

EDUCATIONfirstYOUTHfoyer

Education Offer Conceptual Framework



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty



IT'S TIME TO END
HOMELESSNESS





On the cover

'Six Degrees of Separation' by Miss Christinaray Nadya Weetra
(Warumungu, Arrernte; b. 1992, Darwin, NT)

'Just like the meaning of the painting's name I wanted to show how everything around us is connected to each other, how we go to the same places as the people before us. That's why I did children, women and men sitting around the meeting ground, in each and every place, to represent a type of cycle we all go through.'

EDUCATIONfirst**YOUTH**foyer

Education Offer
Conceptual Framework

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ISBN 978-1-921623-47-9

First published in October 2014

Reprinted in Xxx 2016

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The Education First Youth Foyer Education Offer Conceptual Framework has been developed in partnership by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Hanover Welfare Services, which in July 2015 merged with HomeGround Services to form Launch Housing.

A downloadable PDF of this Conceptual Framework is available @ efyfoyers.org.au.

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Printing Impact Digital

Cover artwork From 'Six Degrees of Separation' by Miss Christinaray Nadya Weetra

Photography Dani Burley @ www.liveloveshare.com.au

For citation Buick, J., Mallett, S. & James, S. 2014, *Education First Youth Foyer Education Offer Conceptual Framework*, Hanover Welfare Services and Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

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Acknowledgments

The Education First Youth (EFY) Foyer’s Education Offer has been greatly inspired by the work of Colin Falconer, Director of Innovation and Strategy at the United Kingdom (UK) Foyer Federation. An extraordinarily innovative and creative thinker, Colin shared his ideas in a spirit of great generosity, openness and dialogue. His ideas have inspired Hanover Welfare Services (now Launch Housing*) and the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) to seed and develop a uniquely Australian version of Open Talent, in collaboration with the UK Foyer Federation, which is embedded in each of the 6 Service Offers (see opposite page).

The EFY Foyer Education Offer also draws on the PERMA model (see p. 4) developed by Professor Martin Seligman (2011) and adopted by Geelong Grammar School (GGS) into a Positive Education framework.

PERMA is drawn from extensive and diverse research in the broad field of positive psychology. In the GGS context it is embedded into the pedagogy and school culture. Reflecting this influence on our thinking, the EFY Foyer’s description of PERMA draws on the extensive and comprehensive work of GGS.

We would also like to extend our thanks to members of the Youth Transitions team at the BSL and the Hanover Research and Service Development team who attended meetings, engaged in discussions and provided valuable feedback on the content of the document.

**Please note:* Hanover merged with HomeGround Services in July 2015 to form Launch Housing. This publication, and subsequent published material related to the EFY Foyers, will refer to Launch Housing rather than Hanover.

Abbreviations

ACSF	Australian Core Skills Framework	NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank	OT	Open Talent
BSL	Brotherhood of St Laurence	PERMA	Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)	SES	Socio-Economic Status
DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)	TAFE	Technical and Further Education
DI	Developing Independence	VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
EFY Foyer	Education First Youth Foyer	VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
GGS	Geelong Grammar School	VET	Vocational Education Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	YDW	Youth Development Worker

About the EFY Foyer 6 Service Offers Conceptual Frameworks

A key component of the Education First Youth Foyer Model is the provision of 6 Service Offers in the areas of:



Education

Creating a bridge to mainstream education for young people



Employment

Providing young people with access to real-world work experience and job opportunities



Health and Wellbeing

Focusing on developing young people's capacity to thrive



Social Connections

Encouraging thriving relationships that support young people to achieve their goals



Civic Participation

Facilitating young people to give back to their community



Housing and Living Skills

Assisting young people to access and sustain housing

The inclusion and development of these 6 Service Offers in the EFY Foyer Model is grounded in research and practice evidence that highlights the role of these domains in facilitating young people's successful transition to adulthood.

Conceptual frameworks have been developed for each of the 6 Offers, which provide an addendum to the EFY Foyer Practice Framework.¹ They detail the different components and processes of each Offer, the rationale for their development and delivery, and demonstrate how the Offers link to each other and to the broader EFY Foyer Model and the Open Talent (OT) approach currently being used in the EFY Foyers.

As such, they provide a more detailed understanding of the rationale behind the development and delivery of the Service Offer components of the model and the evidence base upon which they are built.

This conceptual framework for the Education Offer also outlines the practice model, the operational approaches and some of the tools that can be used to implement this particular Offer. It is designed for use by EFY Foyer practitioners, educators, those developing and delivering youth services and other stakeholders, including government and non-government agencies, businesses and philanthropists.

¹ S. Mallett, S. James, N. McTiernan & J. Buick 2014, *Education First Youth Foyer Practice Framework*, Hanover Welfare Services and Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), Melbourne.

The EFY Foyer Model

Developed by the BSL and Launch Housing, with funding from the Victorian Government, the EFY Foyer Model is currently being piloted in three Victorian EFY Foyers – at the TAFE (Technical and Further Education) campuses of Holmesglen, in the eastern Melbourne suburb of Glen Waverley, at Kangan, in the northern suburb of Broadmeadows, and at Shepparton in central Victoria.

The Model has a number of key features that differentiate it from other Foyers in Australia and overseas:

- 1 Education First** – Engagement in education and/or training is the priority. Stable accommodation and support are the means to facilitate young people's engagement in education and employment.
- 2 An Open Talent approach** – EFY Foyers embed an Open Talent approach in all practices, processes and tools from the development stage. Founded on advantaged thinking this approach promotes and builds young people's skills and capacities.
- 3 A multidisciplinary, 24/7 staff team** – Who work to coach and develop young people rather than adopting a traditional case management approach.
- 4 Mainstream** – EFY Foyers prioritise engagement in mainstream education and services, as demonstrated by:
 - their location on TAFE campuses, which ensures they are comparable to other university-style student accommodation
 - their engagement with the 6 Service Offers.
- 5 Viable Model** – With student accommodation for 40 people, EFY Foyers have sufficient scale to ensure:
 - the financial viability of the Model
 - the potential for replication and reform to programs for youth in transition
 - the ability to attract philanthropic and corporate funding, resources and opportunities.

6 Evidence informed – Developed, implemented, reviewed and evaluated with reference to available evidence on the experience, needs and good practice models for young people.

7 Governed through 'top-down and bottom-up' partnerships – This includes essential government departments, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the Department of Human Services (DHS), community service agencies, education and training institutions, employer bodies, local government, business, service clubs and philanthropy, and community programs. These partnerships are underpinned by key, signed-off agreements.

Key terminology

Why language matters

How we view and value young people in the wider society influences the way we work with them, which in turn influences their ability to access opportunities and resources. If we consider engagement in education, employment and independent housing as critical achievements for transitioning young people, then service offerings designed to realise these outcomes are crucial – and changes to public perceptions about young people will follow. Conversely, if we define young people as at risk, provide crisis management and report on crisis interventions, this provides wider society with a very different view of them.

The following key terms provide an overview of some of the terminology used by those involved with the EFY Foyers to develop and promote the capacities, talents and potential of young people.

Advantaged Thinking

Advantaged Thinking is a shift in the way we think about, and respond to, young people experiencing disadvantage and exclusion. It is a shift away from deficit, disadvantaged or problem-saturated thinking and acting, towards identifying, developing and, most importantly, investing in the skills, capabilities and assets of these young people.

Through the EFY Foyer's 6 Service Offers young people's skills are identified, developed and, invested in to enable them to build sustainable livelihoods. The goal is to build young people's capacity to make positive decisions in their lives and to think and act on their own behalf. It is reflected in the language that EFY Foyer staff use when having conversations with, and describing, the young people with whom they work.

Open Talent

The Open Talent approach was developed by Colin Falconer of the Foyer Federation in the UK and is founded on the understanding that everyone has talents and abilities – not just those people in elite sporting, artistic or academic programs – and that not all of these talents are recognised or valued in the same way. For some, especially those struggling to transition to adulthood, there has been little or no investment in building their talents or skills. Open Talent asserts that instead of investing in these young people's problems, the community needs to re-direct investment to building and nurturing their abilities and harnessing them for personal as well as social good.

Service-connected

To avoid the language of disadvantage, a key term introduced in this document is 'service-connected'. This term is used to describe young people who, as a result of disadvantage, are clients of the State and/or are supported by the community services system (e.g., DHS, Centrelink and/or Department of Justice).

This term is considered to be a more accurate and positive descriptor of a young person than terms like 'disadvantaged' or 'disconnected'. It is a temporary descriptor as it is the aim of the EFY Foyer for students to transition to independence so that they will no longer be 'service-connected' but 'independent young people who are connected' to mainstream community resources, their peers, places of employment and/or institutions of learning.

Family-connected

The term 'family-connected' is used across the 6 Service Offers to differentiate between young people who are service-connected and those who are primarily connected and supported by their families. Family-connected young people represent the majority of youth in Australia – they have 'good enough' support and are largely independent from the welfare system. They have a safe and stable family home, at least one parent, guardian or relative on whom they can rely and turn to for support, a social and/or professional network they can utilise if required and relative economic security.

Mainstream services

The term 'mainstream services' refers to services that are available to the general community and typically designed, delivered funded and/or regulated by government. This includes health services such as hospitals and GPs, as well as specialist mental health services, State schools, TAFEs and public universities, national job service agencies and careers curriculum delivered in schools and available on careers websites.

Mainstream education

'Mainstream education' includes both compulsory and post-compulsory education. It includes those opportunities that are State regulated, government supported, and designed for the educational development of young people. For example, both primary and secondary State schooling are regulated by the Victorian Department of Education, funded by the Victorian Government and designed specifically for children and young people aged 5–18.

Mainstream education also includes post-compulsory, tertiary opportunities that are government supported and facilitated by formal, accredited educational institutions, for example, TAFEs, universities and apprenticeships/traineeships, but not private colleges.

Co-design

Each of the 6 Service Offers has been co-designed, peer reviewed and delivered in partnership with key community or business partners. 'Co-design' refers to a collaborative development and design process to ensure that the proposed initiatives and outcomes are realistic and tangible.

Shared delivery

The 5 Key Partnerships of the EFY Foyer Model – Business, Government, Services, Community and Philanthropy – provide the foundations for shared-delivery of the EFY Foyer program to, and good outcomes for, students. Developing quality, purposeful and sustainable partnerships is core to the EFY Foyer model, and this is actualised by actively sharing delivery of services and outcomes.

The aim of a shared-delivery model is to ensure that students are included and engaged in mainstream services and programs, as opposed to being relegated to community-delivered alternatives. It is therefore critical that the EFY Foyers and staff do not provide and deliver all of the requisite activities, services and programs to students, but rather that a number of key external partnerships are developed to share their delivery across each of the 6 Service Offers. This will serve to broaden students' networks, increase their social and personal capabilities, and work against welfare or service dependency.

PERMA (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement)

PERMA is a Positive Education framework that is drawn from the positive psychology movement, in particular the work of Martin Seligman.²

The EFY Foyers have adopted a version of PERMA based on the Geelong Grammar School model,³ which focuses on six key domains for optimal wellbeing: positive emotion, positive engagement, positive health, positive purpose, positive relationships and positive accomplishment. The EFY Foyer has adapted this GGS model and created its own key domains – the 6 Service Offers.

Flourishing

Flourishing is the end goal of the PERMA model, with the six associated domains of PERMA central to the promotion of flourishing. Flourishing refers to feeling good and doing good; it is the sense that life is going well, even in the face of difficult emotions, circumstances or experiences.⁴ At EFY Foyers, students should be flourishing when they are happy, have strong social relationships, can identify and reach their goals, are confident and valued by others, and can give something back to their community and others.

Health

The World Health Organization defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.⁵

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is defined as the experience of good mental, physical, emotional and social health, and the 'ability to have a good quality of life'.⁶ Wellbeing is a subjective experience that is related to experiencing good health.

² M. E. P. Seligman 2011, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Wellbeing – And How to Achieve It*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London.

³ Geelong Grammar School (GGS) 2013a, 'Model for Positive Education'. Available at: <http://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/School/Positive-Education/Model-for-Positive-Education>.

⁴ Seligman, op. cit.

⁵ World Health Organization (WHO) 1946, *Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization*, WHO, Geneva.

⁶ R. Anderson 2012, 'What is health and wellbeing?', *Training Journal*, May:28–32

Introduction to the 6 Service Offers

Purpose of the 6 Service Offers

Each of the 6 Service Offers are stand-alone programs within the Education First Youth Foyer Model, but are all also interconnected. Through their engagement with the Offers, Foyer students will build the foundations for a sustainable livelihood through:

- developing their talents, skills and qualifications to further their personal goals and aspirations
- accumulating an Address Book of contacts and networks that builds their social capital and social connection
- developing the understanding, skills and capacities needed to thrive.

Each of the Offers invests in structural and individual level interventions to achieve these aims. This includes access to training, activities, opportunities, networks and resources that are flexibly delivered and tailored to each student's needs and aspirations over their time in the EFY Foyer and after they leave.

Common features of the 6 Service Offers

The 6 Service Offers are all structured around the key components of the EFY Foyer Model and, as such, each share the following features.

Underpinned by an Open Talent and Advantaged Thinking approach

The OT and Advantaged Thinking approaches articulate a new way of working with young people who have experienced disadvantage. Both approaches invest in the potential of young people by providing opportunities that foster the development of their talents and abilities.

In the EFY Foyers, OT and Advantaged Thinking are operationalised through the 6 Service Offers. The Offers focus on developing young people's assets, on co-creating solutions, and on providing real jobs, real education and real community connections.⁷ The 6 Offers integrate individual, familial, communal and structural ways of working to achieve sustainable outcomes for young people.

Providing real-world and mainstream opportunities

Each of the 6 Service Offers is grounded in providing 'real-world' and 'mainstream' opportunities. 'Real-world' opportunities are those that are readily available to young people who are family-connected, but which are often denied to those who experience homelessness and disadvantage. Many young people who are estranged from their families are also excluded from mainstream services. The EFY Foyer connects these young people to mainstream services and opportunities including, but not limited to: mainstream education delivered at expert and high-quality institutions; informed careers advice, work experience and meaningful employment; and physical health and recreation activities (e.g., gyms, sporting teams, specialist classes). These opportunities are considered vital to enabling young people to thrive.

⁷ Mallett et al. 2014, op. cit.

Co-designed, shared delivery and facilitated by 5 Key Partnerships

Diverse, strong and effective community connection and partnerships are essential for the Foyer to deliver real-world opportunities to students through each of the 6 Service Offers, and to leveraging access to resources, extended networks and services. The 5 Key Partnerships of the EFY Foyer model – Business, Government, Services, Community and Philanthropy – provide the foundations for the development and shared delivery of services and outcomes to students.

In addition to the provision of resources and opportunities, these partnerships are critical to the design and delivery of each of the Offers, which are co-designed, peer reviewed and delivered in partnership with an expert institution, organisation or business. For example, the Education Offer was developed in partnership with Victorian Institutes of TAFE so that all students are enrolled in, engaged in and achieving educational outcomes in mainstream settings.

Fostering mutual accountability

Together, the 6 Service Offers constitute a program of activities and opportunities at the EFY Foyer that are formalised in a reciprocal ‘something for something deal’ between students and the EFY Foyer staff. ‘The Deal’ is an agreement between the young person and the EFY Foyer that activates the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Students are primarily accountable for remaining engaged in education, training and employment, contributing to the wider community and for responsibly maintaining their accommodation within the Foyer. The EFY Foyer is responsible for promoting a safe and secure environment that gives students access to

opportunities, resources and networks to enable them to use their talents and to make personal change.

The reciprocity inherent in ‘the Deal’ expresses shared ownership of the Foyer program. By holding high expectations of the students, ‘the Deal’ demonstrates that young people are valued citizens with something to offer the community. It also provides them with opportunities to advocate for policy and program change. As such, ‘the Deal’ aims to empower students and promote the transition to independence.

Providing a core skill set

In addition to opportunities, networks and resources, young people need key skills, assets, attributes and character capabilities to make the transition to adulthood and to flourish. These skills are needed to participate in education, in work and in the broader community. Through engagement with the 6 Service Offers, students will develop core personal and social skills, as well as capabilities that foster agency. A range of practical skills relevant to each particular Offer will also be developed. Each of the Offers will contribute to, and reinforce, the development of particular skills while also demonstrating their use in a range of contexts.

The Education Offer, for example, utilises the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) to ensure that all Foyer students are supported to build the requisite core skills needed for a Certificate III level course or higher. The 5 Core Skills identified in the ACSF (Learning, Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Numeracy) are embedded into the Education Offer Toolkit in Section 4.

Education First Youth Foyer Key Partnerships

B Business

S Services

P Philanthropy

G Government

C Community

Part 1: Overview and Rationale of the Education Offer

“

It means a lot to me – education – because it’s all about the future. Good education, good future.⁸”

This Conceptual Framework for the Education First Youth Foyer Education Offer is geared towards service-connected young people. It sits alongside the five other Service Offers – all of which have been created with the voices and needs of service-connected young Australians front and centre.

When asked what is important to them, young people – regardless of their socio-economic status (SES) or background – generally say that they want to go to school, finish their studies and ‘get somewhere’ in life. This could mean finishing Year 12, obtaining an apprenticeship or completing a Masters degree. Whatever the goal, having access to high-quality (and increasingly higher levels of) education is a fundamental human right, as it provides the conditions for accessing other essential rights including economic stability, sustainable employment and safe housing.⁹

Even young people who have experienced significant challenges and disadvantages (including homelessness and abuse) often recognise that ‘getting an education’ will provide them with more opportunities and a brighter future than leaving school early.¹⁰ The 2013 report *I Just Want to Go to School* demonstrates the determination of service-connected young people to attend school, despite serious barriers.¹¹ Such a finding is not unusual for this population.¹²

And young people are right to value education. Research tells us that individuals growing up in low socio-economic environments, of Indigenous descent, living in a remote areas or having a disability can overcome challenging life hurdles by completing school and participating in post-compulsory education and training.¹³

⁸ J. Taylor & L. Nelms 2008, *Life Chances at 16: Life Chances Study Stage 8*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic., p. 11.

⁹ United Nations (UN) 1948, *UN Charter of Human Rights*, UN, New York. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr>.

¹⁰ G. Myconos 2012, *Re-engagement, Training and beyond: Community VCAL Evaluation*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic. Available at: http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Myconos_Reengagement_training_and_beyond_Community_VCAL_evaluation_2012.pdf.

¹¹ L. Campbell, M. McGuire & C. Stockley 2012, *I Just Want to Go to School: Voices of Young People Experiencing Educational Disadvantage*, Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service, Jesuit Social Services and MacKillop Family Services, Melbourne.

¹² G. Myconos 2014, *Developing Independence: Evaluating an Educational Initiative for Young People Facing Homelessness*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic.

¹³ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2013, *How Young People are Faring 2013*, Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne.

1.1 Overview of the Education Offer

The EFY Foyer Education Offer values the aspirations of Australian young people, and recognises the contribution that all of them can make to our national community and to our economy. This Conceptual Framework presents a new way of working together to alleviate structural and individual barriers, and to improve the ways in which service-connected young Australians are included and supported to access compulsory and tertiary education.

Vision

The Education Offer supports all EFY Foyer students to access, engage in and realise their potential through quality mainstream educational opportunities at a Certificate III level or higher.

Purpose

Education is at the heart of the EFY Foyer Model. We know that early school leavers experience social exclusion at three times the rate of those who have completed Year 12.¹⁴

In addition, research has shown that:

People who had experienced homelessness in the last 10 years reported lower levels of educational attainment. After standardising for age, of adults who had been homeless, one third (33 per cent) had not gone beyond Year 10 at school nor obtained a non-school qualification above Certificate II level, compared with 23 per cent of those who had never been homeless.¹⁵

The purpose of the EFY Foyer Education Offer is to formalise a new 'offer' to service-connected young people, aiming to fill critical gaps in the current education and service delivery system, and to increase service-connected young people's access to, and participation in, mainstream education to at least a Certificate III level.

Rationale

The Education Offer recognises that in the instance of engaging (or re-engaging) service-connected young people into education, both mainstream educational institutions and community service organisations require a unique, purpose-built framework that harnesses the expertise of both partners.

“ ... having access to high-quality (and increasingly higher levels of) education is a fundamental human right... ”

¹⁴ F. Azpitarte 2012, *Social Exclusion Monitor Bulletin*, November 2012, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and BSL, Melbourne.

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2012, *Life after Homelessness*, Cat. No. 4102.0, ABS, Canberra.

This recognition is based on evidence that:

Service-connected young people want to engage in study to reach their goals but are underrepresented in mainstream and post-compulsory education, as they often lack the resources, networks and academic backgrounds required for sustained engagement.

Mainstream education institutions have expertise in developing and delivering educational programs, but often do not have the capacity to cater for the high needs of service-connected young people, or to provide the financial, personal and structural supports required to sustain engagement.

Community service organisations have expertise in addressing the personal issues that impact on educational engagement, but often do not have the resources, capacity and expertise to develop and deliver high-quality educational opportunities.

Supporting educational engagement through a shared-delivery model

The Education Offer draws on both the expertise of established mainstream education providers (TAFE) and the EFY Foyers to ensure that all Foyer students are able to access, engage in and achieve within mainstream education settings.

It is conceptualised that improved inclusion in mainstream education will occur by improving access points and pathways into education; breaking down inequitable economic and structural barriers; and developing new shared-delivery approaches towards sustaining engagement within mainstream institutions.

In this partnership, TAFE leads the provision of education and onsite support for young people (including course delivery, learning and pathways plans, careers guidance and tutoring), and the Foyer does not run any accredited courses independent of TAFE. TAFE also provides the accommodation, facilitates the Education Readiness Interview component of Foyer Intake and Assessment, and delivers and manages the Certificate I in Developing

Independence (Cert. 1 in DI). This ensures that all Foyer students are immediately connected to and engaged within mainstream education.

To enable access and participation of EFY Foyer students in education, the TAFE partner commits to providing the following services:

- accommodation of EFY Foyer students onsite at TAFE, to mitigate geographical and financial burdens
- an Education Readiness Assessment, including initial goal setting and mapping (at interview stage)
- Certificate of Recognition of Informal Learning or CRIL (through the CRIL at interview stage)
- co-delivery of the purpose-built Cert. 1 in DI
- access to TAFE literacy and numeracy support
- access to TAFE careers and educational pathway guidance
- access to TAFE study spaces and library resources.

To support young people's access to, and sustained engagement in, mainstream education, the EFY Foyer leads delivery of 'beyond the school gate' support and resources. This includes:

- co-delivery of the purpose-built Cert. 1 in DI with TAFE
- ongoing personalised coaching, goal-setting and planning support
- brokerage for additional course costs and materials (via 'the Deal')
- Internal and External Opportunities to further develop educational skills and goals (e.g., through Foyer activities or offsite opportunities)
- EFY Foyer study groups
- tutoring and/or homework support
- mentoring
- calendars of educational events/ open days and opportunities
- foundational technology skill support (i.e., ICT skills).

1.2 Why a new education offer is needed

Young people and education

Equality of access to education is understood to be a key determinant of a socially just national agenda, as well as being symptomatic of equitable avenues for broader social participation and cultural power.¹⁶ Education not only plays a critical role in giving young people the personal and vocational skills they need to participate in the workforce, it also promotes positive wellbeing and social outcomes that benefit individuals, their families and the community as a whole.

Such is the power of education that international law considers it an essential human right. The *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child* states that all young people have the right to access quality education and, furthermore, should be encouraged to attain the highest level of schooling that they can. According to the *UN Charter of Human Rights* (to which Australia is a signatory), socio-economic status should have no bearing on the quality and level of education available to children and young people.¹⁷

In Victoria, the importance of 'equitable and excellent' educational opportunities for all is articulated in the *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young People*.¹⁸ In particular, the document highlights the importance of ensuring that 'socioeconomic disadvantage ceases to be a significant determinant of educational outcomes' and that the 'effect of other sources of disadvantage', including homelessness on educational outcomes, are reduced.

Inequitable opportunities

Tests carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development indicate that Australia is one of a number of wealthy, democratic nations failing to uphold the educational rights of some of their most vulnerable young people.¹⁹ Testing by the Programme for International Student Assessment 2012 demonstrated that Australia and the US have two of the most inequitable school systems in the world.²⁰ In Australia, the equivalent of around two-and-a-half years of schooling currently separates the maths, reading and science scores of students in the highest socio-economic group from those in the lowest.²¹ Gender, location and cultural background also had a significant impact on achievement.

Structural funding and school resource allocation also contributed to variances in student achievement. The 2011 landmark paper *Review of Funding for Schooling* (aka *Gonski Report*) found that, too often, Australian children and young people's educational outcomes were determined by external and structural factors as opposed to merit and ability.²²

The *Gonski Report* highlighted the structural inability of the current mainstream Australian school system to provide the personalised, targeted support that service-connected children and young people require to fill gaps in home and family support and to achieve educational success. As a result, service-connected young people in Australia remain underrepresented in both compulsory (up to Year 12) and post-compulsory education settings.

¹⁶ See: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2007, *Education at a Glance: 2007*, OECD, Paris. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/40701218.pdf>; S. Thomson, L. De Bortoli, M. Nicholas, K. Hillman & S. Buckley 2009, *PISA in Brief: Highlights from the Full Australian Report*, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Camberwell, Vic.; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2005, 'Education for All Movement', UNESCO, Paris. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/>.

¹⁷ UN, op. cit.

¹⁸ Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) 2009, *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young People*, MCEECDYA, Carlton South, Vic. Available at: www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/melbourne_declaration.25979.html.

¹⁹ S. Thomson, L. De Bortoli & S. Buckley 2013, *PISA 2012: How Australia Measures Up*, ACER, Camberwell, Vic. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>.

²⁰ S. Thomson, L. De Bortoli & S. Buckley 2012, *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012: How Australia Performed*, ACER, Camberwell, Vic.

²¹ Thomson, De Bortoli & Buckley 2013, op. cit.

²² D. Gonski 2011, *Review of Funding for Schooling*, Australian Government, Canberra.

Early school leaving

Completing Year 12 or its equivalent provides core skills, networks and capabilities that are important for overcoming or avoiding disadvantage.²³ National and overseas studies have found that teenagers who leave school early are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed, earn lower wages, have poor health or be involved in criminal activities.²⁴

Although Year 12 retention rates have improved over the past two decades, currently one in five Australian young people (21%) leaves school before completing Year 12.²⁵ Those who live in rural or remote locations, those who reside in out-of-home care settings and those who are at risk of homelessness are particularly vulnerable to early school leaving and ongoing cycles of social exclusion, poverty and unemployment.²⁶ In Australia, school leavers experience social exclusion

at three times the rate of those who have completed Year 12,²⁷ and are more than twice as likely to be unemployed (19% and 8% respectively).²⁸

School disengagement is a significant problem throughout the country, affecting young people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Data indicate that up to 26 per cent of school students are considered 'at risk' of disengagement.²⁹

At a State level, Victorian youth employment trends and engagement data demonstrate that there are a high number of young people in the State who are both alienated from school and facing limited opportunities in the labour market.³⁰

While early school leaving is not always a negative or ill-informed decision,³¹ for those who leave early as a result of significant disadvantage it can be very

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I'd just say 'Stay at school'. You don't realise how many social connections you have at school... I wish I had finished it...³²

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²³ Campbell et al., op. cit.

²⁴ NSW Auditor-General's Office (NSWAGO) 2012, *The Impact of the Raised School Leaving Age*, NSWAGO, Sydney. Available at: <http://apo.org.au/research/impact-raised-school-leaving-age>.

²⁵ Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 2013, *Education in Australia 2012: Five Years of Performance*, COAG Reform Council, Sydney.

²⁶ D. Oliver & M. Circeli 2012, *Youth Transitions: What the Research Tells Us*, NCVET, Adelaide.

²⁷ F. Azpitarte 2013, *Social Exclusion Monitor*, BSL and Melbourne Institute, Melbourne.

²⁸ ABS 2010, *Australian Social Trends*, March Cat. No. 4102.0, ABS, Canberra.

²⁹ Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) 2012, *Student Completion Rates*, VAGO, Melbourne.

³⁰ E. Bodsworth 2012, *Pathways that Work: Lessons from the Youth Employment Project in Caroline Springs*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic. Available at: http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Bodsworth_Pathways_that_work_2012.pdf.

³¹ R. Teese & J. Polesel 2003, *Undemocratic Schooling: Equity and Quality in Mass Secondary Education in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic.

³² J. Taylor 2009, *Stories of Early School Leaving: Pointers for Policy and Practice*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic., p. 22.

difficult to achieve key life milestones (like getting a job or a private rental property) without the required qualifications, skills, experience and/or networks. Whereas completion of Year 10 historically provided a solid pathway into sustainable employment, post-compulsory education is increasingly valued in the global labour market. It is a standard expectation that job seekers and employees have diverse, transferable and accredited skills and knowledge that respond to the needs of a fluctuating labour environment. As we shift to a knowledge-based economy, the importance of schooling only increases.³³

Homelessness

Almost 4000 young Victorians experience homelessness on any given night.³⁴ Young people become homeless for a variety of reasons but most

commonly because of conflict with parents, violence at home, anxiety and depression, drug or alcohol use (their own or that of another family member) or the desire for independence.³⁵ In the July–December quarter 2012 just over 10,000 18–24 year-olds (and 2500 15–17 year olds) used Specialist Homelessness Services in Victoria.³⁶ In the last quarter of 2011, only 29% – or less than a third of the 15–18 year-old clients who gave their educational status (63% of those presenting) – were enrolled in formal study or training.³⁷

The experience of homelessness is associated with poor academic performance and the breakdown of, or lack of advancement in, education or training.³⁸ The negative impacts of homelessness can combine to undermine the efforts of young people to undertake education or training; for example, having no permanent address to use when enrolling in courses,

“Completing Year 12 or its equivalent provides core skills, networks and capabilities that are important for overcoming or avoiding disadvantage.”

³³ Productivity Commission 2012, *Schools Workforce: Research Report*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

³⁴ ABS 2011, *Census – Estimating Homelessness 2011*, ABS Cat. No. 2049.0, ABS, Canberra (ABS reports this figure is likely to be a significant underestimation).

³⁵ S. Mallett, D. Rosenthal, D. Keys & P. Myers 2006, *Moving out, Moving on: Young People's Pathways in and through Homelessness in Melbourne, Key Findings*, Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

³⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2013, *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, July–December 2012 (Vic. Supplementary Tables)*, Cat. HOU 270, AIHW, Canberra.

³⁷ Australian Institute for Health and Wellbeing 2012, *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, December 2011*, Cat. HOU 263, AIHW, Canberra.

³⁸ J. Hanson-Peterson, S. Bond, G. Myconos & J. Borlagdan 2013, 'Literature review on supporting homeless learners in VET' (unpub. ms), BSL, Fitzroy, Vic.

or lacking the facilities to maintain the personal hygiene levels expected in formal education settings (showering/brushing teeth/washing clothes). Homeless learners may also find it difficult to access quiet study spaces or the ICT and resources required for study.

At the school level, young people experiencing homelessness have reported that poor relationships with teachers,³⁹ and ignorance regarding the structural and individual circumstances that lead to homelessness,⁴⁰ have impacted on their disengagement from schooling. Other factors that combine to create feelings of alienation from the learning process and mainstream education include:

- the curriculum not being culturally relevant⁴¹ or learner-centred⁴²
- a lack of continuity of personal support, access to teacher aides and assistance dealing with trauma.⁴³

Weak links between school, training and real jobs

A smooth transition from school into work acts as a protective mechanism against future unemployment, and so building key employability skills is an important component of compulsory schooling.

However, in Victoria the integration of school, work and employer engagement is generally weak. For young people who experience disadvantage, this weak integration can have a devastating impact on their future life chances, as they often lack the networks, resources and family support to attain and independently build workplace experience.

1.3 The ‘standard education offer’

For young people 17 years and under

In Victoria, young people typically receive a ‘standard education offer’, which comprises compulsory State-funded primary and secondary schooling, and a smaller suite of targeted programs for students considered ‘at risk’ or marginalised. These include Wannik for Indigenous students, Education Support Guarantee for students in out-of-home-care, and community re-engagement programs like Community Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) for students who have disengaged from mainstream schooling (programs current as of October 2014).

The Victorian Government’s *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* formalises the ‘standard education offer’. The Act is based on the principle that all young Victorians, regardless of the school or training institute they attend, where they live, or their social and economic status, should have access to high-quality education. It requires that all students complete Year 10 and be engaged in school, training, employment (or a combination of these activities) for a minimum of 25 hours per week up until the age of 17.

Over the past decade, a number of education and welfare policy reforms have been implemented that are geared towards strengthening school achievement and completion rates and catching students ‘at risk’ of disengaging from the education system. These reforms broadened the definition of ‘Year 12 completion’ to incorporate vocational qualifications and combinations of work and formal study, and included the following major shifts:

- developing the VCAL to broaden options for Year 12 completion
- lifting of the minimum school leaving age to 17 years

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) 2012, *Beyond Learn or Earn: Young People Tell How Policy Can Better Support those Who Need it Most*, AYAC, Surry Hills, NSW.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ L. Davis 2009, ‘Homelessness, impoverished language and educational engagement: What’s the link?’, *Parity*, 22(6):23–4.

- linking Youth Allowance payments to full-time school attendance
- subsidising Vocational Education and Training (VET) funding for young people aged under 25 years to encourage greater participation
- developing Local Learning and Employment Networks to enhance sector coordination
- categorising Certificate II courses as 'equal' to a Year 12 Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) pass to broaden Year 12 completion options
- having an increased emphasis on VET in Schools and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

For young people aged 17–24 years

Around 80 per cent of Australian young people complete Year 12, of whom about 50 per cent transition directly from Year 12 into Bachelor degrees. For the majority who don't go to university – almost half of school completers plus the 20 per cent of the

general youth population who leave school early – the VET system is the main avenue for gaining accredited qualifications and pathways to work.

Whether a university, TAFE or VET pathway is pursued, all young Victorians have access to a range of financial loan schemes that aim to alleviate, defer or reduce course and associated study fees. These include the Victorian Training Guarantee,⁴⁴ HECS-HELP Study-Assist Student Loans⁴⁵ and the newly introduced Trade Support Loan⁴⁶ scheme for apprentices.

Additionally, all young people aged 16–24 who are studying full-time, or undertaking a full-time Australian apprenticeship or traineeship, are eligible for financial assistance through the Federal 'Youth Allowance' scheme, a fortnightly allowance that takes into consideration the costs associated with formal study/training and the financial impacts of living independently.

In combination, these schemes aim to mitigate or defer the costs of studying and to subsidise the costs of living independently for those young Australians who are in post-compulsory training and/or education.

“ ...there is now a need to consider how service-connected young people will access the right kinds of support for their educational and vocational development...” ”

⁴⁴ The Victorian Training Guarantee provides government-subsidised places in pre-accredited and foundation level training courses to young people under 20 years of age and/or who have not completed Year 12 to ensure that economic disadvantage does not block young people from accessing training.

⁴⁵ The HECS-HELP Study-Assist Loan Scheme provides loans to Australian citizens enrolling in Commonwealth-supported higher education courses.

⁴⁶ The Trade Support Loan Scheme, introduced by the Coalition Government in June 2014, will loan apprentices up to \$20,000 to support their engagement in an apprenticeship, and will be repayable under the same conditions as FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP.

1.4 The results of the ‘standard education offer’

Different outcomes for different groups

Despite the efforts of both the Australian and Victorian Governments to strengthen school completion and achievement rates for young people experiencing disadvantage, little has changed for youth from low SES backgrounds. Although policy amendments and systemic shifts have resulted in broader options for completing Year 12, the new, wider system has not generated any ‘discernible change in patterns of social inclusion’.⁴⁷ Studies indicate that a young person’s educational trajectory can be effectively predicted by her/his postcode, with those in low socio-economic areas most likely to leave school early, and those in the highest socio-economic areas most likely to achieve the better Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores.⁴⁸

Enrolment in vocational or applied senior school options such as Certificate II, III and VCAL tends to be dominated by students from low SES backgrounds. This is reflective of a broader global trend whereby those with lower literacy and numeracy skills, and/or interrupted patterns of schooling, are transitioned into vocational alternatives⁴⁹ where ‘learning for work, as opposed to learning for life’, is often prioritised.⁵⁰

By contrast, VCE-specialist subjects and the International Baccalaureate are typically undertaken by students from higher SES backgrounds. The social

and cultural value of ‘academic’ over ‘applied’ skills and knowledge is further cemented by the significant weighting of VCE subjects towards ATAR scores, as opposed to the losses incurred by undertaking VCAL or VET subjects.⁵¹

‘Year 12 equivalent’ courses often don’t provide ‘Year 12 equivalent’ skills

A study by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) determined that vocational pathways such as foundational VET qualifications and the VCAL are not ‘equivalent’ to Year 12 VCE, and instead should be considered as ‘alternative options’ to Year 12.⁵² The study found that the complexity and volume of learning required for a Certificate II qualification was not equivalent to that required for a Year 12 VCE, and that if an equivalent is necessary ‘for rhetorical purposes’, a Certificate III course was found to be more equal.⁵³

Furthermore, VET was not designed for delivery to young people and, as such, its compliancy requirements and adult-based instruction methodologies often fit awkwardly with youth cohorts – especially those who have experienced school disengagement and disadvantage.⁵⁴

47 J. Wyn 2009, *The Changing Context of Australian Youth and its Implications for Social Inclusion*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic.

48 A. Jones 2014, ‘Uncapped uni places may be the death of the ATAR obsession’, *The Conversation*. Available at: <http://theconversation.com/uncapped-uni-places-may-be-the-death-of-the-atar-obsession-11716>.

49 UNESCO 2012, *Secondary Education: Paving the Way to Work, Education for Global Monitoring Report*, UNESCO, Paris. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/gmr2012-report-ch5.pdf>.

50 Teese, R. 2011, ‘Vocational education and training in France and Germany – Friend or foe of the educationally disadvantaged?’, in S. Lamb, E. Markussen, R. Teese, J. Polesi & N. Sandberg (eds), *School Dropout and Completion: International Comparative Studies in Theory and Policy*, Springer Netherlands, pp. 343–56.

51 Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) 2014, *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*, VCAA, Melbourne. Available at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/handbook/2014/AdminHandbook2014-book.pdf.

52 T. Karmel & P. Lim 2011, *The Vocational Equivalent to Year 12, Longitudinal Surveys of Australia Youth, Research Report 58*, NCVER, Adelaide.

53 *ibid.*

54 Myconos 2012, *op. cit.*

Outsiders on the inside

For the very few students from low socio-economic areas who do transition successfully into higher education at university, much research has focused on what Bourdieu termed as ‘duality of the self’, or ‘outsiders on the inside’.⁵⁵ Beyond the economic barriers to participation in higher education, many young people from low SES areas experience challenges adapting to and attaining a sense of belonging within the cultures of universities.

A study of participation in Australian higher education found that individuals from low SES backgrounds are about one-third as likely as those from high SES backgrounds to enrol in higher education degrees, so are only taking up approximately 15 per cent of university places.⁵⁶ The study also indicated that this trend has remained ‘virtually unchanged for 15 years despite the overall expansion of access to higher education during that period’.

The same study found that low SES background individuals were:

*more likely to have lower perceptions of the attainability of a university place, less confidence in the personal and career relevance of higher education and may be more likely to experience alienation from the cultures of universities.*⁵⁷

Assumed support systems

In the Australian education system, there exists an inherent assumption that children and young people are supported by their families beyond the school gate to achieve at school. However, this is not the case for all students. In reality the level, extent and continuity of support that a service-connected young person has is paltry by comparison to a family-connected young person.

Students who receive good enough support from their families benefit from a range of formal and informal supports that facilitate achievement and success in school and post-compulsory education and/or training. Evidence indicates that family networks (including friends and relatives) play a ‘crucial role’ in young people’s educational and social development, and are influential in helping them to find employment.⁵⁸ Such networks assist with making important transitions from primary to secondary school, and from school to tertiary study and/or employment by helping with homework, paying for resources, camps, excursions and uniforms, guiding career research and discussing the importance of schooling.

Many middle- and upper-income families bolster this domestic support by providing their children, both those who are publicly and privately educated, with private tutoring.⁵⁹ ‘Hot-housing’ has become a common practice, especially in elite schools, involving ‘inculcating a hyper-competitive, hyper-ambitious mindset... [supported by] access to the best learning opportunities and resources money can buy’.⁶⁰

Figure 1 opposite provides a visual representation of the support that service-connected young people receive in comparison to family-connected young people.

⁵⁵ P. Bourdieu 1999, ‘The contradictions of inheritance’, in P. Bourdieu et al., *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.

⁵⁶ The University of Melbourne 2008, *Participation and Equity: A Review of the Participation in Higher Education of People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds and Indigenous People*, [prepared for Universities Australia by] Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, March.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ Oliver & Circeli, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ J. Kenway 2014, ‘Who’s your daddy? Myths of merit and elite education scholarships’, *The Conversation*, 30 May.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

Figure 1
‘Family-connected’ compared to ‘service-connected’ support networks



Compared to these highly resourced and supported young people, even the brightest and most determined students from poorer backgrounds are unlikely to achieve the results required to progress from school to university. Among poorer students, service-connected young people typically fare the worst, as they often lack basic supports, including safe home environments, sufficient nutrition and positive adult role models.

While Victorian State schools provide health and wellbeing support via the Student Support Services, this service is comprised of one Student Wellbeing Coordinator per school, and a team of specialist Student Support Services Officers who work within school networks on a needs basis. These services are complemented by the School Focused Youth Service, which aims to create partnerships between schools and community organisations to support at-risk young people to access external services. However, all of these services combined still do not provide adequate support for disadvantaged or service-connected young people. Too often, students with high needs and low family support leave school early, remaining on the margins of mainstream education while their counterparts at elite schools with high levels of support and resourcing continue to be the highest achievers in the school system.

The costs of educational disengagement

Failure to intervene early and address the issues affecting vulnerable young people incurs a significant economic cost to Australia and produces the ‘classic false economy – save money now, but pay much more later’.⁶¹ It is estimated that interventions which reduce the early disengagement of youth could potentially return 23.6 times the government’s initial investment to society.⁶²

But the costs of youth disengagement are not just economic but also social and cultural. The earlier that young people leave formal education, the more likely they are to be socially isolated and welfare dependent. Unemployment and welfare dependency tend to be intergenerational, and the longer young people spend ‘on the outside’ of mainstream society the harder it is to break the cycles of poverty. Improving access to high-quality education has the power to transform the lives of young people. Completing compulsory schooling vastly improves a young person’s chance of future employment, social inclusion and independence from welfare, while completing post-compulsory education has even more substantial impacts.

Investing in the life chances of all young Australians has personal, social and economic benefits. However, this investment requires a shift in perspective at a high level. Financial and structural changes will be required if the very real and pressing concerns about our current education and transitions system, and the marginalisation of our most vulnerable young people within it, are to be addressed.

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Investing in the life chances of all young Australians has personal, social and economic benefits.

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⁶¹ P. Grogan, K. Colvin, J. Rose, L. Morstyn & C. Atkins 2013, *Building the Scaffolding: Strengthening Support for Young People in Victoria*, Victorian Council of Social Service and Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Melbourne.

⁶² *ibid.*

1.5 Summary of the barriers to educational engagement

Service-connected young people face multiple and complex barriers to participating in education and training, and in social and economic life more broadly. While there are a number of education support services for those who have experienced disadvantage, these programs often fail to address adequately or systematically the complex needs of young people experiencing homelessness. Some of the key barriers are summarised below.

Lack of adequate support

The current 'standard education offer' does not provide adequate support for service-connected young people to achieve their potential through compulsory education.

Success in the Australian education system remains largely dependent on the quality and breadth of a young person's 'beyond the school gate' support. In addition to a lack of stable accommodation, young people experiencing homelessness are often without the guidance and back-up typically provided by parents or guardians in the critical developmental stage of transitioning to adulthood. This can have profound effects on a young person's health and wellbeing, with poor family cohesion and family conflict associated with both poorer academic outcomes and increased risks of disruptive behaviour and depressive illness.⁶³

Attempts by both the Victorian and Australian Governments to broaden school-based health and wellbeing support for students have not resulted in any discernible improvements for service-connected young people.

Inadequate knowledge base in 'Year 12 equivalent' options

Quality control in the VET sector is weaker than the compulsory school sector and, as such, it can be difficult to gauge the complexity and quality of a VET course in order to make an effective comparison.

Currently, there are no mandatory foundational life and/or employability 'soft skill' units for inclusion in Year 12 or equivalent certificate options, and concern has been levelled at the 'paucity of the knowledge base' that vocational subjects often convey to the predominantly low SES students who enrol in them, in comparison to the more complex and critical programming of academic alternatives.⁶⁴

As a result, while many young people complete pre-employment training, not all develop the core transferable skills they will need for the real world of work. In 2013, the national regulator found that more than half the training providers it sampled were 'marketing qualifications they claimed could be achieved in unrealistically short time frames or time frames that fell short of the volume of learning requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework'.⁶⁵

Weak links between education, employers and labour market opportunities

Strengthening the integration of education and employment requires access to practical, hands-on and 'real-world' engagement in the workforce for all young people, regardless of whether they are engaged in an academic or vocational stream of schooling.

⁶³ M. Dixon, H. Reed, J. Margo & N. Pearce 2006, *Freedom's Orphans: Raising Youth in a Changing World*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London; M. G. Sawyer, F. M. Arney, P. A. Baghurst, J. J. Clark, B. W. Graetz, R. J. Kosky, B. Nurcombe, G. Patton, M. R. Prior, B. Raphael, J. Rey, L. C. Whaites & S. R. Zubrick 2000, *The Mental Health of Young People in Australia*, Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra.

⁶⁴ L. Wheelahan 2009, 'The problem with CBT (and why constructivism makes things worse)', *Journal of Education and Work*, 22(3):227–42.

⁶⁵ M. Peace, 'More than ever we need a strong VET system', *The Age*, 24 April.

Evidence shows that young people cannot learn how to be effective in the workplace ‘in theory’ – through class work, rote learning or ‘simulated workplaces’⁶⁶ – so partnering with and engaging employers in mainstream compulsory and post-compulsory education is critical.

Vocational literature indicates that while some countries effectively promote and invest in ‘dual systems’, whereby secondary students are encouraged to alternate school and work during their senior years, other countries face ‘status issues and complaints about a gap between what employers need and what schools teach’.⁶⁷ Historically, in Victoria, greater emphasis has been placed on the academic pathways from school to university as opposed to the pathways into work. The integration of work and study is promoted for students on a VCAL or VET is (including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships) pathway, whereas those on a university pathway have limited opportunities for employer engagement.

However, even for those interested in integrating school and work, there are increasingly fewer apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities, and the links between VET in Schools and work can be thin. For those young

people who are outside the mainstream school system, the links between education, employers and work can be even weaker. Although growth in the VET industry has broadened access to post-compulsory education and training, and increased visibility of opportunity and choice, there is little guarantee that accredited training will provide a smooth transition into work. Traditionally apprenticeships and traineeships have been the domain of the young, but the general volume of opportunities is declining and young people are increasingly finding themselves in competition with adults. Forty-eight per cent of trainees and apprentices, for example, are now over 25 years of age.⁶⁸

Nor has the VET system traditionally aligned itself with the labour market, instead utilising a ‘supply-driven’ rather than ‘demand-driven’ process of enrolment.⁶⁹ This misalignment is a hang-over from the original mandate of VET – to provide industry-specific, accredited training to practitioners and tradespeople by experienced specialists, incorporating the latest innovations and policies – rather than to provide entry-level training to young people who experience diverse barriers to educational participation.

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Success in the Australian education system remains largely dependent on the quality and breadth of a young person’s ‘beyond the school gate’ support. ”

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⁶⁶ A. Mann, J. Stanley & L. Archer 2014, *Understanding Employer Engagement in Education*, Routledge, London.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ NCVET 2014, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: Apprentices and Trainees Collection, September Quarter 2013*, NCVET, Adelaide.

⁶⁹ Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) 2013, *VET and Young Victorians: A Way Forward*, YACVic, Melbourne.

1.6 What young people need to succeed in education

Many early school leavers disengage from formal schooling as a result of disadvantage and marginalisation, as opposed to making an informed or empowering choice about their future. The factors contributing to early school leaving can be deep and complex, but for many it's due to a lack of basic and essential support in the family home, and insufficient supports available via the school system to fill the gap.

For those who leave school early, or who complete a 'Year 12 equivalent' qualification, the transition to work can be anything but linear. There are a declining number of jobs that young people can walk into without qualifications, or qualifications lower than a Certificate III. Industrial development and technological change has seen the disappearance of many entry-level jobs that existed a generation ago, such as in the banking, government and service sectors. In the early 1980s three-quarters of unskilled men had full-time jobs, but today fewer than 60 per cent do.⁷⁰

To succeed in education, young people need:

- concerted policy and practice interventions
- a continuum of educational opportunities
- support to achieve a Certificate III qualification
- support to develop internal assets
- support to develop external assets.

Concerted policy and practice interventions aimed at service-connected young people

Concerted policy and practice interventions are required to support service-connected young people to access the opportunity and resources to develop both internal assets (including cores skills and capabilities) and external assets (including structural interventions and support systems), which will help them to have greater control over their lives and to become independent yet connected adults.

A continuum of educational options

Too often, service-connected young people are relegated to the margins of the mainstream education system. They are 'transitioned' from mainstream schools and institutions into community-delivered 'alternative' education programs, 'soft-entry' courses or training packages run by private companies – often with weak links to labour market trends and employability skills. While a broad suite of educational opportunities is an essential part of an equitable education offer, easy identification of 'classed' cohorts within various options smacks of structural and social inequity.

There are a number of high-quality, unaccredited, 'soft-entry' and accredited alternative education options in the community, which operate as important re-engagement mechanisms for 'hooking' young people back into education through applied, flexible and personalised learning. However, it is important that these programs are considered as part of a continuum of educational options, as opposed to 'the choice of last resort'.

⁷⁰ R. McLachlan, G. Gilfillan & J. Gordon 2013, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

The justifications for viewing options as a ‘continuum’ are threefold:

- 1 Alternative options are an important part of re-engagement:** Young people transitioned into ‘alternative’ education frequently report an improved sense of self, of belonging and of purpose when they find themselves in smaller, more personalised education settings.⁷¹
- 2 Transitioning smoothly from alternative settings to further education, training or work can be difficult:** Too often, young people who re-engage through flexible learning options complete, or partially complete, their course or qualification only to fall into unemployment or disengagement once more. While the alternative setting provided holistic and welcome support, young people can then struggle when they attempt to enter the workforce or mainstream courses.
- 3 Employer and community expectations regarding education and training are changing:** It is no longer sufficient for a young person to hold a Certificate I or II qualification. Increasingly, employers are seeking people who are multi-skilled and trained with a broad range of skills.⁷² Foundational qualifications and soft-entry courses rarely provide a high enough skill level for direct entry into meaningful work.

Certificate III minimum qualification

At the EFY Foyer, a part of ‘the Deal’ with students is that they will be supported to achieve a Certificate III or higher qualification with a mainstream, accredited educational institution. While some students may commence in a community-delivered or soft-entry course (e.g., vocational taster, life skills or literacy skills courses) to build confidence and motivation, the minimum goal for all students is to enrol in, and achieve, a Certificate III qualification.

We have articulated a Certificate III as the minimum qualification required for our students to succeed as learners, because this level of certification requires the accumulation and embodiment of a range of skills that are valued both in the labour market, the formal education system and the broader community. Although a Certificate II is considered a Year 12 equivalent by some Victorian Council of Australian Governments (COAG) school retention targets, research demonstrates that a Certificate III provides improved employability and social outcomes, and is, realistically, a closer equivalent than a Certificate II.⁷³

When students engage in foundational or community-based courses, the goal should be preparation for mainstream education, training and vocational settings at a Certificate III level or higher.

Internal assets

Educational skills and capabilities

To achieve in educational contexts at a Certificate III level or higher, young people need to have developed the skills and capabilities required to engage in learning at that level. These include but are not limited to:

- literacy and numeracy levels to a Year 12/Certificate III standard
- ICT skills to a Year 12/Certificate III standard
- interpersonal and communication skills
- intrapersonal, self-management and planning skills.

The Education Offer utilises the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) to gauge student educational levels and to cater for appropriate learner support. The ACSF was developed to ‘facilitate a consistent national approach to the identification and development of the core skills in diverse personal, community, work, and education and training contexts’.⁷⁴ It assesses according to five core skills, five levels of performance and three domains of communication.

⁷¹ Myconos 2012, op. cit.

⁷² YACVic, op. cit.

⁷³ Karmel & Lim, op. cit.

⁷⁴ Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education 2012, *Australian Core Skills Framework*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

The Education First Youth Foyer considers a Certificate III qualification as equating to a Level 4 in the ACSF (a comparison of ACSF Levels 1–5 can be found in the Appendix). This is consistent with informal recommendations made by the Victorian Qualifications and Assessment Authority.

Transferable knowledge and skills

To succeed as learners and to reach their full potential young people need to engage in meaningful, quality and practical education. It is important that the skills and knowledge developed in education or training is not highly contextualised, but rather transferable to a range of different settings and life situations.

This is especially important at the lower end of the education continuum – students engaged in foundational certificates should be building their skills for life, work and further learning (e.g., communication skills, functional literacies, self-advocacy, teamwork, self-management), as opposed to tightly structured and highly contextualised content that is not transferable to higher qualifications and tasks (e.g., coffee making, warehouse packing, forklift driving).

External assets

Appropriate level of support to achieve their educational goals and aspirations

To succeed as learners, one of the key external assets needed by service-connected young people is consistent, informed and tailored support. This support needs to span both formal, structural initiatives that alleviate economic, cultural and social barriers, and more personalised assistance such as tutoring, mentorship and internship opportunities.

International research has determined that the right kind of support structures and programs can be transformational for individual students. North American studies have demonstrated that while individual success and achievement at university can be predicted solely by family income status, appropriate support can transform educational outcomes for low SES students.⁷⁵

Evidence also indicates that even when individual students have above average intellectual and academic capabilities, those from low SES backgrounds often suffer from feelings of inferiority and displacement that eventually result in deferral or early exiting from

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For those who leave school early, or who complete a ‘Year 12 equivalent’ qualification, the transition to work can be anything but linear. ”

⁷⁵ A. P. Carnevale & J. Strohl 2010, ‘How increasing college access is increasing inequality, and what to do about it’, in R. Kahlenberg (ed.), *Rewarding Strivers: Helping Low Income Students Succeed in College*, The Century Foundation, New York.

university settings.⁷⁶ However, when those same low SES students were supported to develop a sense of belonging and self-belief through an immersive program that doubled tutoring and study support, and matched them with university mentors, their achievement and retention rates improved.⁷⁷

It is the role of learner supports in the Education First Youth Foyer to provide opportunities that help students to build their skills to Level 4 through the following means:

- coaching around learning skills (planning, goal-setting, time management, etc.)
- tutoring around reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy skills
- providing study clubs
- running education workshops focusing on all 5 core skills.

Good practice principles

The *Good Practice Guide: Delivering to Homeless or at Risk Learners* provides a summary of principles for improving practice interventions geared towards homeless and at-risk learners.⁷⁸ These principles, which have been informed by eight case study sites across Australia plus consultation with key stakeholders in the sector, identify the following as being critical to engaging homeless learners:

- supported learner pathways and transitions
- strong partnerships and connections
- integrating training with work experience and/or aligned with areas of market demand to support sustainable employment outcomes
- embedded support for foundational skills within vocational training
- ensuring the learner's voice is heard and acted upon
- a commitment to improving the capability of the VET workforce to address the needs of diverse learners
- measuring the outcomes of the program/initiative and achieving positive results
- strength-based wellbeing support
- meaningful and culturally relevant practices
- flexible delivery and strategies.

“

To succeed as learners, one of the key external assets needed by service-connected young people is consistent, informed and tailored support.

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⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ M. Schultze & S. Foster 2013, *Good Practice Guide: Delivering Training to Homeless or at Risk Learners*, Hanover Welfare Services, Melbourne.

Part 2: Theories and Frameworks

2.1 EFY Foyer theoretical framework

A core set of theoretical perspectives and approaches inform the Education Offer. The theoretical framework for the EFY Foyer Model articulates a number of ideological ‘shifts’ required to break down the barriers of disadvantage and social exclusion for service-connected young people. In summary, they are:

- moving from deficit to advantaged thinking at a systems level
- investing in building young people’s abilities, developing their assets and co-creating solutions that enable them to achieve independent adulthood
- adopting an inclusive growth approach to economic development
- recognising that young people’s capacity for economic and social participation will be realised through investment in opportunities that enable them to develop the three dimensions of social capital – bonding, bridging and linking
- valuing service-connected young people as social citizens who are able and expected to contribute to the development of their own lives, as well as to the lives of others, including those in the wider community.

In addition to these broad, systemic shifts a growing evidence base suggests that schools, universities and training institutes need to adopt new ways of teaching, assessing and communicating if service-connected young people are to succeed as learners.

2.2 Pedagogical approach

Non-cognitive approaches

For a long time, most schools, universities and institutes of learning subscribed to a ‘traditional pedagogical model’. This model was based on an assumption that learning is a passive task, in which submissive students absorb information under the direct instruction of teachers. It was part of a broader ‘standard paradigm of learning’, wherein the mind was prioritised over the body, and the accumulation of knowledge could only be presented in verbal or written forms.⁷⁹ Techniques such as direct instruction and rote learning were utilised in order to ‘fill’ students’ minds.

It is undisputed that the development of cognitive skills and core academic competencies contribute to social inclusion, labour market participation and community engagement. To be a fully active and involved member of society, individuals require a functional level of literacy, as well as the capacity to use cognitive skills including logic, reason and memory. This is why access to education is a fundamental human right.

Increasingly, however, the importance of non-cognitive skill development to a broad range of life pursuits has been emphasised across international literature and research. Evidence indicates that to attain ‘hard outcomes’, such as strong academic achievement, it is necessary first to realise ‘progressive outcomes’, such as social relationships and community participation.⁸⁰ This is supported by other studies that suggest that the progressive outcomes of self-confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing are all important precursors for engaging in the broader community and for gaining employment.

Traditionally, the acquisition of non-cognitive skills and the achievement of progressive outcomes were

⁷⁹ D. Blake 2009, *Re-engaging Learners in Schooling through Applied Learning Reform: Exploring the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning as an ‘Alternative’ Senior Schooling Pathway in Australia*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany, p. 56.

⁸⁰ P. Howard, T. Merchant, A. Hampshire, J. Butcher, L. Egan & K. Bredhauer 2008, ‘Promoting social inclusion: Emerging evidence from the Catalyst-Clemente program’, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 48(3):479–501.

considered part of the domestic domain that developed from birth as children learnt how to act, interact and respond appropriately from adults in their immediate environment.⁸¹ However, many children face multiple hurdles to developing core skills and outcomes as a result of family breakdown, poor parental mental health, inadequate family income, and unsafe and disruptive homes and neighbourhoods. In these circumstances, the acquisition of certain competencies requires ‘Herculean determination’.⁸²

It has been found that a broad range of non-cognitive approaches can be successful in building both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, including ‘applied learning’ pedagogies,⁸³ constructivist paradigms of learning,⁸⁴ pedagogies of coaching, social and emotional literacy frameworks and ‘positive psychology’.⁸⁵

In the EFY Foyer context, the following evidence-informed elements are considered critical to achieving and sustaining engagement in education:

- personalised coaching and mentoring relationships
- applied activities and projects, where social and emotional literacies, innovation, critical thinking and personal development opportunities are prioritised
- positive engagement and opportunities for flow.

Towards a pedagogy of coaching: The role of learner supports

Appropriate learner support is a critical influencing factor on educational achievement, and may come in the form of mentoring, tutoring or coaching. At the EFY Foyer, all three of these are utilised to improve educational access and outcomes for students but the core approach used by Foyer staff, in particular the Youth Development Workers (YDWs), is coaching.

The pedagogy of coaching has been described as an ‘informal approach to learning based on experience’ that applies theories of constructivism and experiential learning.⁸⁶ The ‘learning cycle’ articulated by the experiential learning theorist Kolb is specifically noted in the literature, due to its emphasis on demonstration, practical experience and reflection.⁸⁷ A representation of the ‘learning cycle’⁸⁸ is presented here in Figure 2.

Constructivism is an approach to teaching and learning in which students directly apply their own experiences to build learning in social, cognitive and reflective realms.⁸⁹ Jameson describes the constructivist process of coaching as:

... the coach closely guides the student through a series of individually tailored lessons in which the student gets closer and closer to achieving their goals by improving their practice. The coach empowers the coachee to perform highly motivated activity in pursuit of practical goals.⁹⁰

⁸¹ Y. Robert 2009, *Grit: The Skills for Success and How They Are Grown*, The Young Foundation, London.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ Blake, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Constructivism is a theory of learning pioneered by Jean Piaget. For more information go to: http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/learning_teaching/ict/theory/constructivism.shtml.

⁸⁵ Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), *Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies*, CASEL, Chicago IL; and Seligman, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ J. Jameson 2012, ‘Coaching as a pedagogical approach’, in A. Brown, L. Browne, K. Collett, C. Devereux & J. Jameson 2012, *Insights No. 1, The Role of Coaching in Vocational Education and Training*, City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, London, p. 58.

⁸⁷ D. A. Kolb 1984, *The Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

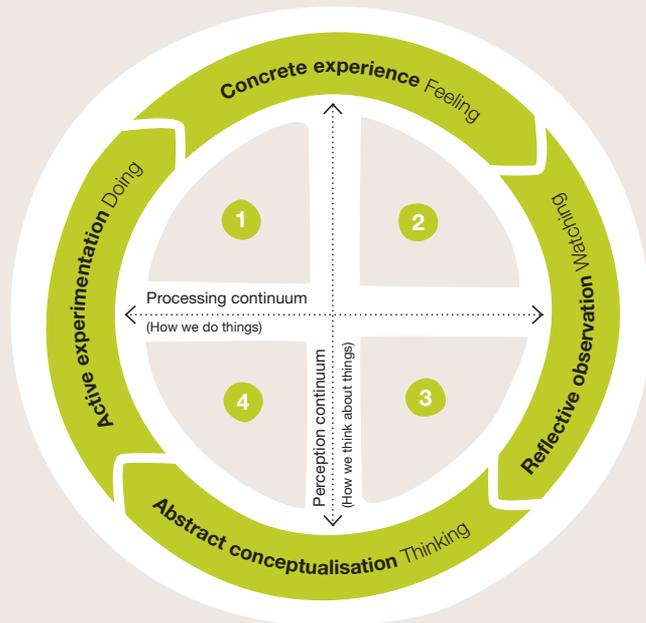
⁸⁸ Jameson, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 57.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

Figure 2 Coaching as a pedagogical approach

- 1 Accommodation (feel and do)
Activists
- 2 Diverging (feel and watch)
Reflectors
- 3 Assimilating (think and watch)
Theorists
- 4 Converging (think and do)
Reflectors



Kolb's learning cycle

According to Collett,⁹¹ the key attributes of coaching include:

- **Coaching is relational:** The relationship between coach and coachee is 'one of developing trust, attending respectfully and with sensitivity to the powerful emotions involved in deep, professional learning.'⁹²
- **Coaching is dynamic:** 'Although the coach may have a plan, the coaching that happens will change in response to the coachee's progress, and the type of coaching required will change over time, as the coachee develops new skills.'⁹³
- **Coaching is co-productive:** 'Both the coach and the coachee must be actively engaged in creating the learning experience. Both of them must bring some understanding of the task at hand, and a willingness and ability to reflect on the learning experience.'⁹⁴
- **Coaching is performance or outcomes-focused:** 'The coach and the coachee work with direct, shared examples of practice to enhance the coachee's performance. The targeted, goal-orientated approach distinguishes coaching from the subjective focus of counselling at one end, and the less individualised focus of classroom teaching (which is not individualised to the same extent) at the other.'⁹⁵

⁹¹ K. Collett 2012, 'What is coaching?', in Brown et al., op. cit., pp. 8–19.

⁹² *ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 14.

In the EFY Foyer, the pedagogy of coaching is integrated into the way that key staff communicate with and ‘teach’ Foyer students. The reasons for this are threefold:

- 1 YDWs are a key contact for all Foyer students. However, they are not educationalists or teachers, and as such are not required to plan, assess or formally teach. In the context of the Cert. 1 in DI, their function is to provide ‘learner support’ as evidence indicates that coaching is an effective practice to achieve learner success.⁹⁶
- 2 As providers of ‘learner support’, YDWs are able to fill the critical gap left when family members or supportive others are not available or able to provide positive support, encouragement, reinforcement and motivation.
- 3 YDWs are well placed to coach students towards developing a vision, becoming self-motivated and being able to self-navigate, trouble-shoot and build networks.

Applied learning theory: Active and authentic learning experiences

The term ‘applied learning’ is used to describe:

*learning activities and projects that endeavour to connect what students are learning with authentic applications beyond the classroom or lecture theatres... it is described as being ‘hands-on’ and ‘real world’ because students engage with workplaces and the wider community to solve problems that are highly relevant in these contexts.*⁹⁷

Blake and Bowling have summarised the constructivist principles that underpin most forms of applied learning (derived from the traditions of experiential learning and situated learning) as:

- students’ active participation in creating and applying knowledge first hand in an authentic and meaningful context

- learning tasks that are open-ended, multi-disciplinary and mediated by their relevance to real-world contexts and the students present and future lives
- opportunities for students to achieve deeper levels of personal learning through appropriate levels of experimentation and risk-taking, which is supported by authentic feedback and critical reflection on their successes and failures
- the development of students’ capacities to learn independently, which is mediated through mentoring relationships and partnerships, and the acquisition of effective interpersonal communication skills that will sustain them as they ‘co-learn’ within and across different contexts and communities.

Applied learning, although relevant and applicable to any subject and/or learning environment, maps particularly well to vocational and work-orientated curricular. As such, it is frequently adopted as an engagement strategy to ‘hook’ back into learning those young people who experience disadvantage and/or disengagement from formal education.

In the EFY Foyer context, applied learning opportunities are promoted through the Internal and External Opportunities steps of the Cert. 1 in DI and through Foyer activities more broadly.

Positive Education: The PERMA model

The Conceptual Framework for the Education Offer has been informed by the PERMA model. Developed by Seligman,⁹⁸ the model has been embedded into an educational context by Victoria’s Geelong Grammar School as Positive Education. Informed by extensive and diverse research in the broad field of positive psychology, the PERMA model focuses on five elements for ‘optimal wellbeing’. The end goal or aim of the model is for all young people to be *flourishing*. Flourishing refers to *feeling good* and *doing good*; it is the sense that life is going well, even in the face of difficult emotions, circumstances or experiences.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ D. Blake & B. Bowling 2011, ‘Youth literacy development through applied learning and the national curriculum’, in B. Doecke, G. Parr & W. Sawyer 2011, *Creating an Australian Curriculum for English: National Agendas, Local Contexts*, Phoenix Education, Putney, NSW, pp. 139–54.

⁹⁸ Seligman, *op. cit.*

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

The PERMA model has been influenced by other experts in the field, and their ideas led GGS to add *positive purpose* and *positive health* to the framework.

The GGS model for Positive Education has now been adopted and adapted by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Launch Housing for the EFY Foyers. It is based on the following six elements:

- **Positive emotion** assists students to anticipate, experience, prolong and build positive emotional experiences, as well as responding to negative emotions in a positive way
- **Positive engagement** encourages students to understand and experience complete immersion in activities as peak experiences through understanding the nature of engagement, the pathways to it and the function it has on individual wellbeing
- **Positive health** assists students to develop a healthy mind and body and to live healthy, energetic and resilient lives
- **Positive purpose** encourages students to understand, believe in and serve something greater than themselves, and deliberately engage in activities for the benefit of others
- **Positive relationships** help students create and promote strong and nourishing relationships with themselves and others by encouraging and developing social and emotional skills
- **Positive accomplishment** helps students develop their potential through striving for and achieving meaningful goals.

Positive Education approach

In an educational context, positive psychology is adapted to shape school environments, pedagogy and curriculum focusing on 'specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, promote mindfulness, and encourage a healthy lifestyle.'¹⁰⁰ Geelong Grammar School describes Positive Education as bringing 'together the science of positive psychology with best practice teaching and learning to encourage and support schools and individuals within their communities to flourish'.¹⁰¹

While *flourishing* represents an optimal level of health and wellbeing, and is the ultimate goal of Positive Education, *flow* represents an optimal level of functioning and is the goal for engagement in an activity. To promote positive engagement consideration is given to three important areas:

- cultivating *flow*
- nurturing intrinsic motivation
- applying signature strengths.¹⁰²

Positive engagement – The importance of *flow*

Engaged students are committed to their learning and more likely to complete school successfully than disengaged students.¹⁰³ Positive engagement is defined as active and immersed engagement in behavioural, cognitive and emotional terms – or the state of *flow*.

Flow refers to 'the state of absolute absorption and optimal experience that results from taking part in intrinsically motivating challenges'¹⁰⁴ and can also be described as 'a level of deep engagement characterized by complete immersion in an activity that brings a profound sense of enjoyment and wellbeing'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ GGS 2013a, op. cit.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² GGS 2013b, 'Positive Education literature reviews'. Available at: <http://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/School/Positive-Education/Resources>.

¹⁰³ D. J. Shernoff, M. Csikszentmihalyi, B. Schneider & E. S. Shernoff 2003, 'Student engagement in high school classrooms from the perspective of flow theory', *School Psychology Quarterly*, 18:158–76.

¹⁰⁴ M. Csikszentmihalyi 1990, *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper Perennial, New York.

¹⁰⁵ GGS 2013b, op. cit.

The importance of sustaining positive engagement and *flow* to both educational and life chances has been evidenced by research indicating that students who are engaged are 'curious, motivated, interested and persistent in the face of challenges'.¹⁰⁶ While these attributes have an inevitable positive effect on health and wellbeing they also impact positively on learning and skill development and the accomplishment of important goals.

Engagement however can depend on a wide variety of factors – from the individual to the structural, and can fluctuate on a daily basis (even for students who are considered at minimal risk of disengagement). To illustrate this, Peter Dwyer and colleagues developed a 'Continuum of Attachment to Education',¹⁰⁷ along which students may move up and down on any given school day.

Continuum of Attachment to Education

Commitment	Active or very strong orientation to education
Engagement	Strong positive orientation to education
Connection	Passive or weak positive connection to education
Disengagement	Passive or weak negative connection to education
Rejection	Strong negative orientation to education
Resistance	Active or very strong negative orientation to education

While positive engagement is a state or skill that individuals can learn to develop, *flow* is a temporal state that is subject to environmental and personal factors. For example, a young person suffering from grief or illness will be less capable of achieving a state of positive engagement than someone who is generally healthy, happy and secure. Furthermore, not every moment of the day is active, demanding, challenging or invigorating so the intensity of students' engagement will not always be at the same level.

Developing the skills for positive engagement is as much about understanding the nature of engagement, the pathways to it and the effect it has on individual wellbeing.¹⁰⁸ In the EFY Foyer setting, students begin to identify their states of positive engagement and *flow* by reflecting on experiences and opportunities, learning about their character strengths and responding to questions such as:

- What are your character strengths and how do you use them?
- What kinds of challenges do you enjoy?
- What activities do you get really immersed in?
- When do you feel really good about yourself?

At EFY Foyers, students will have opportunities to explore their strengths, interests and hobbies, and talents and skills with a view to learning what it is they enjoy and want to engage in. Foyer staff aim to establish the conditions for positive engagement through developing inspiring and well-resourced learning spaces, setting up positive coaching and mentoring relationships, and connecting students with external assets able to provide them with activities and experiences that promote thriving and flourishing.

¹⁰⁶ R. M. Ryan & E. L. Deci 2000, 'Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being', *American Psychologist*, 55:68–78.

¹⁰⁷ J. Buick 2014, *Community VCAL Practice Guide: Showcasing Ideas for Practice in Flexible Learning Settings*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic.

¹⁰⁸ GGS 2013b, op. cit.

Part 3: The Education Offer Model and Practice Approach

3.1 The EFY Foyer Education Offer

Vision

The Education Offer supports all EFY Foyer students to access, engage in and realise their potential through quality mainstream educational opportunities at a Certificate III level or higher.

Key components

The Education Offer has five key components that are designed to support students to achieve a Certificate III level qualification or higher.

Recognition of Informal Learning/Affirmation of talents and skills

The first engagement that every potential EFY Foyer student has with the Foyer and the TAFE on which it is located focuses on recognising prior informal learning, and on affirming their existing talents and skills. This is a purposeful component of the model, as it positively frames the experiences of each young person and focuses on her/his potential, capacity and goals.

Certificate I in Developing Independence

This unique, purpose-built qualification acts as a 'launch-pad' into further study and/or employment. The Cert. 1 in DI supports students to set goals and aspirations in each of the 6 Offers, and provides personalised coaching towards achieving them – as well as building an Address Book of social and professional connections.

Personalised coaching

The EFY Foyer has adopted a coaching, as opposed to a case-management approach to engaging with our students. Every Foyer student has two expert coaches – the Developing Independence Teacher who

focuses on education and career goals, and the Youth Development Worker who focuses on personal and wellbeing goals.

Internal Opportunities that support engagement in a Certificate III or higher qualification

Young people who experience disadvantage often lack key 'internal' supports such as pro-social, positive adults in the family home who can assist with study, education and career guidance, and general school-related support. At the EFY Foyer, Internal Opportunities are those educational activities and opportunities that are available onsite at both Foyer and TAFE and may include:

- study groups or homework clubs
- tutoring
- mentoring
- Foyer activities
- brokerage to assist with study costs/materials.

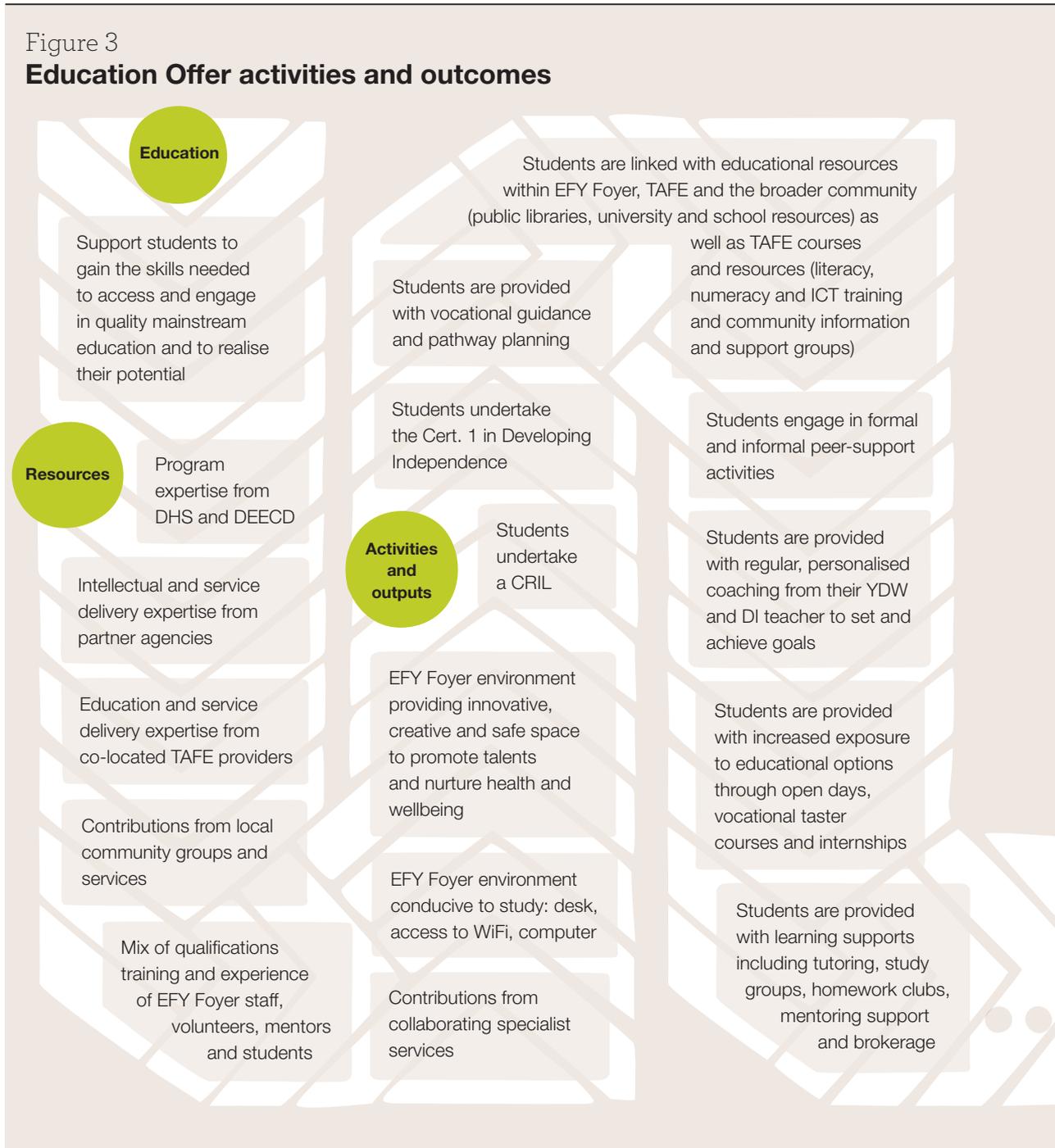
External Opportunities that support engagement in a Certificate III or higher qualification

External opportunities are those that are available outside of the Foyer and TAFE and may include:

- vocational taster program
- short courses
- internships
- industry or educational mentorships.

Activities and outcomes

The activities and outcomes of the EFY Foyer Education Offer are outlined below in Figure 3.

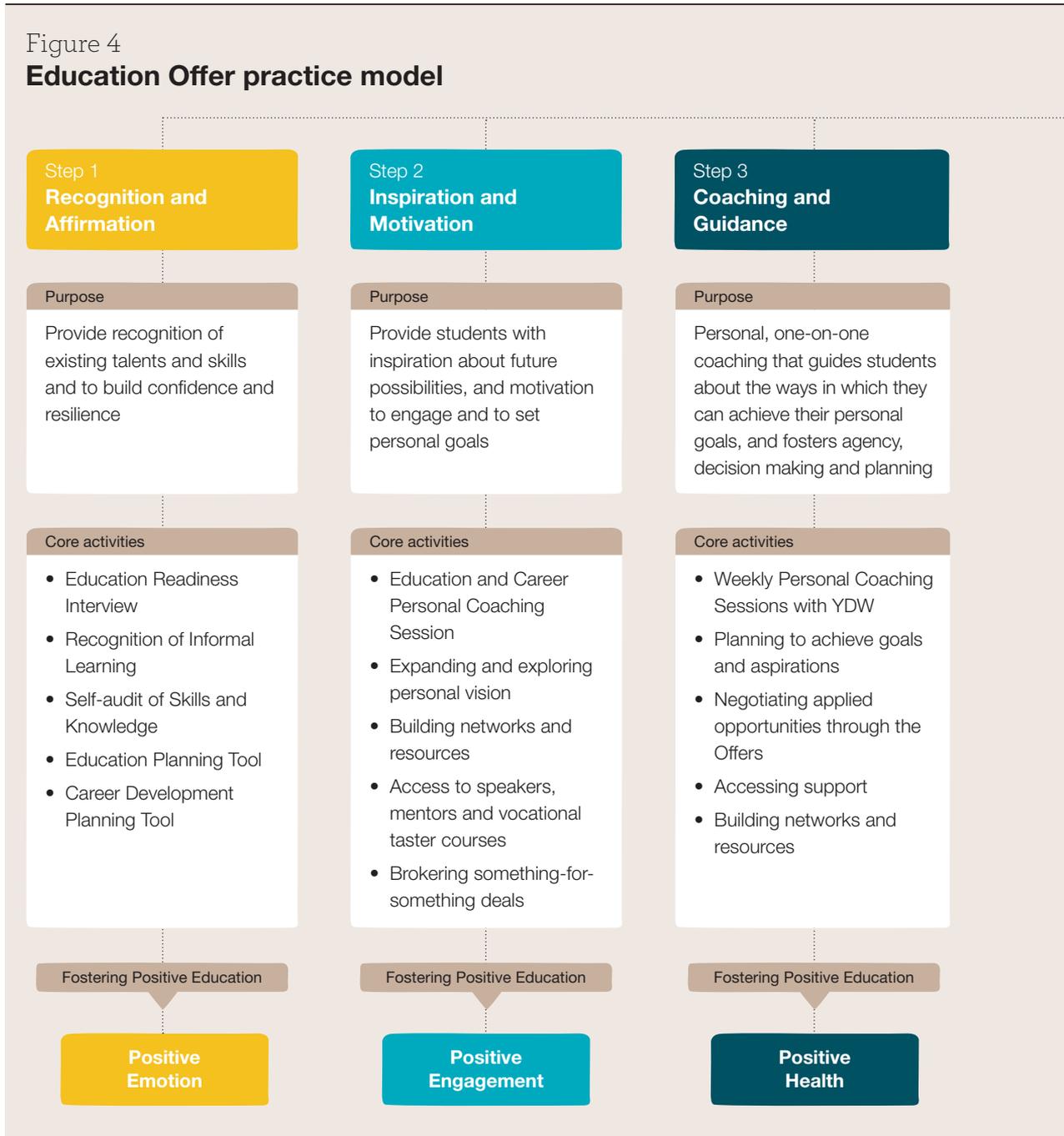


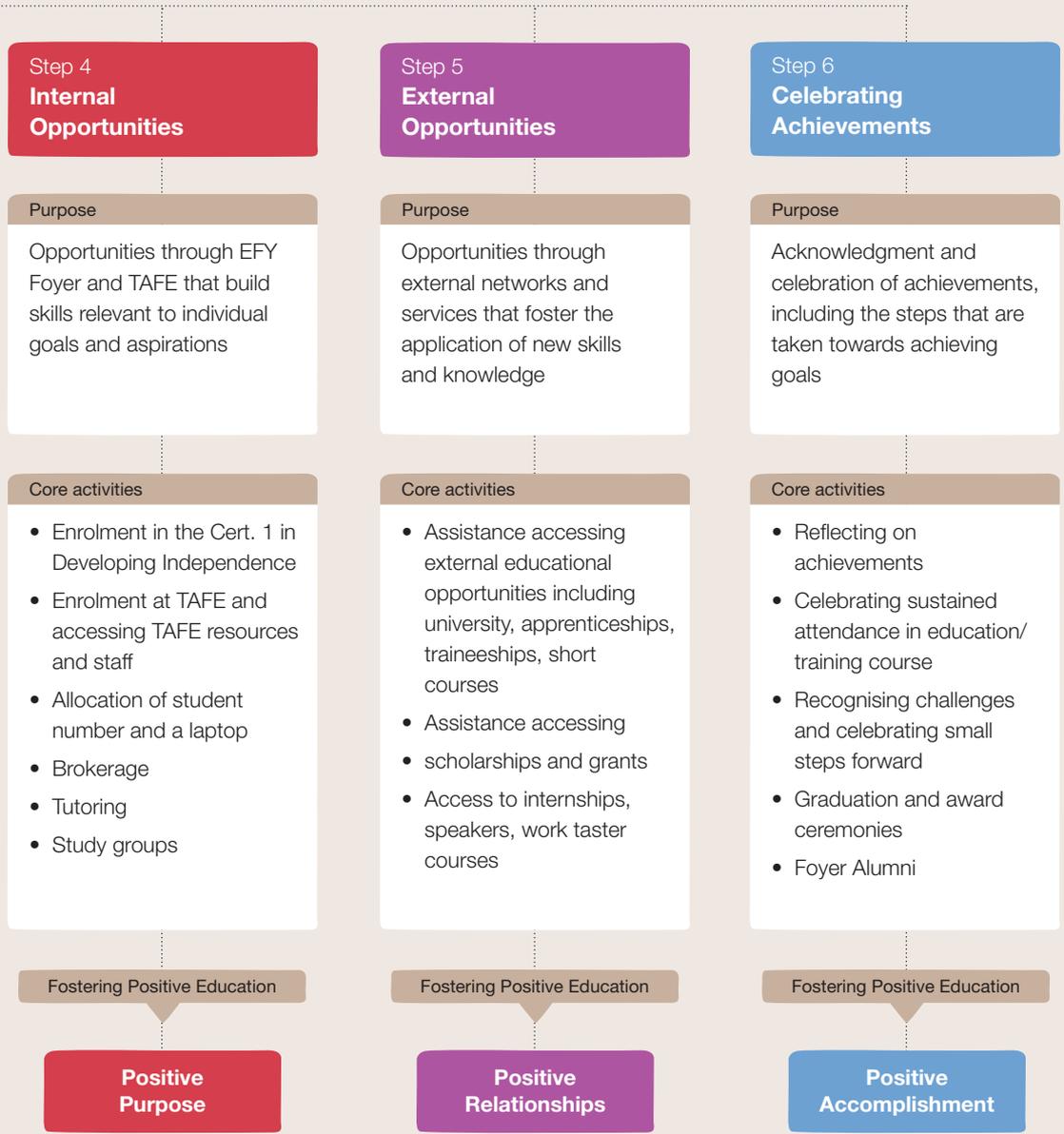


3.2 Key practice elements

The practice model for the Education Offer is based on the Positive Education framework, as outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4
Education Offer practice model



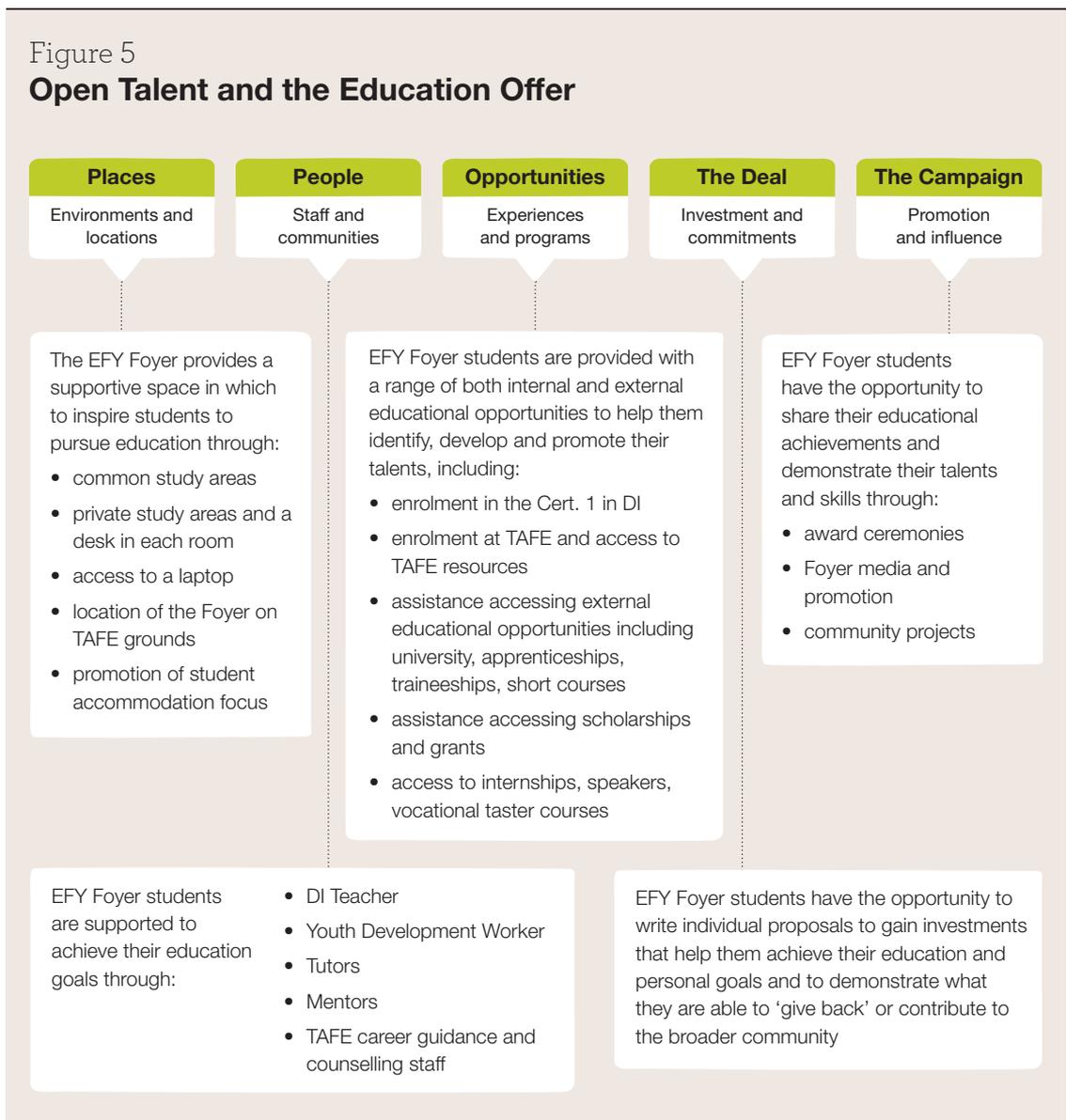


Practice assumptions and explanations

Each of the Service Offers employs a common set of broad practice steps as a way of engaging students and maximising their potential for positive outcomes. Each step or aspect of this practice is also informed by an evidence base that underlines the importance of this form of engagement.

The Open Talent approach

The Open Talent/Advantaged Thinking approach is expressed through the following 5 Key Practice Areas that are embedded within all of the 6 Service Offers. Figure 5 below gives a snapshot of how these practice areas intersect with the Education Offer.



Recognition and Affirmation

Many young people who are service-connected have been exposed to disruptive and often devastating experiences that have a profound effect on their lives. While many have been traumatised by these experiences, most, if not all, have also acquired deep insight about themselves as well as skills that are largely unrecognised or unacknowledged both by themselves or others. Acknowledging these experiences and skills provides the foundations for all 6 Service Offer.

Recognising and affirming informal learning and life experience encourages students to think positively about themselves and their achievements in life. This is a critical first step towards building confidence as a learner and developing educational aspirations. Focusing on capabilities and possibilities, rather than deficits and barriers, gives people confidence as well as hope for the future.¹⁰⁹

The Certificate of Recognition of Informal Learning or CRIL was developed to formalise this intention – to provide a positive first step into education and/or to recognise and affirm the individual talents and skills of all young people.¹¹⁰ The DI Teacher at the TAFE on which the EFY Foyer is located conducts the interview as part of the Education Readiness process for Foyer. It is through this process that all prospective students initially engage with Foyer and the Education Offer.

Affirming students' own knowledge and encouraging them to build on their strengths, rather than subjecting them to testing or accreditation, serves to 'promote access to formal education and training pathways, empower the learner and confirm or refocus the learner on a career direction'.¹¹¹

Inspiration and Motivation

A sense of inspiration and motivation are essential for EFY Foyer students to achieve key personal and program outcomes, especially maintaining engagement in education in accordance with 'the Deal'. Research suggests that personal motivation is created and maintained by:

- establishing the capacity for autonomy or self-direction (over a task or goal, the time, means or techniques and the team to achieve it)
- the opportunity to strive for mastery (through mindset shift, recognition of the struggle it takes and that full mastery is rarely attainable)
- a sense of purpose, especially in the common good.¹¹²

Inspiration has many sources, including from the key people in one's life as well as those not personally known such as celebrities or local or community figures. Art, music, nature and engagement in fulfilling activities can also be sources of inspiration. Exposing young people, particularly those who have not had a stable home life, to a range of people, occupations and activities can help to inspire them about life's possibilities and the potential to change their trajectories.

The EFY Foyer also develops and fosters student motivation and inspiration through Open Talent/ Advantaged Thinking coaching and personal planning, which is tracked through the Developing Independence Learning Plan. This Learning Plan and related activities focus on developing students' talents and capabilities.

Research suggests that young people who are disengaged from education due to disadvantage have often not been ready or able to engage with learning when the system required it.¹¹³ Once young people are

109 C. Falconer 2009, 'An Advantaged Thinking Approach'. Available at: advantagedthinking.blogspot.com.

110 S. H. Wynes & F. Beddie 2009, *Informal Learning at a Glance*, NCVER, Adelaide.

111 *ibid.*

112 D. Pink 2009, *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*, Riverhead Books, New York.

113 L. Nechvoglod & F. Beddie 2010, *Hard to Reach Learners: What Works in Reaching and Keeping Them?*, Adult Community and Further Education Board, Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Melbourne.

able to recognise their own capabilities, they often gain confidence and motivation to develop these interests further or the inspiration to pursue other interests and passions.¹¹⁴ This does not mean that their needs or problems are overlooked, rather that they do not become the focus, inspiration or the motivating force for student engagement in the EFY Foyer Education Offer.

Activities undertaken through the Employment Offer, such as participating in work taster programs or meeting with mentors, are also designed to expand a young person's experience and to inspire and motivate them to expand their vision of what their future could be. Enabling young people to develop personal visions and goals provides them with agency and self-direction about their future. This has been found to lead to a deeper and more sustained level of engagement in education, training and employment.¹¹⁵

Coaching and Guidance

Young people experiencing homelessness are thrust into independence at an early age, often due to crisis or trauma. They may not be emotionally or financially ready for independent living, and indeed may be grappling with common adolescent concerns, which are compounded by recently experienced crisis or trauma.¹¹⁶ In addition to a disrupted education, young people who have experienced family breakdown or dysfunction have often also often missed out on positive relationship modelling and critical developmental guidance and support.¹¹⁷ Providing both formal and informal coaching and guidance mechanisms are vital in establishing the necessary connections and supports that are required in the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

For some, establishing re-engagement in education will involve incremental steps and may take significant time or a number of attempts. For others, it will involve finding and gaining access to the right course and ensuring that appropriate supports are in place to facilitate their successful engagement with it. The time needed to find this pathway will vary greatly according to the different ages and developmental stages of the students at the EFY Foyer.

For example, a 16-year-old still connected or just recently disengaged from school may take considerably longer to decide on an education or employment pathway than a 23-year-old looking for a career direction. A graduated approach is necessary to enable young people to get to a point where they are able to maintain engagement with, and/or successfully complete, mainstream education and training.

The Education First Youth Foyer Model provides integrated coaching support for all aspects of a student's development while in the Foyer. The 6 Service Offers are designed to work together to enable students to develop the necessary suite of skills and connections to build the foundations for a sustainable livelihood.

¹¹⁴ Falconer, op. cit.

¹¹⁵ F. Aldridge & A. Tuckett 2011, *Tough Times for Adult Learners: The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning*, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester, UK.

¹¹⁶ G. W. Kamieniecki 2001, 'Prevalence of psychological distress and psychological disorders among homeless youth in Australia: A comparative review', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 35(3):352-8.

¹¹⁷ Department of Human Services (DHS) Victoria 2008, *Vulnerable Youth Framework Discussion Paper*, DHS, Victorian Government, Melbourne.

Internal Opportunities

Providing opportunities, resources and experiences is part of the EFY Foyer team's commitment to 'the Deal'. This is based on the understanding that disadvantaged young people are limited by their lack of resources and opportunities, rather than by a lack of potential.¹¹⁸

Internal Opportunities are relevant to each of the 6 Service Offers and are geared towards helping students to work on specific goals, to broaden their knowledge and to build and apply their skills within the familiar setting of Foyer – depending on their needs and capabilities.

In the context of the Education Offer, Internal Opportunities are focused on providing access to educational resources and supports that meet the needs students have identified in their CRIL and in their DI Learning Plan. This could include access to TAFE-based literacy or numeracy support, tutoring in specific subject areas or attending workshops on study or essay-writing techniques.

External Opportunities

These provide students with opportunities to build and apply their knowledge and skills within an external setting, accessed through the networks associated with each of the 6 Service Offers.

The EFY Foyer program recognises that access to the right people, information, activities and resources enables young people to develop the skills required to engage in, and sustain engagement with, education. This could include brokered access to scholarships and grants, connections to mentors who have done or who are doing the same course as the student and access to specialised training opportunities.

Celebrating Achievements

Throughout each stage of the Education Offer, students' achievements will be acknowledged and celebrated. This begins with the CRIL during the pre-Foyer Education Readiness process and continues throughout the two-year EFY Foyer tenancy via mechanisms, such as personalised coaching and the Learning Plan, which ensure that Foyer staff are always supporting students to achieve their goals.

Educational goals often contain a number of smaller steps within them. For example, enrolling in a course involves:

- investigating possible learning pathways
- applying for the course of study
- organising the appropriate supports (tutoring/mentoring)
- purchasing materials (text books; materials; travel cards).

Focusing on and celebrating each small step in the attainment of a bigger achievement can help to break negative mindsets about deficits and problems, and instead refocus on a young person's capabilities and possibilities.

Core skills and activities

Many young people who have experienced homelessness have had limited opportunities to develop and enhance their sense of self and self-worth. Their personal strengths and capabilities have often not been recognised and they have had limited access to people, opportunities and experiences that will assist them in allowing these skills to flourish.

EFY Foyers have adopted and adapted the evidence-informed asset matrix that was developed by the UK Foyer Federation to identify the key assets, skills, attributes and character capabilities necessary for young people to transition successfully to adulthood.¹¹⁹ This matrix is based on three key areas – social, personal and agency capabilities – which recognise the central importance of a young person’s sense of self and the influence this has on their future outcomes.

This matrix also resonates with the youth asset framework developed by Youth Support and Advocacy Service¹²⁰ and informed by Ungar.¹²¹

In addition, the EFY Foyers focus on developing practical skills that are specifically related to one of the 6 Service Offers. Together these core skills are critical to ensuring that students have the necessary capabilities to respond to, and cope with, life’s challenges.

Figure 6 opposite represents the core capabilities required for a young person to reach their potential.

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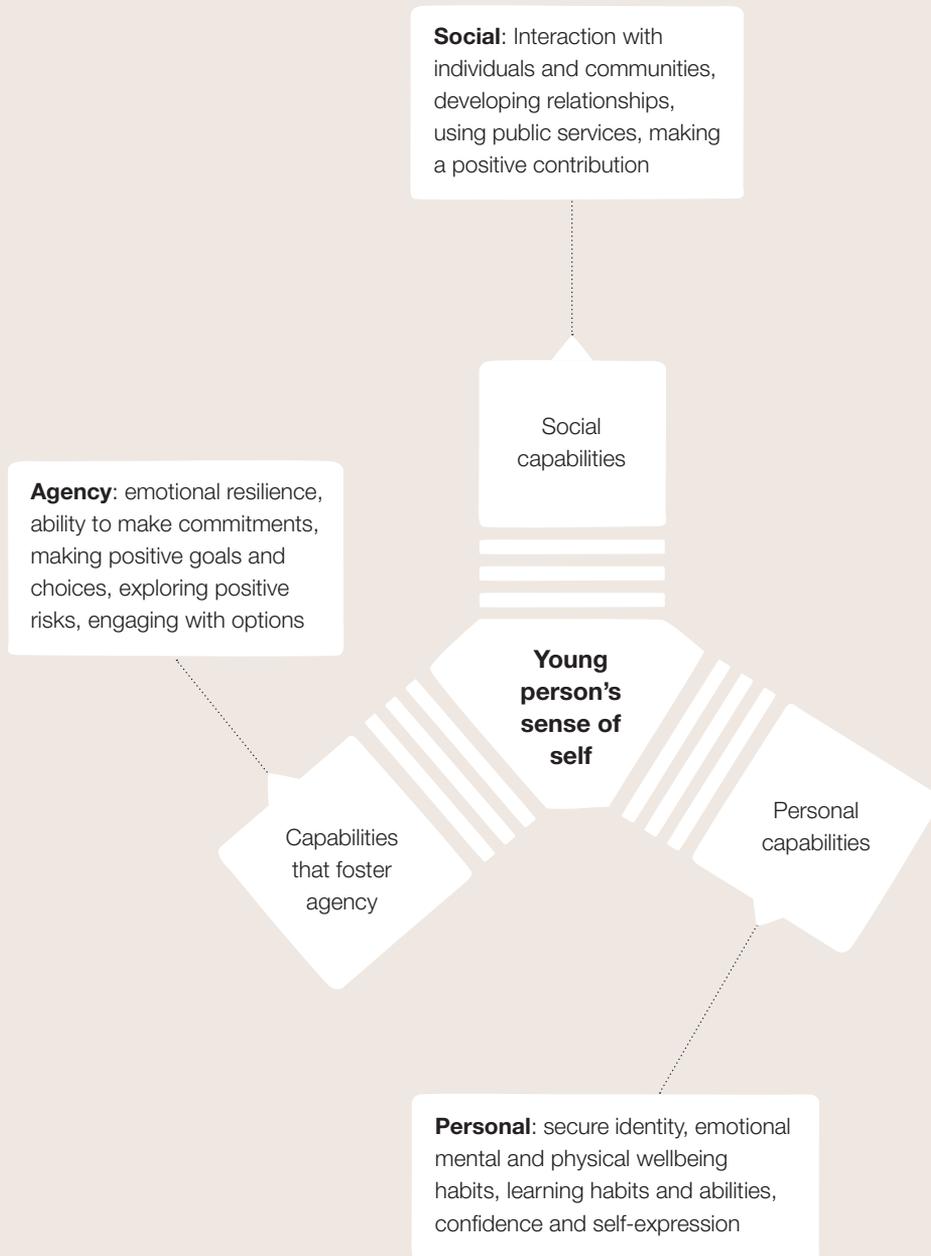
This matrix is based on three key areas – social, personal and agency capabilities – which recognise the central importance of a young person’s sense of self and the influence this has on their future outcomes. ”

¹¹⁹ The Foyer Federation 2013, *MyNav, Destination Independence – Navigating the Journey to Independent Adulthood*, The Foyer Federation, UK, p. 18.

¹²⁰ Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) 2012, ‘Youth AOD Toolbox’, YSAS. Available at: <http://www.youthaodtoolbox.org>.

¹²¹ M. Ungar 2006, *Strengths Based Counselling with at Risk Youth*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Figure 6
Young person's capabilities



To develop the capabilities displayed in Figure 6, young people require the opportunity to build core skills. Table 1 below demonstrates the core skills required to build personal and social capabilities, agency and practical competencies.

Table 1: Core skills for young people

Stream	Skills
<p>Personal</p> <p>Reflectiveness, motivation, responsibility</p>	<p>Self-awareness: be able to act appropriately, manage stress, regulate emotions, possess self-confidence about one's abilities and have optimism for the future.</p> <p>Self-expression: confidently express one's identity, talents and abilities, and recognise opportunities for self-development, personal growth and making positive change.</p>
<p>Social</p> <p>Relatedness, engagement and interaction</p>	<p>Social awareness: understand social and ethical norms of behaviour, relate to and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and be aware of family, social and community resources.</p> <p>Relationship skills: establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, communicate clearly, negotiate conflict, resist inappropriate social pressure, and seek and offer help when needed.</p>
<p>Agency</p> <p>The capacity to act on one's own behalf</p>	<p>Decision making: make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviour and social interactions, evaluate consequences of various actions and safety and wellbeing of self and others.</p> <p>Problem solving: identify and define problems, investigate possible solutions and implement strategies for resolving issues.</p> <p>Positive experimentation: be able to take positive risks concerning one's self-development that may include new experiences, places and/or people, as well as pro-active steps towards achieving set goals.</p>
<p>Practical skills</p>	<p>Literacy and numeracy, technology, career planning and development, learning skills: have the ability to engage in education and training at a Certificate III level or higher, utilising ICT, oral and written literacy, critical thinking and analytical skills.</p>

Part 4: Overview of the Education Offer's Tools and Resources

The Education First Youth Foyer Education Offer is supported by a suite of practical tools and resources for use in operationalising the Offer. They are specifically designed for the use of Youth Development Workers, Team Leaders, Developing Independence Teachers and volunteers in the EFY Foyer context, but may also be useful to other workers and teachers in youth settings.

All of the following tools and resources have been developed to support the students and staff involved with the EFY Foyers. An overview of these tools and resources is provided here, all of which can be accessed at: efyfoyers.org.au.

Vision of the Education Offer

The Education Offer supports all EFY Foyer students to access, engage in and realise their potential through quality mainstream educational opportunities at a Certificate III level or higher.

How the Education Offer supports students to engage in Certificate III level or higher qualifications

- 1 **'The Deal'** is an agreement signed by all EFY Foyer students that they must engage in education and/or training for the duration of their residency.
- 2 **Coaching framework** formalises the positive, outcomes-focused relationship formed between EFY Foyer students and staff, and provides a weekly one-hour space for each student to engage in tailored goal setting, planning and skill development with their YDW.
- 3 **Certificate I in Developing Independence** (or Cert. 1 in DI) supports students to set goals and aspirations, plan to achieve them and grow their networks and experiences.
- 4 **EFY Foyer educational tools and resources** support students to set goals and plan independently through the framework of the 6 Service Offers.
- 5 **Internal Opportunities** provide educational resources and supports that aim to build students skills to an ACSF Level 3 or 4 (depending on where they are at)
- 6 **External Opportunities** connect students with community, public and specialised educational networks, resources and supports that exist outside of EFY Foyer and TAFE.
- 7 **Celebrating Achievements** is a critical part of the EFY Foyer Model that ensures that small and big achievements are recognised and supported as a part of students' learning journeys.



Break-out area, Kangan EFY Foyer

Photography Dani Burley

4.1 Coaching framework

The way that EFY Foyer staff, mentors and group facilitators work with students is central to ensuring the integrity of the Open Talent approach, and we aim to enable staff, mentors and others involved with EFY Foyers to work in ways that develop their capacity to innovate and lead change.

A wide range of methods – including positive psychology, mindfulness techniques, narrative-based approaches, motivational interviewing, solutions-focused therapy, life coaching and group work methodologies – have informed the development of the EFY Foyer Coaching Framework. It incorporates a youth-focused coaching approach, which is distinct from models designed for adults such as leadership coaching, vocational coaching and life coaching.

Youth-focused coaching marks a move away from a traditional, deficit-based, case-management approach towards one that is 'aspirational' and goal-oriented. Such coaching does not replace all other forms of professional health and wellbeing services and supports. Rather, this approach clarifies and reshapes the activities of non-clinical staff in EFY Foyers, such as Youth Development Workers and Team Leaders, whose roles integrate personalised coaching, assisted planning and group work facilitation.

Coaching in the EFY Foyer is led by YDWs and Team Leaders, with the process structured and focused on a clear set of objectives and goals. It is relational and task orientated, and driven by the self-articulated goals of the young person. It requires a shared investment from both the Personal Coach (YDW or Team Leader) and the young person being coached. In the coaching relationship, it is the Coach's role to:

- recognise and improve skills, abilities and/or knowledge
- have expectations and make demands
- motivate
- facilitate further opportunities for young people to develop skills.

The Coach can also play an important role in supporting young people to arrive at a place where they are building in all areas of their life. The Foyer Federation recognises four distinct levels of livelihood, which map where young people may be on a continuum from surviving towards thriving. These four levels are:

- **Surviving** – a life defined by deficit and day-to-day sustainability
- **Coping** – a life limited by deficit and short-term sustainability
- **Building** – a life moving from deficit to asset and mid-term sustainability
- **Thriving** – a life defined by asset and long-term sustainability.

The EFY Foyer approach towards coaching supports young people to move from states of 'surviving to thriving' through regular Personal Coaching sessions.

Coaching Manual

The Coaching Manual provides an insight into the thinking and theory behind youth-focused coaching, as well as practical exercises and tools to use with young people in a coaching context.

Training

All EFY Foyer staff undertake Induction Training when they commence in a Foyer role and coaching is part of this training. The coaching modules provide practical, hands-on training designed to up-skill staff as Personal Coaches.

4.2 Certificate I in Developing Independence Toolkit

Certificate I in Developing Independence

The Certificate I in Developing Independence (or Cert. 1 in DI) is a key component and driver of the Education First Youth Foyer Model. It is a mandatory course, formally accredited by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, in which students accepted into the EFY Foyer will enrol on their second day of induction.

The Cert. 1 in DI fills a significant gap in the current education and training system by providing a formal, supportive and accredited space for young people to develop core life management skills – such as goal setting, planning and dealing with conflict – as well as recognising and validating their existing skills, talents and aspirations.

Through a combination of personal coaching around education and career planning, enhanced by engagement in group activities at the EFY Foyer, the Cert. 1 in DI provides a solid platform from which young people can independently begin to navigate their own career and personal development journeys. It aims to provide a launch-pad from which to engage with the EFY Foyer's 6 Service Offers:



Education



Employment



Health and Wellbeing



Social Connections



Civic Participation



Housing and Living Skills

DI Trainers' Manual

The Trainers' Manual is a guide for those staff with responsibility for implementing the Cert. 1 in DI – in particular, Youth Development Workers at the EFY Foyers and TAFE-based DI Teachers. It includes:

- a course overview
- delivery modes and methodology
- FAQs about the Cert. 1 in DI and the steps to completing the certificate
- examples of student experiences
- an example of a completed Certificate of Recognition of Prior Learning (or CRIL)
- use of the Open Talent approach in EFY Foyers.

DI Learning Plan

The Learning Plan for students is a key component of the Cert. 1 in DI, and is designed to be completed by students enrolled in the certificate in consultation with both their EFY Foyer YDW and their TAFE DI Teacher.

The Learning Plan outlines:

- the 6 Steps to attaining the Cert. 1 in DI
- an Assessment Rubric
- the Address Book for Students.

Once completed, approaches to storing the Learning Plan will differ for each EFY Foyer. The DI Teacher will need to keep a record of completed Learning Plans for assessment purposes, and generally the Foyer team will keep a copy in the Student File system.

Open Talent Resumé/Application Builder

The OT Resumé/Application Builder is an assessment task in Step 6 of the Cert. 1 in DI. The tool is designed to embed young people's skills, attributes and talents into their resumé in an authentic and relevant way.

Using this tool, students engage in active discussion with their DI Teacher about their vocational goals, aspirations and unique skills and talents. The Resumé Template provides a general format for completing a resumé, and should be regularly updated and revised.

4.3 EFY Foyer educational tools and resources

LaunchPAD Student Planner

After completing the Cert. 1 in DI, students are not required to continue with their Learning Plans after the first three months of residency. Of course their Cert. 1 in DI Learning Plans may continue to be referred to and utilised in part, but the core document to be used in the regular Personal Coaching sessions is the EFY Foyer LaunchPAD Student Planner. This is a unique Learning Plan designed to link students to the 6 Service Offers, and to build the self-sufficient practices of planning, goal setting and self-reflection. It contains:

- a review of goals, talents and aspirations
- a prioritisation tool for new and existing goals
- action plans and goal trackers
- an address book
- a yearly diary
- notes pages.

LaunchPAD App

Currently in development, the Independence App is being designed to support EFY Foyer students (and other young Australians) to independently set goals, track progress, and determine new targets that are connected to the 6 Service Offers.

4.4 Internal Opportunities

The Education Offer provides the students with access to education and training opportunities that are relevant to a young person's goals and aspirations, and provides them with the necessary resources and skills to allow them to unlock their potential to be productive and independent, yet connected, citizens.

In the context of the Education Offer, Internal Opportunities are considered to be those that support engagement in a Certificate III or higher qualification. These include:

- Cert. 1 in DI
- TAFE courses, teachers and resources
- Study Clubs or homework groups
- tutoring programs
- Educational Workshops
- positive learning environments.

Internal Opportunities and the Cert. 1 in DI

While all EFY Foyer students are expected to engage in Internal Opportunities throughout their residency, Step 4 of the Cert. 1 in DI formalises the importance of engagement with the Foyer and TAFE community by requiring all students to articulate those Internal Opportunities that are relevant to their goals and aspirations. This does not mean that all Foyer activities become assessment tasks – rather, that students can engage in any number of Foyer activities, but will be assessed on their participation in those that relate to their goals and aspirations in the Cert. 1 in DI Learning Plan.

Educational Internal Opportunities: Assessing the learning needs of EFY Foyer students

Foyer students will have diverse learning needs, which will depend upon their personal pathway and educational experience. It is critical that Educational Internal Opportunities meet the specific needs of the current cohort, as opposed to being ad hoc activities.

To scope the learning needs of EFY Foyer students, Foyer and DI staff should review the 'Self-audit of Knowledge and Skills' from the CRIL. When students go through the Education Readiness Interview they are asked to complete this self-audit, which are then reviewed by Foyer staff to determine the common educational needs of current cohorts. Staff can also ask students to revisit the self-audit tool for more current scoping, or survey students to assess their learning needs.

Working in partnership with TAFE

TAFEs have a wide and diverse range of educational opportunities available to their students. These may extend from onsite career guidance and counselling services to study and exam help sessions, team sports and recreational facilities. As all EFY Foyer students are also students of their home TAFE, it is important that they know of, and can easily access, the services available onsite. It is also important that the EFY Foyer does not duplicate TAFE services.

Forming a Study Club

All formal courses and certificates require students to engage in private study towards the completion of their qualification. For family-connected young people, the family home may provide a quiet, safe space with appropriate technology and resources (e.g., Internet connection and computer technology) to engage in private study, as well as reminders from parents/guardians about the importance of homework and study.

For young people who experience homelessness finding a space for private study can be challenging. EFY Foyers are purposefully designed to facilitate study and learning, and include WiFi connections and designated study spaces. However, architecture alone may not facilitate the culture of a learning community. EFY Foyer and TAFE staff will also need to have available activities like a Study Club to encourage students to dedicate time to private study and homework.

However, when setting up a Study Club, it is pivotal that a number of students have either self-identified this as a desired Internal Opportunity, or the broader student cohort has been consulted as to its establishment. It may be that formation of a Study Club results from a review of the cohort's 'Self-audit of Knowledge and Skills', but if not buy-in and student ownership will be critical to its success.

Study Clubs can be defined in a number of ways – from informal gatherings of people meeting to discuss a topic of shared interest (e.g., film club), to a more formal and structured gathering at a regular time and place (e.g., homework clubs). Thus, before setting up a Study Club, it is important to meet with students to decide on its focus and goals and the expectations of participating students.

In forming a Study Club, the following questions should be considered:

- What is the purpose of the Study Club? Is it to create a quiet space for private study, or will the group be focusing on a shared interest?
- Who will be the key EFY Foyer contact for the club?
- When and where should the Study Club meet? What times are best for studying, and for how long?
- What resources will the group need? Will ICT be required? Will external tutors, YDWs or TAFE staff be a part of the Study Club? Will snacks or drinks be provided?
- Who will facilitate the Study Club? What kind of rules/expectations will apply for those attending?

“ For young people who experience homelessness finding a space for private study can be challenging. ”

Developing a Tutoring Program

Tutoring can occur in both formal and informal contexts. In many family homes, parents informally tutor their children through schoolwork by assisting with homework and class projects, discussing school rules and expectations, and leading conversations about future goals and career aspirations.

In addition to the informal tutoring that occurs through positive parenting, many Australian families are increasingly investing in private tutoring to enhance the learning experiences and academic outcomes of their children. The kind of informal and formal support that a family-connected student receives from ‘beyond the school gate’ contributes greatly to their success and achievement at school.

By comparison, service-connected young people – especially those who experience homelessness and family instability – receive limited ‘beyond the school gate’ support. To fill this gap, both YDWs and Tutors have a critical role to play.

Youth Development Workers fill the gaps in informal tutoring by engaging in frequent, casual conversations with students about their educational pathway. In their roles as Personal Coaches, YDWs may provide support with homework, and engage in discussions with students about how they are experiencing school/TAFE/university/apprenticeships. It is not an expectation that YDWs will be highly skilled tutors or have explicit content knowledge. Rather, their role is to support, assist and coach students to success.

Tutors fill the gaps in formal tutoring by providing targeted, skilled assistance to students about their study. Tutors may have expertise in a specific content area (e.g., in maths or physics), or have more general expertise about study (e.g., structuring assignments or exam study skills).

To develop a Tutoring Program, it will be important for EFY Foyer staff to assess the learning needs of students and to scope the kind of Tutors required. Direct surveying of, and discussion with, students will form a critical part of this process.

In developing a Tutoring Program, the following questions should be considered:

- What is the purpose of the Tutoring Program?
- Who will be the key EFY Foyer point of contact for the program?
- How will it be structured, i.e., will Tutors and students meet as a group on a designated day and time, or will Tutors and students meet independently?
- How will Tutors be matched to students?
- How will they be recruited, i.e., from specific communities (universities, TAFEs, schools, business and industry) or through direct advertisement to the broader community?
- Will there be minimum expectations of Tutors? For example, some tutoring programs require a minimum six-month commitment and tertiary qualifications.
- How will Tutors be inducted and trained?

Running Educational Workshops

In addition to Study Clubs and Tutoring Programs, there may be the need for Educational Workshops within the EFY Foyer setting. As with determining the need for other Educational Internal Opportunities, reviewing student self-audits, as well as direct surveying of and discussion with students, will provide a solid indication of what may be required.

An Educational Workshop is a targeted and purposeful opportunity for students to increase their skills and knowledge in a specific area. Such workshops may be targeted 'one-offs' or one of a series, and may be facilitated by the DI Teacher or an external expert. Example workshops include:

- study skills and exam tips
- mindfulness skills to lower students' stress levels when studying

- planning, prioritising and setting study goals
- proficiency in Microsoft Office to complete and present assignments
- using the Internet for research
- references, footnoting and resourcing
- using ICT to enhance your study.

In developing a program of Educational Workshops, the following questions should be considered:

- What do the current cohort of EFY Foyer students identify as 'skills that they need to develop'?
- Does the TAFE or local community run any workshops like this already?
- If not, who could potentially present on these skills?
- Who will be the key EFY Foyer contact for Educational Workshops?

“

... young people who are disadvantaged, or who have experienced disadvantage, are limited by their lack of resources and opportunities rather than by a lack of potential.

”

4.5 External Opportunities

External Opportunities provide students with the chance to build and apply their knowledge and skills within an external setting. They can also broaden students' scope to build networks and connections that can sustain their aspirations in life.

The objective is that students leave the EFY Foyer with an Address Book of contacts and resources that they have accumulated throughout their stay. For the Education Offer this includes giving students the opportunity to connect with people, resources and services that help them remain engaged in or access new educational opportunities.

Given that all students enter Foyer with different needs and priorities, External Opportunities are highly personalised and relevant to each individual. Within the context of the Education Offer, these opportunities include:

- enrolling in an accredited course
- undertaking a short course/vocational taster program or attending an Open Day
- participating in industry or educational mentorships or internships
- having access to scholarships and grants.

External Opportunities and the Cert. 1 in DI

Step 5 of the Cert. 1 in DI requires all students to think about how External Opportunities may assist them to achieve their educational goals. While students identify potential External Opportunities, the certificate does not require them to engage in those activities in order to pass the course. Rather, engagement in External Opportunities becomes a core part of the work that students and their YDWs engage in after the certificate is completed.

However, if students do progress to engaging in External Opportunities during the course of the Cert. 1 in DI, YDWs and DI Teachers should support this engagement and ensure that it is recorded in Step 5 of the Cert. 1 in DI Learning Plan.

Assessing learning opportunities in the local community

External Opportunities are defined as those that support engagement in a Certificate III or higher qualification. These opportunities may include:

- vocational taster programs
- short courses
- internships
- industry or educational mentorships.

To assess learning opportunities in the local community, the following questions should be considered:

- What are the educational goals and aspirations of the current cohort?
- What kinds of External Opportunities have students identified as relevant to their educational goals?
- What other educational institutions and resources are available in the local community?
- Are there businesses, organisations, industries or government services in the community that may be able to provide External Opportunities?

All of the tools and resources referred to herein can be accessed at: efyfoyers.org.au.

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Appendices

Australian Core Skills Framework tables

The following three tables provide samples of assessment and activities at Level 4 of the ACSF.*

Sample Assessment at Learning Level 4.01

Learning Level 4			
4.01	Accepts new learning challenges, explicitly designing, reflecting on and redesigning approaches to learning as an integral part of the process		
Support	Context	Text complexity	Task complexity
Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources	Range of contexts, including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable Some specialisation in less familiar/known contexts	Complex texts Embedded information Includes specialised vocabulary Includes abstraction and symbolism	Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting
Focus area:	Performance features include:		
Learner identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies personal strengths and weaknesses in different contexts and seeks to develop skills and knowledge in areas of need Recognises that confusion and mistakes are a part of the learning process and persists in the face of problems Experiments with various approaches to learning and reflects on effectiveness in different situations Self directs learning in an expanding range of contexts, seeking assistance as required Stays focused on achieving learning goals despite distractions and problems Uses some formal approaches to facilitate reflective practice, e.g., keeps a journal or discusses with a mentor 		
Goals and pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets/accepts learning goals that may lead into unfamiliar contexts and identifies appropriate learning pathways Develops a formal learning plan with short and longer term objectives, timeframes and actions, taking some potential barriers to learning into account Identifies different and possibly competing requirements and expectations (personal, workplace or formal learning) and builds potential solutions into the planning process Reviews and adjusts plans and strategies regularly, seeking assistance as required 		

* The following three tables (Sample Assessment at Learning Level 4.01, 4.02 and Sample Activities for Domains of Communication at Level 4) reproduced here are from the Australian Core Skills Framework, Commonwealth of Australia 2012, available at: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/acsf_document.pdf.

Planning and organising

- Attempts relatively complex and unfamiliar tasks/activities that may involve abstraction
- Poses explicit questions to help focus planning of new tasks, e.g., 'What do I need to achieve? Why is it important? How does it fit with what I already know? What questions do I have?'
- Assesses the nature and scope of new tasks in unfamiliar contexts, identifies established procedures where applicable, and develops formal plans for completion with sequenced, prioritised steps and timeframes
- Independently accesses a range of information resources/services
- Assesses the appropriateness of available tools and equipment, including ICT based, taking into account their strengths and limitations in different contexts

Sample Assessment at Learning Level 4.02**Learning Level 4****4.02**

Adapts a range of familiar strategies to new contexts and experiments with new approaches

Support

Works independently and initiates and uses support from a range of established resources

Context

Range of contexts, including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable
Some specialisation in less familiar/known contexts

Text complexity

Complex texts
Embedded information
Includes specialised vocabulary
Includes abstraction and symbolism

Task complexity

Complex task organisation and analysis involving application of a number of steps
Processes include extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting, abstracting

Focus area:**Performance features include:****Locating, evaluating and organising information**

- Develops a formal set of questions to focus an information search in an unfamiliar field
- Uses some advanced web search queries to filter out irrelevant information
- Considers the reliability of an information source against a range of criteria, e.g., the author's background, the intended audience and purpose, or the date of publication
- Uses manual and/or ICT applications to collect, analyse, store, organise and facilitate ongoing access to information, e.g., systematic filing systems or spreadsheets

Using prior knowledge and scaffolding

- Draws selectively on experience to adapt past learning to new circumstances
- Draws on a repertoire of strategies to clarify and extend understanding, e.g., paraphrases, uses the outline feature of a word processing application, flow diagrams or mind maps
- Begins to apply conceptual models developed by others, such as theories and frameworks, as an aid to understanding
- Develops and trials own approaches to a task when templates and guides are not available
- Actively reinforces learning by applying new knowledge and skills beyond a formal learning context, e.g., teaches someone else
- Implements some formal approaches to help maintain the currency of professional knowledge and skills, e.g., regularly checks on updates in a specialised field

Learning with and from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to effective group and team interaction by clarifying tasks, recognising each member's strengths, negotiating roles and assisting with conflict resolution • Participates in professional/technical or community networks where appropriate • Recognises that individuals construct knowledge differently, building on past experience and influenced by personal and cultural values, beliefs and assumptions • Seeks advice, and reflects on and responds to feedback from trusted sources
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Sample Activities for Domains of Communication at Level 4

Domains of communication	Learning Level 4 – sample activities
Personal and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively elicits the views of others in relation to a specific problem • Identifies and uses a range of community resources for information and advice, e.g., financial planning, a men's/women's health line or government websites • Promotes problem solving with others, e.g., helps to settle a neighbourhood dispute • Accesses and scans a number of internet sites to compare reviews prior to a purchase • Identifies bias and misrepresentation in different news reports
Workplace and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organises own workplace professional development/training plan to achieve a negotiated outcome with consideration of personal priorities and demands on time • Actively seeks feedback from others as a way of improving performance, e.g., approaches peers, manager or customers • Takes a leadership role in professional/technical networks or project teams • Makes changes to work routine to meet deadlines, drawing on insights gained from previous experiences • Uses organisational file sharing and storage systems • Keeps a record of new technical terms or procedures encountered • Actively encourages others to learn • Initiates team problem solving sessions • Understands the implications of copyright in relation to the authorship of a text • Participates in and contributes to change management in the workplace
Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers information on a range of courses, assessing and comparing them in order to identify the most appropriate learning pathway • Uses a range of formal techniques to collaborate effectively with others to complete a multi-layered research task • Improves on study routine, drawing on insights gained from previous experiences • Experiments with different strategies, e.g., draws a picture to help understand a problem, works backwards from a possible solution or identifies a concrete example of an abstract problem • Uses a range of computer based information systems and collaborative tools as an aid to learning, e.g., email, blogs, wikis, discussion boards or online training programs • Accesses and scans a number of internet sites to evaluate suitability for research purposes • Uses library systems efficiently and effectively to access relevant resources • Contributes to course information sessions telling new students about the challenges posed by the course and suggesting some ways to manage these • Provides feedback to a teacher/trainer regarding relevance of a training course, with suggestions for improvement

Comparison of levels in the Australian Core Skills Framework**

Characteristics of the Level

Level 1

- Needs support
- Can operate in highly contextualised areas only
- Works with texts with explicit purpose
- Can do concrete tasks with 1 or 2 steps
- Can do tasks involving locating and recognising^{R, N}
- Identifies a personal/career goal^L
- Recognises common signs and symbols^R
- Writes simple sentences^W
- Has limited vocabulary of highly familiar words^{W, OC}
- Spells some highly familiar words, e.g., the, and, own name^W
- May write with mixed upper case/lower case^W
- Participates in simple conversations of short questions/answers^{OC}
- Relies on facial and other gestures^{OC}
- Adds and subtracts simple whole number amounts (into the 100s) and familiar monetary amounts in personally relevant contexts^N

Level 2

- May request support to complete tasks in familiar contexts
- Can do tasks with a limited number of familiar steps
- Can do tasks involving identifying, simple interpreting, simple sequencing
- Demonstrates some awareness of learning strengths and areas of need
- Understands the main ideas in familiar texts^R
- Can write at least one paragraph^W
- Accurately uses basic punctuation, e.g., capital letters, full stops, commas^W
- Can ask simple questions and seek clarification^{OC}
- Able to do multiplication and simple division^N
- Can work with everyday fractions, decimals and percentages, e.g., 1/4, 1/10, 50%, 0.25^N

Level 3

- Works independently on routine tasks
- Begins to work in less familiar contexts
- Completes tasks with a number of steps
- Can do tasks involving integrating, interpreting and some abstraction
- Can set a personal/career goal and identify a learning plan to achieve this^L
- Can integrate information presented in different way, e.g., paragraphs and charts^R
- Can identify fact from opinion^{R, OC}
- Can sequence paragraphs^W
- Uses familiar acronyms and spells most words accurately^W
- Can begin and maintain conversations^{OC}
- Speaks at a normal rate with pronunciation that is mostly clear^{OC}
- Listens for relevant information to make notes, follow instructions^{OC, W}
- Constructs a table or graph using routine scales and axes^N
- Uses distance, direction, simple scales and keys to read maps or routine plans^N
- Applies rates in routine situations, e.g. ,km/hr, \$/kg^N

Sample Activities

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logs on and off a computer website • Uses a diary to record key dates • Reads and fills in a simple form • Follows simple or pictorial instructions • Reads familiar labels in workplace • Creates and sends a short SMS • Tells supervisor that a machine is broken • In answer to simple questions can provide own name, address, DOB, country of origin • Locates and adds the whole dollar price of two items in a catalogue • Uses a calculator to add whole numbers of stock in workplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses key word and search engine to find information • Makes a checklist of tasks to be completed • Follows simple instructions on a fire hydrant • Reads dials and scales on workplace machinery/equipment • Creates a simple flyer to advertise community event • Writes a description of an item for sale to be placed on noticeboard • Writes a paragraph describing country of origin • Receives and passes on phone messages • Listens for specific information in a meeting • Calculates change from simple petty cash purchases | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects personally relevant job advertisement online or in newspaper • Interprets information from a graph, to predict a trend • Prepares an agenda for a workplace/ community meeting • Understands that domains (.com, .gov, .net etc) are relevant to the way information is communicated on the Internet • Writes clear sequenced instructions for using a piece of machinery • Writes a formal letter of complaint • Listens and responds to routine customer complaint • Expresses an opinion and makes a suggestion regarding a new procedure • Creates a budget in a spreadsheet • Correctly prepares an invoice with itemised costs and GST to undertake a specific task, e.g., build a fence |
|--|---|---|

** This table developed by Phiiippa McLean, Escalier McLean Consulting Pty Ltd (<http://www.escaliermclean.com.au>).

Key

Level 4

- Works independently in a range of contexts including some that are unfamiliar and/or unpredictable
- Works in complex tests with embedded information and specialised vocabulary
- Undertakes complex task analysis involving a number of steps
- Can do tasks involving extracting, extrapolating, inferencing, reflecting
- Independently accesses a range of information resources/ services^L
- Participates in professional networks^L
- Synthesises relevant ideas and information from several sources^R
- Communicates complex relationships between ideas and information^{W, OC}
- Demonstrates accurate use of a range of text types, e.g., reports, procedures, narratives^W
- Engages in complex negotiations^{W, OC}
- Selects and understands words that create shades of meaning^{W, OC}
- Uses and applies ratio and proportions^N
- Calculates with fractions, decimals, and percentages^N
- Uses relevant routine formulae^N

Level 5

- Autonomous and self-directed learner who accesses and evaluates support from a broad range of sources
- Adaptability within and across broad range of contexts with specialisation in one or more contexts
- Works with highly complex texts, highly embedded information, highly specialised language and symbolism, sophisticated task conceptualisation, organisation and analysis
- Can do tasks involving synthesising, critically reflecting, evaluating, recommending
- Actively monitors performance against goals and milestones^L
- Draws on and understands extensive vocabulary including specialised terms and idiom^{R, W, OC}
- Demonstrates sophisticated control of a broad range of writing and speaking styles and purposes^{W, OC}
- Selects from and flexibly applies a wide range of highly developed mathematical and problem-solving strategies and techniques^N
- Uses and solves a range of equations using a variety of algebraic techniques^N

L Learning

N Numeracy

OC Oral Communication

R Reading

W Writing

- Accesses and scans a number of website prior to a purchase
- Takes a leadership role in project teams
- Reads and responds to online postings in a chatroom and discussion forums as part of an online training course
- Analyses product review data to make purchasing recommendations
- Documents and communicates roles, responsibilities and timeframes for a project plan
- Actively participates in workplace or community meetings and accurately reports back key information
- Develops a survey tool, collects and analyses data and documents the outcomes
- Uses a set of instructions for making up a mixture based on ratios and alters the mixture according to any required amount according to WHS/OHS constraints

- Leads change management processes in the workplace
- Reads a detailed manual for a complex new machine and prepares an operator manual with all key information
- Compares and contrasts all aspects (including fine print) of competing offers, e.g., health insurance, mortgage packages
- Prepares a contract for service delivery
- Writes a story or play with a developed storyline or plot, including events and characters developed and described in detail
- Negotiates a win-win outcome with work colleague or neighbour demonstrating conflict resolution skills
- Provides a materials list for a building project that requires trigonometric calculations to determine outcomes, e.g., roof structure with bull nose veranda and 30 degree pitch

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