The NETschool

Aims of Innovative Learning Environment, nature and history of innovation: holistic picture of organisation

Background and context of school
The City of Greater Bendigo, with a population of 100,054 is a major regional centre servicing the towns and rural areas of the Loddon region about 150 km north-west of Melbourne. Bendigo’s traditional reliance on manufacturing has diminished in recent years while strong health care and social assistance, education and retail sectors have developed in the city. Commerce, finance and government administration are important to the local economy and, as part of the historic goldfields triangle, Bendigo attracts both local and overseas tourism (Community Indicators, Victoria, 2010; City of Greater Bendigo, 2010).

Whilst there are thriving areas of employment, the region is economically depressed. The City of Greater Bendigo and its regional neighbours all rank in the top 30 most disadvantaged areas in Victoria. Individual, family and household income levels across the Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network (LLLEN) are lower than the average for Victoria. Bendigo has high levels of unemployment, rising from 4.9 in 2008 to 7.8 in February 2009. 25% of 15-64 year olds receive Centrelink benefits, which is higher than the State average. People in the region have lower levels of educational attainment than in Victoria generally; 37% of 15-64 year olds completed Year 12 or equivalent in 2006 compared to 49% in Victoria, and 74% in Australia (Community Indicators Victoria, 2010).

The 2006 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006) indicated that the total number of 15 to 19 year olds in the Bendigo Shire was 7012. These young people are typically below the State average on socio-economic measures and, if working, are most likely to be labourers, or in sales or trades. The hospital admissions rate for 15 to 24 year olds is above average. There is a higher than State average level of suicide for young males within this age group in Bendigo and higher rates of depression among young females.

Lower regional population numbers, combined with geographic distance, gives rise to many ‘economy of scale’ issues of access, facilities and services for both young people and the broader population. A report on homelessness demonstrated that young people were requiring a disproportionate assistance with homelessness but there were limited crisis accommodation options for youth, no common assessment and referral tools for youth, high rates of unemployment and disengaged school leavers, and an increasing number of pregnant or parenting young people. St Luke’s Anglicare identified 190 homeless young people in 2009. In 2007, 250 people aged 16 to 19 years engaged with Connect Central, a State initiative to create sustained pathways, provide support, consultation and advice (GLLEN, 2010).

Anglicare identified key issues facing young people disengaged with schooling and the drivers behind non-participation as:

- lack of family support and family disconnection
- impact of trauma through exposure to prolonged neglect and abuse issues within the home
- high prevalence and impact of mental health issues both diagnosed and undiagnosed
- learning difficulties and low levels of literacy and numeracy
- poor school experiences and early disconnection from education
- substance misuse that impacts on day to day living
• homelessness
• a limited support system within the community and poor connection to community.

There is a significant number of students struggling with school disengagement. According to the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), the Goldfields LLEN in 2008 65.3% of youth completed Year 12 or equivalent by age 19 in 2008 and this rate is declining; the Victorian completion rate is 80%. One response to this problem has been the use of the Student Mapping Tool to detect student risk factors as soon as possible (GLLEN, 2010).

**NETschool objectives**

The NETschool was established in 2005 in response to the identification of up to 700 young people aged 16-20 years old receiving Job Seeker benefits. The NETschool, funded for three years initially through the Leading Schools Fund, involved a partnership between Bendigo Senior Secondary College, a high achieving school of 1800 students with a well developed ICT capacity for delivery of curriculum, and five local Year 7-10 secondary colleges. The target group was 15-18 year olds who had not completed secondary schooling, were no longer enrolled at a school and may not have enrolled for some time, and who believe they cannot return to a formal school setting. These were students who could not, or would not, enrol in formal schooling or who had been excluded and were therefore outside formal education and training systems (Leading Schools Fund Application, 2004).

The Team Facilitator states:

> At the moment we pick up each year about 100. Now hopefully we’re getting better at picking them up before they completely disengage from school. Our referral rates are certainly much higher. And that’s been a bit of the process and a bit of the journey too, getting known about what we do and also tailoring what we do. We don’t replicate what other providers do in Bendigo so we are catering to a particular group of kids who applied to get in because they see that NETschool can really make a difference to their life.

The initial focus was to re-engage and re-integrate young people who had disengaged from schooling by providing an alternative school setting. This was originally conceived as a mixture of a centre-based and on-line curriculum – the NET in NETschool refers to the ‘virtual and personal network connections to worlds of knowledge, support and vocation’. The target in the 2005 application for Leading Schools funding was 40 students – with 10 in home based online learning setting with a formal curriculum, and the remainder in a NET Centre-based program involving either a formal curriculum or a research based learning program.

As stated in the 2006 evaluation, ‘NETschool is an organic program, operated by staff with a clear commitment towards the wellbeing of students’. NETschool has ‘a logic consistent with an emerging national and international educational approach to re-engage high need students disadvantaged in contemporary educational institutions’ (Cox 2006 p. 21).

**Partnerships**

The NETschool is an outpost of Bendigo Secondary College (BSSC), and NETschool students are enrolled at BSSC, with full access to the teachers, staff and resources. They can attend any classes they wish as they share a common curriculum with BSCC.

The program was initially funded from the DEECD Leading Schools Fund for 3 years and is now funded through the BSSC Resource Package. BSSC is the primary financial provider in partnership with local Year 7-10 colleges together with the local TAFE. Since 2008 NETschool has been directly
funded by BSSC with an additional 25% weighting added by the Minister on standard enrolment funding i.e. 1.25 for each student when costs are closer to 1.4. The shortfall is made up by the BSSC School Council and the facilities are now funded by the Lodden Mallee Regional Office. This is currently under review by DEECD (NETschool Brief, 2010).

Young people enrolled in the NETschool are not eligible to apply for the Youth Guarantee. Other partners and sponsors provide low cost or free-of-cost services. Bendigo Community Telco supplies free internet service to student homes, with support from a help desk, and has also garnered support from IBM Australia and the Rotary Club. St Luke’s Anglicare provides case work support and facilitates relationships with other agencies based on a joint Memorandum of Understanding. In 2009, the school received $69,265 from the federal government to support Healthy MOVE, a project to promote personal development and community connection. Philanthropic funds ($8700) from the Sydney Myer Foundation enabled a maintenance room to be converted into a metal bending room so that products such as wine racks could be built and sold as a student enterprise. Staff were trained and 6 learners worked in a pilot project. They will now train others in a train-the-trainer model (NETschool Brief, 2010).

The City of Greater Bendigo provided a Community Arts Grant organised by a former student for a NETschool Arts exhibition of 12 students’ work around the theme of Dreams; a mentor worked with students for 6 months. NETschool also provides assistance to those they do not enrol to be placed in employment or in community programs. Connect Central was set up as part of a Youth Transition program with Anglicare as a central referral point for students who drop out of school and is able to provide a support worker for 6 months. Conversely, students are sent to NETschool from Central Connect if appropriate. A new partnership in 2009 with Victorian General Practice Network Health connected NETschool with a fitness trainer, dietician, GPs, and Quit Australia (NETschool report, 2009).

NETschool governance is two tiered. The Project Council of Board of Management was responsible for policy development, strategic direction and monitoring outcomes in order to meet accountability requirements. This involves all key stakeholders: BSSC, Year 7-10 colleges, ACE and TAFE sectors, St Luke’s, Bendigo Community Health, City of Bendigo Youth Services, Lead On, Bendigo Plus, Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network as well as NETschool management staff. The second tier is at the project management level where managers are responsible for the implementation of policy, operational procedure, and dealing directly with staff and students. They seek compliance with funding plans and report to the Board of Management (Leading Schools Fund, 2004).

NETschool, since the initial three year completion under Leading Schools Funding is now governed fully via BSSC.

Underlying theory and practice

Theories underlying the NETschool practices are derived from the disciplines of psychotherapy, counseling and education. As 45% of NETschool learners suffer from mild or acute forms of mental illness (NETschool Report, 2010) the therapeutic emphasis is a necessary one. Also discernable in the NETschool program are the principles of ‘turn-around pedagogy’ (Kamler and Comber 2005). According to this pedagogy, all students come to school with funds of knowledge from their own social environments, but only some are invited to share or use this knowledge in schools. Kamler and Comber’s research shows that one transformative way of re-connecting learners with education is to appreciate their unrecognised interests and abilities in a school setting.
All staff are trained in mental health first aid, in Circle Work and Glasser’s Choice Theory. Circle work, which derives from the work of counselors such as Margaret Thorsborne, is used as a means of building trust and addressing issues pertinent to each mentor group (Thorsborne, 2010; Hubbard, 2010). Circle work theory is evident in the morning ‘SET’ and ‘RESET’ sessions in which plans are made and reflection on the day’s activities take place. William Glasser’s Choice Theory (1998) underpins the Centre’s focus on student autonomy, respect for individual choices, and the beneficial effects of physical activity on negative thought patterns. The contacts made with other health professionals also inform staff approaches to individual learners. The Team Facilitator explains:

*When you start to build trust and rapport with the [learner’s] family we want to know what the psychiatrist is helping [the learner] work with. What are these actual strategies they want them to use when they’re feeling overwhelmed and out of control...and that’s when it starts to make a powerful difference...We’ve got a very good relationship with CAMHS, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. And a couple of the people there have come in...and run sessions on autism and Aspergers, anxiety. So we can actually fire specific questions...and when we do that as a round table forum where we are hearing what others are trying...that’s really good practice.*

Any staff member can suggest methods or approaches for inclusion in the program. Choice Theory was suggested by one mentor, and the two mentors studying for Master of Education degrees have contributed theory and practice derived from these courses. The theoretical approaches are therefore both participatory and evolving.

**Structured patterns and characteristics of ILE: layout, sequencing and mix of learning activities**

**School setting**

NETschool’s exterior is like that of a business or office within a community setting. It is located in a former bank building in the city centre, between a pie shop and a café, close to Myer and Fletcher Jones. The interior design resembles a workplace, with a central conference table flanked by individual work stations. The area has a maroon carpet, and walls covered with a fawn, felted material.

This formal office setting includes informal and personal elements. The workplaces are individually decorated with posters and pictures, and the shelves contain potplants as well as books and papers. The learners’ comfort and wellbeing is emphasized: the chairs are designed for computer stations, and the upstairs rooms contain exercise bikes and cushioned sofas.

NETschool staff foster a relaxed atmosphere within this setting. The Team Facilitator, explains:

*We work very hard at welcoming and making people feel comfortable in their work place. Let’s be clear, we do operate, it is like work, but every morning when I walk in I say hello to everyone. And this morning I acknowledged a girl who has only been here for the second day, made a particular point of saying hello to her. It’s the small [things] that make the difference. The center is small for everybody to know everybody’s names and we do a lot of work around that, so that I can acknowledge every person who is in the room...and the staff are often sitting there like in any workplace reading the paper, having a cup of coffee, as students arrive in the morning; it is just like welcoming a work colleague.*

Whilst the ‘work’ environment is emphasised, the NETschool acknowledges its students’ physical, psychological and social needs. The Team Facilitator describes one approach:
...a number of [learners] won’t have eaten very well the night before or perhaps that morning. Whereas for others...if you’re not feeling too good about yourself, going and sitting and making pancakes with someone and having a chat is one of the best ways...eating over food is one of the best ways to break down those barriers...

In general, the NETschool aims to support the learners individually and socially, whilst preparing them for a more impersonal world of work or formal study.

The learners

In 2010, up to 70% of NETschool students were in lower income groups and many lived in difficult familial circumstances. For most, the difficulties they face in accessing and completing their education are complex ones, but the major barriers affecting learners at NETschool in 2010 are classified as follows: pregnancy (22%), family dysfunction (2%), physical health (6%), mental health (45%) and disengaged with schooling or with behavioral issues (25%)(NETschool, 2010).

NETschool learners themselves cited difficulties at school as the main reason for their disengagement. Some experienced violence and bullying:

In my previous school, well I went there until year 9 and just gave up because they just weren’t doing anything about all the problems that were occurring in every class...mostly verbal bullying and name calling or throwing things at me (Female student).

Other students describe being overwhelmed by the crowds and numbers at large secondary schools:

...I come from Mildura and at my old school I knew everybody there, it is just a small town. Here there were about 2,000 kids which is a lot and I couldn’t cope with that many strangers (Male student).
One student had fallen behind in his work after an illness and did not feel he could catch up with the others at his school. Another found she was classed as ‘a failure’ in her secondary school because she ‘learns differently’.

In general, the group of young mothers, most of whom are enrolled in the home-based program, found it difficult to continue with their studies after giving birth, even if they had been progressing well at school. As one said: ‘I would have dropped out at the end of Year 10 because I had a tiny baby and it was just going to be too hard’.

The program recognizes that disengagement from schooling is a process and that it derives from multiple difficulties ranging from abuse through to bullying and is not necessarily related to educational underachievement. Nor is educational underachievement necessarily due to lack of ability, but rather to personal, familial and institutional reasons that make learning difficult, reduce motivation or limit possibilities.

Selection

Selection for enrolment relies on an individual student indicating that they are motivated to complete their schooling. As The Team Facilitator states: ‘They have to be able to convince me this is what they want’. Students apply on a website form and are then interviewed. They have to be supported by a significant other - parent, sibling, foster parent or juvenile justice worker. The Team Facilitator describes the process:

> At the interview we’re talking about what’s holding them back from school. And we talk about NETschool values – trust, honesty, and commitment – and some point I’m trying to get them to be honest with me, you know, what really went wrong at school. What’s gone wrong at home...you get a sense about what’s gone wrong. But then it’s about where do you want to be. It’s destination focused. So you know if I had my magic fairy wand, where would you like to be at 21? Where does your passion lie? ... So they will come with a view that you know it’s more academic type study that they want or perhaps a business course or working in an office, that sort of thing. So if you want to be a plumber, I’ll refer them to TAFE. One girl wanted to be a hairdresser. She attended NETschool for a year, did work placement and then enrolled in the local TAFE.

After a trial period, students are allocated to either a home or centre based program. The initial year is spent in an inquiry or research based activity that is of interest to the individual learner (See Appendix C).

Given the aim of re-integration and gaining formal accreditation, content, delivered online is drawn from any of the three secondary school certificates: the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE); the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or the Vocational Education and Training (VET) modules. According to The Team Facilitator:

> …we don’t have huge literacy issues here...while they might be a little bit below where they should be, they generally can read and write. Academically there’s big gaps but they’ve probably been coming and going from school for a while...so they’ve just missed out on chunks so there is stuff here that we can catch them up and is that...The educational philosophy is the ‘you can do it; stuff, it’s really that self belief. And it’s about getting them to acknowledge that instead of blaming everyone else, that they really need to take that internal control.

The organisation of two settings: Home-based and Centre-based learning environments

Home-based learners are provided with a computer to access the online curriculum taught by teachers at BSSC, usually in VCE units. Mentors oversee student progress, resolve communication issues, visit homes to install and check equipment, and develop individual plans. They also facilitate
visits to BSSC and NETschool for additional learning and assessment opportunities and assist with the development of pathways back into formal learning. The home based students also attend the Centre for MOVE sessions, a pastoral care program which fosters independent living skills and provides a connection to the Centre. Students also publish their work and communicate with the other students online. There is a specialist group for young mothers, who meet on a Wednesday morning at the Centre.

One of the young mums – her bubby is now 4, and she chose to return to class to do her last couple of subjects because her classroom learning is much easier of course as we know – and so she’s chosen to go back to class now he’s old enough to be in care. So it’s been able to give her that flexibility of home based learning to begin with, then going back into classroom but only for a couple of subjects. (The Team Facilitator)

Centre-based students attend the NETschool facility where they are supported in curriculum design, daily organisation and approaches to study with mentor teachers. Learning is organised around a negotiated individualised learning plan and curriculum which can be mapped onto VCAL outcomes (See Appendix B). Students can also enroll in VCE and VET courses, and some students attend BSSC classes.

NETschool routines

The NETschool offers a 20 hour week over four days, with Wednesday as a non-school day. The shortened week allows learners to undertake projects such as work experience, and assists more fragile learners with the demands of study and social contact. Wednesday morning at the Centre is a dedicated time for young mothers and other home-based learners to socialise, and to meet their mentors and teachers. Meals are supplied for the young mothers and babies, and cooked breakfasts, planned and prepared by the learners, are available on a weekly basis (NETschool report, 2010).

Each day begins at 9:00am with a SET (Set Expectations for Today) in which learners sit together to plan their own activities. The SET is followed by three long sessions of between 1½ and 2 hours separated by breaks. The learners follow their own research interests in this time, or work on their VCE or VET studies with the support of their mentors. During the day, subject teachers from BSCC take classes in the Centre, and some learners will leave to attend classes at BSCC. Learners log their activities in a reflective journal that is shared with their mentors (NETschool Handbook, 2010).

At the end of the day learners sit in a circle for the RESET session in which individual ‘highs’ and ‘lows’ are discussed. The RESET is also an opportunity to consider issues affecting the group. It is an opportunity to ‘clear the air… and provide alternative perspectives and ideas for the next day’ (NETschool Handbook, 2010 p.4). Learners are also required to take responsibility for their surroundings by cleaning and tidying daily.

The NETschool week includes a timetabled MOVE (Motivational Outside Values Experience) in which both home- and centre-based learners participate. The program has three strands:

1. Personal Development (e.g. team games, drugs information)
2. Community Work (e.g. community gardening, training dogs to assist disabled people)
3. Physical Activities (e.g. rock climbing, yoga, ball games) (NETschool Handbook 2010, p.4)

Learners also participate in whole school excursions called ‘Big Days Out’, later recalled and celebrated with posters and photographs on the walls of the Centre.
The individual in the physical environment

The learners were very articulate about the effects of the physical environment on their psychological states and on their learning. All of those interviewed appreciated their own desk and computer space. For some, this area provided a sense of peace and security – ‘my little bubble’ as one learner put it – whilst others spoke of the importance of ownership and familiarity: ‘...it’s good to have your own space where people aren’t going to come and use it and you have your own little area...it’s just good to be able to go to a place you’re familiar with’. A number of students had personalised their space with pictures and familiar objects. Another learner spoke of the sense of control she felt at her own desk: ‘...well it’s sort of my own personal area...I like peace and quiet and no interruptions...I can be like – I’m trying to get my work done, can you please move along and come talk to me at break’.

Although each student has a desk, some of them choose to work at the central table. One learner said they chose this space because it provided a sense of control. As a female learner described it – ‘I’ve gotten used to where everything is visually from where I sit...I feel a lot more comfortable knowing what is going on around me’. Learners also appreciated the freedom to move to a different part of the building to avoid noise, and to use different pieces of furniture, such as bean bags or sofas, at stressful times. A sense of neatness and order was important to some. One young man liked everything to be tidy, as he could only work in an orderly environment, and another learner liked to have her materials around her in a ‘messy organised’ way, with everything to hand.

Learners spoke of the need to be close to their friends and/or mentors when they were working. One liked to be close to his mentor, as she helped him deal with distractions. One young woman, who liked to work at the central table, said ‘I like connecting with my mentors, so when they’re sitting at the table I enjoy it’. Others mentioned the importance of having friends nearby to offer...
ideas and assistance, whereas another appreciated the opportunities for social talk at the central table, as in mainstream school ‘I used to be terrible at socialising’.

Wherever the learners chose to work, the important factor was the sense of individual space, and the freedom to choose where this should be. The learners were sensitive to all aspects of their surroundings – to light, heat and noise – and needed to be able to choose their workplace depending on these factors, and on their own varying physical or emotional states. The freedom to move was itself an important issue because in the learners’ previous schools, an inability to sit still, in one place, had caused problems. One mother said: ‘[at] NETschool he could get up and move around because he can’t stay in one place for too long’. For all the learners, the freedom to choose their own space, and to move from one space to another, was highly significant.

For a number of learners, the use of, and sense of space in the NETschool was highlighted as one of the ways it differed from their previous mainstream schools. A young woman described its importance:

> When I was back at mainstream schooling at Bendigo Senior, we were always so close to everyone and there’s people behind us, forward us, next to us. And I used to feel real isolated, like I didn’t have room, and I didn’t have a good sense of what was going on around me. It used to stress me out.

One learner suffered from the same sense of crowd anxiety in school. His mother explained: ‘Certain things frighten him like big classes, strange people, too many strangers...He was so tense he couldn’t concentrate...’

NETschool, by contrast, provided a secure, non-threatening spatial environment. Some learners compared NETschool with their homes, regarding both as tranquil places. However, for one learner,
the image was reversed: ‘...in my lounge room, because it is a nice, quiet, relaxed area, it is easy to study there. It does remind me a lot of school being there because it is so peaceful.’

**Individual learning plans**

The methodological driver of the program is an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), discussed regularly between mentor and mentee. On an ILP one learner wrote:

> I find it hard to cope with big masses of people. At the end of year 10 I want to better my literacy, get closer to my goals. I want to achieve Year 12 by 2012. I want to be doing Year 11 by 2011. Things have to change about my behavior, not being so aggressive.

The ILP discussion occurs regularly as a prompt for learners and staff:

> So when you’re doing research-based learning and you say I want to study Homer Simpson and whether his pants should be turned from yellow to red, you then have to convince your mentor that it matches your personal learning plan. Now if in your personal learning plan it says something about that you need to improve your literacy, you need to improve your essay writing, you can. You can write a very good argumentative essay on whether Homer Simpson’s pants should change from yellow to red. So the topic doesn’t matter but if it motivates you to come and if it motivates you to be here and be punctual because you’re driving your learning [then it has academic value]. (The Team Facilitator)

Individual Learning Plans are closely linked to curriculum options. For example, the research-based project is related to the VCAL Personal Development unit. Other activities are readily linked.

> This morning, one learner who finds it difficult to be with lots of people has cooked everyone breakfast. So she’s done pancakes and delivered pancakes to everyone this morning. For her those...are work related skills. When she cooked her pancakes of course there’s Occupational Health and Safety in relation to working in a kitchen and not contaminating people at NETschool. So once she’s cooked her pancakes and had evidence of cooking safely, she has a conversation with her mentor, writes it up on her online journal (because they journal every day) the mentor can tick it off; there’s part of an outcome met. So at the end of the year quite a few of them will get at least one unit in work related skills if they’ve been on work placement...and at least a unit of personal development. Now they qualify and count as part of their VCE, they then go on to VCE and they’ve got two units done.

The Centre is responsive to the changing needs of its students:

> We had a young lady who completed her VCE last year but started with us at centre-based due to...significant family abuse issues and drug issues that she had herself. She then fell pregnant and so she became a home-based young lady but completed her VCE as well. So it allows us that flexibility to be able to cater to anyone. If they are having a particularly bad time we can move them from one branch of the program to the other. (Female mentor)

The program is sufficiently flexible to adjust as students move in and out of the Centre and as they transition back into BSSC mainstream classes.

**Language use**

The vocabulary in use is deliberately adult and workplace oriented, with a positive tone. Students are referred to as ‘learners’, as ‘young men’ and ‘young ladies’, and their particular teachers are known as ‘mentors’. Learner behavior is guided by ‘workplace expectations’. The positive tone of the language can be seen in NETschool’s data gathering and reporting processes, where mentors are asked to observe ‘the what’ rather than ‘the how’ in initial
assessments of learners’ written work (NETschool handbook 2010 p. 17). Rather than writing ‘reports’, mentors describe student achievement using less judgmental terms such as ‘reflective journals’ and ‘narratives’ (NETschool handbook 2010, pp.28-29). The word ‘achievement’ is used daily in peer group sessions, and on occasions such as the public ‘Record of Achievement’ night. Phrases such as ‘fresh start’, ‘redemptive tasks’ and ‘restorative practice’ (NETschool handbook 2010) emphasise the school’s positive and progressive approach.

The metaphors in use by staff imply an alternative approach to teaching, learning and assessment, one in which the learner is central to the educational practices. An English teacher at Bendigo Senior Secondary College spoke of a ‘greenstick’ approach to assessment, of ‘bending what is expected of the students...so it’s a matter of adapting what they have to learn to what they can do, to what they can learn’. Staff also spoke of assessment ‘by stealth’. The Team Facilitator explains: ‘Those who have been on work placement can get at least one unit in work related skills...now that counts as part of their VCE...you’re not actually teaching it, you’re doing it by stealth.’

The NETSchool signals its difference from mainstream education through its language use and thereby suggests innovative identity formation and an opening up of possibilities for its learners.

**Process and structuring of teachers’ and students’ work**

**The role of the mentor**

The role of mentors is to support learners in achieving their educational or vocational goals. Whilst mentors at the NETschool are all trained teachers, their focus in this setting is on building relationships with the learners, and providing them with practical assistance. As a mentor they will address a range of issues from mental health and abuse through to homelessness.

The success of the program is attributed by people both inside and outside the program to the strength of the relationship between learner and mentor. The Assistant Principal at BSCC explained:

> The program’s success is in terms of the students [being able] to connect with significant adults in their lives and have a positive role model and develop the trust that wasn’t there...with the guiding hand...the relationships are basically the fundamental success of the school.

Building this relationship takes time and perseverance on the part of the mentor, who must gradually earn the trust of the learners. One mentor described this as a process of ‘chipping away each day’ until the relationship took shape. Another mentor described the gradual process of connecting with one learner, and of re-engaging her in education:

> So she’s been out of school for about 12 months...She’s done schooling at hospital but not here. So she comes in once a week at the moment but we’re trying to extend that to a couple of days a week with the intention of getting her in hopefully 4 days a week by the end of this term. At the moment she’s only doing one subject but her enrolment for next year is for a bigger load. We’ll see how she goes...It’s my first experience of working with students like that. It is quite difficult at times. But she’s very good at communicating and as you know we all have our own phones, and she’ll contact me whenever she’s got a question, ’cause I’m also her English teacher so if she’s got questions about English she’ll contact me...The first time I met her she’d only been out of hospital for a week so she was very medicated so that was a big shock for me. So by the second or third time she was in here she was much more responsive to me so it’s about building that rapport with her... Besides focusing on English I will throw in little anecdotes or just have chats with her. Like,
she’s a violinist so has lots of interest in classical music so I ask her to teach me about that ‘cause I have no idea. I did have good communication with her teachers at the hospital as well. Before she started here they emailed me and they sent me her report which outlined what works best for her in a classroom situation.

To cope with the demands of the work, mentors need strong personal qualities, as described by a male mentor:

...absolutely undying patience, unwavering, because these kids will go three steps forward and two steps back, and that can be very frustrating for a mentor when you can see the absolute potential...

Mentors also mentioned importance of having empathy and resilience in equal measure so that, when things went wrong, they were able to distance themselves emotionally. Even so, the role is a demanding one, and de-briefing routines are important. Mentors meet daily to share their experiences, and offer support to one another through an on-line journal. They are also sustained by the professional rapport between them. ‘It is very helpful,’ said one female mentor, ‘that we are very open to learning from one another.’

The mentors and teachers undergo additional training in mental health, around how to deal with anxiety, depression, Aspergers Syndrome and autism. They are also able to talk with the DEECD psychologist, BSCC Student Welfare or with the local psychiatrist to identify useful strategies. This means that:

the mentor ends up in a bit of a case manager role because they advocate for the learner plus they’re on the side of hearing what the parents are saying, then they’re hearing what the doctors are saying, and the psychologist so that can be a treading outside the boundaries of their role. So it’s about moderating that as much we can and saying ‘look you’ve got to be a bit careful of that’ but sometimes they do, and sometimes it’s the first time that learner has had a person for everybody to refer to. (Mentor)
NETschool teachers

Teachers self-nominate to be at NETschool. They bring with them both specialist expertise, for example in Art, English, Maths, but also a desire to work at a personal level. Some are part time (.5) in the NETschool and at BSSC. They are selected on the basis of being a good classroom practitioner and flexible in their teaching, able to cater to the individual through differentiated learning, ‘Which means they can juggle multiple things...so we do take into account what skill set they’re bringing and their personal qualities’ (The Team Facilitator). In selecting staff the academic side is not highly prioritised as it is important that every mentor has a different skillset which is not replicated across the team. NETschool employs teachers with expertise in literacy, numeracy, physical education, outdoor education, English and Maths who help each other as well as the students; this includes primary as well as senior secondary trained teachers.

An English teacher describes her day:

I...work with the English students. I come down 3 times a week. I work to the timetable of Bendigo Senior Secondary College so I come down for two 60 minute periods, and then a 100 minute period. And we have a classroom here at NETschool that I can utilise if I want to but generally I would just walk around and individually speak to each student because I’m running 4 different Englishes so I’ve got a very big spread of where students are at. So I just find it easier to do that...I’ve set it up so that particularly with the Foundation English, the students know exactly what they need to do. They have a tick sheet and they just work through the content. And I have folders sitting on my desk that they come to and look at when they need to move onto the next piece of work...And I guess because I’m here anyway for 2½ days. I do have them come and see me during that time period as well. So they always know they can come and knock on my door and say ‘I have a question’...There is not a lot of direct teaching.
The teachers also actively participate in all programs to model behavior for the learners. For example, with the focus in 2009 on fitness and healthy eating, mentors were involved in all the personal training sessions and with the community dietician.

All the mentors attend pathways meetings with other teachers at BSSC and become advocates for their learners within the wider school environment. There is significant cross institutional knowledge, as working with the students in NETschool leads to approaches which have value for all teachers.

**Leadership as modelling**

The Team Facilitator is a member of the BSSC Extended Leadership team and the Curriculum and Learning team. She also runs professional development at BSSC and with other local schools around restorative practices. At NETschool, the Team Facilitator reads all personal learning plans and inducts and supports new teachers. The Team Facilitator describes her role as ‘a lot of the modelling so every staff meeting…has the modelling of what I want people to do in their rooms. Every staff meeting has active PD in it’. One example of staff professional development (PD) was a ‘no blame classroom’ conference in response to tensions between staff after the move into the new space.

The Team Facilitator described her leadership as

> hands on…there’s nothing I would ask the team to do here that I haven’t done. So I’m not going to tell them to go and run a no blame classroom without having done it myself in my own classes. I’m not going to ask them to take their kids rock climbing unless I’ve done it myself and can predict what will happen, ‘cause here it is about predicting where things will go wrong…So having that length of experience – I’ve been a home-based mentor, a centre-based mentor, run a group, taught at Bendigo Senior, so, you know, the whole gamut. And I still have learners now, and that’s strategic again, so that I can keep my hand in plus I also get to keep trialing new things as our own practice changes and grows…I think that’s important from the staff perspective to see that I’m still hands on and I’m still in there.

As a leader she considered she was responsible for keeping up with of a range of policy initiatives, funding possibilities as well as maintaining connections with BSSC, other schools and the service providers and partners. Decisions are made as a team with the teachers and mentors.

Central to the Team facilitator’s role is her support of the mentors. This takes the form of a continuing dialogue, with daily conversations and de-briefing sessions. The conversations concern ‘What’s working, what’s not working. Where are your frustrations? Who’s not in contact with you? Who’s disappeared off the radar?

Any problems faced by the staff are solved jointly. According to the facilitator – ‘…If I need to, I’ll step up and intervene. So I’ll say let’s maybe do this together’. This joint approach means that views are shared equally – the Facilitator herself seeks out and values the staff’s opinions, as ‘we’re all in this together’.

The Team Facilitator is also highly aware of the need to offer moral support to staff, as ‘when you’re dealing with traumatized people the demands are very great’.

And you can tell, you get a sense for when someone is struggling. Or when a particular learner is getting to them or they’re feeling down about a particular situation and you just take more time to spend with them. And talk about that.
The Facilitator felt that, as a result of this support system, staff were not only retained in employment, but experienced considerable satisfaction from their work.

**Nature and Quality of Learning**

The school focuses on motivating the whole learner to re-engage with learning. It therefore offers activities which focus on the personal, educational and everyday skills required to live and work effectively. The use of ICT as a key communication and information strategy was deemed essential as it provided a range of learning options.

The Team Facilitator considers that the underpinning educational philosophy is that ‘It’s up to you, you can do whatever you like. It’s really your life and you get you to your destination. It is about finding that belief in yourself again’. This belief is embedded in everyday practices; students who do not achieve their immediate goals can always try again.

The principle of restorative justice is central and, according to The Team Facilitator:

> …it’s interesting because we run a restorative practice, not a punitive one. When they muck up the first couple of times [the learners] are expecting to be kicked out, kept in, whatever. We go through the restorative process and it’s done...if it needs to be done, it will be done with a facilitator, which is usually me, and with their mentor. We do it formally if we need to with parents ...and so the agreements are made and someone is monitoring the agreement and we tend to move on that way. It’s about teaching them how to solve their conflict in other ways. (The Team Facilitator)

Sustaining motivation is a key issue for these students. The curriculum is therefore highly individualised and flexible enough to meet specific student needs. The central feature of the NETschool’s success mentioned by all interviewees and foregrounded in the evaluation is that of relationships based on trust. As the English teacher and mentor said:

> …the relationship you form with these guys is very important...you need to be able to have communication with them. They need to be honest with you and you have to be honest with them. So that’s very critical.

Given the significance of relationships to the success of this program, the school focuses on the close support of mentors with learners. There was a high level of personal support, particularly for young mothers. They are perceived as a motivated group: ‘they all have mentioned getting a job to support my baby so that plays heavily on their mind I think. They really want to be able to provide for their baby. I guess they probably think of the future a little bit more’ (Mentor).

Conflict resolution is a central activity for mentors and learners:

> During the day the mentor has to very much be able to moderate behaviors because the kids don’t understand how to explicitly solve conflict. And it might be over something small like you’re sitting at my computer and that’s where I usually sit. Or someone has taken something of mine. They need to explicitly be able to unpack and repack that... so it is about giving them that skill adults have. We’re hoping that when they go back to class, that if they’re not comfortable with a teacher or they’re not comfortable with a piece of work, they know what to do. Instead of just sitting and being quiet, they will become the more positive student who will say ‘Excuse me, I don’t know what I’m meant to be doing’. Now that will never happen unless here they can say ‘Excuse me but I don’t like the way you’re talking to me’ or ‘I don’t like what you said about me. (The Team Facilitator)
Individual approaches

This support system is highly focused on the needs of individuals. Within the academic program this means that students choose a learning model to suit them and work at their own pace with it. The Assistant Principal at BSCC says that, because the program is personalised, there are many approaches to the final outcome:

*The basic model is that we have centre-based students who come in and home-based students who come in on a Wednesday. With the centre-based students there are some who are not ready to take a VCE subject so they're actually doing research based learning…based on interests and needs.*

*When they've reached a point where they've established really good work habits, good literacy skills, good attendance, reliable attendance, we'll...check the competencies that they've been able to meet in VCAL. So then you might have some students deciding to do some VCE units...and the mentors might say 'I reckon you might only cope with one and let's do it online for a while.' And then we've got some students who might do more than one VCE subject and they might go completely to class...*

One young mother at the NETschool, describes her own learning pathway:

*I've been here for four years and I am a home-based student. In my first year all my subjects were done on-line…I completed Maths units 1 and 2 and the following year I wanted to pick up a subject where I could only do it in class, so I joined the classes. I did two subjects in class and one on-line. Then in 2008 I did Community Services 1/2 and Further Maths over in class. And I did English on-line...last year I did Psychology 3/4 and Community Services 3/4 and English 3/4 online. And I've got my VCE certificate.*

There are no given expectations about the pace of student learning. A former NETschool student now at university, found himself behind with his VCE after moving to Bendigo from Darwin and spending time in hospital. He subsequently completed his VCE over three years:

*It surprises a lot of people when I say I am 21 and only finished year 12 last year but I am fairly proud to admit that I went back to school and pursued that initial goal.*

The program is personalised, with considerable individual choice, at many levels. For example, those engaged in research-based learning draw up personal learning plans and timelines with their mentors. The learners are then free to organize their own time. As The Team Facilitator says ‘...if they are passionate about art, on a Monday...they can spend all day drawing’.

The individual is also considered in extra-curricular activities, such as the health awareness program, which are organised so that learners only attend the relevant sessions:

*...so that you only hear the message [you need]. Because we've got that much flexibility we'll take the kids who smoke [and] the kids who don't smoke don't have to listen to the Quit lady. And that's the advantage of here.* (The Team Facilitator)

A further example of the NETschool’s consideration of the individual learner is seen in the inclusion of safety plans on the individual learning programs. These plans are the learners’ chosen responses to tense or volatile situations. The plans are known to their mentors and referred to in times of difficulty or crisis.
Impact and Effectiveness of ILE

While the initial NETschool proposal to the Leading Schools Fund in 2004 sought to re-engage students with formal schooling in order to gain a qualification, the notion of a successful outcome has been extended to include enrolment in training, moving to the next phase, or finding employment. For some students, success is being able to get up and come to school, to plan for the future, or to indicate an improved sense of self. In these terms, the NETschool has achieved a high success rate with 89% of students enrolling or staying in mainstream education or training or finding employment.

As the 2010 Evaluation (Cox 2010) stated that while it is easy to assess destinations and qualifications of students, it is more difficult to assess the impact on personal wellbeing. In a study comparing a Year 11 BSSC cohort with 24 NETschool learners, Cox (2010) identified that the BSSC cohort had higher levels of educational confidence but that measures of self esteem and self efficacy were equivalent¹. The NETschool students did not indicate lower levels of mental or emotional health, indicating the sample was possibly selective as those who opted to do the interviews and survey were possibly more confident.

Cox’s (2010) evaluation of the program identified the relationship between mentors and learners as critical to its success. Other aspects included the non-classroom/workplace environment and small group approach, the pacing of the program and its relevance to the learners’ lives. Equally important was the positioning the learners as knowledge producers as well as learners.

Measures of success

¹ The study utilized measures of self esteem to consider a random sample of a control group of 200 Year 11 BSSC students and the 2008 cohort at NETschool. 36 (12 home based and 24 Centre based) of the 91 students at NETschool responded.
Success is measured in small steps. For one student, with crowd anxiety, attending school was a significant first step. Her next achievement was to complete her set tasks, and she is now completing her work placement in preparation for VCAL hairdressing. This process took three terms.

For another girl, the route to re-engagement is a more complex one:

> It is her third term at school. She has anxiety but she is in denial and when she gets anxious she runs away but then will also be aggressive verbally so she pushes people away. [She] has been like that since she was little, so always struggled with school. The mother is now acknowledging that a lot of it is her issues as well and that she feeds into it but it gets to the point that now she doesn’t know any other way to behave because the way she’s tried to control her hasn’t work for the last 10 years and she doesn’t know another way to do it. So we’ve given her lots of chats over the phone, strategies over the phone; given her books to read; had her in here talking to her about what she can do; and then encouraging her to get her own counseling support. We’re seeing now a change the way she does things. She’s putting consequences in place instead of letting things go. And it’s about everybody giving the kid the same message. And we said to her last week unless you’re honest with us, we can’t help you. So it comes back to what you want from your life and why you’re here. So that’s been an interesting journey over the last 3 terms and we’re just starting to get there now, so again it’s the time factor. A lot of it comes back to time. (Mentor)

What these examples indicate is that success takes on multiple forms and that working with these young people takes energy and time. There are no quick-fix solutions, and the difference between managing and becoming more ‘at risk’ is slight, perhaps only taking a small incident to spark off damaging behavior. The primary issue here is about setting up conditions of learning that develop patterns of behavior that are supported by teachers and family and which also provide concrete opportunities for the future.

Other indicators of success indicated in the 2009 Annual Report are

- VCAL units have been given to 19 Centre-based learners covering 37 units
- 38 learners completed NETschool and
  - moved back into mainstream school BSSC or BRiT,
  - partially completed VCE and Certificate 2 and 3,
  - obtained an apprenticeship, traineeship or full work, or
  - connected with community agencies who will take them to next stage, e.g. ACCESS employment, Career on Track.

The majority of students in the home-based group are those who completed Year 10 or 11 before coming to NETschool, predominantly young mothers. These have largely remained connected to school even after their babies are born. For these young women, completing VCE was important for them to support themselves and their child.

**Reasons for the NETschool’s success**

The 2010 evaluation (Cox 2010) concluded that the practical value of the home-based program meant that young mothers had flexibility. They also had mentors who were both teachers and friends, who could be contacted when the learner was sick or feeling down, assist with overdue assignments and negotiate deadlines with VCAA and BSSC. The Centre-based learners who had attended over 2-3 years indicated a high level capacity for reflection since their initial interview in 2006, displaying greater confidence, eye contact, and the ability to articulate a point of view. The words used to describe the program were making them feel more ‘comfortable’, gaining confidence, learning to learn as well as learning to trust, while recognising and managing their anxieties better. The key aspect to success identified by the learners in Cox’s interviews and survey was the mentor-
learner relationship. Mentors were seen to be motivators, always there, emotionally available, challenging, and trusting. The learners also liked the non-classroom approach, the small size of the classes, the flexibility, pace and relevance of the program as well as the group work.

The NETschool’s initial expectation for success – re-engaging students with formal schooling to gain a qualification – has been amended to accommodate successes that are specific to individual learners, such as school attendance, planning and organizational skills, improved sense of self. As well as witnessing these kinds of achievement, the NETschool has a high formal success rate with 89% of students enrolling or staying in mainstream education or training or finding employment.

Overall Cox’s report emphasised a culture of positive learning. The school, she maintains, is ‘doing important identity work with learners [as] participants’ language shows identity shift from ‘drop outs’ and ‘quitters’ to ‘taking charge’ and talking about ‘can do it’, we are ‘pushing past comfort zones; and ‘making choices’ (Cox 2010). This study found the learners used positive language, similar to that of the school documents, to talk about themselves and their futures. One young man talked about the school giving him ‘a new lease on life’; another is returning to Mildura ‘to get a job and start my life’. And one young woman, who had been in trouble with the law, said:

What pretty much pulled me out of the deep end was the fact that I’ve been good for the time since them charges...and now I’m at school I’m doing all these great things so I’ve kind of turned my life around.

The quality of the relationships, especially those between mentors and learners, was said to be central to the success of the program. An established relationship with a mentor, according to the Youth Worker, provides the support young people need to take the risks involved in completing education, finding work and living in the community. Mentors become significant adults in the lives of young people, providing both a positive role model and a guiding influence. This view was supported by the staff at BSCC, the learners and the mentors themselves.

Equally important and highly relevant to these relationships is the individual nature of the program, described by Cox (2010 p. 17) as being ‘wrapped around the learner’. Not only is it highly motivating for the learners to follow an individual program, but they are affirmed and validated by having their goals and interests placed at the core of their learning. The implementation of the program is also individual in nature, designed to accommodate, or to ‘wrap around’ the individual. A parent explained the flexible nature of the approach:

If [my son] gets stressed, because he does have a lot of anxiety, he can go off and have a drink. And if he gets distracted, his mentor says ‘We’ll give you half an hour in a separate room and then take 15 minutes to go and chat to someone’. And he was quite happy with that idea...There isn’t a one size fits all...
The influence of NETschool practices

It is a notable indicator of the NETschool’s success that a number of its innovative practices have been taken up by mainstream schools. According to the Assistant Principal at Bendigo Senior Secondary College: ‘There is a sense that NETschool is really successful so what are the things that underpin that?’ An example of a NETschool practice transferred out to other educational providers is demonstrated by the fact that all BSSC students now have an individual learning plan based around their goals. In addition, teachers are encouraged to strengthen relationships with those students in danger of disengaging. To foster these teacher-student relationships, the NETschool mentors have led PD sessions at BSSC in restorative practices. In another interesting development BSCC has implemented self-paced learning programs derived from NETschool models, in which students come to class for every 4th lesson in some subjects, but otherwise work independently. This approach has been developed with the assistance of student feedback, a practice also derived from a NETschool model.

Individual teachers who work between the NETschool and BSSC have found that their NETschool teaching experiences have altered their attitudes towards both learners and their teaching. A Maths teacher with experience of both schools spoke about the flexibility she has developed as a result of her NETschool experiences. She said she was now more accommodating when BSSC students did not complete tasks on time, and more understanding of their personal circumstances: ‘I have one who is living in a caravan’. As a result of her changed attitude, she says:

…I’m not getting stressed out whether they’ve handed in an assignment or not. I just sit down with them...while I’m doing my work and just get them to move through the work, [so they can] hand it in.

Also as a result of her NETschool experience this teacher has altered the content and approach of the Maths course: ‘I’m more aware of them being engaged and wanting to do it. We’ve designed the course around their interests...sport is the big thing, and travel...things to do with budgeting and designing a house’.

These changes in attitudes and practices derived from the ‘less advantaged’ school shows that marginalised learners can provide significant insights into educational practice.

Overall, the evaluation and the research visits signal a culture of positive learning. The School is ‘doing important identity work with learners. This is exemplified in the following speech given by one graduate:

Speech made to the NETschool Community at the Recognition of Achievement evening December, 2008.

In 2005 I was in year 9 at secondary school. I felt very trapped. I felt I had no future, there was nowhere for me to go, that my possibilities were very limited. I was diagnosed with depression and social anxiety. I started NETschool as a home base learner, and move to centre base learner in 2006. I started to take steps that were do-able, these steps I worked out with my mentor. I spent 12 months doing research based learning. It got me reengaged in doing work again. It was easy because I could pick things I wanted to find out about. I also started one VCE subject which was Equine Studies, my area of passion. This was my first step in heading to Bendigo Senior. But the hardest thing was to push myself to do them. NETschool gave me power and confidence when I took each step. And it made me want to take more steps. Pushing myself got easier. By 2007 I was attending classes back in a normal classroom at Bendigo Senior. In my journal on the 2nd of March 2007 I wrote:“Oh boy things have just been going nuts these last few weeks. I still sit back in CLASS and think to myself "I'm in a class room??!! (cool)” I can't believe I have come this far, I'm so proud of myself. So many things have changed this year. I've changed so much. I still miss
being at NETschool more often, but I just remember that this is for me.” And now towards the end of 2008 I have now completed my VCE and have a plan for my future. I am now managing both my depression and anxiety. My advice to all learners is: Acknowledge each success you have no matter how big or small. Listen to advice from your parents and mentor. Do it yourself, no one can do it for you. I don’t think I would have quite achieved all I have without NETschool. Although my successes are my own, I thank NETschool for all its help and support. Thank you Kim Scott, NETschool Achiever of the Year 2007 (NETschool handbook, 2010)

Concluding Comments

The NETschool is a highly effective learning environment, both in terms of its educational and employment outcomes, and in terms of its impact on the lives of young people, their families and their communities.

This success derives in part from the creation of a de-institutionalised learning model, one that is deliberately adult and workplace-oriented in nature. This orientation is made clear in all aspects of the NETschool’s operation, notably in the use of language to refer to the young people and their achievements, in its physical setting and layout, and in its program choices.

The NETschool model is one which values the learners’ emotional, physical and social wellbeing as well as their academic interests. Individuals are therefore offered choices at every level of the school’s operation - where they sit and move, or whether they should study at home or in the centre. In addition, their individual learning plans, related to their own goals, are a motivating and validating aspect of the program.

The individual choices offered are balanced by the structure of the program, with its regular and predictable timetable, and the daily and weekly rituals within it. These offer security to the learners and reinforce the adult, workplace nature of the learning environment. At the same time, the mentors encourage learners to attempt new skills and to operate in challenging settings such as mainstream schooling. Mentors provide pastoral and academic support while scaffolding independent learning and affirmative life skills.

The particular needs of the learners in the NETschool have affected staff practices. Given the multiple demands of the mentoring and teaching roles, staff have required additional and inventive forms of leadership and professional development, and draw on wide formal and informal networks of support.

It is significant that some of the innovative practices initiated by the NETschool have been taken up by mainstream schools. This shows that programs adapted to marginalised learners have useful insights to offer mainstream schooling. Whilst these insights could assist all students, they may be of particular benefit to the more vulnerable young people found in all educational institutions.
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NETschool Handbook 2010, NETschool, Bendigo.


Welcome to NETschool 2010k

Well it is the start of a new year and for many the start of a new educational experience. It’s about ‘wiping the slate clean’ and starting afresh. In doing so it is important to learn from our previous mistakes and to understand how we can improve on our past performances. Importantly, we are accountable for the time we spend at NETschool. It is like working in a business here and we must achieve our set work, to build on achieving our goals and gaining our ultimate success.

What to expect this year

- To push my comfort zone
- Personal Learning Plan
- Set Value Goals
- Living the NETschool values
- Set Personal/Academic Goals
- Journaling
- Work Logs
- Work Trip
- Work Placement
- MOVE program (Personal Development, Community Service and Recreation)
- Healthy Move, Music, Metal Bending Programs
- VCE Units
- VCAL Units
- Restorative Chats
- Circle work
- Circle Set and Reset
- Big Day Out
- Unplugged – End of 1.2&3
- Record of Achievement Evening
- Narratives

Group daily obligations – (jump in and work as a team!!)

- Kitchens clean up (roster)
- Wipe down and leave clean workstations
- Wipe down Set table.
- Journal entries to account for your day
- Water Plants
- Be punctual for session time
Appendix B – Personal Learning Plan

Personal Learning Plan

Date: / /2010
Learner:
Mentor: Jim
Support person(s):

My interests are:

In 2010 I want to be doing:

In 2011 I want to be doing:

By the end of 2009 I want to achieve:

The reason(s) I am at NETschool is because:

The things I would like to change about my behaviour:

I would like to learn about:

The skills I would like to develop are:

Where will I push my comfort zone?

My time safety plan steps are:
1) 
2) 
3) 

How will I draw on other people to track my progress, gather advice and feedback and support learning?

Three ways I will show trust, honesty and commitment to NETschool are:
1) Trust –
2) Honesty –
3) Commitment –

All NETschool mentors work together to help you achieve your goals. Do you give consent for us to discuss your situation?

Yes  NO

Signature: __________________________ Date: ________________

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<th>Initial STEPS I WILL TAKE</th>
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