

# The Trinity Institute



TRINITY COLLEGE

*The Trinity Institute seeks to improve educational practice to support young people to succeed personally and academically at school and, in their lives beyond school in a world increasingly shaped by change and disruption. It does this primarily through practitioner enquiry, supporting the staff of Trinity College and educators everywhere to improve their professional practice and the practice of their profession.*

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## About Us

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South Australia is at the forefront of economic and societal transformation. Increasingly frequent disruptions from forces such as advancements in technology and globalisation are the new normal. Businesses and individuals must continually adapt to remain competitive and to take advantage of new opportunities.

The changing demands of modern education have been outlined in numerous policy statements including the Melbourne Declaration, OECD 2030, Gonski review, National Curriculum, and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). The common call in these documents is to equip young people to be life-long and self-regulated learners. Recognising that we still don't know the best way to achieve this, however, Trinity College is committed to be a place not only of 'best practice' but also 'next practice'. To be active in ensuring that its students, and young people everywhere, receive an education that prepares them for tomorrow's needs. With this in mind, it has established the Trinity Institute.

The Trinity Institute is leading the transformation of schooling from within to equip students with the skillsets and mindsets needed to flourish in a future shaped by disruption. In collaboration with key partners, we are exploring and operationalising structures and practices that engage complexity and foster the emergence of innovation and creativity. The Trinity Institute is comprised of educators from all parts of Trinity College working to foster synergies between the elements.

The measure of our success will be the emergence of life-long learners, equipped with strong ethics, values and positive mental health, who will lead the transformation of our society and economy to the benefit of the community.

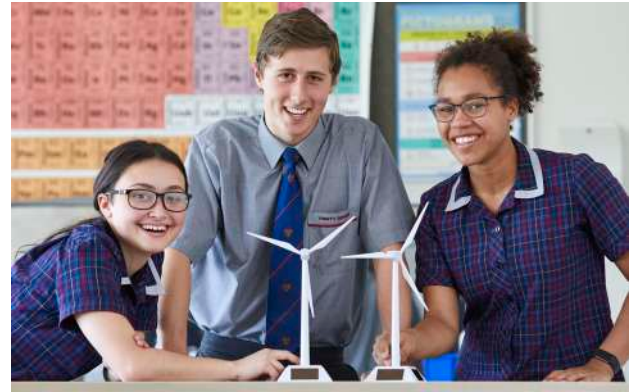
## Partners

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Establishing common intent and collaboration with stakeholders is critical to achieving self-organisation and the subsequent emergence of students' capabilities. The Trinity Institute will coordinate and facilitate practitioner enquiry in collaboration with university academics and researchers.

Our foundation partner is the University of South Australia (UniSA), historically the destination institution for most of the Trinity College's Year 12 graduates.

The College is open to meaningful collaborations with other education and enterprise partners.



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## Graduate Qualities

Trinity College began in 1984 with 27 students, being formed to raise children in a liberal and Anglican tradition regardless of economic status and religious affiliation. In less than three decades, it has grown to a student body of over 3600 with five schools and a Montessori pre-school across three campuses. The size and organisation of the College have created economies of scale that have provided facilities and resources that are typically only seen in elite colleges with substantially higher fees.

Improving vertical and horizontal integration across the College is critical to fully realising similar benefits of scale in teaching and learning. The College's vision and mission are as relevant today as they were in 1984. However, rapid growth and decentralisation, combined with continually changing political, economic and societal demands, requires a new approach to achieving common intent for all stakeholders.



**The Trinity College Graduate Qualities** have been developed to achieve the common intent of the College community. The Graduate Qualities articulate the skills, qualities and dispositions that the College aims to foster in its students. Their development was based on the core values and mission of the College, whilst also being informed through consultation with students, parents, old scholars, staff and enterprise partners.

***Applied Creativity - the ability to develop novel and effective solutions in response to current and future challenges***

1. Flexible thinking to generate many possible solutions to a problem.
2. Dealing well with uncertainty and disruption.
3. Desire to question assumptions and willingness to challenge the status quo.
4. Critical thinking and consolidation of a solution to a problem.

***Wellbeing - a state of physical, mental and spiritual health that enables individuals to flourish in life with meaning and purpose***

1. Ability to build emotional literacy, self-awareness and self-reflection.
2. Ability to build and nurture physical and psychological assets needed to respond to life's challenges and opportunities.
3. Building what is best in oneself and others through the understanding of strengths of character.
4. Respond to setbacks with resilience and perseverance in order to flourish.

***Lifelong Growth - the ability to be self-regulated and self-directed in the ongoing pursuit of personal and professional growth***

1. Mastery of numeracy, literacy and digital literacy to enable effective engagement with future learning.
2. Setting learning goals to respond to and prepare for continual change.
3. Selection and use of effective strategies for learning.
4. Ongoing self-reflection and evaluation to adapt and improve learning skills.

***Community Engagement - the ability to build positive and responsible relationships that achieve social good, locally and globally***

1. Ability to build social capital through the formation and growth of positive relationships.
2. Ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
3. Development and the ongoing pursuit of cultural capital and an understanding of its significance in society.
4. Collective pursuit of goals that serve social needs in local and global contexts.

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## ***Our Research***

The Trinity Institute will create new knowledge and share that knowledge through both professional and scholarly fora and journals.

The focus of our research is to create and transform educational systems and practices that support students to move creatively into an unknowable future.

Our primary approach is applied research, building on the strength of our staff. The research will be undertaken by teachers completing higher degrees by research (Master's and PhD), and collaborative research projects with universities.

Contemporary thought on educational leadership is built on ideas of complexity and an acknowledgement that hierarchical leadership is generally not fit-for-purpose. Our research will explore and foster expansive education by building both communities of practice and professional capital.

The Trinity Institute will coordinate and facilitate practitioner inquiry-based projects. Teachers from all parts of the College are encouraged to identify, participate in and lead projects that:

- \* Align with the Trinity Institute's vision and mission for the transformation of schooling;
- \* Improve vertical and horizontal integration across the College;
- \* Explore evidence-based approaches to the development of the Graduate Qualities;
- \* Explore new ways to lead education;
- \* Foster staff collaboration;
- \* Connect the College community with the world.

Research projects are monitored by the ethics boards of both the Trinity Institute and the collaborating university. Research based on archival data is de-identified before access is granted to any collaboration partner in strict accordance with privacy legislation. Informed consent will always be sought from parents prior to student engagement in any activity that is designed for research purposes. Data in the College IT system is only to be accessed and used if it pertains directly to learning activity with the purpose of improving student learning.



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## Our Projects

### *Learning Analytics Approaches for Assessing the Attainment of Graduate Qualities*

Traditional approaches to feedback, reporting and data analysis are ill-equipped to deal with the explosion of learner data that has resulted from increased uptake of technologies in schools.

Learning analytics and communication technologies can be used to harness this data to provide timely, meaningful and individualised information to students, teachers, school leaders and parents.

Trinity College has been developing approaches to optimise feedback through the Schoolbox Learning Management System (LMS). The continuing development of this technology is critical to informing stakeholders of student attainment of the graduate qualities. In this project, we aim to:

1. Examine the validity of the existing surveys and their use for assessing students' SRL and metacognitive skills.
2. Analyse the collected data to inform the development of a set of graduate qualities including the associated longitudinal assessment methods.
3. Examine the usefulness of the collected learner data for predicting academic success, driving personalised student feedback, student support and instructional interventions.



### *Creativity & Innovation Assessment*

Creativity - "[T]he interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context" - Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow, Educational Psychologist Volume 39 2004

Creativity across all domains is critical to the development of solutions to current and future problems. It can be clearly defined and research spanning more than 60 years has identified the factors that lead to its development. Despite this, there is a gap between the theory of creativity and its application in schools.

This preliminary project in creativity aims to investigate the College's alignment to the ideal conditions for innovation. The Innovation Phase Assessment Instrument (IPAI) will be used to identify areas of strength and weakness regarding the phases of innovation of our people, thinking processes, culture and outputs. Subsequent research projects, professional development and interventions will then be designed and implemented to target those areas that are impeding innovation within the organisation. The assessment will also provide a benchmark for comparison to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.



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## **Glossary** - *The Trinity Institute Language*

**Cognitive Flexibility** (aka 'flexible thinking' or 'mental flexibility') - The ability to think about an object or concept in more than one way. Cognitive flexibility is critical to one's ability to solve problems as it enables a non-linear approach in which different possibilities or perspectives can be explored.

**Communities of Practice** - A group of people with a common interest in a domain. The group can evolve naturally or be created with the goal of creating knowledge. Members of the group learn from one another and develop the shared practice to become effective in their domain.

**Complex Systems** - A system with many elements that interact with each other in such a way that leads to emergent phenomena. That is, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Examples include organisms, ecosystems and business organisations. The study of complex systems provides an alternative paradigm to reductionism.

**Complexity Science** - An alternative paradigm to the standard method of scientific enquiry (the Newtonian paradigm of linear cause and effect between isolated objects) that sees the world as sets of interconnected elements that give rise to emergent phenomena. The focus of complexity science is on systems and how they behave in the context of their environments.

**Decisional Capital** - Development over time of one's capacity to make judgements in contexts and situations where the evidence and appropriate response is not incontrovertible.

**Emergence** - Phenomena that arises from the synergies that occur between the elements of a system.

**Executive Function** - There are different perspectives and definitions of executive function (EF). However, it is commonly viewed as being comprised of three groups of skills (working memory, cognitive flexibility and inhibition control) that allow people to manage their thoughts, actions and emotions, to achieve their goals. EF plays a critical role in students' capacity to pay attention, organise and plan, initiate tasks and stay focused on them, regulate emotions, and self-monitor.

**Expansive Education** - An approach to education that focuses on developing student's capabilities and learning dispositions/habits so that they are prepared for an uncertain world beyond school. Features of expansive pedagogy include student enquiry and questioning; authentic and engaging activities; focus on developing mindsets; opportunities for deeper learning and striving for excellence; collaborative learning; optimal use of face time and utilising resources of the virtual world.

**Inhibitory Control** - The ability to ignore distraction and resist temptation. Inhibitory control enables students to regulate their emotions and prevent them from acting impulsively

**Practitioner Inquiry** - Investigation, usually conducted in collaboration by people operating within a domain, with the intent of creating knowledge and sharing within the group and beyond. Practitioner Inquiry is intended to create space for people to stop and think about existing practices with a critical mind. This can disrupt or challenge habits, leading to professional growth.

**Professional Capital** - An expansion of human capital (based on individual capabilities) that includes social capital and decisional capital.

**Reductionism** - The process of breaking a complex system into its parts so that the properties of the individual elements and their linear interactions can be described. In this paradigm, the system is equal to the sum of its parts.

**Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)** - A comprehensive and holistic approach to learning that encompasses cognitive, metacognitive, behavioural, affective and motivational aspects. While there are several models of SRL, each describes the way in which learners strategically take control of their learning, behaviours and environment, to achieve their goals.

**Social Capital** - The capacity to access resources through connections and relations, being critical in achieving individual, group or organisational objectives.

**Synergies** - Positive relations between the elements of a system that lead to emergent phenomena.

**Working Memory** - The ability to keep information in mind and use it in some way. Examples of the use of working memory include mental arithmetic, remembering spoken instructions, or remembering new names or terms long enough to repeat them.



## The Trinity Institute Our Partners



University of  
South Australia



SACE International  
WORLD-CLASS LEARNING



Government  
of South Australia



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