A Pedagogic Framework for Socially Inclusive VET: Principles, Strategies and Capabilities

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Key messages

- A single set of principles and strategies for effective teaching and learning approaches can apply to all disadvantaged learners in vocational education and training (VET), although certain strategies are relevant to particular learner groups.

- The best outcomes are achieved for disadvantaged learners when VET practitioners embrace eight pedagogic principles:
  
  o Be learner-centred;
  o Use a strength based approach;
  o Ensure real world, goal oriented learning;
  o Offer active learning opportunities;
  o Scaffold the learning;
  o Integrate learner support services with study;
  o Implement flexible learning and assessment processes; and
  o Plan for sustainable learning through regular review.

- Strategies for achieving these principles involve a mix of approaches that promote: learner engagement; flexibility around learning content, delivery and assessment; learner resilience and persistence; and progression.

- Implementing the principles and strategies requires shared efforts and appropriate resourcing, including resourcing to deepen core capabilities of VET practitioners.

- The Pedagogic Framework for Socially Inclusive VET, including principles, strategies and VET practitioner capabilities, is in accordance with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Agreements on increasing access and the education educational outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
Executive summary

The National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) commissioned this report as part of its overall plan to achieve an equitable and inclusive Australian VET system. The plan is outlined in the *Equity Blueprint 2011-2016: Creating Futures: Achieving Potential Through VET* (NVEAC, 2011) which sets out the policy direction for disadvantaged learners across the VET system for the next five years (2011-2016) through six reform areas. This work relates to Reform Area 3 ‘Building the Capability of the VET Workforce’.

This report identifies a common set of pedagogic principles, strategies and capabilities for teaching and training disadvantaged learners to enable them to successfully participate in and complete Australian VET programs. The principles, strategies and capabilities are collectively referred to as the Pedagogic Framework for Socially Inclusive VET (Pedagogic Framework).

The Pedagogic Framework was developed using two research methods. First a general review of the research literature was undertaken. The review examined a full range of educational contexts including primary, secondary schooling, VET and higher education, and adult and community education. Individual reviews were also undertaken for each of the following four learner groups: Indigenous Australians (Appendix A); people with a disability (Appendix B); people from low socio-economic status backgrounds and communities (Appendix C); and people with low levels of educational achievement (Appendix D). These four were chosen as effectively covering the range of equity groups identified in the Equity Blueprint.

The reviews revealed that a single set of principles and strategies for effective teaching and learning can apply to all disadvantaged groups, with some principles and strategies to be emphasised more in relation to particular learner groups. Further, these guiding principles and strategies for effective teaching and learning can be applied to all learners.

Following the reviews, a draft Pedagogic Framework was developed and this was used as the basis for consultation with a selection of experts in VET policy, practice and research from across Australia (see Introduction). These experts reviewed and provided feedback on the draft Pedagogic Framework and endorsed the final Pedagogic Framework as presented in Figure 1.

Based on the literature review and consultation, the Pedagogical Framework includes eight general social inclusion principles, eight pedagogic principles and eleven core capabilities seen as required by VET practitioners working with disadvantaged learners. A number of strategies for achieving the principles and case studies to illustrate their practical application are provided in the body of the report.
**Figure 1. A pedagogic framework for socially inclusive VET**

| Social inclusion principles | • Build on strengths,  
|                           | • Early intervention  
|                           | • Develop tailored services  
|                           | • Build partnerships  
|                           | • Build joined-up service solutions  
|                           | • Use evidence  
|                           | • Contextualise to suit local conditions,  
|                           | • Plan for sustainability  
| Pedagogic principles      | • Learner-centred  
|                           | • Strength based  
|                           | • Real world goal oriented  
|                           | • Active learning  
|                           | • Scaffolded learning  
|                           | • Supported learning  
|                           | • Flexible learning  
|                           | • Sustainable learning  
| Pedagogic strategy types  | • Learner engagement  
|                           | • Learning environment  
|                           | • Learning content  
|                           | • Learning delivery  
|                           | • Learning persistence  
|                           | • Learning assessment and progression  
| Pedagogic capabilities    | • Views diversity as the norm and addresses diversity in VET program design  
|                           | • Understands each learner’s educational attainment and goals  
|                           | • Creates an environment for learning  
|                           | • Selects and adapts learning resources and equipment  
|                           | • Facilitates foundation skills development as well as technical vocational skills at all qualification levels  
|                           | • Reasonably adjusts learning and assessment tasks  
|                           | • Encourages/nurtures learner persistence  
|                           | • Acts as the pedagogic expert/professional within a support team  
|                           | • Asks for specialist advice and support  
|                           | • Reflects on their own practice and actively seeks learner and peer evaluation  
|                           | • Participates in professional development  

Building on the work by Wheelahan and Moodie (2011), the report identifies the following actions to build the required core pedagogic capabilities in the Framework:

- Consider amendments to the Certificate IV TAE and VET entry level qualifications to incorporate a deeper understanding on pedagogy and differing learning styles, and to embrace student diversity and achieve inclusiveness;
- Support the professional development of inclusive teaching and learning principles and strategies in VET teaching qualifications up to AQF Level 6 Associate Degrees and Advanced Diplomas; and
- Support continuous quality improvement of VET training and teaching for the learner that incorporate the features of the Pedagogic Framework, and captures the learner’s experience.

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1 Note that the scope of the project did not include consideration of the role of HE qualifications in capability building for VET practitioners
Introduction

The National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) commissioned this report as part of its overall plan to achieve an equitable and inclusive Australian VET system. The overall plan is outlined in the *Equity Blueprint 2011-2016: Creating Futures: Achieving Potential Through VET* (NVEAC, 2011) which sets out the policy direction for disadvantaged learners across the VET system for the next five years (2011-2016) through six reform areas. This work relates to Reform Area 3 ‘Building the Capability of the VET Workforce’ in the Equity Blueprint. Building the capability of the VET workforce requires identifying the knowledge and skills VET practitioners need to effectively work with the diverse learner population in VET in the changing environment of VET. VET teachers, trainers and assessors need to continually access professional development in pedagogical teaching and learning capability, as well as their subject knowledge and skills.

Project aims

The aims of the project were to:

- Develop a framework of pedagogic knowledge, including principles and strategies, for teaching and training disadvantaged learners in the Australian VET context (informed by the national and international research literature and drawing on the full range of formal educational contexts as far as is applicable to VET)
- Provide short scenarios to illustrate key principles and strategies in the framework

The term disadvantaged learners means current and potential learners in VET who experience disadvantage as a result of VET systems and processes which do not adequately take account of their particular life circumstances (NVEAC, 2011). The term practitioner means anyone involved in VET teaching, learning and assessment.

There are several related activities underway that have implications for this project, and that have influenced the thinking presented in this report:

- Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) work on the capabilities required of practitioners in the VET sector being undertaken by Precision Consulting (2011);
- Review of the standards for the regulation of VET by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC), focusing on improving the quality of delivery of training and assessment and managing the growth and diversity of VET;
- Development of a National Foundation Skills Strategy and a new Foundation Skills Training Package with implications for the capabilities of the VET workforce to deliver foundation skills training; and
- NVEAC submission to NSSC on VET standards proposing that industry requires highly qualified VET practitioners with current industry experience and competence in the aspects

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2 The Equity Blueprint identifies six learner groups as the primary focus of equity reform: Indigenous Australians, People with a Disability, People from low SES backgrounds, women, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds particularly new arrivals to Australia, refugees and emerging communities and people from rural, regional or remote locations or communities with high levels of disadvantage. Also identified, are a number of other ‘second chance’ learner groups
of pedagogy that are necessary to teach diverse learners. Practitioners need to have the knowledge, skills and strategies for successfully engaging these learners, with this reflected in the provision of industry relevant training delivery and assessment.

Given these developments, it is timely for the NVEAC to undertake a review on disadvantaged learners from across educational sectors that identifies the required principles, strategies for their effective teaching and learning and the required capabilities of VET practitioners. The importance of gathering this evidence was identified during the consultations for the VET Equity Blueprint and, and formed Reform Area 3 ‘Building the Capability of the VET Workforce’ in the Blueprint.

Methods
Two research methods were used in producing the A Framework of Pedagogic Knowledge for teaching and training disadvantaged learners:

1. The Framework is informed by a review of the research literature at the national and international levels on documented good practice in teaching and training disadvantaged learners. This review examined the current thinking in theory and practice, accessing the input of numerous disciplines, and reports upon the findings from different countries and contexts. This review examined a full range of formal educational contexts including primary, secondary schooling, VET and higher education. However, this literature review does not profess to be inclusive of all major studies and reports, but in the time available provides an examination of the numerous literatures related to disadvantaged learners.

2. The Framework was developed through consultations with experts from across Australia. The experts included mainly VET practitioners working with various disadvantaged groups, but also academic researchers in teaching, learning and assessment in VET and other contexts. The consultations with experts were in the form of semi-structured interviews conducted by telephone. Each expert was sent the draft report of the literature review to examine prior to their interview. The experts’ opinions helped to validate the Framework while they offered suggestions for improvements. The experts also assisted with the identification of examples of the principles and strategies in action and that have been included in the report as short vignettes.

The twelve experts consulted were:

- Dorothy Lucardie, RTO Manager and Chair Adult Learning Australia;
- Denise Janek, Managing Director, TAFESA Regional;
- Mark Whitehead, a Leader in Education, Employment and Support initiatives in TAFENSW;
- Mark Jewell, Regional Director, TAFE NSW;
- Paul Gaertner, Manager Training and Education, Bedford Training, RTO, South Australia;
- Joan King, Manager of MADEC, working in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia;
- Georgina Nou, consultant and facilitator of e-learning for Indigenous Australians;
- Anne Brecht, Training Manager Jobquest, Newcastle;
- Heather McGregor, Director Community Development and Aboriginal Engagement, TAFENSW;
Drivers for better education outcomes for disadvantaged learners

The case for greater equity in education and training has economic and social dimensions. In this review we identify four major drivers for continued reform in this area:

1. Social justice and fairness;
2. Australia’s economic growth and sustained international competitiveness;
3. Greater corporate social responsibility; and
4. The need for greater professional development of our educators.

Social justice and fairness

Despite the high levels of economic growth in Australia over the past decade disparities in the wealth have persisted. Dimensions of inequalities still exist for Australians experiencing unemployment, low incomes, disability, and a lack of access to information on available services. This can lead to social exclusion and a lack of opportunities to participate fully in society. The frequently reported correlates of entrenched disadvantage in Australia are limited education, information and employment-related skills, and low family incomes. Vinson (2007) refers to these factors as the ‘generic dimensions of disadvantage’, the connecting threads to other manifestations of disadvantage.

To address social inequities, a national social inclusion agenda has been developed to achieve a fairer Australia (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2009). The national social inclusion agenda aims to ensure that all Australians have the capabilities, opportunities and resources to:

- Learn by participating in education and training;
- Work by participating in employment, voluntary work and in family and caring;
- Engage by connecting with people and local community resources; and
- Have a voice and influence decisions that affect.

Linked to achieving goals around greater social justice are more inclusive educational policies and practices that challenge existing systems that support exclusion. Central to achieving greater inclusiveness is to focus on people’s strengths that will put the disadvantaged learners at the centre of the educational and social systems (Hattam & Zipin, 2009; Johnson, 2004). However, as these experts note, responding appropriately to social justice in education is a complex process for educational institutions to manage.

Australia’s economic growth

In Australia participation in post-compulsory education has increased across all of the target equity groups (Brown & North, 2008). Australia, however, is not alone in pursuing improving outcomes for equity groups. Improvements in educational levels are occurring across all of the OECD nations,
including higher proportions of people with upper secondary and tertiary qualifications, and lower proportions of people working in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs (OECD, 2008).

In Australia, the government suggests our productivity can be improved by including people currently excluded from the workforce due to a lack of access, opportunities and skills. For instance, the Productivity Commission (2007) calculates that if Australia’s workforce participation is increased by around 8% by 2030, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will increase by 6%. To achieve this target, Skills Australia (2010) recommends that governments commit to achieving a workforce participation rate for Australia of 69% by 2025.

However, to improve this workforce participation rate we need to improve social inclusion around encouraging and supporting more people to enter, re-enter and remain in the workforce. A report for the NVEAC on the economic benefits of participation in VET by disadvantaged groups demonstrated a $12 billion increase to the economy and 118,000 new jobs in 2020, if Indigenous Australians and people with a disability were to achieve the same outcomes from VET as all Australians (Access Economics, 2011).

The VET system is well positioned to provide a ‘second chance’ for education and training among the disadvantaged. Many individuals select VET as their first preference and achieve good outcomes around gaining employment and further education. However, as a number of authors reflect (Gale, 2010; Karmel & Woods, 2008; Wheelehan, 2009), equity groups in VET tend to be in the lower level certificate courses. In addition, the student population in higher education is not particularly equitable. People from a low SES background, for example, represent 15% of the student population on average compared to their proportion in the general population at about 25% (Centre for the Study of Higher Education, 2008).

**Greater corporate social responsibility**

There is a major body of literature that recognises drivers around the moral, legal and business cases for greater equality and diversity in our organisations (Lauring & Thomsen, 2009; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). The *VET Equity Blueprint* (NVEAC, 2011) notes that industry and employers already play a lead role in VET governance arrangements, the development of VET products and in the investment in skills development. However, the Blueprint identifies the need for better education for employers about the advantages of, and available incentives for, employing disadvantaged learners.

**Greater professional development opportunities for educators**

There are calls for a greater level of collective professional learning and development among educators (Beckett, 2011; Campbell & Groundwater-Smith, 2010). Teachers at all levels - primary, secondary, VET and higher education - need to improve their collective performance in applying more effective strategies to respond to the complexities of working with students of all abilities, including disadvantaged learners. Where disadvantaged students’ participation and success in school and university education improves, there is substantial evidence of causal links to increased efforts in promoting the professional learning and development of teachers and academics (Alton-Lee 2003; Bowers & Brown, 2006).
Australia’s equity in education reforms

Many commentators and drivers of reform (e.g. Abbott-Chapman, 2011 and Bradley et al., 2008, respectively) propose that building more responsive and connected institutions is at the core of resolving and addressing the disadvantage of learners. In one example, Brown and North (2010) propose stronger links between schools and other providers to develop locally-based approaches around effective early intervention strategies in the areas of literacy and numeracy, careers education and pathway planning. Others have identified the value around promoting learning by stronger links between schools and the cultural contexts in which students are socialised (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Of note is that regional universities have led the formation of learning hubs through bridging the divide between schools, VET institutions and universities. Today regional campuses have one of the highest levels of equity group participation (Bradley et al., 2008). Furthermore, these partnerships are being further strengthened by the rapid growth of new technologies that promote more blended, flexible, and on-line forms of learning.

Finally, the reforms that support disadvantaged learners need to be more systematic through outcomes and performance measurement, in particular around the learner’s experiences. At the primary and secondary levels of schooling, there is the My School website which encourages comparisons between schools that are statistically similar in terms of a range of factors known to effectively test performance.

In VET, currently within the national student outcomes survey there are limited measures on the learner’s VET educational experiences. There is a new national survey of student satisfaction being implemented for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) as part of their AQTF reporting and compliance requirements, but the data are not currently widely published. Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) have noted that such data have the potential to be published on the new MySkills website for each Registered Training Organisations (RTO).

At the higher education level, the Government’s approach is being informed by enduring principles proposed to promote a new student-centred higher education system which will facilitate students to develop richer learning and employment pathways (Australian Government, 2009), including:

- The importance of opportunity for all, especially those from groups under-represented in higher education;
- Access to university based on merit, not ability to pay;
- Academic freedom and autonomy; and
- Research that advances knowledge and critical thinking.

Australia’s equity reform targets

As stated earlier, many of those who write about the strategies for promoting enduring reform in the area of disadvantaged learners argue that we need to consider the entire education system. Indeed, Australia has an equity reform agenda that runs across each education sector, and that includes education attainment targets and revitalised equity reform programs towards achieving the targets.
This revitalised equity reform across the education life cycle has the following common features: the need for early intervention; a strengthening of foundation skills; building educational pathways for all; improving the safety net of support services; and a drive for greater professionalism of educators. In particular, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) since 2006 has set a range of evidence-based and long-term performance targets to maintain and improve Australia’s economic competitiveness. These COAG targets are summarised in Table 1 on the next page, and are contained in the various National Partnerships to do with education and training.

The targets include an aspirational threshold of education attainment for the working-age population of a VET Certificate III or above. This is the critical skills level needed in the Australian workforce of the future (CEET, 2006). People who do not have at least a Certificate III level qualification are less likely to be in the workforce. If they are in the workforce, they are 1.6 times more likely to be unemployed, and they are more likely to be marginalised in other ways (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010).

Also, attention to basic skills is a key focus for the working-age population. Targets include lifting the unacceptably low levels of adult language, literacy and numeracy that continue to be key barriers to effective education and labour market participation. Some 44% of the Australian working-age population has literacy skills levels below those required for effective functioning in the workplace and in modern life. However, as Access Economics (2009) indicated, the above targets will not be easy to achieve without sustained effort.

Table 1. Educational attainment targets across the education lifecycle

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Educational attainment targets across the education lifecycle</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2020 20% of students in universities, to be from low socio-economic backgrounds, up from 15% in 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2025, Australians 25 to 34 years of age with a degree to be 40%, up from 32% in 2008</td>
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<td>(National Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program, DEEWR, 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Higher level VET</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2020 double the number of higher level VET diploma and advanced diploma completions</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2020 halve the proportion of Australians 20 to 64 years without a Certificate III level qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Basic skills education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2022 two-thirds of working age Australians 15-64 years will have literacy and numeracy skills at Level 3 or above of the International Adult Language and Literacy Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>(National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adult, SCOTSE, 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Young people</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>By 2020 90% of young people 20 to 24 years old to achieve Year 12 or a Certificate III or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 2015 90% of young people 20 to 24 years old to achieve Year 12 or a Certificate II or above, up from 74% in 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>From 2010 all young people up to 17 years of age must be in education, training or work or a combination</td>
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<tr>
<td>(National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, COAG, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early childhood education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the middle of 2013 every child, 12 months prior to full time schooling, has access to a preschool (or kindergarten) program delivered by a four year university qualified, early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year</td>
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<tr>
<td>(National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education COAG, 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous people and people with disabilities</strong></td>
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There are specific targets in the *National Partnership Agreement for Indigenous Economic Participation* (COAG, 2009) and the *National Partnership Agreement for Disability* (COAG, 2009).

**Equity reforms by education sector**

Australia has revitalised equity reform programs in each education sector towards achieving the above targets, and these equity reform programs are based on the cumulative evidence to date on what works. These reforms include:

**Quality pre-schooling and primary schooling**

The provision of accessible and quality pre-schooling is linked to the reduction of the often lasting impacts of social inequalities (Feinstein, 2003; Johnson & Kossykh, 2008). However, in some locations such as in remote and Indigenous communities, children can have little or no pre-school access. As a result, the efforts of primary teachers are diverted to addressing non-educational as well as educational needs (Rice, 2010). One strategic response is that some primary schools are drawing on their network of community-based services, and in some cases providing the necessary services on the sites of the schools (see Bates et al., 2009). In further support for these strategies, Anderson and associates (2008) report upon the Healthy Community Schools Initiative in New Zealand. This initiative has improved educational outcomes by increasing effective learning time by reducing teachers’ time in attending to student health and well-being issues, and by more strongly connecting schools with the interests and aspirations of local communities.

**Completion of schooling or the equivalent for all**

In April 2009 COAG agreed to a *National Compact with Young Australians* that requires young people to stay engaged in combinations of education, training and employment until the age of 17 years. This agreement has put the spotlight on young people at risk of leaving school early and how to avoid this outcome. The *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions* (COAG, 2009) has four new elements that reflect learning from best practice on youth education and work transitions in Australia and overseas. The National Partnership comprises the Compact just described and a Youth Connection Services program and a School Business Community Partnership Brokers program. The Youth Connection Services element provides an improved safety net of support services. This element is based on a ‘learning disadvantage levels approach’. This approach identifies youth learner segments that are at risk, according to their level of engagement with learning and disadvantage, and links the risk profiles to learning program types and strategies. Of note is the realisation that schools may not always be the best learning environment for all students.

The School Business Community Partnership Brokers program is aimed at involving parents and the broader community in alternative pathways and re-entry programs through non-mainstream school options. There is also a specific seven-year (from 2009) support program for schools in low socio-economic status areas that has a strong focus on further improving the quality of teaching in schools, a factor identified in many studies as a strong determinant of student outcomes (Hattie, 2003; Rice, 2010).
Many Australian students from disadvantaged backgrounds who succeed from school to university report that they were supported by an inspirational secondary teacher or teachers (Abbott-Chapman, 2007). A critical driver for quality teaching is the professional development of teachers, including raising their awareness of cultural and social diversity, challenging their biases and stereotypes, and providing practical actions to promote the learning and performance of disadvantaged students (Allard & Santoro, 2008; Mills & Gale, 2002, 2003).

However, there are funding implications in providing teacher professional development and performance management for pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, and higher education. Rice (2010) provides a set of financial strategies focused on teachers, themselves. Rice’s research showed that teachers have a strong commitment to their own learning and proposed that teachers be offered support for postgraduate study to accept a position in a disadvantaged school, either in the form of course fee subsidisation or paid study leave. Other funding models propose more expenditure per student in more disadvantaged schools. This allocation provides more stable staffing and more experienced teachers in these schools. Similarly for Australian university education, Brown and North (2010) amongst others propose that better program support for equity groups should be supplemented by increased numbers of scholarships, bursaries and allowances to support learners who have the academic potential, but do not have the financial support to attend university.

As for VET, it is noted in the NVEAC Blueprint that any new investment model needs to take into account the real costs of delivering improved outcomes for equity groups and that serve to support continued reforms.

**Embedded equity in VET**

The VET sector has had a strong focus on equity for many years and the VET sector has a track record of successful engagement with learners from all types of backgrounds. The aim of the Equity Blueprint for VET is to ‘embed equity into the DNA of VET’ (NVEAC, 2011, p2) and to reflect the diversity of the student population in the design of each aspect of VET using feedback on the system from disadvantaged learners.

The VET Equity Blueprint identifies six key areas of equity reform for the VET system:

1. Achieving sustainable investment that adequately supports disadvantaged learners and their VET practitioners;
2. Raising awareness and commitment to action including through empowering individuals to seek development opportunities to build their skills;
3. Providing a variety of quality foundation learning opportunities and outcomes including to make it easier for learners to build skills that are relevant to their situation;
4. Strengthening foundation skills in the workplace including better partnerships around making foundation skills training more responsive to the needs of employers and industry; and
5. Building the capacity of the education and training workforces to deliver foundation skills including a greater focus upon the key roles of specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners; and
6. Ensuring the voice of the learner is heard and guides strategies to achieve continuous improvement (NVEAC, 2011).

**Pathway roles for Adult and Community Education (ACE)**

ACE providers are renowned for person-centred pedagogies within supportive, community-based learning environments.

The national policy position assigned to ACE is to help achieve social inclusion in education and workforce development. As set out in the *Ministerial Declaration on ACE* policy (MCEETYA, 2008), the focus is on building the capability of ACE providers. Their role is to engage people from disadvantaged backgrounds in supportive foundation skills programs and to build pathways to further formal education, training or paid work. *The Declaration* commits governments to collaboration and partnerships with ACE providers to assist efforts to achieve vocationally-focused outcomes for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

*The Declaration* outlines several strategies for ACE providers to consider. Importantly, as Bowman (2007) found in her review of the community engagement project of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, disadvantaged learners can be effectively engaged in e-learning. Callan and Bowman (2010) also report in a series of Australian case studies that included ACE programs, that once the right supports are put in place, e-learning allows increased opportunities, especially for rural and remote learners.

**Early intervention and higher education**

As noted in the Bradley Review of Higher Education (Bradley et al., 2008), equity groups are still under-represented in Australian higher education. These groups include students from remote parts of Australia, Indigenous students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Their participation rates in higher education have either changed little over time, or in the case of regional and remote students, have actually decreased in recent times.

In response, *A National Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program* is in place that is focused on implementing early invention outreach programs for school students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. An aim is to build students’ aspirations about going to university. The focus is on developing cultures of possibility by beginning early within the school system, and particularly in areas of high disadvantage, to generate cultural and attitudinal shifts in the aspirations of students, families and teachers.

In universities, there has been minimal effort on modifying learning and teaching for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Universities Australia, 2008). However, in more recent times how pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered in universities are being debated in order to engage all students in learning that is more meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. In particular, universities are now more focused upon promoting inclusive learning and teaching. Rather than focus on particular equity groups, this approach to a more inclusive pedagogy embraces a wide range of differences and explores their effects on individual learning (Hockings, 2010).
**Improved foundation skills for all**

Currently, there is a systematic and national approach to foundation skills that is under development to achieve the aspirational targets being set for Adult Language and Literacy Skills. Foundation skills are defined as the combination of:

- English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) including listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy and use of mathematical ideas; and
- Employability skills, such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, learning and the information and communication technology skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults (SCOTESE, 2012) has four priority areas for action:

1. Raise awareness and commitment to action including through empowering individuals to seek development opportunities to build their skills;
2. Provide a variety of quality foundation learning opportunities and outcomes including to make it easier for learners to build skills that are relevant to their situation;
3. Strengthen foundation skills in the workplace including better partnerships around making foundation skills training that is more responsive to the needs of employers and industry; and
4. Build the capacity of the education and training workforces to deliver foundation skill
A pedagogic framework for socially inclusive VET - Overview

Up to this point, this review has provided a general examination of disadvantaged learners. However, while this approach is valuable in identifying common issues, disadvantaged learners are not a homogeneous group. Disadvantaged learners are part of a diverse range of students, and any set of principles and strategies identified needs to take into account the particular life circumstances of all learners.

Towards the identification of socially inclusive principles and good practice strategies, we investigated four learner groups that are traditionally associated with disadvantage:

1. Indigenous Australians (Appendix A);
2. Persons with a disability (Appendix B);
3. Persons from low socio-economic status backgrounds and communities (Appendix C); and
4. Persons with low levels of educational achievement (Appendix D).

We selected the first two groups above as they are the two most readily identifiable disadvantaged groups in education at all levels. We focussed on the latter two groups because of their disadvantaged position in society, and because they effectively cover many other of the equity groups identified in the Equity Blueprint (e.g. those from rural and remote communities with high levels of disadvantage; from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including refugees and other new arrivals; people involved in the criminal justice system; ‘second chance’ learners and women).

The reviews of these four learner groups (Appendices A to D) revealed the following three key points:

- The pedagogies or best practice teaching approaches for the various equity groups are not fundamentally different;
- A single set of principles and strategies for effective teaching and learning can apply to all disadvantaged learners;
- Certain strategies need to be emphasised more in relation to some disadvantaged learner groups.

The single set of principles and strategies for effective teaching and learning of disadvantaged learners are presented in Figure 1. They are based both on the review of the four learner groups and the review of more general literature on disadvantaged learners. Figure 1 also identifies the core capabilities required by VET practitioners. These capabilities are based on the identified pedagogic principles and strategies, and also by reference to a number of existing and comprehensive Australian VET practitioner capability frameworks (Appendix E).

In the next sections these pedagogic principles and strategies are teased out, and cross-referenced to the literature cited in Appendices A-D.
General principles for social inclusion

The Australian Social Inclusion Board provides eight principles (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) designed to help guide governments, community organisations and businesses in their work with disadvantaged Australians (see Table 2). These principles include building on strengths, showing respect, intervening early, building effective partnerships and using evidence-based approaches.

These eight principles provided an important base that guided our selection from the literature of the pedagogic principles to support VET practitioners. As to be expected, there are overlaps in the two sets of principles. Together the inclusion of these two sets of principles in the Framework provides VET practitioners with a guide around selecting the best set of strategies, opportunities and resources to maximise the training outcomes for disadvantaged learners.
Table 2. General principles for social inclusion

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Build on strengths through showing respect and support for a strong positive view: not a deficit position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Intervene early if possible as well as tackling presenting problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Develop tailored services to meet each person’s different needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Build partnerships as diverse contributions are required to build social inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Build joined-up service solutions to meet the range of needs of disadvantaged people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Use evidence and build on it in policy and practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Use location approaches so solutions fit local circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Plan for sustainability by helping individuals deal better with their problems</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Adapted from Commonwealth of Australia (2009)

Pedagogic principles for social inclusion

Based on a review of the more general literature on disadvantaged learners, as well as the four specific reviews for each disadvantaged learner group (Appendices A to D), we propose eight pedagogic principles to guide VET practitioners (see Table 3). The discussion that follows highlights both their distinctiveness, but also their linkages.

Table 3. Pedagogic principles for social inclusion

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Learner-centred Teachers find ways to meet each person’s individual needs by changing the design of programs and/or systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Strength based Teachers adopt a supportive and positive view of the learner and help them appreciate and build on their strengths and opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Real world and goal oriented Teachers negotiate with the learner around learning goals that build on their life contexts and real world opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Active learning Teachers function as facilitators and build positive relationships to help learners achieve their goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Scaffolded learning Teachers build learning outcomes and foundation skills together with vocational skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Supported learning Teachers collaborate and partner with others to meet the complex needs of disadvantaged learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Flexible learning Teachers make changes to the learning program to match the changing needs of learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sustainable learning Teachers regularly revisit with learners their educational goals and plans and follow up learners who stop attending to revise and redirect toward new goals</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Learner centred learning

VET practitioners should focus on providing an educational environment to empower and inspire the learners to participate (see the first page of Appendix B and Bagshaw & Fowler, 2008, Bowman, 2011).

Strength based learning

VET practitioners’ aim is to help individuals to achieve the highest possible level of education and the best outcomes possible around employment. In many ways this is a strength-based approach that adopts a positive psychology perspective that emphasises the capabilities and strengths of individuals and recognises that existing competencies are a valuable starting point (Seligman, 2002; Waterhouse & Virgona, 2008).
VET teachers must have high but realistic expectations for all learners who enter VET, no matter what the learner’s circumstances and background, and encourage them to aspire as high as possible in their educational goal (see the vignette ‘Be My Guest- A collaborative VET course for learners with an intellectual disability’ in the strategies section below). In working towards the learner’s career aspirations, practitioners need to identify and build upon the existing knowledge and skills of the learner.

**Real world and goal oriented learning**

Disadvantaged learners may have limited knowledge of all career opportunities and options (Beddie, 2005; Volkoff et al., 2008). They need assistance in identifying relevant learning programs that will yield tangible benefits. VET practitioners need to be able to engage disadvantaged learners early in activities that sensitively explore their past education, and motivate them to build an individual learning plan. This requires skills in the recognition of prior learning as a learning development tool, and/or assistive learner analysis tools, and to have knowledge of realistic career opportunities (see the vignette ‘Personalised learning through blended learning technology’). Hockings (2010) found that students who were able to articulate a very clear goal are far more likely to persist with their learning than those who could not.

**Active learning**

Students learn better when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Disadvantaged learners respond well to self-paced, active or hands on learning approaches, as opposed to instructional classroom teaching. The preferred position is where the VET practitioner is a facilitator, who supports, but also challenges, learners towards assisting them to achieve their goals. To achieve these outcomes, VET practitioners need to be able to develop a variety of active learning opportunities, and to build positive relationships between the students to aid peer learning and life skills development (Alton-Lee 2003; Brown & North, 2010).

**Scaffolded learning**

VET practitioners need to build and constantly revise plans with their learners. Many disadvantaged learners progress their learning in small milestone steps, from enabling courses into accredited VET courses, and some from high-level VET courses into a university course (Bowman, 2007; SA ACE, 2008). Some learners may complete several foundational learning steps before undertaking more directed learning aimed at gaining employment (Dymock, 2007; Dawe, 2004). This all takes time and requires establishing a long term relationship.

**Supported learning**

VET practitioners need to recognise that many elements in the lives of disadvantaged learners are daily challenges. Disadvantaged learners can be dealing with a range of emotional, social, educational, financial and other barriers when undertaking a learning program. For instance, one in twenty Australians aged 18 to 64 years is experiencing three or more experiences of disadvantage (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). To overcome barriers to their participation in learning and the workforce, a ‘whole-of-life’ approach is required (ANTA, 2004a).

Non-educational support services may be required to achieve learner resilience or ‘the capacity to overcome obstacles, adapt to change, recover from trauma or to survive and thrive despite
adversity’ (Parkin & Baldwin, 2009). It is not the responsibility of the learning provider to deliver all of the needed non-educational support services. Rather a multi-disciplinary approach is required, involving other agencies, or other institutions in a learning hub approach (Bradley et al., 2008). It is acknowledged that this can be difficult to achieve in regional and rural areas.

**Flexible learning and assessment**

VET practitioners need to appreciate that disadvantaged learners do not always follow a linear progression in their learning and skills acquisition. The reality is that learners’ journeys are often stop-start, with many detours and breaks, some of which are the learner’s own choosing and some not (Bradley et al., 2008; Nechvoglod & Beddie, 2010). As a result, practitioners need to make changes to the learning program according to individual learners’ needs and situations. They also require flexible approaches to learning assessment. Goal-oriented assessment with effective feedback, used as formative assessment, is one of the strongest influences on student learning (see the vignette ‘Enhancing assessment to enhance teaching and learning’).

**Sustainable learning**

Persistence in learning, the ability to continue to the completion of the program, is a key issue with regard to disadvantaged learners. It is not in anyone’s interest to have learners not complete their learning program. For students, the failure to complete their program of study leaves them without a credential that could lead to greater opportunities. For institutions, high levels of non-completions may indicate poor performance. For society, it results in lower educational attainment at a time when Australia is faced with skills shortages and is important to our national prosperity.

With the learner, VET teachers need to regularly revisit learner’s education goals and plans, and follow up learners as to why they are not attending. Persistence can falter due to a lack of progress. The learner’s goals must be revised and redirected toward new goals, and provided the information to access new people who can help if needed (Parkin & Baldwin, 2009). Also, besides a teacher, a number of studies (e.g. Volkoff et al., 2008) reveal that there is an important role for a significant adult or group in supporting the disadvantaged learner. In some cases this could involve taking the disadvantaged learners to a training location to meet other learners who are already enrolled and succeeding in the qualification to show them examples of success, as well as to build possible peer mentoring (Hockings, 2010; see Appendix C, Table 6, Griffith University guidelines for enhancing student engagement).

**Strategies to achieve the principles**

Figure 2 illustrates six types of strategies to achieve these pedagogic principles. These six types relate to the various facets of the total learning experience. No strategy type is taken as more important than others, while strategies centre on and interact with the learner. The next sections examine each of these strategies in depth, with links back to their supporting literatures presented in Appendices A-D.
Improving learner engagement

Trowler (2010) notes that engagement is about enhancing the learning outcomes and development of students, their performance and in turn the reputation of the institution. Improved behavioural engagement is associated with improved attendance and involvement, and less disruptive or negative behaviour. Greater emotional engagement is linked to increased levels of interest, enjoyment, and a sense of belonging, while greater cognitive engagement is shown by students who have greater investment in their learning. In particular, the growing emphasis from primary to tertiary education on student-centred and active learning is designed to involve and engage students of all levels much more in the learning process (Brown & North, 2010).

Best practice involves putting the disengaged learner at the centre of the process (Nechvoglod & Beddie, 2010). The relationship disengaged learners develop with each of the phases of education is very important to seeing their journey through. When thinking about hard-to-reach learners and course delivery, best practice suggests including the learner in determining the design and content of the course to help engage and maintain their interest. Making the content interesting and relevant is also critical. Flexibility in design, content and delivery can increase self-directed learning and ownership which in turn cultivates learner persistence. Learner persistence is also promoted by ensuring learners identify their own goals and make decisions about their learning. A strong message running through the literature is how partnerships between learners, learning providers, employers and support services helps make the journey for reluctant learners less bumpy and more likely to be successful (Abbott-Chapman, 2011; Bradley et al., 2008; Miller, 2005).

An important series of studies by Hockings and her team (e.g. Hockings, 2010; Hockings et al., 2007, 2008) reveal that the notion of the traditional and non-traditional student is overly simplistic. Teaching strategies and curricula designed on this position will disengage the majority of students.
who do not fit this model. They found across numerous studies that disengaged students want to fit in at university, and towards doing this, they look for similarities between themselves and other students. In the classroom, disengaged learners value their individual academic and social identities being acknowledged by teachers, and they want their needs addressed. They often rely on their peer support networks to compensate for any lack of attention to their individual needs or interests in class.

For university teachers the message from these studies is that they need to employ inclusive pedagogic practices and curricula that take account of the diverse interests and needs of the students. University teachers especially need to reflect on their own identities as learners and teachers, to consider issues of cultural, social and educational diversity and difference among students, and to be aware of their impact on the learning and teaching environment (Hockings, 2010; Hockings et al., 2008).

Turning to the VET context, the attitude of the VET practitioner is critical towards engaging the disadvantaged learner. Adopting a strength-based approach is aligned to a positive psychology perspective that emphasises the capabilities and strengths of the individual, not their shortcomings. Ensuring a positive experience is essential for disadvantaged learners. Negative forces that are often at work can make engagement difficult, and a frequent finding is that many disadvantaged learners leave courses early (Nechvoglod & Beddie, 2010). The importance of the initial contact between learners and teachers cannot be underestimated and needs to be positive and supportive (Lingard et al., 2001, 2003; MCEETYA, 2008). Also supportive classroom environment pedagogies help to ensure that students influence the nature of the activities they choose to undertake, engaging seriously in their study, and having high expectations about what they can achieve.

Relationship building is a key issue from the point of initial engagement with the learner. However, teachers should not expect students to disclose the form of their disadvantaged such as a mental illness (Venville & Street, 2012). VET practitioners need to realise that students fear prejudice and rejection, and want to blend in with other learners so that their source of disadvantage does not dominate the perceptions of peers and teachers. One strategy advocated by Venville and Street (2012) is to separate the collection of learning focused information from the collection of AVETMIS data. In addition, there is evidence that VET staff can experience a lack of clarity about their roles in supporting students with mental illnesses (Miller & Nguyen, 2008). While they accept responsibility to provide a duty of care, some staff report that they need improved skills and additional collegiate support to respond more confidently to students with diverse needs including those with mental illnesses.

To promote increased levels of learner engagement, Bowman (2011) proposes that VET practitioners:

- Examine the use of outreach or taster programs to inspire the learners, their parents and their communities;
- Engage in a sensitive exploration of learners’ past educational experiences, their personal goals for education and training, and current and required skills that are relevant to achieving these goals;
- Begin with pre-accredited learning first as a practical step if need be; and
• Accept that a long term relationship with these individuals is very likely.

Another strategy that is becoming increasingly common is the use of Individual Education and Support Plans that provide a guide along a route to employment. Extensive use of these Plans is linked strongly to the attainment of short and longer term learning targets, while also enabling practitioners to consider how they might adapt and personalise the training to suit the learner’s needs and styles (Hockings, 2010). The Box Hill Institute’s vignette illustrates this.

**Personalised learning through blended learning technology**

Box Hill Institute has introduced individualised learning plans for every student that creates a pathway to academic achievement utilising blended learning technologies. Before enrolment, students are inducted into the e-learning environment that is unfolding across the Institute. Students are introduced to and employ a range of learner and learning analytic tools. The students undertake a digital (ACER) literacy test; a learning style analysis; a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of self; and a short and longer term goals identification exercise. There is an online program that introduces students to available support services. All of this enables the students to reflect on what course is right for them and what they need to set in place to complete it. They set this out within their own online individualised learning plan that they track their progress against. Also, the collective results of the student exercises undertaken are used as a key driver in the design of Institute teaching and assessment programs. For example, Box Hill discovered that most of their students are visual learners. So now video is being used to alter the largely text based resources that were available online and to move from a passive to an interactive learning experience.

Source: WEBINAR sighted 7/11/2012

A related strategy is to make explicit the connections between the learning and its benefits to real life, while illustrating the transferability of the skills being developed to other contexts (Alton-Lee, 2003). One option here is to focus on the career opportunities offered by local employers or local communities as additional evidence of how the learning is connected to real outcomes around employment (Abbott-Chapman, 2011; Bradley et al., 2008). Students become more motivated when they identify the connection between the task at hand and their goals. Exercises such as problem-based learning are especially useful.

For some disadvantaged learners, filling gaps in foundations skills is often part of a process of building a person’s identity and greater confidence as a learner (Dawe, 2004; Dymock 2007). However, developing confidence and a positive self-image as a learner takes time. Practitioners need to be aware of these ‘psychological constraints’ that may require practitioners early in the relationship to seek the involvement of support services (e.g. literacy and numeracy experts). A number of reports highlight the growing need for teachers to have close partnerships with these support staff (National VET Equity Advisory Council, 2011; SCOTESE, 2012; also see the vignette for ‘The Certificate in Applied Vocational Study Skills’).

The scaffolding skills of the practitioner are very important at this stage in building learner engagement. The approach involves building on small steps and constantly revising in order to consolidate initial gains (see the vignette ‘Scaffold learning with Māori, Pacific, and Youth students’). For example, as learners develop their fundamental literacy skills, they develop new skills, attitudes and knowledge about their environment that enables them to be more likely to undertake daily tasks in their community. These developments in turn build more self-confidence, which motivates the development of language and literacy skills. Together these components
combine to provide a growing momentum that promotes what one author describes as ‘the wheel of progress’ (Benseman, 2012).

**Scaffolded learning with Māori, Pacific, and youth students**

Māori, Pacific, and youth students commented on the teaching styles of their tutors:

> ‘If they break the questions down a bit then we’ll get the question. Do a diagram up on the board instead of like speaking all the time and draw what’s needed - like steps and stuff you can take to answer the question. With our tutor she explains it, then she asks everyone if they understand, then she comes around and asks each person how they are going with it. I like it when the tutor provides a diagram, then we talk about it and then she gives bullet-points of the main points, all these things help me to process the information and retain it.’

Students also commented on less than ideal teaching approaches: ‘Some teachers just talk then leave you to figure out what to do and you’re just sitting there for the whole time they have gone and you haven’t done anything when they come back cos you’re stuck.’

Overall, successful strategies found included:

- Chunk the learning into manageable amounts that are sequential and utilise a concrete example to support the learning of a theory;
- Indicate to students the points that need to be noted because they will be tested;
- Use a range of methods to present the same information, for example students appreciated seeing a diagram, reading the theory and discussing the points;
- Check that students actually understand the questions and what is expected of them; and
- Be well organised, while clear and consistent in your expectations of students; this is a proactive way to manage behaviour.

Source: Adapted from AOTEARO (2012).

**Learning environment strategies**

VET practitioners need to exhibit pedagogical practices that promote the creation of a caring, inclusive and cohesive learning community for each disadvantaged learner. Practitioners can apply strategies such as creating a learning climate that removes any ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinctions, and that promotes an ‘all of us’ community where diversity is valued and supported. Strategies that build a supportive peer culture in particular have been shown to be critical to support disadvantaged learners (Archer, 2007; Balatti, Black & Falk, 2009; Hockings, 2010; also see the vignette ‘Be my guest’).

Based on these reports, and the vignette, the following ‘social capital’ building strategies are available to VET practitioners:

- Negotiate rules of behaviour where the learner accepts responsibility for managing their own behaviour;
- Reward and build trust especially around positive behaviours that are valued by the group of learners;
- Build trusting one-on-one relationships with each learner, and between learners, through being a facilitator or coach who makes a psychological contract with each learner to support their learning; and
- Identify and maximise the use of learning experiences that are in the workplace or in the community. These experiences serve to connect the learning to real world experiences that are important for the more disadvantaged learner.
Be My Guest- A collaborative VET course for learners with an intellectual disability

Be My Guest course is a course developed through a collaboration between the Gold Coast Radisson Resort (Carrara), NSW TAFE North Coast Institute Hospitality and Disability Support sections (Kingscliff campus), and local state funded Transition to Work Services and a local school. The course aims to equip students with intellectual disabilities with the vocational competencies, underpinning knowledge, employability skills and the self-confidence needed to secure employment or articulate to other qualifications. Students attend on the job training one day a week at the Gold Coast Radisson Resort and one day at Kingscliff TAFE. Transition to work services and a local high school provide support for transport, promptness and reliability, appropriate work wear, out of class assignments and follow up around absenteeism or other issues impacting on course engagement. Ten students with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 15 and 25 enrolled and worked towards a Certificate II in Hospitality (Accommodation Services) competencies over a full year (36 weeks). Seven students completed all competencies required for the Certificate II (Accommodation Services), while others gained other positive outcomes around successfully completing units of competence and in gaining employment in local resorts or restaurants. The success factors included:

- Active learning and demonstration of competence in the Radisson workplace was the course priority, while the TAFE classroom provided a safe, caring and encouraging learning space for students to prepare for, and debrief, workplace performance. In addition there was personalised attention by creating small groups in class and small workplace teams supported by two workplace instructors with intermittent supervision by Radisson staff;
- Teachers were highly skilled in educating disadvantaged learners. Teacher capabilities included firmly held beliefs in the students’ potential; skills in shaping student ‘ownership’ by creating a lively learning environment; negotiating course rules with clear expectations and goals; adapting learning materials; providing effective on-going feedback including assessment strategies that enabled students to demonstrate their competency;
- Significant use of information technology for developing individual learning plans, researching job possibilities, developing resumes and researching the hospitality industry; and
- Strong support from partners when performance or behavioural issues arose and from transition to work and schools partners in ensuring that students got to locations on time and ready.

Source: Mark Jewell, TAFENSW

For a number of disadvantaged learners, it is important to ensure culturally affirming learning environments (ANTA, 2000; Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008; also see the vignette ‘Building Aboriginal Cultural Identity’). For example, Indigenous Australians desire ‘both ways’ learning where there is a sharing of knowledge between Indigenous and western cultures. Training serves to build pride in their Indigenous culture, as well as achieving other outcomes around employment and employability skills.

Lawson and associates (2007) provide an example of how recognising the intersection of the discourses on transformative pedagogy and Indigenous education has made the University of Newcastle a leader in recruiting and retaining Indigenous students, particularly in its Medicine programs. The medical program follows a strong Indigenised curriculum for all its students, and their model combines community, equity and engagement together with academic rigor.
Building Aboriginal cultural capability

North Coast TAFE NSW has built into its Charter 2011-2013 a clear commitment to get better at Aboriginal Cultural Capability as a means to improving Aboriginal participation and completions in their VET programs. From July 2011 the Institute has established Aboriginal Teacher Coaches (ATCs) to work closely with Aboriginal Learning Liaison Officers to provide wrap around support for students across all faculties. ATCs have trialled a variety of models including in-class, whole cohort support, individual support, small study groups and free floating section support roles. Sections are very enthusiastic about the ATC role and impacts on students. North Coast TAFE has seen recent improvements in units of competency completion rates for Aboriginal students and whilst this may be due to many factors, it does coincide with the increased dedicated effort to support these students through the Aboriginal coach strategy and personalised learning and support strategies for students as well as staff. In addition, in 2012 an Aboriginal Cultural Capability program was run. Representatives from every faculty and portfolio and from the various campuses made a commitment of energy, effort, collaboration, travel and exchange over a six month period. At an induction workshop participants were paired, one Aboriginal staff member with one non-Aboriginal staff member, and made a start on a two-way learning agreement. They identified what they aimed to learn about their partner’s role and what they would show their partner about their roles. Over the next five months the participant pairs fully developed and executed their agreements using a range of strategies and activities. A reflection workshop was then held in which key messages were shared and a strategy developed for conveying the messages to the Institute Executive. Participants then refined their key messages and rehearsed their presentations as a whole group. Many ideas for building Aboriginal cultural capability were put forward to the Executive and each participant greatly enhanced their own capabilities.

Source: Mark Whitehead, TAFE NSW

Learning content strategies

Adapting training materials to ensure that they are sensitive to cultural considerations is a key strategy to promote more culturally affirming learning (Abbott-Chapman, 2011). Having the vocational training endorsed by the local community or by an appropriate Indigenous authority as part of this process is also being adopted in some locations (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000).

Also, teachers need to see how the training content can build not only the vocational skills of the learner, but also their foundation skills (SCOTese, 2012). Foundation skills include; reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and learning, and the employability skills of learning, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management and the use of technology. Indeed, facilitating the development of foundation skills can be more important than the technical vocation skills, at least in the early stages of the process of re-engaging the disadvantaged learner with learning. In addition, VET teachers need to fully recognise that foundation skills require systematic attention, while they are required at increasingly sophisticated levels across the VET qualification levels. At higher VET levels, VET teachers need the capacity to recognise when specialist foundation skills support is required and to have the capacity to team-teach with specialists when required (Roberts & Wignall, 2010). More general tutoring may also be required as part of the team teaching approach.

There are examples in the VET sector of two practitioners being present in the classroom working together successfully with disadvantaged learners, one to support foundation skills around literacy and numeracy, and the other providing the support for skills training. A delivery model that has attracted special attention is an accredited course from Western Australia (see the vignette for
‘Western Australia, the Certificate in Applied Vocational Study Skills’). In short, this program is reporting outcomes around learners being more resourceful, confident and involved.

### Western Australia, Certificate in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS)

The CAVSS model provides a mechanism for funding a workable approach to integrated VET delivery. The CAVSS course enables training providers to build foundation skills in tandem with vocational delivery. The course can be used in conjunction with accredited vocational training to provide an additional 100 hours of LLN support in any six month period. CAVSS is accessed for entire learner groups, not individuals. The LLN support is provided using a team teaching approach with an LLN specialist working with the vocational practitioner in a face-to-face classroom environment. The course can be used in conjunction with any accredited VET course or Training Package qualification at any AQF level. The outcomes requirements of the CAVSS states that the use of CAVSS must not separate assessment of literacy or numeracy skills for any learner during or on completion of the vocational program. Evidence of planning, delivery and attendance must be maintained by the provider. Data from WA implementation of CAVSS indicate that the program has a positive effect on completion and withdrawal rates. Additional benefits of the program include:

- Increased learner confidence and participation;
- Greater learner collaboration;
- Two-way staff development;
- More effective practitioners; and
- More resourceful learners.

Source: Adapted from Roberts & Wignall (2011)

A final important point regarding literacy skills for Indigenous learners is the need for a two-way bi-dialectal approach. Research in Western Australia has identified this need on the basis of a significant body of research and developmental work undertaken over the past 20 years with Edith Cowan University (Malcolm, 2010; Malcolm & Truscott, 2012). Since 2005, the WA VET sector has been collaborating with the researchers, teacher educators and community members to bring the results of this research into the pedagogical practice of VET teachers. The Education and Training Departments have jointly launched the Tracks to Two-Way Learning professional development resource which is being used to develop the capacity of the VET sector, as well as the schools sector (for further information see Appendix A).

### Learning delivery strategies

There are numerous strategies that can be adopted to promote learning delivery. Major actions include:

- Provide flexibility in numerous ways, including open entry and exit points with flexible scheduling including a choice of times. Use a mix of hands on and more academic learning, and with appropriate breaks between learning sessions (Bowman, 2011);
- Generate teaching environments that build social capital amongst the learners. (Balatti, Black & Falk, 2009). Indigenous learners, for example, often want to be in all Indigenous classes. Practitioners should avoid situations where Indigenous learners are a minority in the group doing the training qualification unless they so desire and have the requisite supports. However, the aim should be to encourage disadvantaged learners to be comfortable and able to perform in mainstream VET programs as part of the general student population;
- Adapt the training materials to ensure that they are sensitive to cultural considerations (Abbott-Chapman, 2011; Alton-Lee, 2003). There is a need for adequate time to ensure training is endorsed by the local community or in the case of Indigenous students by an
Indigenous authority (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000). A related strategy is to incorporate Indigenous elders and other identities with their knowledge and values into the training programs;

- Adopt self-paced, active or hands on learning approaches as opposed to instructional classroom teaching (Brown & North, 2010). VET teachers need to be able to work as a facilitator of learning and to create an environment for metacognition (learning to learn) so learners participate in managing and pacing their own acquisition of skills and knowledge. Consider a variety of active learning opportunities such as project based work, real life scenario based work, and out of class work and community based learning opportunities that are useful to the learners. These options build ties to possible future employment (paid and non-paid) opportunities after the learning program (Alton-Lee 2003); and

- Design the training delivery to allow for learning-by-doing, with training delivered in a practical or workplace setting or community setting. Introduce a mix of learning approaches within the one day, moving between the more academic content, to more hands-on work, and to group work in particular. Increasingly, VET practitioners are accepting that e-learning approaches need to be part of the mix. E-learning meets learner and employer expectations around increased flexibility and more personalised learning, especially with the growing diversity of learners (Callan & Bowman, 2010; Wallace & Appo, 2011).

As McDonald and O’Callaghan (2007) argue, e-learning has the potential to address broader outcomes around the organisational, systemic, pedagogic and cultural issues that challenge policy, educators and educational brokers. Significantly, disadvantaged learners respond well to the integration and innovative use of technologies in teaching, learning and assessment. There is growing acceptance that competence in the use of ICT technology is a foundation skill of the 21st century that all learners need to acquire. However, as Callan Consulting Group (2006) concluded from an audit of the capabilities of VET teachers, they require improved digital literacy and need to be able to keep pace with the rapid changes in technology if e-learning is to achieve its potential.

Finally, identifying a local e-learning champion from among teachers or the learner group emerges as a key to sustaining e-learning. For instance, in one example from their report on sustaining e-learning, Callan and Bowman (2010) found that Indigenous Project Champions assisted and supported VET project delivery. These champions were not experts in the technologies or learning pedagogy, but supported the team of Indigenous people and promoted the potential of using e-learning to achieve personal and community goals. These champions evolved over time from being more introverted individuals at the beginning, to people who chaired community e-learning hubs and co-presented at events around the positive outcomes of e-learning for Indigenous learners.

**Learning persistence strategies**

VET practitioners can promote learning persistence through multiple strategies that provide appropriate support services (Bowman, 2011; Parkin & Baldwin, 2009). Central to managing and maintaining student engagement is the design of training to feature more whole-of-person outcomes. These outcomes include personal development goals and important life skills, as well as completing a valued qualification that allows the development of a broader set of employability skills. Linking training programs with an accreditation framework is a practical strategy that interconnects personal and employment goals.
Another useful strategy is for each individual to have a support plan in completing their training (Bowman, 2011; Hockings, 2010). The support plan might include access to tutoring in basic education skills, identification of a mentor, and finding an advocate who assists the learner at critical times or a case manager who plays a similar role. Linked to the plan is a periodic review of their progress, and the ability to make adjustments that put in place possibly more realistic timelines for the completion of the training.

**Supported learning**

Alesco accredited independent schools in regional NSW are providing a successful alternative for students no longer able to attend mainstream schools because of their behaviours. They generally have low levels of literacy and numeracy. Success rates compare favourably with conventional school benchmarks when the backgrounds of the Alesco students are taken into account. The Alesco learning model involves deep commitment from the college, carefully chosen talented staff, agreed codes of behaviour, and strong relationships between the educator, the young person and support staff and local social service agencies. Students sign up to an adult learning behaviour code adapted for the maturing person. An understanding of consequences for poor choices associated with behaviours is communicated. Support staff or local social service agencies work with students who are not coping until such time they are ready to re-join the class. Students eventually settle and become more self-determined, autonomous decision-makers requiring less social support. Alesco students work as a core crew in small classes. They form strong relationships with each other and the teachers, and this keeps them engaged and enthusiastic. They work together to reach a common goal of their School Certificates. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.


VET practitioners also need to engage in student tracking (Bowman, 2011). These practices ensure that if the learner stops attending, there is follow up and appropriate actions to return learners to the plan. Options might include postponing a goal until barriers are under control, adjusting the goal or switching to a program that better meets the needs of the learner.

**Learning assessment and progression strategies**

Disadvantaged learners often have had negative experiences with learning assessment. They need clear information on the process upfront, what will be involved and when and how. They tend to prefer continuous feedback on their learning progress and practical assessments as opposed to written assessments. They prefer continuous assessment linked to on-the-job and work-based training rather than abstract point-in-time assessment in a formal classroom context (ANTA Research Advisory Council, 1998). In addition, learner feedback promotes continuous improvement in the instructional design and support services that assist all learners (Golding et al., 2012).

VET practitioners need to be innovative in their application of high-quality approaches to teaching, learning and assessment (Callan at al., 2007; Precision Consulting, 2011). This capability includes being able to demonstrate considerable creativity and sound professional judgment in their choice of assessment, and an awareness of alternatives. For instance, practitioner strategies increasingly include the application of new technologies to assess competency, including on-line quizzes,
simulations and the use of evidence reported through pictures and video recorded by mobile phones or other technologies (Callan & Clayton, 2010).

The principles of effective assessment need to be articulated clearly and early. At the commencement of training, VET practitioners need to explain what will be involved and how assessment activities are linked to the learning objectives and assessment. Goal-oriented assessment with effective feedback, used as formative assessment, is one of the strongest influences on student learning. As Callan and Clayton (2010) report, this feature of quality VET teaching draws on the industry knowledge, currency, experience and expertise of practitioners, and is particularly valuable for the learning of all students (also see the vignette ‘Enhancing assessment to enhance teaching and learning’).

Promoting flexibility in how competencies are assessed is important. Disadvantaged learners report being more comfortable with knowledge and skills assessment that include practical assessment compared with more written assessment (Alton-Lee, 2003). There is a preference for continuous assessment linked to on-the-job and work-based training rather than assessment that is more formal or in the classroom.

Also applying the principle of reasonable accommodation is required if training and assessing are to occur in a non-discriminatory manner. To be equitable, the methods used for teaching and assessing must take account of the characteristics of the person while still meeting the set standards. Appropriate accommodation supports learner participation. The Commonwealth’s Disability Standards for Education sets the standards for education provision for people with disability and can be a guide for VET practitioners. A further information source is the Queensland VET Development Centre Strategy and Research (Equity)’s 2010 Guide on Reasonable Adjustment.

Enhancing assessment to enhance teaching and learning
Researchers from the University of Melbourne suggest that capitalising on the capacity of assessment for creating preferred patterns of study is a powerful tool for teaching staff. For academic staff, assessment is often a final consideration in their planning of the curriculum. This is not to imply staff underestimate or undervalue the role or importance of assessment, but assessment is often considered once other curriculum decisions have been made. The primary concerns of academic staff are often with designing learning outcomes and planning teaching and learning activities that will produce these outcomes. In contrast, assessment is usually at the forefront of students’ perceptions of the teaching and learning process. Students often work ‘backwards’ through the curriculum, focusing first and foremost on how they will be assessed and what they will be required to demonstrate they have learned. For most students, assessment requirements literally define the curriculum. Assessment is a potent strategic tool for educators to spell out the learning that will be rewarded and to guide students into effective approaches to study. Students study more effectively when they know what they are working towards. Also, many students express a strong preference for choices in the nature, weighting and timing of assessment tasks. This preference for ‘negotiated’ assessment is a logical extension of the trend towards offering students more flexible ways of studying and more choice in study options.


Learner progression strategies
The VET practitioner needs to operate in a partnership with the learner, their potential or current employers and community based organisations that can offer work opportunities. A ‘whole-of-life’
model is more likely to ensure coordinated learner support (ANTA, 2004a). In this model, service delivery is through partnerships where the key players are engaged in achieving goals with the learner.

Support units and services play a key role in ensuring that successful outcomes are achieved by disadvantaged learners. Academic support services include advice on suitable learning pathways, in-class literacy and numeracy support and one-on-one tutoring. Non-academic supports include mentoring by suitable role models, and assistance in gaining and maintaining paid employment, where relevant (see the vignette ‘VET linked into the local community to aid progression to jobs’). It is not the responsibility of the VET practitioner to deliver all of these services, but to work with others to make sure that they are delivered when and as required to disadvantaged learners.

There are numerous practical strategies identified in this review around how training providers can establish relationships that promote the progress of the disadvantaged learner. For example, VET practitioners can (see ANTA, 2002c; Bradley et al., 2008; Brown & North, 2010):

- Find employment agencies that are willing to establish a longer term strategic partnership around placing and supporting disadvantaged learners. This partnership might include a Memorandum of Understanding that specifies the roles and responsibilities of each partner. This Memorandum of Understanding might include clear codes of conduct that are understood by providers, employers and individual students and state expectations about each other’s roles, their responsibilities in the partnership, and outcomes if these expectations are not met;
- Put in place a marketing plan that features the benefits of supporting people with disabilities, Indigenous employees, or those from other disadvantaged groups and promote being an equal opportunity employer in recruitment advertisements;
- Establish relationships with local schools (including schools that cater specifically for students with disabilities, low socio-economic status, and other groups);
- Have members of the partnership work together to locate, screen and refer suitable candidates to the most appropriate form of training, including by level of qualification, flexibility, and the nature of the training (e.g. more hands on than more academic);
- Encourage employers and VET institutions to customise induction programs to better accommodate the needs of disadvantaged learners; and
- Establish a system of regular communication between the VET practitioner, employee and learner.

**VET linked into the local community to aid progression to jobs**

Bedford Training, an enterprise RTO, has developed the Abilities for All programs to encourage disadvantaged and disabled people to achieve where they previously did not. The program has a strong community based approach and is designed to introduce participants to the services and opportunities available to them in their local community. Abilities for All programs are conducted within local community centres and utilise programs that are already on offer at these centres. Community centres provide the non-threatening, nurturing environment needed to deliver the program. A partnership with Career Systems provides the link to the job market and uses training from the employment consultants in job ready skills such as resume writing and presenting for interview. Work experience partners such as local cafes and child care centres provide a work experience aspect to the training to develop job ready skills. Work experience is centred in the local area as the Abilities for All program aims to provide local employment options. Guest speakers are an integral part of the program, introducing the clients to
In the Abilities for All programs the trainers gain their trust before training can begin. Many times the program starts with a social chat before the training begins. Trainers get to know their clients and find that this slow introduction aids them in their teaching. The training itself includes 12 months of mentoring. The trainers mentor the participant through the program and then continue to help with resume writing, applying for work or further study or just to help with everyday issues. This aspect of the training provides a link with a mentor who understands and cares about their future welfare. Many of the mentors and students remain in contact for many years after the program.

Source: Paul Gaertner, Bedford Training

### VET practitioner capabilities

The identification of principles and strategies for working with disadvantaged learners has implications for current VET teacher capabilities. A number of capability frameworks currently exist (see Appendix E; e.g. Callan Consulting Group, 2006; Mitchell & Ward, 2010) that identify the knowledge and skills required of VET teaching staff. Based on these prior frameworks, and on the principles and strategies identified in this report, Table 4 provides a summary of the core pedagogic capabilities required of VET practitioners working with disadvantaged learners, as identified by the authors.

Fundamental to the pedagogic capabilities is the need for a much greater focus than exists currently upon teacher attitudes around inclusion. There is evidence identified in this review that learning and teaching strategies may be less important predictors of educational experiences and outcomes than teacher attitudes and their interactions with learners (see European Commission, 2012). For inclusion to work well, VET practitioners need to be more confident in their ability to meet the needs of all learners, and supported where necessary by the types of specialist input identified in this report (e.g. literacy and numeracy experts; social workers). One group of researchers summed up the common characteristics of practitioners working successfully with disadvantaged learners as including that they are knowledgeable; adaptive; supportive; tenacious; and connected (Ithaca, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Pedagogic capabilities required of VET practitioners to teach disadvantaged learners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Views diversity as the norm and addresses diversity in VET program design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Understands each learner’s educational attainment and goals, and life circumstances that might impinge</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Creates a conducive environment for learning so learners participate in managing and pacing their own acquisition of skills and knowledge and behaviours</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Selects and adapts learning resources and equipment and organises the learning site to maximise engagement, interest, motivation and success including through the use of e-learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Facilitates foundations skills development as well as technical vocational skills at all qualification levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Reasonably adjusts learning and assessment tasks and approaches</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Encourages/nurtures learner persistence towards agreed learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Acts as the pedagogic expert/professional within the support team providing a pedagogical perspective to other professionals and to the family/community of the learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Asks for specialist advice and support to aid learner resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Reflects on their own practice and actively seeks learner and peer evaluation of processes and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Participates in professional development to inform and improve practice</td>
</tr>
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Studies from a number of countries reveal that teachers are more likely to practice inclusion when they have access to continuing professional development (e.g. Koutrouba et al., 2008; Hadjikalou et al., 2008). Professional development of VET practitioners therefore is of vital importance in moving...
towards a more socially inclusive VET system. Also taking as a guide the European Commission (2012), there is a need for specialist training programmes for VET practitioners who have learners with particular categories of difficulty. Countries such as Germany and Belgium adopt this approach. In addition, for more mainstream VET practitioners, professional development programmes with a focus on inclusive education and training can develop more generic skills, such as those listed in the earlier Table 4. A key capability is how better to respond to learner diversity in VET, in particular how to adapt pedagogy, training and assessment.

**VET workforce- capability gaps**
The VET workforce requires professional development to address capability gaps in some of the areas identified in Table 4. For instance, a Productivity Commission (2011) report on the VET workforce identified the need for better outcomes around supporting learners experiencing disadvantage. The report listed assessments via RPL and using ICT in VET delivery as specific areas where the VET workforce needs further development (see Section 9.4 of the report).

From an environmental scan of the VET workforce challenges, Innovation and Business Skills Australia (2011) proposes that VET teachers need to develop skills that:

- Meet changing client needs and expectations around language, literacy and numeracy support;
- Encourage them to access specialist learning support for disadvantaged learners;
- Allow them to balance, maintain and develop pedagogical skills that are appropriate to different disciplines and learner cohorts; and
- Give them the confidence to implement new technologies around the application of learning and assessment.

Other research raises concerns about the extent to which VET practitioners currently seek and use learner feedback to drive continuous improvement (Golding et al., 2012). The current focus appears to be more on collecting information at the end of the learner’s training to support systems level analysis (e.g. NCVER student outcomes survey; the VET regulatory framework AQTF Learner Questionnaire).

**Relating capabilities to different types of VET teachers**
In the various frameworks for building VET teacher capability (see Appendix E), the VET teaching workforce has been differentiated in various ways. One differentiation is by the roles played. For example, the VET workforce includes teachers, generalists and specialists employed to teach and train who may be full-time, part-time or sessional, through to industry experts who provide some workplace training and assessment as part of their broader job. There are also visiting industry experts who teach occasionally for a very specific purpose related to their industry expertise (see Rumsey & Associates, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2006).

Another differentiation is by level of teacher development. Those who have adopted this approach often refer to at least three groups: novice/foundation practitioners, specialist VET practitioners, and advanced VET practitioners; or an alternative typology is practitioner, advanced practitioner and lead practitioner (e.g. Mitchell & Ward, 2010; Precision Consulting, 2012). A third differentiation is by level of responsibility for teaching, training and assessment. This approach is adopted in the some
recent reports, including by Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) on improving the quality of VET teaching, and by Precision Consulting (2011) in developing a broad capability framework for the VET workforce.

Wheelahan and Moodie (2011), as noted, propose that the level of responsibility or category of teacher be distinguished by the extent to which the teacher is required to demonstrate ‘an extensive range of knowledge, understanding and application of curriculum development, curriculum innovation or curriculum delivery strategies’ (p25). The current Certificate IV TAE (teaching and education) is the mandated qualification for teaching in VET. Qualifications have learning outcomes that are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, and their application contexts.

When Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) examined the new AQF level descriptor at level 4, they reported: ‘It is highly improbable that a core VET workforce with full responsibility for teaching, training and assessing that does not have qualifications at higher levels than a Certificate IV will be able to achieve VET’s goals, which will be increasingly characterised by innovation, diversity and complexity’ (p.42). Further they noted that many participants in their research argued that if the Certificate IV TAE continues to be the entry level qualification, it will require some modification to incorporate more on teaching, pedagogy, how people learn, and student diversity and inclusiveness.

The Wheelahan and Moodie report recommends that a staged and developmental approach be implemented to develop VET teaching qualifications up to Level 6 in the new AQF (Associate Degrees and Advanced Diplomas). Level 6 is first point at which graduates are required to demonstrate autonomy in contexts subject to change within broad parameters. Further, their report recommends a nested model of qualifications for VET teachers be developed that includes:

- An induction program before starting teaching and training;
- Basic entry level credentialed study upon commencing teaching and training; and
- Higher level credentialed study as teachers and trainers progress in their careers.

**Proposed actions to build VET teacher core capabilities**

Building on the recommendations of Wheelahan and Moodie (2011), and based on the findings of this review and prior reports (e.g. ACER 2011), the current report supports actions to build VET teacher core capabilities in teaching disadvantaged learners by:

- Promoting some modification to the Certificate IV TAE entry level qualification to VET teaching to incorporate more on pedagogy (including facilitation of foundation skills as a core unit), how people learn, and student diversity and inclusiveness;
- Supporting and assisting the development of VET teaching qualifications up to Level 6 in the new AQF (Associate Degrees and Advanced Diplomas)³; and
- Supporting the development of a national survey of VET teaching quality, that incorporates the features of this Pedagogic Knowledge Framework to promote the development of the new capabilities that are now required of VET practitioners.

Another way forward is to promote the use of integrated teaching and support services models, to achieve the full range of core competencies that are required. This idea is to offer a seamless

³ Note that the scope of the project did not include consideration of the role of HE qualifications as the basis of capability building for VET practitioners
integrated team approach. One focus is to overcome ‘disconnections’, such as groups specialising in equity groups and others providing general education working in different programs and physical locations that impose a barrier to lateral influence, and perceptions amongst practitioners that the pedagogical base intended to reverse disadvantage is somehow different from the thinking that underpins vocational programs intended to enable employment (Figgis et al., 2007).

### An integrated team approach to increasing VET capability

NSW North Coast TAFE has 10 of the 40 lowest SES areas of Australia within its market reach. From 2011 it has been trialling different ways of offering personalised learning and employment support (PL&ES) to its students, to improve placement in courses and develop personalised pathways to study and employment outcomes at all levels of VET. In 2011 the PL&ES teams mostly included a Counsellor, a Teacher Consultant for Disabilities, a Learner Support teacher and an Aboriginal Learning Liaison Officer, and sometimes also Head Teachers, Librarians, Campus Managers and Student Support Officers. In 2012 the teams are evolving to include staff across all faculties. PL&ES teams might form for a variety of purposes:

- To develop orientation and induction strategies to improve student placement or to develop improved ways to access support staff on a campus;
- To develop online/face to face support and mentoring trials or to implement Institute wide initiatives to follow and support discontinuing students;
- Identify new ways to link or connect services with students and with vocational delivery to develop transition support for students moving into higher level qualifications;
- Develop job placement networks with employers in a community or to support better placements and outcomes for students referred through job service agencies; and
- Implement other innovations that the team thinks will help students to complete.

Examples of successful outcomes to date include:

- A course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS) is delivered at negotiated delivery ‘hot spots’ determined by the vocational trainer;
- Teachers contacting students at risk of disengaging or non-completion and conducting an assessment of their needs and offering appropriate support channels. Most students who were inactive were found to be waiting to be re-engaged and were very appreciative of the opportunity to get started again. The initiated contact was an ‘ice-breaker’, a chance to re-build the teacher/student relationship;
- The use of staff mentors to develop trusting relationships with students to address training needs and refer students to appropriate support staff;
- Student mentoring models wherein students identified as having leadership qualities provided IT and study skills support and encouragement to peers. Student mentors benefited through learning teamwork skills, learning leadership skills and developing improved interpersonal skills; and
- Facebook trials that are having positive outcomes in encouraging students to develop support groups within established clear rules.

Source. Mark Whitehead, TAFENSW
Appendix A. Literature review 1: Indigenous Australians

The VET system has played an important role in meeting the educational and training needs of Indigenous Australians, from the development of basic skills through to professional training, providing the role of a second chance provider for many Indigenous learners (Helme, 2007). An Access Economics (2010) report to NVEAC reveals that this role will increase as the population of Indigenous Australians, and people with a disability, is estimated to grow faster than the general population to 2020. There is projected to be an additional 223,000 Indigenous Australians and people with a disability by 2020. This Access Economics modelling also indicates that there is a potential return to the economy of over $12 billion in 2020 if we remove the barriers to participation, completions and transitions-to-work gaps for Indigenous Australians and people with a disability.

A significant body of research exists on what it takes to achieve effective engagement, participation in and completion of education programs for Indigenous Australians (for example Miller (2005) found over 4000 references). In addition, many bodies have put forward strategies to close the gap between the educational outcomes of the broader community and those outcomes for Indigenous Australians. For instance, The Closing the Gap educational targets set by COAG (2009) include to:

- Ensure all Indigenous four years olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (i.e. by 2015);
- Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade;
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020; and
- Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

In a significant report from the VET sector perspective, Miller (2005) and her team of reviewers undertook a systematic examination to identify seven factors associated with positive outcomes from vocational education and training. For Indigenous people there needs to be:

- Community ownership and involvement;
- The incorporation of Indigenous identities, cultures, knowledge and values;
- The establishment of partnerships;
- Flexibility in course design, content and delivery;
- Quality staff and committed advocacy;
- Extensive student support services; and
- Appropriate funding that allows for sustainability.

As Miller’s report acknowledges, multiple strategies are required to deliver upon better outcomes for Indigenous learners. The next sections identify a range of strategies that might inform VET practitioners in working more successfully with these disadvantaged learners.

Key strategies

Understanding Indigenous peoples’ aspirations

VET practitioners need to appreciate fully the motivations of Indigenous Australians for participating in VET. They wish to achieve employment outcomes, but not just paid employment (NCVER, 2005).
Indigenous people undertake significant amounts of unpaid community work and their communities aspire to economic independence. They aspire to types of employment outcomes that include:

- Paid employment, especially in government and Indigenous organisations;
- Effective participation in their own community development; and
- Indigenous enterprises development and economic independence.

The latter two outcomes are especially relevant in rural and remote areas where labour markets are small and there are few paid employment opportunities. A government issued consultation paper aimed at revamping the Community Development Employment Program as part of an Indigenous Economic Development Strategy argues that a more ‘demand responsive’ VET will take different forms in each of three different local economies:

- Established economies, for example, capital cities, major regional centres, some rural and remote locations;
- Emerging economies, for example, mainly smaller regional and remote locations; and
- Limited economies, for example, remote and very remote communities and outstations.

**Understanding the learning journey**

Indigenous Australians often take a staged approach, and develop personal skills, educational achievements and then ‘employment’. The personal outcomes of enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem, improved communication skills and feelings of being respected by others are enabling factors for achieving other positive educational outcomes that are steps towards gaining employment. The same learning journey is found for others who are educationally disadvantaged (Bowman, 2007; SA ACE, 2008).

Furthermore some individuals require several positive learning engagements focused around building foundation skills, and as part of the process of building identity and confidence as a learner, before they achieve more directed learning for employment or greater community involvement (Dymock, 2007; Dawe, 2004). Central to these outcomes is that VET practitioners establish a suitable learning pathway with and for each individual who is disadvantaged educationally, and accept that a long term relationship with these individuals is very likely.

**Ensuring culturally affirming learning environments**

A number of writers argue that little attention has been given to Indigenous pedagogy. Biermann and Townsend-Cross (2008), for example, propose that more attention be given to practical aspects of Indigenous pedagogy by means of a student-teacher dialogue and through the intersection of the discourses on transformative pedagogy and Indigenous education in Australia. However, examples are emerging of how this can be done. Lawson and colleagues (2007) report how the University of Newcastle has been recognised for its strengths as a sector leader in recruiting and retaining Indigenous students, particularly in its Medicine programs, graduating approximately 60% of doctors in Australia who identify as Indigenous. This program follows a strong Indigenised curriculum for all its students, and this model combines community, equity and engagement by the medical profession together with standards of academic rigor.

Indigenous Australians desire ‘both ways’ learning where there is a sharing of knowledge between Indigenous and Western cultures. These expectations are espoused well in the national strategy for Indigenous Australians in VET of 2000 to 2008, **Partners in Learning Culture** (ANTA, 2000). Training is
a way of building pride in Indigenous culture, as well as achieving other outcomes. Responsive and culturally affirming learning environments need to be created.

Strategies identified for building strong rapport with Indigenous students include:

- Having Indigenous community ownership and involvement in the training from the start to the finish;
- Providing ‘true’ partnerships with VET providers based on mutual respect and clearly defined understandings to meet each other’s expectations. These expectations may manifest in different ways in VET programs including the involvement in Indigenous-specific courses and by access to Indigenous-controlled training providers. Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECGs) at the State/Territory level can assist;
- Having more Indigenous staff in VET to overcome the current shortfall including establishing a critical mass. A related action is efforts to aid the retention and professional development of existing Indigenous staff including moving them beyond their Indigenous roles to work at higher levels and in different contexts (Kemmis et al. 2006);
- Giving Indigenous communities an active role in selecting staff, particularly in Indigenous-specific programs;
- Mandating cross-cultural training among non-indigenous VET staff, not just cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness training includes ‘Indigenous culture, pastoral care strategies, training in delivering Indigenous studies courses, racism awareness and training and reconciliation strategies’ (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003, p.52); and
- There are also calls for the need to increase the number of staff with specialist skills around cultural competency and to ensure that groups served by the sector are reflected within its staffing profile (e.g. Kemmis et al., 2006; Miller, 2005);

Teachers’ pedagogical practice must affirm the cultural identity of each student, while the curriculum needs to respect and engage Indigenous students. Pre-service teacher training in particular can prepare teachers to include Indigenous perspectives in their curricula. Ideally Indigenous and non-Indigenous students need an engaging and relevant curriculum. This is especially true for Indigenous learners where the barriers to engagement are experienced to a much greater degree by Indigenous students (Helme, 2007).

Two-way dialectal education for Indigenous Australians

A body of recent research undertaken in Western Australia indicates a need for two-way bidialectal education for Indigenous Australians (Malcolm, 2010; Malcolm & Truscott, 2012; Konigsberg, 2012). The English language situation in Australia is one where there are two dialects, Australian English and Aboriginal English. In English-speaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, English is an indigenized variety which belongs to its Indigenous speakers, and which is a vehicle for the maintenance of their culture in a largely unaccepting wider environment. Aboriginal English is a language in its own right which differs from Australian English at all levels, including sounds, words, syntax as well as text form, pragmatics and underlying conceptualisations.

When approaching bidialectal situations such as these, there are three major options in education (Malcolm, 2012). The first is to ignore Aboriginal English completely and present the curriculum from a mono-dialectal standpoint, using and accepting one dialect only (i.e. Standard Australian English). The second is to be dialect-sensitive by pointing out and taking account of the differences
in Aboriginal English within the teaching of Standard Australian English; and the third is to use a two-way bidialectal approach where both dialects are valued and used.

An *ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning* resource has been produced to demonstrate how the objective of two-way bi-dialectal education is realised in pedagogical practice. For two-way bi-dialectal education to be effective, both Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal understandings of conceptualisations need to be exposed. This can only effectively occur when an ongoing genuine exchange of ideas and understandings occurs. In other words, the flow of information needs to go both ways, from the Aboriginal to the non-Aboriginal speaker and vice-versa. This is most effective when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people work as partners in teams, called two-way teams. The systemic framework adopted by the *ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning* includes relationship building, mutual comprehension building, repertoire building and skill building (Malcolm & Truscott, 2012). The most recent resource, the *Tracks to Two-Way Learning* (Konigsberg et al., 2012) is currently tagged as one of the key resources mentioned in the Western Australian *Aboriginal Education Action Plan for WA Public Schools 2011-2014* (p.4).

**Providing student support services of various kinds**

Indigenous support units have a key role in ensuring that VET programs and qualifications are developed and delivered in culturally appropriate ways to address the needs of individuals and communities (Helme, 2007). Successful outcomes are achieved by Indigenous Australians where extensive support is available around their academic and non-academic needs. Academic support services include advice on suitable learning pathways, in class literacy and numeracy assistance and more general one on one tutoring. Non-academic supports often include cultural support through mentoring by suitable role models and after training completion support to help gain and maintain employment.

**Flexibility in course design, content and delivery**

As already alluded to, training needs to be relevant and based on real life contexts and opportunities that vary by location. Paid and unpaid employment opportunities within communities can be included. The teaching style and learning environment preferred by Indigenous students is based on adult learning principles. They prefer teachers who are flexible, informal, inclusive, interactive and friendly (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000). The curriculum and training materials need to be adapted to ensure they are sensitive to cultural considerations. There is a need for adequate time to ensure training is endorsed by the local community or another suitable Indigenous authority.

The most effective training delivery allows for learning-by-doing, that is, training delivered in a practical or workplace setting or community setting. Indigenous Australians favour training that involves group work, more so than individual study, so that people are able to support each other. There is a tendency for Indigenous Australians to want to be in all indigenous classes and to avoid isolation as a minority within all student class groups. This option may change in the future if the commitment, expertise, understanding and sensitivity of people involved throughout the VET system towards Indigenous Australians improves.

Another aspect around flexibility is the way in which competencies are assessed. Indigenous people are most comfortable with knowledge and skills assessment that include practical assessment.
compared with written assessment. They prefer continuous assessment linked to on-the-job and work-based training rather than abstract point-in-time assessment in a formal classroom context (ANTA Research Advisory Council, 1998).

Using information technology
There is a general acceptance amongst Indigenous people around the use of computer technology. Even in remote communities, people are experimenting with technologies of various sorts, where it is available, for their own purposes around sharing information and towards preserving culture and language. E-learning provides opportunities for different modes of interaction with many people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Bowles (2004) refers to this development as a new set of literacies and relationships with learning and technologies.

Potentially e-learning can include Indigenous Australians in the co-production and development of new approaches to learning. Boyle and Wallace (2008) propose that integrated e-learning developed with Indigenous people is more than the mere understanding of technological or ICT resources. Rather e-learning has the potential to address broader outcomes around the organisational, systemic, pedagogic and cultural issues that challenge policy, educators and educational brokers (McDonald & O’Callaghan, 2007).

The Indigenous Engagement project under the Australian Flexible Learning Framework of 2005 to 2007 demonstrated that e-learning is a useful training delivery method (Wallace & Appo, 2011). Indeed, it can support learning in a context where the managers of learning are at a distance from the students, opening up opportunities for learning beyond what is available locally. E-learning provides more personalised and individualised learning, an enhanced role for social contexts in learning (e.g. situated learning, learning from each other, action learning,) and greater flexibility in responding to individual needs.

However, e-learning has to be situated in the context in which people engage with this learning. Wallace and Appo (2011) argue that the design of e-learning experiences must incorporate approaches that engage with the situatedness of people’s learning and needs to examine the connection between the nature of knowledge in those Indigenous communities and external educational institutions. They claim that the full potential of Indigenous people to inform and shape e-learning to achieve positive outcomes will be realised through more partnerships and a readiness to learn together through a ‘both ways’ learning paradigm.

E-learning with its expectations around increased flexibility and more personalised learning is a desirable objective for the VET system, especially with the growing diversity of learners and their needs in VET. The key factors leading to more positive training outcomes include:

- Ensuring community involvement and ownership;
- Providing flexibility in program design, content and delivery;
- Incorporating Indigenous identities, cultures, knowledge and values into training and education programs; and

The use of Indigenous Project Champions is another strategy of building strong rapport with Indigenous students. These champions are not experts in technologies or learning pedagogy, but
operate to support the development of effective solutions. Champions support the team of Indigenous people and promote the potential of using e-learning to achieve goals. Importantly, the impact of Indigenous project e-champions occurs through and beyond the project life cycle. Also e-learning project champions assist in the long-term sustainability and embedding flexible learning into Indigenous organisations. Several case studies show that project champions evolve from being quiet introverted individuals at the beginning of the project, to people confident enough to chair the opening of the community e-hub and co-present with the project manager at a number of functions (Wallace & Appo, 2011).
Appendix B. Literature review 2: People with disabilities

Over time, the perception of people with a disability has changed, albeit slowly and certainly not universally. Bagshaw and Fowler (2008) have described the general stages of disability reform (see Figure 1). Approaches to people with a disability have included a:

- Welfare/medical model that suggests a need to “fix” disabled people or compensate them for their handicaps;
- Rights based model, often manifested in the form of legislation to provide people with disabilities the same rights as everyone else; and
- Social integration model that focuses on ‘fixing’ society and environmental factors to include and empower people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of life.

The National VET Disability Advisory Taskforce that existed between 2000 and 2008 strongly advocated the integrated approach to disability reform. The Taskforce developed Bridging Pathways, a national strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational training and related employment (ANTA, 2000a), and two subsequent implementation documents, referred to as Blueprints (ANTA 2000b, 2004) that included several demonstration projects. The latter blueprint was informed by a review of the first (Barnett, 2003, 2004).

The suggested position reached at 2008 for Australian VET is indicated Figure 1. More recently, NVEAC have taken up the challenge to achieve a VET system design that is more inclusive of people with disabilities towards an integration position.

Figure 1. Stages of disability reform

![Figure 1](image)


Strategies

The following strategies support this continued transition to integration position.

Lifting expectations of people with disabilities

This is a threshold requirement. VET practitioners need to have a positive view of the potential of people with disabilities, as do these individuals themselves. Bagshaw and Fowler (2008) assert that the aim in VET for people with disabilities is the achievement of the highest possible level of skills, and for an employment outcome wherever possible. Nechvoglod and Griffin (2011) report on a small survey investigating the attitudes of people with a disability towards undertaking training that reinforces this assertion. In all qualification levels, the most important reasons people with disabilities reported for undertaking training were to help them get a job, to gain work skills and to help increase confidence. The researchers also noted, however, that many people with a disability require support to undertake this training.

In addition, Karmel and Nguyen (2008) found individuals with hearing/deaf, intellectual, learning, acquired brain impairment and vision disabilities, their poor VET completion rates were largely determined by characteristics other than their disability. Actual disabilities did not explain poor
educational performance once other student characteristics such as age, sex, educational background and course studied were taken into account. In contrast, both student characteristics and the disability were important for the low completion rates of persons with a physical or mental illness or a medical condition.

Significantly, there are numerous examples of people with a disability who have succeeded in VET in all its forms and levels, although their successes are often hidden in research reports as case studies (see Griffin & Nechvold, 2008). There are 40 examples at least in one publication for *Reframing the Future* (McKenna, 2004). Clearly such examples need to be extracted and better promoted than at present.

**Adopting a strength-based focus**

Too often the focus is on what people with a disability cannot do. There is a strong desire among people with a disability for the focus to be on their abilities, what they can do and how to build on these. A strength-based approach adopts a positive psychology perspective that emphasises the capabilities and strengths of the individual. It starts with and accentuates the positive, recognising that existing competencies is an important starting point (Seligman, 2002).

**Having suitable education pathways in place**

For some, but not all people with disabilities, basic level skills programs provide a stepping stone to higher level VET and VET before the end of school programs. A major contribution to demonstrating the potential role of VET in Schools programs for young people with a disability was the *Lighthouse Initiative* of the (then) Enterprise Career Education Foundation. The *Initiative* enhanced expectations about career possibilities for people with a disability that were held by VET and transition education teachers, by employers, by parents and by the disabled VET-in-schools students themselves who were still in their compulsory years of schooling, (prior to years 11 and 12). Through increased awareness of what is possible, a positive impact on access to vocational training and employment can be made for people with disabilities (Barnett, 2004).

The same issues apply to the apprenticeship pathway in VET in which people with disabilities currently participate at very low rates, although this does not need to be the case. For instance, a best practice guide developed by Group Training Australia (ANTA, 2002c) identified the key success factors in recruiting, placing, supporting and securing outcomes for apprentices and trainees with disabilities. Also it exemplified best practice through six case studies. In summary, this guide recommends the following five strategies:

1. Partner with a disability employment agency;
2. Have a culture that embraces diversity;
3. Prepare staff to support new apprentices;
4. Market new apprentices with disabilities jointly; and
5. Provide post-placement support.

Further, the guide recommends numerous steps for employers often in partnership with their training provider that incorporate these strategies including:

1. Find a like-minded disability employment agency and offer to establish a strategic partnership to place and support people with disabilities;
2. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with a partner that specifies the roles and responsibilities of each partner;
3. Ask your partner to provide your staff with practical training in matching, marketing and supporting people with disabilities;
4. Provide training to your partner’s staff on group training arrangements and the expectations of host employers and GTOs;
5. Become involved in local schools (including schools that cater specifically for students with disabilities) and start to prepare students with disabilities before they come to your service;
6. Use your partner to locate, screen and refer suitable candidates and to assist in matching the right New Apprenticeship to each candidate;
7. Include a reference to being an equal opportunity employer in your recruitment advertisements;
8. Make your facilities, information and resources accessible to people with disabilities;
9. Ensure that your recruitment interviewers are properly trained in interviewing and equal opportunity issues;
10. Where required, customise your standard induction process to better accommodate individuals with disabilities; and
11. Establish a system of regular communication between yourself, the host employer, the disability employment agency and the RTO to monitor progress and to resolve any difficulties.

Applying the principle of reasonable accommodation
Reasonable accommodation is required if teaching and assessing is to occur in a non-discriminatory manner. Reasonable accommodation involves making a variety of ways available for learner participation and demonstration of competency. This requires appropriate modifications and adjustments, while not imposing an undue burden to meet the needs of the person with a disability.

Nor is it about watering down the curricula or relaxing the assessment criteria. It is about ensuring that the disability of the person is not an inhibiting factor. Indeed, the Disability Standards for Education brought into force by the Commonwealth Government in 2005 requires that all education sectors ensure that enrolment, teaching and assessment processes for students with a disability incorporate the concept of reasonable accommodation. VET practitioners need to be fully across this concept and how to implement it.

Using assistive teaching and learning devices
Sign language for the hard of hearing or speech impaired, and adapted equipment for those with physical disabilities, are two well-known examples of assistive devices. However, the use of information and communication technologies for assisted teaching and learning is a rapidly growing area.

The publication by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2006) Inclusive E-learning: A Guide to E-learning Resources, Research, Reports and Case Studies for Learners with a Disability provides a good starting point (flexiblelearning.net.au/inclusive). It notes the value of technologies in enabling people with disabilities to actively participate in education and training programs. It emphasises that it is vital for students, teachers and administrators to be aware of the availability of emerging assistive and adaptive equipment and appreciate its significance.
Progressing to a ‘whole-of-life’ model for coordinated learner support

The Bridging Pathways Revised Blueprint (ANTA, 2004a) introduced and emphasised the progression of a ‘whole-of-life’ model to service delivery through partnerships, ensuring that all key players are engaged in achieving the goals of the learner with a disability. Progressing a whole-of-life approach involves cross-sector input where:

- Disability experts advise on the appropriate supports needed, employment services link students to workplace training and employment opportunities;
- Special education experts advise on the learning support required, and VET coordinators on VET pathways;
- An individual plan is developed that encompasses both the educational and non-educational needs of the person with a disability; and
- Disability liaison officers are employed by education institutions to achieve a whole-of-life approach.

These key requirements for people with disabilities from the teaching and learning perspective are covered in a resource document for VET staff produced as part of Bridging Pathways: Working with Diversity: Quality Training for People with a Disability (ANTA, 2004b). The fact remains, however, that information about what support is available is not as accessible as it should be. Nechvoglod and Griffin (2011) investigated the attitudes of people with disabilities to undertaking VET training. They found that 70% of the participants indicated they would need or would maybe need support. However, of the many people with disabilities who needed support, 43% indicated that they were not sure if support was available.

Expect non-disclosure of disability especially by people with mental illnesses

There is tendency for support to be made available only when disclosure of disability is provided by the student. This disclosure requirement is particularly problematic for people with mental illnesses. Of all the different types of disability, mental illness is disruptive especially for educational and training outcomes.

Venville and Street (2012) found that rates of disclosure of mental illness by students in the vocational education and training sector are low. As a result, many students are not accessing the support potentially available to them. Most VET staff expect students to disclose their mental illness. Moreover, a reluctance to seek assistance is seen by some VET teachers as unwillingness by these students to take responsibility for their education. For students, the decision to disclose or not disclose their mental illness is difficult. Students want to blend in with other learners and they do not want to be identified as ‘the depressed guy’, with their illness dominating the perceptions of peers and teachers. This situation in VET means that most students do not disclose their mental illness. Venville and Street (2012) argue that VET providers need to ensure that information and formal provision of study supports and reasonable adjustment is available to all students, and is not be predicated upon the disclosure of mental illness.

Other actions are that student attendance, accountability (e.g. timely submission of assessment tasks) and academic performance need to be monitored. Also offers of study assistance must be made repeatedly and in a timely manner. Further, changes are required to how institutes collect health, learning, and disability information to ensure a transparent separation between the data
collected for organisational reporting purposes, and data designed to identify student needs for support (Venville & Street, 2012).

Other research (Miller & Nguyen, 2008) found that VET staff felt that there was a lack of clarity about their roles in supporting students with mental illnesses. Staff acknowledged their responsibility to provide duty of care, but agreed that their roles should not cross over to actual provision of personal support. Clearly, staff require appropriate skills and collegiate support to respond confidently to the diverse needs of students with mental illnesses, including more opportunities for discussion and debriefing sessions with experienced staff.

**Further insights from recent international research**

The momentum for more inclusive education systems for people with disabilities is an international phenomenon. However, as noted by the European Commission (2012), while many countries have started taking action to remove the barriers faced by learners with disabilities or special, greater progress is necessary. Importantly, the Commission has identified what works in practice to support students with disabilities in education, training and employment.

**Providing a conducive learning environment**

The European Commission (2012) report includes the following evidence based strategies aimed at providing a conducive learning environment for people with disabilities:

- Provide learners with a type of mental scaffolding on which to build a new understanding;
- Direct them to stop from time to time to assess their understanding;
- Encourage learners to think about the material to be learned in a way that connects the material to information or ideas already in the mind;
- Help them to make sense of what they are learning by summarising the information;
- Develop general study strategies, such as underlining, note-taking, summarising;
- Generate questions, outlining and working in pairs to summarise sections of materials;
- Help learners to think about and control thinking processes; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a strategy.

Also strategies which foster collaboration between learners such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring are viewed as effective in enhancing learning.

**Inclusive curricula and the use of Individual Educational Plans**

Today there is growing acceptance in many countries that all children should have access to a common curriculum, contrasting with earlier practices where children in special schools had access to very limited programmes of study. For example, several countries in the Asia Pacific region have worked with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on achieving inclusive vocational training for people with disabilities for employment purposes. The countries have been prompted by widespread attention to and interest in the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of 2008 and the 2003 ILO Biwako Millennium Framework for action regarding people with a disability. The AbilityAsia country study report series of 2002/3 (14 countries) was designed to contribute to the knowledge base on people with disabilities in mainstream training and employment and to provide baseline status data. Another ILO publication includes case studies illustrating good practices in vocational training and employment for people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (2003).
In Europe, the European Commission (2012) reports that many countries, including Sweden, England and Scotland, are making extensive use of Individual Educational Plans. These documents set out long term and short term learning targets for learners with special educational needs, enabling teachers to consider how the mainstream curriculum might be adapted and personalised.

Support in mainstream classrooms
Across many developed countries investigated by the European Commission (2012), support is frequently given to the mainstream class teacher by a specialist teacher, who may be peripatetic or based in the school. Special educators may be used to work directly with children, often withdrawing them from the mainstream class for small group of individual tuition. Mattson and Hansen (2009) found that the team support approach was much more likely to lead to inclusive practices than the individual-child focussed approach.

Teacher attitudes to inclusion
There is some evidence that learning and teaching strategies may be less important determinants of educational experiences and outcomes than teacher attitudes and interactions with pupils (see European Commission, 2012). For inclusion to work effectively, teachers need to feel confident in their ability to meet the needs of all pupils in their class, supported where necessary by specialist input.

Studies in a range of countries (e.g. Greece, Koutrouba et al., 2008; and Cyprus, Hadjikalou et al., 2008) suggest that teachers are likely to be broadly in favour of inclusion as long as they have access to continuing professional development. This professional development builds their confidence in working with children with particular types of impairments. However, mainstream teachers’ insistence on impairment specific training may be an additional barrier as knowledge of generic approaches to learning support is likely to be more useful than an encyclopaedic knowledge of diverse medical conditions.

Inclusion and teacher education
Teacher education is of vital importance in moving towards more inclusive systems. The European Commission (2012) recommends the need for:

- Specialist training programmes for teachers of learners with particular categories of difficulty. Countries with a large special sector, such as Germany and Belgium, adopt this approach. Whilst specialist knowledge is helpful in the differentiation of learning materials for particular learners, it may be counterproductive if mainstream teachers believe that they need specialist training in relation to every type of difficulty which they may ever encounter; and
- Teacher education programmes with a focus on inclusive education to seek to develop generic skills to respond to pupil diversity, in particular how to adapt mainstream pedagogy, curriculum and assessment to meet individual needs and in what circumstances specialist input is necessary. This inclusive pedagogy approach demands that teachers extend what is ordinarily available so that it is accessible for all. Whole class teaching methods are seen as antithetical to inclusive education, since they purport to provide identical and therefore equal learning experiences for all children. Rather, it is important to provide a range of options which are equally available to all children.
Appendix C. Literature review 3: Persons from low socio-economic backgrounds and locations

Introduction
The VET Equity Blueprint recognises that disadvantaged learners include:

- Those from rural, regional or remote communities with high levels of disadvantage; and
- Those from low socio-economic status backgrounds.

Traditionally, the VET sector has not focussed on socioeconomic status as an equity indicator. Rather the sector has attended to other social groups where low socioeconomic status is a part of their disadvantaged position in society (i.e. Indigenous, those from rural and remote areas, persons with disabilities, persons with low education).

VET student data show an over-representation of students from low SES backgrounds, reflecting in part the VET sector’s track record in working with learners from rural, regional and remote areas that tend to be lower socioeconomic regions (Foley, 2007). More detailed analysis of VET student data reveals that a person’s socio-economic status is correlated with location and greater levels of inequity (Golding & Pattison, 2004). Lower educational levels is a defining feature of those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who tend to be geographically located in certain metropolitan as well as non-metropolitan areas in Australia (Vinson, 2007). Significantly people from low socioeconomic areas undertake and complete lower-level VET qualifications only (Foley, 2007).

VET education outcomes data show that students from disadvantaged areas continue to face more barriers to attaining skills than non-disadvantaged groups:

- Almost 20% fewer students from disadvantaged areas completed their Year 12 or equivalent qualification compared to students who came from the least disadvantaged areas;
- Fewer than 60% of people from disadvantaged areas were fully engaged in employment, education and training in 2011 (compared to 80% of people from more advantaged areas); and
- In 2011, only half of Australia’s population in disadvantaged areas had, or were studying for a qualification, compared to 3 in 4 people in the least disadvantaged areas (COAG Reform Council Newsletter 14 /11/2012).

In both the school and higher education sectors, low socioeconomic status is used as a major indicator of disadvantage. The literature examined briefly here from school and higher education sectors identifies strategies for improving teaching and learning for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and for better responding to greater equity in educational attainment.

Strategies

Increasing low SES student participation in schools
Various programs over many years have focussed on low socioeconomic students and on specific groups that include Indigenous Australians, people from remote areas, those with disabilities and people with low levels of literacy. A chronological review of equity programs in the schools sector since the landmark report on Schools in Australia (Karmel, 1973) is provided by Brown and North
There were four programs implemented in response to the Karmel review to better target the needs of disadvantaged groups the:

- Disadvantaged Schools Programme (DSP);
- Aboriginal Education Programme (AEP);
- Country Areas Programme (CAP); and
- English as a Second Language Programme (ESL).

Amid the declining youth labour market of the mid-1980s, the main policy mechanisms for improving school retention rates were the *Participation and Equity Program* (PEP) and an expanded secondary allowances scheme. In the 1990s the *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling* (NSES) was developed that stated that specific strategies are required to help counter the cumulative effects on students’ learning of multiple disadvantage. The *National Equity Programme for Schools* (NEPS) was released concurrently to broadband Special Purposes programs (e.g. English as a Second Language, Disadvantaged Schools, Gender, Disabilities).

In 2003, the MCEETYA *Career and Transition Services Framework* was developed as a guide for all jurisdictions, as well as the non-government sector and other practitioners, when developing transition strategies. The Framework is underpinned by a number of key objectives and a set of operating principles comprising the following ten elements:

- Learning pathways plan;
- Transition plan and portfolio;
- Exit plan;
- Follow-up support;
- Career education
- Brokerage;
- Career information, guidance and counselling;
- Placement or referral;
- Individual support approaches; and
- Monitoring and tracking.

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (COAG, 2008a) has coverage of the majority of programs concerning the youth cohort. This initiative consolidates previously funded programs into four new elements that reflect the learning from a range of research studies on youth education to work transitions in Australia and overseas.

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions comprises a compact with young Australians regarding the participation in education. All young people will remain engaged in education until the age of 17 years and by 2020 90% of young Australians aged 20 to 24 years will achieve Year 12 or a Certificate III or above. The National Partnership also comprises a School Business Community Partnership Brokers program, a Youth Connection Services program and Career Development Services initiative. A specific seven-year (from 1 January, 2009) support program for schools in low socio-economic status areas has also been established within the National Partnership Agreement. The focus is on further improving the quality of teaching in schools, a factor identified in many studies as the most significant factor affecting student outcomes (Hattie, 2003).
Pedagogical innovations at the school level
A number of reports have identified the education program design principles that suit school students. Examples are from Queensland, NSW and Victoria. The Productive Pedagogies for Queensland Schools Project identified four dimensions that are now pedagogies embedded in the Queensland education policy and supported in a guide manual (Lingard et al., 2001, 2003). The four dimensions are:

1. Recognition of difference pedagogies - to ensure students know about and value a range of cultures, respect individuals and create positive human relationships;
2. Connectedness pedagogies - to ensure students engage in real, practical or hypothetical problems that connect to the world beyond the classroom and can communicate ideas and arguments;
3. Intellectual pedagogies - to ensure students manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications and can communicate ideas concepts arguments; and
4. Supportive classroom environment pedagogies - to ensure students influence the nature of the activities they undertake, engage seriously in their study, regulate their behaviour and have high expectations about what they are to achieve.

These four pedagogies were taken up by the NSW system under the nomenclature of Quality Teaching and also have influenced the policy of other States (e.g. Victoria). The Principles of Teaching and Learning Initiative, Victoria, listed in Table 1 below, aimed to build consistent, comprehensive and improved pedagogical or teaching approaches within and across schools. The aim was to meet the diverse needs of students, while still allowing flexibility, innovation and local decision making at the school level.

As Table 2 proposes, good program design principles to re-engage young people who have disengaged from school have been identified. Bowman (2011) constructed the following list based on her review of four key studies (Martin & Halperin, 2006; Wyn, Stokes & Tyler, 2004; Fergusson & Young, 2005; James, 2005; see Table 2).

Table 1. Principles and characteristics of teaching and learning to meet school students’ needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn best when:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The learning environment is supportive and productive. The teacher builds positive relationships through knowing and valuing each student; promotes a culture of value and respect for individuals and their communities; uses strategies that promote students' self-confidence and willingness to take risks in learning; ensures each student experiences success through structured support, the valuing of effort; and provides recognition of their work.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation. The teacher: encourages and supports students to take responsibility for their learning; and uses strategies that build skills of productive collaboration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Students’ needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program. Teacher: uses strategies that are flexible and responsive to the values, needs and interests of individual students; uses a range of strategies that support the different ways of thinking and learning; builds on students’ prior experiences, knowledge and skills; and capitalises on students’ experience of a technology rich world.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application. The teacher: plans sequences to promote sustained learning that builds over time and emphasises connections between ideas; promotes substantive discussion of ideas; emphasises the quality of learning with high expectations of achievement; uses strategies that challenge and support students to question and reflect; uses strategies to develop investigating and problem solving skills; and uses</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
strategies to foster imagination and creativity.

5. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom. The teacher: supports students to engage with contemporary knowledge and practice; plans for students to interact with local and broader communities and community practices; and uses technologies in ways that reflect professional and community practices.


Table 2. Good program design principles to re-engage young people in education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify real-world career-oriented options exist with an eye to local employer needs. If student interests lie elsewhere, then go with their interests and emphasise the transferability of the skills they develop to other contexts;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have the training content feature personal development, life skills and group work combined with practical incentives; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Link programs within an accredited framework or to mainstream accredited programs.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning delivery</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify staff with skills in working flexibly and as facilitators and coaches, with participants viewed as adults who have goals which the staff will help them to achieve through close informal relationships;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open entry and exit points with flexible scheduling including choices of times and a mix of academic and hands-on fieldwork within the one day, and formal breaks in the program; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create low staff-to-student ratios (e.g. one to two staff for fifteen learners).</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Guidance and support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide clear codes of conduct that are understood by staff and students with consistent enforcement and positive rewards but not punitive discipline;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide strong coordinated and timely student support services; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support referral to the program.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Quality teaching for a diverse school student base

A major point of attention in thinking through how to promote the provision of a high quality education for all students, and especially students from disadvantaged background, is the Productive Pedagogies framework (Lingard et al., 2001; Lingard et al., 2003; Lingard & Mills, 2007). The four dimensions of the Productive Pedagogies framework are intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment, and valuing and working with difference. Central to this framework is the view that for any student to achieve high level outcomes, they must be afforded with a learning environment that stimulates intellectual activity.

This type of learning is most likely to happen when the material connects with the students’ various worlds, especially for students who are disadvantaged or who have disengaged from school. The data reveal that the supportiveness of the classroom is linked to the achievement of high level outcomes for students, especially for those who have been failed by the education system that has not recognised and valued difference.

Another landmark statement is the report from New Zealand on quality teaching for diverse students in schooling that provides a best evidence synthesis of international studies that contribute to the dialogue about pedagogy (Alton-Lee 2003). This report identifies quality teaching as a key influence on high quality outcomes for diverse students. It presents international evidence from several studies that support the view that up to 59% of the variance in student performance is...
attributable to differences between teachers and classes, while up to almost 21%, but generally less, is attributable to school level variables.

The report identified ten interdependent characteristics of quality teaching derived from a synthesis of research findings of best evidence linked to student outcomes (see Table 3). The concept of diversity was highlighted as central to the synthesis, while diversity and difference are central to the classroom endeavour and central to the focus of quality teaching.

Table 3. Ten research-based interdependent characteristics of quality teaching for school students

1. Quality teaching is focused on student achievement (including social outcomes) and facilitates high standards of student outcomes for heterogeneous groups of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Quality teaching facilitates the learning of diverse students and raises achievement for all learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· The teacher establishes and follows through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes and the pace at which learning should proceed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· High expectations are necessary but not sufficient, and can be counterproductive, when not supported by quality teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Pedagogical practices enable classes and other learning groupings to work as caring, inclusive, and cohesive learning communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Pedagogical practices create an environment that works as a learning community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Student motivation is optimised and students’ aspirations are supported and extended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Caring and support is generated through the practices and interactions of teacher(s) and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Pedagogical practices pro-actively value and address diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Academic norms are strong and not subverted by social norms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>· The language and practices of the classroom are inclusive of all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers use class sessions to value diversity, and to build community and cohesion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching and tasks are structured to support, and students demonstrate, active learning orientations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching includes specific training in collaborative group work with individual accountability mechanisms, and students demonstrate effective co-operative and social skills that enable group processes to facilitate learning for all participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Students help each other with resource access and provide elaborated explanations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Pedagogical practice is appropriately responsive to the interdependence of socio-cultural and cognitive dimensions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Effective links are created between school and other cultural contexts in which students are socialised to facilitate learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers ensure that student experiences of instruction have known relationships to other cultural contexts in which the students have been/are socialised.</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Relevance is made transparent to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Cultural practices at school are made transparent and taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Ways of taking meaning from text, discourse, numbers or experience are made explicit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Quality teaching recognises and builds on students’ prior experiences and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· New information is linked to student experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Student diversity is utilised effectively as a pedagogical resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Quality teaching respects and affirms cultural identity (including gender identity) and optimises educational opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Quality teaching effects are maximised when supported by effective school-home partnership practices focused on student learning. School-home partnerships that have shown the most positive impacts on student outcomes have student learning as their focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· When educators enable quality alignments in practices between teachers and parent/caregivers to support learning and skill development then student achievement can be optimised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Quality teaching is responsive to student learning processes.

**Research-based characteristics**
- Teachers have knowledge of the nature of student learning processes in the curriculum area, can interpret student behaviour in the light of this knowledge and are responsive, creative and effective in facilitating learning processes.
- Examples of teaching approaches that are intended to exemplify this characteristic are the dynamic or flexible literacy models, the numeracy strategy focus and the Interactive Teaching Approach in science education.
- Classroom management enables the teacher to be responsive to diverse learners.
- Responsive teaching is important for all learners and particularly critical for students with special needs.

5. Opportunity to learn is effective and sufficient.

**Research-based characteristics**
- Quality teaching provides sufficient and effective opportunity to learn.
- Management practices facilitate learning (rather than emphasising compliant behaviour or control).
- Curriculum enactment has coherence, interconnectedness and links are made to real life relevance.
- Curriculum content addresses diversity appropriately and effectively.
- Quality teaching includes and optimises the effective use of non-linguistic representations by teacher and students. (This assumes the concurrent and rich use of oral language and text as central to literacy across the curriculum.)
- Students have opportunities to resolve cognitive conflict.
- Students have sufficient and appropriate opportunities for practice and application.

6. Multiple task contexts support learning cycles.

**Research-based characteristics**
- Task cycles match developmental learning cycles of students.
- Task cycles enable students to engage in and complete learning processes so that what is learned is remembered.
- Optimal use is made of complementary combinations of teacher-directed groupings, cooperative groups, structured peer interaction and individual work (including homework) to facilitate learning cycles.

7. Curriculum goals, resources including ICT usage, task design, teaching and school practices are effectively aligned.

**Research-based characteristics**
- Curricular alignment: The use of resources, teaching materials and ICT is aligned with curriculum goals to optimise student motivation and accomplish instructional purposes and goals.
- Curricular alignment optimises rather than inhibits critical thinking.
- Pedagogical strategies are evaluated in relation to curricular goals.
- ICT usage is integrated into pedagogical practice across the curriculum.
- Quality teaching is optimised when there is whole school alignment around evidence based practices.
- The school maintains an ‘unrelenting focus on student achievement and learning’
- There is whole school alignment and coherence across policies and practices that focus on, resource and support quality teaching for diverse students.
- Pro-active alignment across the school supports effective inclusion of diverse students within the school community.
- Whole school alignment optimises opportunity to learn, particularly in language immersion, literacy, ICT, social studies and health.
- Whole school alignment enables a common language, teacher collaboration and reflection and other synergies around improving teaching.
· Whole school alignment minimises disruptions to quality teaching and sustains continuous improvement.
· School policies and practices initiate, and support teachers in maintaining, school-home partnerships focused on learning.

**8. Pedagogy scaffolds and provides appropriate feedback on students’ task engagement.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Tasks and classroom interactions provide scaffolds to facilitate student learning (the teacher provides whatever assistance diverse students need to enable them to engage in learning activities productively, for example, teacher use of prompts, questions, and appropriate resources including social resources).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching develops all students' information skills and ensures students' ready access to resources when needed to assist the learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Students receive effective, specific, appropriately frequent, positive and responsive feedback. Feedback must be neither too infrequent so that a student does not receive appropriate feedback nor too frequent so that the learning process is subverted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**9. Pedagogy promotes learning orientations, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies and thoughtful student discourse.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Quality teaching promotes learning orientations and student self-regulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching promotes metacognitive strategy use (e.g. mental strategies in numeracy) by all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching scaffolds reciprocal or alternating roles in student group, or interactive work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching promotes sustained thoughtfulness (e.g. through questioning approaches, wait time, and the provision of opportunities for application and invention).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching promotes critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teaching makes transparent to students the links between strategic effort and accomplishment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**10. Teachers and students engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-based characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Assessment practices improve learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers and students have clear information about learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Students have a strong sense of involvement in the process of setting specific learning goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Pedagogy scaffolds and provides appropriate feedback on students’ task engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers ensure that their assessment practices impact positively on students' motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers manage the evaluative climate, particularly in context of public discussion, so that student covert or overt participation is supported, scaffolded and challenged without students being humiliated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers manage the evaluative climate so that academic norms are not undermined but supported by social norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Teachers adjust their teaching to take account of the results of assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Adopting a learning disadvantage levels approach**

*The Youth Connection Services* element of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions aims to provide an improved safety net of support services. This element is based on a ‘learning disadvantage levels approach’. This approach identifies four youth learner segments that are at risk, according to their level of engagement with learning and disadvantage. Also it links the risk profiles to learning program types and strategies.

Support strategies that aid student persistence have been researched by Bowman (2011) and found to include:

- Tracking of students;
- Individual career guidance and plans;
- Pathways portfolio development;
• Mentoring/tutoring;
• Brokering /advocacy;
• Case management;
• Networking and partnering; and
• Monitoring and evaluating actions taken.

The learning disadvantage levels approach was first used in Australia in the successful Youth Engagement Innovative Community Action Networks initiative of the South Australian government. Table 4 illustrates how this initiative has linked youth learner segments risk profiles to learning program types and persistence strategies (SA DECS, 2004). The general rule that emerges is that the more vulnerable the young person is as a learner, the more comprehensive and focused are the education-to-work support programs that are required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Risk profiles of youth learners by segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At some risk of leaving school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some attendance issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual attendance issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 2009, this initiative was progressively expanded across South Australia as part of the Federal Government’s Low SES Schools National Partnership component of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (COAG, 2008a). Also, The Low SES Schools National Partnership Schools (COAG, 2008b) is implementing a range of reforms to improve education achievement in locations where people with low socioeconomic backgrounds are concentrated. These actions include:

- Incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers;
- Adoption of best practice performance management and staffing arrangements;
- Innovative and flexible school operational arrangements;
- Tailored learning opportunities for students;
- Strengthened school accountability to parents and the community; and
- External partnerships with parents, schools, businesses and local communities and other education providers.

The external partnerships component is focused in part on expanding learning contexts beyond the classroom and into community and workplace contexts. The School Business Community Partnership Brokers program of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions has a similar goal. Research shows that a narrow focus on school retention to Year 12 is detrimental for some young...
people. Rather other pathways might be more helpful. VET and ACE systems have become increasingly important for early school leavers (Wyn, Stokes & Tyler 2004). Also community-based learning has a profound impact on the problems of disengagement through involving students in real-world problem solving. This strategy makes learning more relevant and meaningful while promoting personal and social growth, career development, and greater civic responsibility. Such programs are effective in helping young people to remain engaged in learning especially for disadvantaged students (Bowman 2011).

**Increasing low SES student participation in higher education – outreach programs**

Gale and Tranter (2011) have provided a detailed historical overview of social justice in the case of Australian higher education policy moving from the policy post-World War 2 through to the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley et al., 2008). What emerges from these and other literatures is that the notion of social justice is ambiguous and open to debate (see also Hattam et al 2009; Johnson, 2004), while this lack of agreement has impacted upon the ways in which social justice is promoted in educational systems.

Despite higher education participation having expanded dramatically in Australia over the last half century, people from low SES backgrounds remain under-represented by a significant margin. In higher education they represent 15% of the student population on average compared to their proportion in the general population at about 25% (Centre for the Study of Higher Education, 2008). The Australian government has set a target by 2020 for people from low socioeconomic backgrounds in undergraduate higher education to be 20% of all students in our universities (DEEWR, 2010).

Today universities are seeking to partner more with schools, and especially schools in low socioeconomic areas to inspire students to finish school and consider the opportunity of continuing on to higher education. As Archer (2007) warns, those assisting disadvantaged students to make such choices about their educational and training options must recognise that such choices can be limited by the students’ economic, social and cultural capital. Critical to helping them meet these challenges, and to respond to the mixed success that it may bring, is the role of teachers in preparing students through knowledge, skills and self-belief skills (Alloway & Dalley-Trim, 2009; Dalley-Trim & Alloway, 2010).

The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (Gale et al, 2010) has reviewed outreach programs by universities in schools across Australia. The Centre’s evaluation framework (the DEMO) identified ten characteristics of effective outreach programs. Outreach programs by universities in schools across Australia (nine identified from the literature review and one from the review of outreach programs) categorised underneath four strategies (see Table 5). Assembling resources involves committing human resources (including mentoring of one kind or another), financial resources and time (early, long term sustained) to support and implement the outreach programs. Engaging learners involves learning about programs and their effects more generally, promoting high quality student learning driven by quality teaching and learning from and valuing the knowledge of others. Table 5 below also identifies working together that involves cooperation and partnership at the level of program design including engaging communities of students, rather than just individuals.
Table 5. Strategies and characteristics of effective university outreach programs to school for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assembling resources</th>
<th>Engaging learners</th>
<th>Working together</th>
<th>Building confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People-rich</td>
<td>Recognition of difference</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Communication and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support and incentives</td>
<td>Enhanced academic curriculum</td>
<td>Cohort based</td>
<td>Familiarisation/site experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early, long term sustained</td>
<td>Research driven</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gale et al, (2010)

Finally, building confidence involves strengthening students’ awareness of university structures, pathways and opportunities and increasing students’ familiarity with university contexts and lifestyles. Familiarisation or site experience promotes the view that access to and participation in higher education is for all students. The National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (2010) found the most effective outreach programs feature characteristics drawn from each of the four strategies.

The importance of staff-student interactions

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of student learning is the role of teaching staff. Data analysis of the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has highlighted the critical importance of contact between students and staff in ensuring quality provision of university education. The importance of the relationships of students with teaching staff is not limited to the likelihood that students will leave their course, but also extends to student satisfaction and learning outcomes. The AUSSE is the largest cross-institutional survey of university students ever conducted in Australia. In 2009, 25,795 responses were collected from undergraduate students at 30 Australian universities, representing a total population of 222,547.

As ACER’s analysis of AUSSE data reveals, students who feel supported by teaching staff, and who find them available, helpful and sympathetic, are more engaged with their higher education studies than those who do not. They are less likely to consider withdrawing from their courses, are more likely than their peers to be satisfied with their studies overall and are more likely to feel that they have successfully developed the competencies they will need for their future careers. At the same time, teaching staff who have regular contact with students are more attuned to the contemporary student experience, are better able to understand the perspectives of students on a whole host of educational measures and are better able to meet their learning needs. Together these conclusions reinforce the vital importance of sustained, significant and meaningful contact between staff and students if the quality of learning and teaching in Australian higher education is to be optimised.

The analysis of the AUSSE also shows that students particularly vulnerable to a lack of interaction with teaching staff at university includes students from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly Indigenous students and students from rural and regional areas. These students are likely to require more support than those from family backgrounds where university study is a given.

The ACER goes on to suggest that as the diversity among university students grows, it is inevitable that the demands on teaching staff will increase rather than lessen. Yet there are signs that as more vulnerable students are accepted into university, the institutional capacity to look after individual...
learning needs is decreasing. The rapid growth in online and distance models of delivery exacerbates this trend and underscores the urgent need for a re-conceptualisation of the role that teaching staff play in the learning of their students. The ACER concludes that in the drive for quality in higher education, the interaction between students and teaching staff is a critical element, one that is too often overlooked. Urgent attention is required to ensure that the status quo is not maintained (ACER 2011).

Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education
A UK study (Hockings, 2010) has identified a number of useful principles towards addressing issues of inclusive learning and teaching in higher education:

1. See students as individuals, learn about and value their differences and maintain high expectations of all students;
2. Create safe learning environments in which students express their ideas, beliefs, requirements and identities freely in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, empathy and open mindedness;
3. Establish at the outset clear rules of what is expected from students with tight control and close monitoring in order to develop confident learner identities and behaviours;
4. Create student-focused ‘universal’ programmes, modules and lessons that engage all students meaningfully by encouraging them to draw on and apply their own and others’ knowledge;
5. Anticipate, recognise and provide for individuals’ specific physical, cultural, academic and pastoral needs, particularly at critical periods (e.g. transitions, examinations);
6. Greater involvement of students in the negotiation of the curriculum and assessment;
7. Ensure staff at all levels develop a shared understanding and commitment to student diversity and inclusive practice and include this as a key component of staff recruitment, training, development and reward;
8. Ensure adequate and relevant central services to support students and staff, integrating strategies for teaching and learning and co-ordinating the efforts of academics and specialist support staff in central service centres;
9. Shift negative beliefs about, and attitudes towards, student diversity that currently inhibit the development of inclusive learning and teaching;
10. Challenge and change policies, practices, systems and standards that inhibit the participation of students in any subject or constrain teachers’ capacity to engage all their students; and
11. Collect and analyse institutional, quantitative and qualitative data for the evaluation and improvement of inclusive learning and teaching strategies, policies and practices.

In Australia, Griffith University provides an example of such principles of learning and teaching being applied in higher education. The University espouses a wide range of learning and teaching processes to accommodate its diverse student cohorts, disciplinary differences, different curriculum design, varying levels of academic staff experience, and different modes of delivery. Their actions are informed by a strong evidence base. The Griffith Principles are:

1. Create an engaging, motivating, and intellectually stimulating learning experience;
2. Encourage the spirit of critical inquiry and creative innovation informed by current research;
3. Emphasise the importance, relevance, and integration of theory and knowledge with professional practice to develop solutions to real world issues;
4. Provide learning experiences that develop inter-culturally capable graduates who can make a difference as socially and ethically responsible global citizens;
5. Value and recognise individual and cultural diversity through the provision of an inclusive context of support and respect for all students;
6. Enhance student engagement and learning through effective curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment strategies; and
7. Improve continuously teaching practice through academic staff professional development, and critical reflection informed by a range of evaluation. (http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/120201/PrinciplesLandT.pdf)

Griffith University also provides examples of activities that illustrate ways in which each of the principles might be reflected in practice (see Table 6 for Principles 5 and 6).

Table 6. Griffith University strategies for enhancing student engagement and valuing diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies for enhancing student engagement and learning (Principle 6 above)</th>
<th>Strategies for valuing individual and cultural diversity (Principle 5 above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• clearly communicate goals of courses/programs</td>
<td>• demonstrate and foster among the class a respect for student diversity in all its forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explicitly link teaching and learning and assessment tasks to learning objectives</td>
<td>• establish ground rules for group discussions, apply quick action in the case of any discriminatory student comments or behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensure learning objectives include graduate attributes (employability skills) and where appropriate, content that is aligned with work integrated learning and internationalised curriculum</td>
<td>• create group-based opportunities to learn more about students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensure curriculum content is up-to-date, relevant and future focussed</td>
<td>• create a safe, non-threatening learning environment in which students are encouraged to express their own views and opinions while respecting those of peers and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• design valid and reliable assessment that is fair and ensures academic standards are maintained</td>
<td>• use examples, case studies and resource materials that demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect for the diversity of the student body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have reliable processes for marking and assignment of grades, with consistent and systematic moderation processes used within and across courses</td>
<td>• design early formative assessment tasks designed to gauge students’ background knowledge so as to determine any gaps in requisite knowledge or skills and the necessary support required by students who may be at risk of failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide timely and targeted feedback on assessment that is designed to enhance students’ learning and takes account of individual learning needs</td>
<td>• adapt the pace of teaching to accommodate different learning styles, while maintaining rigour and standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use a combination of formative and summative assessments, with opportunity for students to benefit from early feedback</td>
<td>• provide students with the necessary information about institutional support to assist them to manage learning and personal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensure appropriate spread and timing of assessment tasks, considering student workloads within and across subjects in the timing of assessments</td>
<td>• design assessment activities that encourage students to make use of campus spaces – whether real or virtual, particularly in group settings that encourage students to meet and socialise outside of formal classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make use of a range of teaching and assessment strategies to take into account different learning styles</td>
<td>• introduce peer mentoring schemes that include later year mentors supporting early year students in order to vertically integrate students across year levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make use of ICTs where this will facilitate student learning</td>
<td>• extend the notion of ‘campus’ to include the virtual campus environment and ensure that students who are studying in mixed or online modes have comparable opportunities to on-campus students in terms of access to and engagement with the university, its services and learning experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensure students are aware of issues and policies relating to academic integrity and penalties associated with breaches</td>
<td>• where possible, provide flexibility in terms of delivery of course content and type/timing of assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In another examination of such strategies, Gale (2010) summarises inclusive pedagogy as being comprised of three building blocks: belief, design and action and with meta principles drawn from the social justice research literature as outlined in Table 7.

**Table 7. Inclusive pedagogy building blocks and meta principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building blocks</th>
<th>Meta principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>A belief that all students bring valuable knowledge and valuable ways of knowing to the Learning environment (respect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>A design that values difference while also providing learners with access to and enabling their engagement with dominance (both ways)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Actions and activities that ‘work with’ learners and learner backgrounds, not against or irrespective of them (relevant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D. Literature review 4: People with low levels of previous education

Introduction
People with low levels of prior education are the final social group investigated in this review to inform the development of a Pedagogic Knowledge Framework. This group is chosen as it encompasses many people from the other social equity groups mentioned in the VET Equity Blueprint (NVEAC, 2011). Many Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities and people with low SES backgrounds who we have already been examined in this review also have low levels of previous education.

The Blueprint mentions other groups that are at risk of being disadvantaged learners. One group are new arrivals and refugees particularly from more culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Often these groups have low levels of education and English that impede their learning. They have associated disadvantages around poor community and business networks that reduce their employment outcomes. At the same time, there are other people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are more highly educated and networked who do not face the same types of challenges in gaining employment (Volkoff, 2004).

The Blueprint also recognises those involved in the criminal justice system. Most prisoners have low levels of education, as well as low literacy and numeracy skills (Noonan, 2004; Dawe, 2007). Another group are persons experiencing difficult life chances and for whom VET may offer a second chance. A major group here are the mature aged returning to work or having to find alternative work after a redundancy.

In summary, adults with low levels of previous education are the largest single equity group in Australia. About 44% of working-age Australians has English language literacy and numeracy skill levels below Level 3 of the International Adult Language and Literacy Survey. This is the level identified for effective functioning in the workplace and for participation in further education and training (ABS, 2008). The survey also reported that individuals are inaccurate in estimating their own literacy and numeracy skills, leading Roberts and Wignall (2010) to suggest that possibly up to 50% of adult learners require literacy and numeracy skills development.

Kilpatrick and Millar (2004) note that the inability or unwillingness to identify as a person with low literary and numeracy skills puts the onus especially back on educational professionals. They need to be aware of the extent of this problem, as well as how the stigma attached to low skills encourages the problems often to remain hidden. Besides this need for greater teacher awareness, literacy and numeracy skills development needs to be built into all education programs, together with the other basic skills that facilitate better opportunities in life and work.

Strategies
A focus on foundation skills
‘Foundation skills’ are used in Australia to refer to several core skills. These skills include reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and learning, and the employability skills of learning,
communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management and the use of technology. Employability skills is often the VET term, while schools talk of general capabilities and the higher education sector refers to graduate attributes (Bowman, 2010).

Currently, a systematic and national approach to foundation skills is under development. The National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults was launched in September 2012 with a view to moving more working age Australians aged 15-64 years to higher levels of employability skills, with a particular focus on those with low levels of foundation skills (SCOTESE, 2012). Australian governments have set an aspirational target for the National Strategy so that by 2022 two-thirds of working age Australians will have literacy and numeracy skills at Level 3 or above on the International Adult Language and Literacy Survey.

The National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults has four key priority areas for action:

1. Raising awareness and commitment to action - empower individuals to seek development opportunities to build their skills;
2. Providing a variety of quality foundation learning opportunities and outcomes - make it easier for learners to build skills that are relevant to their situation;
3. Strengthening foundation skills in the workplace by providing through better partnerships foundation skills training that is more responsive to the needs of employers and industry; and
4. Building the capacity of the education and training workforces to deliver foundation skills by placing a focus upon the key role of specialist literacy and numeracy practitioners, but also the education workforce more generally.

In addition, the Innovation and Business Skills Australia is scoping the development of a Foundation Skills Training Package as part of this national approach and to provide:

- National standards for foundation skills training;
- Options for foundation skills units that can be embedded within qualifications;
- Options to mix and match products and training practices to suit individual learner needs; and
- More pathways into vocational qualifications so developing more stand-alone foundation skills qualifications at lower levels of the AQF (IBSA News, 26 October 2012 @ no-reply@ibsa.org.au).

Teaching and learning foundation skills
Core skills and employability skills require similar approaches in their development. Both sets of skills are exercised as part of the process of carrying out tasks and activities. This means that almost any work or non-work task can be used as a learning focus to develop these skills, while they are best developed in situ or in context, as part of other activities. The task could be of a personal interest, of a non-accredited nature or a vocational accredited learning activity.

However, any development of these skills requires systematic attention, coupled with personal reflection on how the skills are exercised and developed. It is important to acknowledge that core and employability skills should not be interpreted as only low-level skills. They are required at
increasingly high levels across Australian qualification levels for Australia to remain competitive as a nation.

There are many stand-alone English language, literacy and numeracy courses. However, Gale (2012b) warns against too much emphasis on stand-alone literacy and numeracy programs for disadvantaged learners –

“By definition, disadvantaged learners are learners whose experience of learning foundation skills has been in decontextualized circumstances. Disadvantaged learners do not share the prior familiarity that advantaged learners have with formal education environments and their codified knowledge forms. To assess the needs of disadvantaged learners as needing more of this de-contextualisation is to increase their disadvantage. And it is so unnecessary, particularly given the excellent examples of how the teaching and learning of foundation skills can be contextualised” (p 4).

While stand-alone English language, literacy and numeracy courses have their place, it is an increasingly accepted view in VET that adult literacy and numeracy skills are best contextualized; that literacy and numeracy skills are best built into VET programs and built hand in hand with vocational skills. These more integrated programs, however, require not only expertise to develop and to deliver, but also require innovative approaches to delivery such as through team teaching. In one model, vocational experts teach the technical components and literacy, and numeracy specialists deliver the literacy and numeracy components or advise and assist with the these components at critical times. Table 1 presents one model developed by AQF level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AQF level 3</th>
<th>Delivery is best integrated into meaningful vocational or other contextualised outcomes as these skills are rarely a goal in themselves. Learners are focused on the achievement of other personal and vocational objectives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At AQF levels 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Some contextualisation makes LLN outcomes more meaningful. This is generally done through the inclusion of introductory vocational units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners with very low level LLN skills</td>
<td>This enabling level learner needs to focus on very basic skill acquisition around learning to read and write before they can begin to use these skills in other learning. Learners benefit from stand-alone literacy and numeracy, and face-to-face delivery methods without any significant contextualisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teaching of employability skills is quite well researched. There is a general recognition that active or hands-on learning is the most effective means for developing these skills. These strategies include learning through real-work settings, simulated work settings, project-based activities, well-constructed scenarios, case studies or real-life situations. For example, Cleary, Flynn and Thomasson (2006) recommend four adult learning principles for effective employability skills development: responsible learning, experiential learning, cooperative learning and reflective learning. Also Bowman and Kearns (2009) have clustered the employability skills into families of like-skills against the four adult learning principles towards identifying the technologies or e-learning options that are best suited to each cluster of employability skills.
Building identity as a learner through foundation skills

Filling gaps in foundations skills is often part of a process of building identity and greater confidence as a learner. However, developing confidence, self-esteem and a positive self-image as a learner takes time and the use of several learning experiences. As an example, consider the challenge of building the identity and self-confidence of refugees as learners. As Hayward points out (2007), refugees’ migratory journeys are often precipitated by traumatic events and sustained periods of living in transit camps. Because of these sustained and prolonged losses, refugees’ coping skills may be diminished and they may be less equipped to deal with the new challenges of re-settlement. These ‘psychological constraints’ constitute a considerable challenge for teachers, while some refugees may require the same type of support services as persons with a mental illness. In addition, the majority of refugees have no or only minimal schooling.

Benseman (2012) describes a number of steps or a ‘wheel of progress’ that involves the teacher scaffolding skills, building on small steps and constantly revising in order to consolidate initial gains. As the learners develop their learning and fundamental literacy skills, they develop a new set of skills, attitudes and knowledge about their new environment that enables them to be more likely to undertake daily tasks in their community with increasing confidence. These gradual developments in turn build more self-confidence, which helps develop the motivation to develop language and literacy skills. The self-confidence that comes from achieving learning milestones is also augmented by a supportive and stimulating learning environment. All of these components combine to provide a growing momentum that pushes the wheel of progress.

When Benseman asked experts about the strategies for effective teaching and learning with refugee learners, the following list emerged:

Teaching content
- Ensure that learners have all the requisite 'learning blocks' on which to build higher levels of learning;
- Provide relevance of teaching content by using everyday life tasks and issues;
- Note the importance of teaching all four literacy skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking);
- Recognise the importance of basic sight words, with some taught every day;
- Use phonics, especially for low-level learners;
- Use dictation with all levels; and
- Provide rote practice of oral skills especially with very low level learners to ensure a solid foundation of key skills.

Teacher qualities
- Be patient;
- Understand that learners’ previous trauma can be played out in the classroom in the form of constant headaches, difficulties in concentrating on tasks and on-going health issues that might require pastoral care for issues outside the classroom;
- ‘Be human’ and de-mystify the ‘teacher as expert’; and
- Show respect for learners in terms of their age, religion and culture.

Teaching skills
- Revise previous learning to ensure the consolidation of skills and knowledge;
- Vary teaching strategies according to the needs and skills of the learner;
• Have ready access to support especially for very low-level learners;
• Note the importance of everyone experiencing success by pitching teaching at the right level for the learner;
• ‘Seize the moment’, by being responsive in your teaching, and looking for opportunities to maximise learning with individuals;
• Approach tasks in different ways (e.g. using pictures, speech and words) to ensure relevance
• Be prepared to re-phrase and re-present if not successful;
• Recognise the value of a cycle of modelling/acting/role-play/re-cycle/reflection/practise in pairs;
• Ensure that learners with a common language can work together; and
• Use of a case management model that provides support prior, during and after training.

From a study of refugees with low literacy, Diab (2012) suggests that successful employment outcomes from training are best achieved through a case management model. This model has the following core features:

• More rigorous induction including broad assessment, counselling and orientation procedures for each participant;
• Appropriate cultural training, to assist students to manage the workplace experience and to inform employers of the cultural backgrounds of the students; and
• Enlisting employers who offer genuine employment opportunities and the allocation of a workplace buddy or mentor.

Finally, as Bowman (2011) reports, there is substantial research that can guide the more effective teaching and training of disadvantaged learners. These ‘lessons learned’ are from studies in our Australian schools, adult community education, the VET sector and higher education. These lessons serve to assist and guide practitioners in particular in how to better respond to disadvantaged learners, as noted many of whom are adults with low levels of previous education. These principles and practices include:

• Adopt a learner centred and whole of person perspective to best respond to learners;
• Empower each learner - be sensitive in exploring their past education; set goals around their required skills; negotiate with the learner around an education to work pathway; prepare with them an individual education to work plan; negotiate rules of behaviour where the learner accepts responsibility for managing their own behaviour;
• Reward and build trust - reward positive behaviour; build trusting one-on-one relationships with students and between students where the teacher works as facilitator or coach to help participants achieve their goals;
• Engage the learner - consider outreach or taster programs for those who otherwise may not make contact; make clear the benefits of the learning program for the learner;
• Adopt a flexible teaching and learning approach - use flexible enrolment strategy/open entry; set up exit points/flexible scheduling/choices of times/formal breaks in the program; use many modes of learning with action-learning and experiential learning as a key learning mode; mix learning approaches such as academic/hands-on work/group work; maximise learning experiences in and out-of-class that are useful to the learners (e.g. workplace based or community based); exploit open and flexible learning approaches to promote learning options; minimise teacher-directed pedagogy and maximise learner input;
• Heavily support the learner through their learning program – try to set low staff-to-student ratios; combine content featuring personal development, life skills and group work with
practical vocational skills development; use team teaching with expert tutors in foundation skills working along-side vocation subject experts;

- Plan for learner persistence - establish realistic timelines for the completion of any learning; develop one on one assistance plans to manage non-educational issues; provide mentoring or case management for the learner; advocate and broker on behalf of the learner;

- Know and partner with others – work with others to meet the non-educational needs of the learner; ensure the individual has a support plan to aid their ability to complete their learning to work plan; build links into any existing local network of social support services;

- Do student tracking - if the learner stops attending, follow up and redirect; postpone a goal until barriers are under control; adjust the goal up or down or take a different route to the goal which might mean switching to a program that better meets learner needs; be willing to pass responsibility to the a suitable agency to facilitate the learner’s reintegration; and

- Promote equity – make it everybody’s business and advocate its reflection in the policies, procedures and practices of the whole organisation.
### Appendix E. Examples of VET practitioner capability frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Framework/Developed For</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Framework Structure Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rumsey and Associates&lt;br&gt;<strong>Shaping the VET Practitioner for the Future 2002</strong>&lt;br&gt;Western Australia Government Department of Training</td>
<td>Broad definition of VET practitioner including administrative staff and managers as well as trainers and assessors</td>
<td>Six domains:&lt;br&gt;1. Instructions and assessment&lt;br&gt;2. Personal&lt;br&gt;3. Student support&lt;br&gt;4. Education technology&lt;br&gt;5. Design&lt;br&gt;6. Management skills&lt;br&gt;(Areas of perceived skill need were detailed for each domain for 18 VET practitioner job roles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guthrie and Associates&lt;br&gt;<strong>Teaching and Learning: The Future Now 2006</strong>&lt;br&gt;Western Australian Government Department of Education and Training</td>
<td>Broad definition of VET practitioner including administrative staff and managers as well as trainers and assessors</td>
<td>Knowledge, skills and personal attributes that will equip VET professionals to meet key challenges in next 5 years. Categories of requirements are:&lt;br&gt;1. Teaching, learning and assessment expertise&lt;br&gt;2. Program and resource development skills&lt;br&gt;3. Strategic enquiry&lt;br&gt;4. Technology&lt;br&gt;5. Business and client focus&lt;br&gt;6. Vocational expertise and industry currency&lt;br&gt;7. VET system knowledge&lt;br&gt;8. Management and leadership&lt;br&gt;9. Personal qualities and attributes. (Not all practitioners require all of the skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision Consulting</td>
<td>VET practitioners delivering</td>
<td>Four capability domains with 4 elements in each:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A Broad Capability Framework for Practitioners in the VET as of October 2012 | training and assessment services/trainers and assessors. Three different career development levels. | 1. Teaching-learning theories, design, facilitation, and evaluation  
2. Assessment- theories, products, processes, and validation  
3. Industry and collaboration-engagement, networks, vocational competence, and workforce development  
4. Systems and Compliance- system standards; stakeholders; products and processes.  
Also 6 Skills areas including:  
1. Teamwork and Communication  
2. Leadership  
3. Ethics  
4. Cultural competence  
5. Innovation  
6. Evidence based practice and research |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Wheelahan and Moodie The Quality of Teaching in VET: Final Report and Recommendations 2011 Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. | VET teachers and trainers defined by level of responsibility required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of curriculum development, innovation or delivery strategies and includes:  
*Visiting industry experts who teach occasionally;  
*Workplace trainers and assessors;  
*Teachers who do not have full responsibility for curriculum development, innovation, delivery and assessment strategies; and  
*Teachers who have full responsibility for curriculum development, innovation, delivery and assessment strategies, and  
*Proposed -cross-sectoral teachers who can teach from certificate IV to the first years of degrees to support school retention. | Recommendations made on the quality of vocational education and training (VET) teaching; VET teacher qualifications and continuing professional development includes in three stages: immediately possible; in medium term; and ideal and in the following areas:  
The structure of the VET teaching workforce  
*Cross sectoral teachers  
*Staff data collection  
*National VET awards for teachers/trainers  
*Entry level teacher qualifications  
*Supporting new teachers/trainers  
*Continuing teacher education qualifications  
*Continuing professional development  
*External validation of assessment of VET qualifications  
*The role of industry bodies & professional associations in quality assurance in VET  
*A national VET professional body  
*Accrediting VET teacher qualifications  
*Registering VET teachers  
*Research on VET pedagogy and models of teaching |
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