

Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE Youth Options Youth Outcomes (YOYO)

Hornsby Campus (Room DG06), 205 Pacific Hwy, Hornsby, NSW, 2077

Established in 1999, the Youth Options Youth Outcomes (YOYO) program, based at the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE, offers alternative Year 10 equivalent qualifications for young people who have disengaged from mainstream schooling. The program prepares students for entry into further studies or employment within a flexible, self-paced and supportive learning environment. In 2012, 100 students, aged between 15-19 years, were enrolled in the program. Students come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and have often experienced *barriers to education* such as: learning difficulties, behavioural disorders, family breakdown, homelessness, psychological conditions, drug and alcohol abuse or pregnancy and motherhood.

How this program works

The YOYO program aims to meet the *complex educational and social needs* of students for whom the formal structure of schooling and traditional models of classroom management did not work. Adopting a *flexible and inclusive model of learning*, within a *caring, non-threatening and supportive* environment, the program helps to *break the cycle of disengagement and inspire lifelong learning*. Providing a *hands-on approach to learning*, enabling students to work at their own pace, the program includes core units comparable to the Board of Studies Year 10, as well as *personal development workshops, art, and project based learning*, mentoring and counselling. Students receive *personalised help* but are encouraged to *become responsible for their own learning*. The program works *holistically* with students focusing on *academic, emotional health and social competencies, encouraging students to reach their potential*. A network of support agencies and organizations are linked to the program.

Based at the Hornsby TAFE campus, the core of the YOYO program is delivered in a purpose designed large room with lots of natural light, student computers, a white board and data projector. The tables and chairs are arranged in a café style. Full time, part time and flexible modes of study are available, and attendance hours are negotiated with the YOYO Coordinator. The program provides a *relevant* curriculum emphasising the *interrelationships between subjects*. Students have the opportunity to gain a Year 10 equivalent qualification (Cert I and II Skills for Work and Study (SWAT), Cert I Preparation for Work and Study, Cert II Foundations for Vocational and Further Study). Job seeking and work related skills, IT knowledge and skills, and literacy and numeracy skills are integrated into the program. Students may enrol at any point in the year after attending an interview via self-referral or referral by others.

Outcomes

Positive outcomes, indicating the success of this program, include: completion rates, credentialed attainment, transitions on to further study and/or employment, increased motivation to learn, and levels of self-respect and self-esteem, and benchmarking against similar programs.

Credentialed attainment: Since 1999, hundreds of young people have attained a Year 10 equivalent qualification through the program, including 50 students in 2011-2012.

Program wide achievements: In the 2012 graduate destinations survey, 100% of students said that the course gave them the knowledge and skills they needed and 96% of students said they would recommend the course to others.

Destinations and pathways: 47% of students are continuing with further study (both the Higher School Certificate and TAFE) and 17% secured employment (2012). An example of success includes a former student who was expelled from school and labelled with a range of behavioural problems before successfully completing the YOYO program and becoming a training and placement consultant for disability services.

Health and well-being: 52% gained confidence from the participating in the program (2012). Comments from students include: *I had been to three high schools before coming to YOYO, I was depressed and lost all hope... now I have a chance to be a success.*

Productive partnerships: Partnerships with Mission Australia and KYDS provide students with personal development programs and workshops. A linkage with OzHarvest's Food Rescue Program provides healthy, nutritious food on a weekly basis.

Wider influence: Information seeking visits from professionals/peers from other TAFE Institutes and Organisations and the invitation to visit Sydney Institute of TAFE to speak to staff working in Foundation Studies and other areas (2011).

Why this program is successful

The YOYO program attributes much of its success to its *innovative form of delivery* including: flexible attendance and learning, individualised and tailored programs, self-paced and student initiated work timetable, high teacher-student ratio and levels of pastoral care, good humour in the classroom, hands-on approach to learning, use of technology, calming environment, relevant subject areas, interesting guest speakers, personal development workshops and provision of programs with partner organisations. Additionally, community partners and former students suggest that treating the students as adults, providing support and time beyond that of a mainstream school including one on one support, believing in students, focus on personal issues, and the professional manner in which staff interact with students enable the program to succeed.

Want to know more?

<http://www.learningchoices.org.au/programs/604/Northern-Sydney-Institute-of-TAFE-Youth-Options-Youth-Outcomes-YOYO.php>

<http://www.nsi.tafensw.edu.au>

Sources of information

Cahill, E. (2009) A place for those who don't fit at school. Letters: The Sydney Morning Herald. National. <http://www.smh.com.au/national/letters/nothing-simple-about-a-matter-of-life-or-death-20091013-gvmi.html> (accessed 18.03.13).

Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE (2013) Website (accessed 18.03.13)

Youth Options Youth Outcomes (YOYO) Program (2011) Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE, Hornsby Campus.

Youth Options Youth Outcomes (2012) Graduate Destination survey.

Please note, where possible and appropriate, we have adopted the language and terminology used by the program sources (*italic fonts*) and referred to the most recent publically available information.

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