the mean ATAR performance of students in five subjects (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics Methods and Mathematics Applications) were above like schools, and the college's performance in Maths Methods and Biology ranked substantially above the state mean. The college was the standout school for the South Metro Region in 2018; the average ATAR was 78.85, and the academic dux achieved an ATAR of 98.8, placing him within the top 1.2% of students nation-wide (SRC, 2018a). In 2019, the college again performed better than like schools overall in ATAR studies, with chemistry students achieving their highest average scaled score in three years, and students across all mathematics subjects again performing well compared to like schools (Department of Education Western Australia [Dept Ed, WA], 2019).

MEDIAN ATAR
SOUTHERN RIVER COLLEGE COMPARED TO LIKE SCHOOLS



In 2020, 23 of 108 Year 11-12 students completed an ATAR pathway, and greater numbers of general students aspired to a university pathway post-secondary. Although the 2020 median ATAR dropped a little compared with 2019 results, this remains a creditable performance in this pandemic year; it is of note that 6 students (26% of the ATAR cohort) achieved a score over 83.

DESTINATION DATA FOR SOUTHERN RIVER COLLEGE (DEPT ED WA, 2020)



Note: Destination data is sourced primarily from the Destination Survey conducted by the WA Department of Education of the previous year's Year 12 students. Hence data is not known for all students from the year. Of the 42 students who completed Year 12 in 2010, the post-secondary destination is known for 18 of these students (43%). Similarly, the destination of 67 (46%) of the 147 students from the 2019 cohort is known.

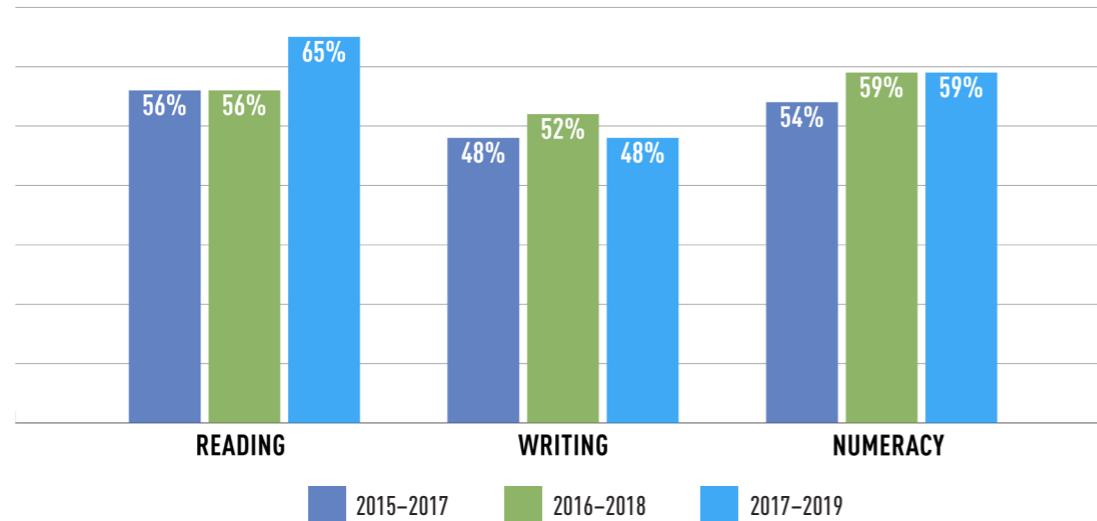
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM – LITERACY AND NUMERACY (NAPLAN)

Literacy and numeracy performance was a priority target area for Southern River College in the period 2018-2020. Hence improvements in NAPLAN performance are a specific focus area, with a number of initiatives in place to improve literacy and numeracy scores in Years 7 and 9, as well as supporting upper primary improvements. We have focused on Year 9 results, as these better reflect the impact of teaching and learning at the college.

In 2018 the college celebrated early positive results, stating “2018 NAPLAN results are the best in decades!” (SRC, 2018), with the college achieving at or above its priority targets for 2018. Year 9 Numeracy results in particular rated better than like schools, and Year 7 to 9 progress in Numeracy was significantly better than like schools. Year 9 Writing and Grammar and Punctuation performance were above predicted school mean and on par with like schools. The maths learning area showed a big shift in grading and assessment, value adding to students’ progression in lower school.

In 2019, Year 9 results again showed improvement, with students now achieving at the expected standard or better. Year 7 to 9 progress in average score for Reading was ‘well above’ students from other like schools, Numeracy rated ‘above’ and Writing ‘close to’ (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2021). While Year 7 results demonstrated lower achievement, Southern River College works actively with local primary schools to address this. Initiatives which assist in engaging upper primary students in learning with the college are, for example, the ISAAC Club, an after-school program for Year 5-6 students to explore STEM, and the Coder Dojo Club, with its focus on learning and sharing ideas around computing. Both these initiatives have flow-on effects in improving literacy and numeracy and self-directed learning.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MAKING ABOVE AVERAGE PROGRESS (FROM YEAR 7 TO YEAR 9) WHEN COMPARED TO STUDENTS OF A SIMILAR BACKGROUND WHO HAD THE SAME STARTING SCORE ON THEIR PREVIOUS NAPLAN TEST.



Project-based learning approaches are also applied by TFA teachers in some classes for students with low literacy and numeracy proficiency, with good results. The Inspire program for Years 7-10 students also assists with improving literacy and numeracy performance. Of note is the increase in numbers of students who start their secondary schooling with lower literacy and numeracy who are now graduating with their Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE); one leadership group member commented that “this would not have been possible earlier in the school’s life”.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

Students presenting to Southern River College with low literacy and numeracy attainment, or with learning difficulties, may be directed towards The Learning Centre (TLC). TLC provides students with different and tailored learning opportunities, giving these students the opportunity to ‘catch up’. It is a credit to the quality of teaching and learning offered that many of these students return to mainstream classes later in their college pathway.



STEM IMPROVEMENTS

In 2016, Southern River College addressed its need for a stronger STEM program with a workforce strategy, through their partnership with TFA. Since then the college has partnered with a growing number of industry and other learning institutions to expand their offerings and improve STEM participation and performance. From being recognised as a Teacher Development School for Innovation in STEM in 2016 (SRC, 2016a), the college has continued from strength to strength, with early gains in the Maths learning area using Explicit Instruction and structured learning practices to help all their students achieve their potential. In 2016, the college achieved an improvement in Mathematics scores by an average of 58% (SRC, 2016a).

Senior subject offerings such as Physics and Chemistry started with the recruitment of suitably skilled TFA teachers. Maths and Science Learning Areas joined to create a thriving STEM program and environment in 2018. School excursions and incursions with industry (e.g. BHP, PwC) and industry/academic mentoring opportunities feature significantly in this improvement journey. Anecdotally, teachers report reductions in poor behaviour because improved STEM teaching and learning practices have increased student engagement and inspired them to learn.

In 2018, the Southern River College team made it to the finals of the FIRST Robotics Competition, in only their second year of participation in this competition (SRC, 2018a). Along with this strong and well-established robotics stream, the college added Engineering Mechatronics as a pathway in 2019, with 22 students in its inaugural year, and new and exciting science electives such as Edible Science and Forensic Science in 2020 (SRC, 2019a). Permaculture studies are being introduced in 2021. As a result of these popular additions, students are entering university pathways in STEM fields such as forensics, medical technology and pharmacy. One long-term staff member at the college commented, *“those career pathways were not anything possible when I first got here”*.

Recently the college demonstrated its leadership in this field when 30 of its Year 10 STEM students attended a Women in STEM initiative at Murdoch University; it was noted that Southern River College was the only public school to attend this event. One teacher commented that it was not unusual for the college to be the only public school participating in events and competitions in STEM, and this *“punching above our weight [was] due to the college supporting its TFA teachers to be brave and have the courage to make a difference. We can do this – it’s been amazing”*.

This growing reputation for STEM excellence may be one of the reasons the ISAAC Club has become so successful. With an average annual attendance of some 20 students from seven feeder primary schools since its inception, more than 50 students attended the first session in 2020.

WHAT HAS BEEN CRITICAL TO SUCCESS?

College leadership and staff identified several factors that were crucial in achieving improvements, underpinned by sound strategic and workforce planning over the last two planning cycles (SRC, 2016b, 2018b and 2019b). The college has built a culture of strong pedagogy that enables tailored teaching and learning to meet all students’ needs, no matter where their starting point might be. This means every student can achieve their potential and aim high in their aspirations. College leadership commits to recruiting the best teachers they can, and values the life and work experience that TFA teachers bring with them, along with the exposure new teachers have to best practice teaching and learning based on current evidence and research.

They recognise that having multiple TFA teachers in each annual intake assisted in creating a strong cohesive internal support network, and plan for and encourage both this and other external networks of support to flourish. This has created a much safer environment for TFA teachers to build, explore and experiment with their studies, so that they do better. One leadership team member commented: *“that collegiate support was infectious, and has lifted the whole pedagogical perspective”*.

The college’s work with the Fogarty Foundation is complementary with the aims of the TFA program and TFA teacher recruitment (SRC 2017, 2019a). Examples of this are the greater understanding that college staff have of intergenerational value sets, the impact of those values on teaching and learning, and the intent to become a highly competent Visible Learning school. These partnerships in improving teaching and learning have enabled the school to adopt new pedagogical methods and approaches.

College leaders have maintained a significant focus on continuing improvement; they have established high expectations of all staff, demonstrated a willingness to embrace new ideas and fostered a camaraderie between staff, irrespective of their pathway into the college and their length of tenure. They know it is working, and this enables them to cohesively focus on the development of their students as citizens of the world.

Southern River College is aspirational as a school and aims to transfer this to their students. One leader acknowledged that this was why they valued the TFA teachers so much, commenting: *“they’ve done so much and share this with students. It’s good for the students and good for the school”*. Ten of 21 TFA graduates (48%) have stayed three years or more, and the school sees this as a great enabler of change, and of giving back to the school.

CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY

The college's improvement journey has not been without its challenges, some of which relate to its location in an area of socio-economic and educational disadvantage. In working with a diverse range of students and their families, teachers need clear strategies to combat the impacts of inter-generational attitudes towards education. Teachers may also need additional strategies to support students who face challenges beyond the school environment, such as the competing demands of education, part-time work, and/or providing home- or child-care for their families. Other students face challenges of low IT literacy, or limited access to IT. The school has also been cognisant of the challenge in finding and maintaining the balance between ATAR and general pathways for students.

College leadership needed strategies to engage with all staff to ensure buy-in to adopt new pedagogies, based on research and evidence. Whilst this may have been built in for TFA teachers as they learn this theory while 'on the job', this same buy-in may not come so easily for others. Once new pedagogical approaches are introduced, time is needed to embed these new approaches into practice in a sustainable way.



HOW HAVE TFA TEACHERS CONTRIBUTED?

"The selection process for TFA – it's very difficult. I know a few who didn't get in. The people who get into the program are passionate people, they care, they want to make a difference."

- Teach For Australia teacher

Although the relationship with TFA was initiated to fill gaps in the college's maths and science teacher cohort, the leadership group of Southern River College were (and remain) wholly committed to finding the highest calibre people to teach their students across all learning areas. TFA teachers have been heavily involved in achieving an improved STEM focus and performance across the college, and to embedding STEM into pedagogy across all learning areas. Over time, TFA teachers have also opened opportunities for new subject areas such as politics and law in the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area.

Southern River College also sought to enrich the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. Successive intakes of TFA teachers have in turn contributed to and often led the uptake of a range of pedagogical improvements, bringing with them the evidence base and the knowledge and skills to apply this in practice.

"I was not sold when the Principal first suggested it. But I've had to eat my words, and reframe my thinking around the program ... being able to work with the TFAs who have had such a positive impact on the students and staff. But now I see it totally differently. I cannot fault what they bring into the space, the kinds of thinking, the ways they approach things, and plan. They've got a different life experience and that's a great thing."

- Leadership group member

The passion and commitment of TFA teachers stands out. Some teachers suggested that these (generally younger) TFA teachers were more relatable for students and had been able to establish better, and more empathic, relationships with students, based on their age, life experiences and skills, vibrant passion and enthusiasm. This, along with their capacity to translate research into fit-for-purpose teaching and learning, provided great building blocks for students to learn at their own pace and in their own style, demonstrating that

they too can aim high and achieve their life ambitions.

“The way they approach the students, the different cohorts from different backgrounds, their belief in the students. I think the students feel that.”

- Leadership group member

“With TFAs... [you] definitely see the care for the students and the needs they have – kids see it too, not just ‘is this teacher good?’, but ‘do they care?’”

- Leadership group member

Many of the staff acknowledge that TFA teachers are often the drivers of improvement initiatives – *“TFAs are typically the first to put their hands up for anything; they are always keen to participate in new initiatives and learning opportunities”* (Manager). TFA teachers are encouraged to test out new ideas. Some of the teachers suggested that TFA teachers were more capable in making improvement contributions because of their different life skills and knowledge, and also their ability to translate research into evidence-based practice. For example, in data measurement to inform practice, TFA teachers have led initiatives to improve performance measurement in learning areas such as English and Health and Physical Education (HPE), and have shown how to relate this back to practice change. TFA teachers were strong contributors to the development and implementation of a whole-of-school behaviour system. Teachers also commented about how TFA teachers were instrumental in creating learning communities and engaging other staff in collaborations – *“the school has a real sense of learning – not just a space for students to learn, but teachers too”* (Principal).

“An unexpected impact of the TFAs in the school is the ‘revolting’ amount of enthusiasm. They are generally just so enthusiastic; it is infectious and has a positive knock-on effect.”

- Leadership group member

TFA teachers have influenced the range of extra-curricular activities the school can offer; the highly successful ISAAC Club was started through the efforts of three of the college’s early TFA teachers. TFA teachers are also keen to take on leadership roles; TFA teachers have assumed lead roles as Acting Heads of Learning Areas in Science and HPE, and as Coordinators for VET Studies, Years 11-12 and in overseeing the sustainable implementation of Explicit Instruction across the curriculum. Yet others have moved on to leadership and policy roles elsewhere.



“We are talking about people as well who have vast experiences - work and life experiences. I am blown away by just how incredible these people are, and how much they care. That care factor, that is what I think the school benefits from.”

- Teacher

Notwithstanding the significant contribution TFA teachers have brought to Southern River College, it is without question the vision and leadership from the Executive team, the wrap-around support from the college, and the culture of making a difference that the college has built over time, that enable these TFA teachers to have such impact.

REFERENCES

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2021). *Southern River College, Gosnells, WA: NAPLAN: Student progress*. My School. Retrieved March 8, 2021, from <https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/48212/naplan/studentprogress>
- Department of Education Western Australia. (2017). *Student Achievement Data WACE Report: Southern River College 2017*.
- Department of Education Western Australia. (2018). *Student Achievement Data WACE Report: Southern River College 2018*.
- Department of Education Western Australia. (2019). *Student Achievement Data WACE Report: Southern River College 2019*.
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority (2020). *2020 Student Achievement Data*. Retrieved March 8, 2021 from <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/certification/student-achievement-data-by-school>
- School Performance Branch. (2021) *Destination data for Year 12 cohorts 2010 and 2019*. Department of Education Western Australia. (accessed by email exchange 18 February to 4 March 2021)
- Southern River College. (2015). *Workforce Management Plan 2015 – 2017*.
- Southern River College. (2016a). *Annual Report 2016*.
- Southern River College. (2016b). *Business Plan 2016 – 2018*.
- Southern River College. (2018a). *Annual Report 2018*. <http://www.southernrivercollege.wa.edu.au/index.php/college-reports/>
- Southern River College. (2018b). *2018 – 2020 Business Plan*.
- Southern River College. (2019a). *Annual Report 2019*. <http://www.southernrivercollege.wa.edu.au/index.php/college-reports/>
- Southern River College. (2019b). *Workforce Management Plan 2019 – 2020*.

RESEARCH COMMISSIONED BY



RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY



CASE STUDY: SOUTHERN RIVER COLLEGE

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2021. RESEARCH CONDUCTED NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2020.