



**EVIDENCE  
FOR LEARNING**

# Implementation Profile

Metacognition to strengthen student capacity at Wodonga Senior Secondary College, Victoria



## Metacognition to strengthen student capacity

Evidence for Learning (E4L) would like to acknowledge the team at Wodonga Senior Secondary College for their contributions to the development of this Implementation Profile.

### Introduction

In 2020, an audit of practice at Wodonga Senior Secondary College highlighted a number of areas for improvement.

The audit found that:

- When students became 'stuck' they did not have the strategies or language to overcome challenges with learning,
- Teachers were not explicitly aware of metacognitive strategies and their role in literacy improvement, and
- Achievement and retention rates were not meeting expectations.

A small team of leaders and teachers (the implementation team) explored the potential impacts of introducing a more explicit focus on metacognition as a potential solution to these identified challenges.

### Context

Wodonga Senior Secondary College is a large regional school catering for 820 students in Years 10-12 at its main campus. The College serves a community with socially, economically and culturally diverse needs. A significant proportion of WSSC students are known to be experiencing disadvantage (reflected in the College ICSEA value of 871). The College motto, 'Every Student, Every Opportunity, Success for All' embodies its shared vision for all students.

"When we took our in depth knowledge of our specific circumstances and paired this with what the research evidence from the Teaching & Learning Toolkit showed, it was clear that metacognition and self-regulated learning was the area of improvement focus that would yield the greatest benefit for our students."

Michael Rosenbrock, Assistant Principal

### Key evidence resources

The implementation team from Wodonga Senior Secondary College participated in a year-long professional learning program developed by E4L with the support of the Science of Learning Research Centre in 2020. This PL focused on applying the best available evidence on both implementation and metacognition.

Teaching & Learning Toolkit  
[Metacognition and self-regulation](#)

Guidance Reports  
[Metacognition and self-regulated learning](#)  
[Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#)



## Active Ingredient

### *Staff have the capacity to teach metacognitive skills and strategies*

The implementation team set out to build staff capacity by first developing a shared understanding of metacognition, and what it looked like in practice. This included identifying and addressing misconceptions amongst staff. They developed a bank of resources, including videos, to help teachers engage students in metacognitive and self-regulation practices.

These resources were supported by professional learning, delivered as both whole-staff PL and online opportunities, and consolidated by opportunities to rehearse and apply their deepening knowledge.

## Active Ingredient

### *Students have the capacity to use metacognitive strategies independently*

Supporting students to work independently required several strategies to be implemented. The explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies, paired with a metacognition tool developed as a student resource, were the launching pad for engaging with students.

The transition to home-supported learning and the disruptions of the pandemic led the implementation team to make adaptations to the original implementation plan. This led to some teachers and classes taking on the role of 'trailblazers', trialling and adapting metacognitive tools to suit the changed situation ahead of the rest of the school.

## Active Ingredient

### *Structures and policies support the teaching of metacognition*

To support capacity building for staff and students, the implementation team thought carefully about the structures and policies that would enable metacognition to be implemented well. This included an adapted reporting process to highlight metacognition and the inclusion of metacognition and self-regulation in teaching and learning frameworks as prompts for teachers.

As a new structure was developed for home-supported learning, metacognition was explicitly included to highlight the importance of the associated skills to staff, students, parents and carers.

## Sustainability

This exploration into metacognition was fortunately timed for the implementation team, who not long after embarking, found themselves moving to a new way of teaching and learning as a result of Victoria's pandemic response.

The increased focus on metacognition ensured teachers could continue to focus on supporting students throughout home-supported learning, and that structures to do this were already in place.

As early indications of improved outcomes emerge, the implementation team continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of this focus.



## Read more

A full implementation plan for Wodonga Senior Secondary College is [available here](#).

You can also read more in this article published by ACER Teacher Magazine:  
[Implementing metacognitive strategies to strengthen student capacity](#)

Evidence for Learning has a range of materials to support implementation including:

- [Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation](#) - a useful starting point for schools thinking about implementation in their own context.
- [A suite of illustrations and profiles](#) which demonstrate how Australian schools have implemented approaches in their contexts.
- A [summary of active ingredients](#) which supports schools to understand and articulate the essential components of their implementation plan.
- A resource to support schools [gather and interpret data](#) in order to identify priorities.



**EVIDENCE  
FOR LEARNING**