

## Chapter 6

# An Intervention Program for Advancing the Academic Performance of International Pathway “STAR”

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### **ABSTRACT**

*As part of an intervention and support strategy, this chapter discusses the evidence-based merits of a tertiary skills development (TSD) course delivered at the Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT) to “students at risk” (STAR). The effectiveness of the TSD course was measured via quantitative means by comparing students’ academic performance before, during, and after TSD intervention. It was found that student performance analysed over three consecutive trimesters underwent a significant improvement when the support strategy was provided, followed by a small downturn in performance when the support was removed and students were again relying solely on their independent study skills and self-directed learning.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a consistent relationship between academic achievement and retention in Higher Education (HE), with higher performing typically students persisting in their studies more than lower achieving cohorts. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can, however, inadvertently place 'Students-At-Risk' (STAR) when the 'rules of the game' are not explicit. That is, HEIs may assume or take-for-granted that students know what is expected of them, but when students have to guess or infer what increases or decreases their chance of academic success at the tertiary level, they are likely to 'get it wrong' at least some of the time. Not surprisingly, the earlier the identification of vulnerable students who may be prone to dropping-out is crucial for the success of any retention strategy (Kovacic, 2010). Once identified, HEIs would be better able to undertake timely and proactive measures, and STAR can be targeted with administrative and academic support to increase their ability to stay on the 'pathway' to success.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology**

The Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT) is one of a growing number of private providers partnering with universities to establish pre-university pathway programs. EIBT offers student pathways to *The University of Adelaide* (UoA) and the *University of South Australia* (UniSA), with three Diplomas in Business, Information Technology and Engineering. Student recruitment is predominantly directed towards full fee-paying international students who: have completed Year 11 high school in Australia and would prefer to continue their studies in an alternative context; have completed Year 12 high school in Australia, but did not obtain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR score) satisfactory for direct entry into university; have graduated from high school abroad, but whose English language proficiency did not meet the minimum requirement for direct entry into university; have graduated from high school abroad, but whose previous academic results did not meet the minimum requirement for direct entry into university; or are above 20 years of age with relevant employment history (Velliaris, Willis, & Breen, 2015a, 2015b; Velliaris, Willis, & Pierce, 2015).

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