



SunLit

A whole school approach to reading

North Campus

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SUNLIT READING PROGRAM

'SunLit is Sunshine College's comprehensive, whole-school reading initiative designed to enhance and support literacy for all students. It is based on evidence from extensive research by Queensland academic, Dr. Carol Christensen.

The SunLit program commenced in 2007. A distinguishing feature of the program is that it caters for readers of *all* abilities. Any student who enrolls at Sunshine College can expect to receive targeted reading lessons designed to match and extend their reading competence.

Teachers from every learning area in the college teach in the SunLit program. We know that every teacher must be responsible for developing their students' literacy skills and this program is a practical example. Our students receive constant reinforcement on the value and enjoyment of reading throughout their daily school lives.

Students from years 7-10 participate in the SunLit program four times a week. A student's reading level is determined through testing conducted twice a year. SunLit students are then placed in one of four strands.

The 4 Strands:

Decoding
Comprehension Transition
Comprehension
Strategies



Each strand follows a timetable of reading activities tailored to accelerate the learning of all students.

DECODING STRAND

VIC CURRICULUM LEVEL: F-2

(Max. class size 10 students)



Phonics: Students engage in systematic, structured phonics lessons twice a week. Through explicit instruction, letter-sound relationships are taught in a clear, organised, and sequential manner to improve phonemic awareness. Lessons incorporate morphological instruction to build word knowledge and enhance students' understanding of language structure.



Reciprocal Reading: Students engage in a teacher-facilitated reciprocal reading process, where they are explicitly taught to use context clues to infer meaning and clarify vocabulary. They respond to both literal and inferential questions across a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Summarising strategies are also taught to support comprehension.



Comprehension: Students read and respond to a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They develop their ability to identify the purpose, audience, and structure of texts, determine main ideas and supporting details, and apply strategies such as sequencing and visualising across narrative, informative, persuasive, and procedural text types.



Independent Reading and Teacher Read Aloud: Students engage in independent reading three times a week using carefully selected 'just right' texts. During this time, teachers conference individually with students to discuss and reinforce strategies for making meaning from texts. Additionally, teachers read to students to model effective reading behaviours and foster an enjoyment of reading.

COMPREHENSION TRANSITION STRAND

VIC CURRICULUM LEVEL: 3-4

(Max. class size 15 students)



Phonics: Students engage in systematic, structured phonics lessons twice a week. Through explicit instruction, complex letter-sound relationships are taught in a clear, organised, and sequential manner to improve phonemic awareness. Lessons incorporate morphological instruction to build word knowledge and enhance students' understanding of language structure.



Reciprocal Reading: Once a week, students engage in the reciprocal reading process, where they are explicitly taught to use context clues to infer meaning and clarify vocabulary. They respond to both literal and inferential questions across a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Summarising strategies are also taught to support comprehension.



Comprehension: Students read and respond to a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They develop their ability to identify the purpose, audience, and structure of texts, determine main ideas and supporting details, and apply strategies such as sequencing, visualising and compare and contrast across narrative, informative, persuasive, and procedural text types.



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COMPREHENSION STRAND

VIC CURRICULUM LEVEL: 5-6

(Max. class size 20 students)



Reciprocal Teaching: Once a week, students engage with a range of texts to extend their literacy skills through reciprocal reading strategies. These strategies include clarifying meaning, responding to inferential and analytical questions, and summarising the author's message.



Morphology: Students participate in regular morphology lessons, where they receive explicit instruction in the structure of words, including prefixes, suffixes, and root words. This targeted teaching supports the development of word knowledge and vocabulary, enabling students to better understand and use complex language across a range of texts and across disciplines.



Oral Language: Students work collaboratively to engage with a variety of speaking and listening tasks.



Comprehension: Students read and respond to a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They develop their ability to identify the purpose, audience, and structure of texts, determine main ideas and supporting details, and apply strategies such as sequencing, visualising and compare and contrast across narrative, informative, persuasive, and procedural text types.



Independent Reading: Using selected 'just right' books, students read independently four times a week. Teachers conference the students and talk about strategies for making meaning from the texts.

STRATEGIES STRAND

VIC CURRICULUM LEVEL: STRATEGIES 7-8

STRATEGIES PLUS 9+

(Max. class size 25 students)



Reciprocal Reading: Once a week, students engage with complex texts to extend their literacy skills through reciprocal reading strategies. These strategies include clarifying meaning, responding to inferential and analytical questions, and summarising the author's message.



Morphology and Word Work: Students participate in regular morphology lessons, where they receive explicit instruction in the structure of words, including prefixes, suffixes, and root words. This targeted teaching supports the development of word knowledge and vocabulary, enabling students to better understand and use complex language across a range of texts and across disciplines.



Oral Language: Students work collaboratively to engage with a variety of speaking and listening tasks.



Critical Literacy: Students critically analyse a range of increasingly complex texts by practising the skills of retrieval, interpreting explicit and implied information and reflecting on texts. They make inferences and interpret meaning of vocabulary from context, and evaluate bias and competing perspectives across paragraphs and texts.



Independent Reading: Using selected 'just right' books, students read independently four times a week. Teachers conference the students and talk about strategies for making meaning from the texts.

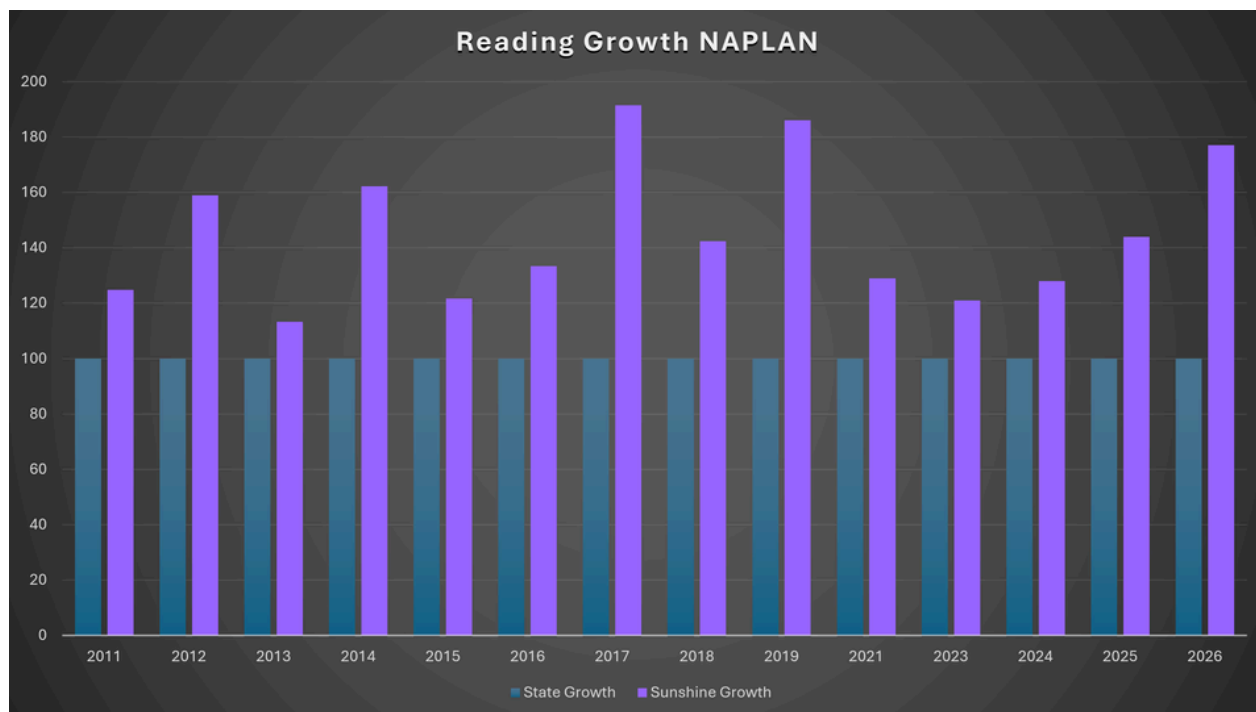
DATA & GROWTH

The primary focus when analysing PAT test data, is to inform teachers of a student's preparedness for learning. This allows us to design and target SunLit lessons accurately. We are able to place students into groups where texts, tasks and reflection best fit the needs of the class.

Data is used for tracking student growth and maintaining an improvement focus in our program.

We report to parents on the growth of their students in Years 7 to 10. Every student now uses digital spreadsheets to track their personal growth in reading during their years at Sunshine College.

NAPLAN matched cohort data shows that students who commence at Sunshine College in Year 7 and sit NAPLAN again in Year 9 make strong progress during their time at the College. When comparing the mean scores of this same cohort from Year 7 to Year 9, our students demonstrate greater growth than the average student across Victoria. This pattern has been consistent over a number of years, as shown in the table below.



MEDIA RELEASE 22 February 2014

Turning around troubled schools: It can be done

Some of Australia's most troubled schools are turning around their performance to achieve remarkable results and serve as a model for low-performing schools across the country, a new Grattan Institute report has found.

Turning around schools: it can be done examines two secondary and two primary schools to show that all of them have succeeded by following the same five steps.

They are: strong leadership that raises expectations, effective teaching with teachers learning from each other, development and measurement of student learning, a positive school culture, and engagement of parents and the local community.

"People think turning around a school only happens with superhuman leaders and teachers – it doesn't," says Grattan Institute School Education Program Director Ben Jensen.

'Turning around schools: it can be done' examines two secondary and two primary schools to show that all of them have succeeded...

Governments and schools must develop the skills for change in the five steps for school turnaround, and then reinforce them with comprehensive evaluation and accountability mechanisms.

But Dr Jensen said these mechanisms had to focus on achieving change in the five steps, not just on test scores.

"If school turnaround is done well, it will make huge dent in inequality and enrich the lives of the students who need it most," he said.

The four schools examined in the report are Ellenbrook Primary School in Perth, Ravenswood Heights Primary School in Launceston, Holroyd High School in Sydney and Sunshine College in Melbourne.

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Against the odds, schools provide lessons in excellence

JUSTINE FERRARI, PIA KIERMAN AND MATT DENHOLM
The Australian February 22, 2014 12:00AM

Sunshine Secondary's Tim Blunt with, from left, Lucia Tran, Selena Wang and Ryan Meyers. Source: News Corp Australia

TEACHERS will tell you every school is different, every child is different and there's no one-size-fits-all solution to improve schools. Strategies and techniques need to be adapted to fit the individual.

Yet there are lessons to be derived from experience, as set out by the Grattan Institute in its report on turning around school performance. The report sets out a five-step plan to improve the schools lagging at the bottom, and lift results, aspirations and opportunities for our weakest and most vulnerable children.

That's the story. As report author Ben Jensen, director of the school education program at Grattan, says, turning around schools is hard. Relatively few schools lift their performance in a sustained and significant way.

"Because it's one thing to know what to do but a very different thing to make it happen," Jensen says.

"This is a very tough and where government comes in. It's very hard for government in any area to change what people do on a day-to-day basis but that is what turnaround policies must achieve."

The four schools highlighted in the report serve different communities and face varying challenges from their array of students but they all demonstrate change is possible.

A belief in the possibility of change is the necessary first element coupled with an unwillingness to accept low performance. All schools in varying degrees have followed the same five steps.

Strong leadership that raises expectations, considered the vital ingredient that leads to a change in behaviour among students and teachers.

Effective teaching, using methods to significantly improve learning with teachers working together in teams or by learning from each other.

Measurement of student progress using test results to identify the gaps in students' knowledge where teaching should be directed, and to chart improvement to build on success.

A positive school culture providing an orderly and disciplined environment with new norms of behaviour for students.

Engaging parents and the community to reinforce behavioural norms and help lift student aspirations.

The good news is the number of schools where students are lagging more than two years behind the average for their grade is relatively small, about 6 per cent of the nation's total.

It's a small enough number that a concerted effort from government and within the schools themselves can bring about the sort of change that will transform the lives of their students.

The best lesson in excellence comes from the schools themselves. Inquirer visited Holroyd High School in western Sydney, Ravenswood

me a fair bit of money to resource and get the staffing that we need into that program to get the outcomes we're getting."

The results have been strong, with numeracy next to receive a special focus as teachers devote extra hours to designing their own program rather than relying on textbooks.

For students in Year 7, 8 and 9, homework is voluntary in the belief that it is better for kids who are struggling to be helped by the teachers at school instead of parents who may struggle themselves with certain skills.

About one-third of students voluntarily take homework from a classroom out-tray without prompting, before homework becomes compulsory in Year 10.

Nearly half the students come from a family where English is not the main language, and

It began with a new intensive approach to literacy, known as the SunLit program...

well, education not only of kids but of the staff," Blunt says.

"As a school, I think we made a mistake a number of years ago because we thought that because our community was poor, we wouldn't have the aspirations for them that we should have. That was typified in the uniform we had."

Chosen by the Grattan Institute as one of five examples of how a school can turn around its academic performance, Sunshine Secondary College has been visited by educators from Victoria and other states looking to replicate its success.

Blunt says dedication, enthusiasm and leadership among the staff was crucial, as well as the resources to make the switch.

"It's hard because you have got to have the finances to do it and that's why it gets a bit daunting," he says. "You really can't do these sorts of things effectively without the extra funds."

literacy, such as new textbooks and scrapping textbooks, as well as steps to increase students' engagement and pride at Sunshine Secondary College, in Melbourne's industrial western suburbs.

Today, the school boasts VCE results well above similar schools, with nearly half the graduates going on to university and many others to TAFE or vocational study.

It began with a new intensive approach to literacy, known as the SunLit program, that saw teachers from all disciplines pulled in to devote extra periods to literacy for all students, who were divided into four different streams.

"Four days a week, period 2, everybody is in literacy in Year 7 to 11," Blunt says. "It costs

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

Revealed: blueprint to boost our schools



Justine Ferrari, principal of Ellenbrook Primary School, northeast of Perth, with Year 9 students yesterday. Dr Ben Jensen discovered that West Australian schools were using the same textbooks used by students in eastern states—but a year late, putting them behind.

JUSTINE FERRARI
NATIONAL EDUCATION
CORRESPONDENT

STUDENTS in 156 high schools—about 5 per cent of the nation's total—are lagging at least two years behind their peers in literacy and numeracy skills, and have been for more than five years.

A report by the Grattan Institute, to be released today, analyses national test results to identify schools lagging to teach their students, where Year 9 students are performing at the same level as the average Year 7 student.

The report sets out a blueprint to turn around the schools' performance in literacy and numeracy, and

to show how schools can follow five crucial steps to turn around their performance.

"It's going to take Australia

probably 10 years to be top of the world but we can make huge change in five years at the classroom and school level," Dr Jensen said.

"These schools are in our poorest communities. They're the kids most at risk in our society."

The report identifies five steps that schools across the world have employed to turn around their performance along leadership that raises expectations, effective teaching, measurement of student learning, a positive school culture, and engagement of parents and the local community.

It highlights the experience of four schools: Ellenbrook Primary in Perth, Sunshine Secondary College in Melbourne, Ravenswood Heights Primary School in Launceston, and Holroyd High School in Sydney.

Under the Empowerment agreement program, the schools

"You have to have leadership to raise expectations"

Dr Jensen said all the five elements contributed to the schools' transformation but none were more important than others, depending on the differing circumstances.

"We're state ministers in the past, thinking it can only be achieved with experience and wisdom, super school principals," he said. "The idea that it's because of super principals doesn't change to failure because every

school has a principal. The largest number of low-performing schools is in NSW and Queensland, which have large systems, followed by Western Australia and South Australia.

Most are government schools but the group also includes 22 non-government schools across Queensland and five in northern Australia and three in the Northern Territory.

The report outlines a program to turn around schools in Shanghai, which are at the top of student performance in the world, that pairs high-performing schools with weaker schools.

Under the Empowerment agreement program, the schools

Take the socio-economic disadvantage of Sunshine Secondary College, which was highlighted as a case study in a Grattan Institute report released on Tuesday.

Turning Around Schools: It Can Be Done

When principal Tim Blunt took over at Sunshine in 2006, about two-thirds of the students in years 7 to 11 were barely achieving primary school levels of literacy. The school was in crisis.

"We knew we had a problem," Mr Blunt said. "But it wasn't until we looked at the data that we realised the depth of the problem—that it was an epidemic."

Confronting the issue began in 2007 with a "whole-school approach" that started with the simple allotment of extra class periods for literacy, even at the expense of other subjects.

"Team teaching" methods were also established, so that educators could judge and learn from one another, particularly in numeracy. There was a raft of nuts-and-

bolts changes and even skin-deep ones, such as new school blazers, which had a profound impact on the culture of the school.

"There was a time when the kids said, 'We don't feel like

ingredient, as is teaching that emphasises collaboration and feedback. Measurement and data-driven analysis is a must, as is the creation of a positive school culture, and the involvement of parents

Dr Jensen, too, noted that government can play a productive role in triggering the right changes. Education Minister Martin Dixon said the new state School Performance

focuses on peer review and that schools need to be held accountable for their performance. Mr Blunt added: "You've just got to be prepared to identify the challenges... and then come together as a group—staff, community and kids. Then things really can change."

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/sunshine-a-model-in-school-turnaround-20140222-133844.html?ixzzuH518t4E>

THE SATURDAY AGE

Sunshine a model in school turnaround



Uniform approach: Principal Tim Blunt with students (from left) Lucia Tran, Michael Douglas, Damon Humpheys and Katharine Nikolic. Photo: Pat Scala

Date February 22, 2014
BY KONRAD MARSHALL
EDUCATION REPORTER

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for changing the face of poorly performing schools, but new research suggests there are key traits that educators can strive towards.

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classroom—low-performing schools as those where students (on average) lag two years behind in both literacy and numeracy, based on NAPLAN data. By that stark measure, there is some good news for Victoria. Of the 156 schools identified nationally as low-performing, only seven were in Victoria. NSW had 43, while Queensland had 44 and Western Australia 28.

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...when compared with schools facing similar disadvantage, Sunshine has gone from the bottom 10 per cent to the top 10 per cent.

Mr Blunt added: "You've just got to be prepared to identify the challenges... and then come together as a group—staff, community and kids. Then things really can change."

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