2020

READY
CONNECTED
SUPPORTED

A FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE YES PROJECT

THE YES PROJECT BY AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE IS A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Center for Promise
AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE®

THE YES PROJECT
YOUNG. EMPLOYED. SUCCESSFUL.

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INTRODUCTION

In a nation built on the promise of opportunity, too many young people struggle to find a solid foothold in the world of work. The youth unemployment crisis is complex, pervasive, and persistent, with wide-reaching consequences for states and communities across the national and global economies. In the U.S., recent annual estimates indicate that **1.8 million young people ages 16-24 are available and actively searching for work, but are unable to secure a job**.[1] This translates to a roughly 9% youth unemployment rate, more than double the national average for the overall population.[2] This figure excludes the 17 million youth who are not in the labor force (e.g., neither currently participating in work nor searching for work within the previous four-week period), nearly 1.6 million (10.7%) of whom indicate that they would like a job, yet have stopped searching for various reasons (e.g., discouragement over their job prospects, family responsibilities, health, and disability).

Moreover, even among employed youth, many are tenuously connected to precarious working situations that fall below the threshold of what might be considered decent and dignified work. These experiences are marked by a lack of social protections, learning experiences, and opportunities for advancement that are critical for youth to experience dignified work lives, gain a foothold in decent work, and lay a foundation for upward mobility.[3] The state of the youth unemployment crisis remains dire for the millions of young people desiring the chance to experience decent work and create a meaningful career in today's economy.

Despite a rebounding economy; the resilience of young people themselves; the efforts of inspired programs; and significant investments from federal and state governments, philanthropists, and corporations; youth unemployment remains a problem. The repeated calls to action from scholars, policymakers, industry leaders, and communities underscore the reality that many young people in America continue to struggle to establish a healthy and sustained connection to successful work pathways. These calls to action also affirm the notion that the nation must continue pursuing a future in which every young person who seeks a job can find decent work that will serve as a platform for sustained employment and self-determined lives.

1 BLS, 2019
2 BLS, 2019; World Bank, 2019
3 Osterman & Shulman, 2011; Kalleberg, 2012; Blustein, 2006; Duffy, Diemer, Blustein, & Autin, 2016; Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018

The YES Project: A National Campaign by America's Promise Alliance

Building on the success and learnings of the GradNation campaign, America's Promise Alliance has launched the YES Project—Young, Employed, Successful—to unify the nation in reaching a major collective goal: **every young person seeking a job can find a job**. The YES Project sets its focus on the 1.8 million unemployed young people in America. This vulnerable period of unemployment represents a critical intervention point. Engaging young people at the point when they maintain an active, although often tenuous, connection to the world of work can help youth avoid more severe and long-term disconnection, strengthen their confidence and connection to the labor market, and advance along a more secure pathway toward work and careers.

Connecting unemployed youth with successful work pathways can also shine a beacon of hope to other discouraged and disconnected youth, inspiring new optimism about what is possible when one is afforded the opportunities and supports necessary to thrive vocationally.

Drawing on over two decades of America's Promise Alliance's leadership in the youth-serving sector, the YES Project is aligning the field in pursuit of this goal and driving the nation towards action by amplifying best practices, galvanizing cross-sector collaborations, and creating and sharing knowledge. This bold effort to reduce youth unemployment is fueled by the field's shared belief in the need to create an environment where every young person is **Ready, Connected, and Supported** to succeed in the workplace. This requires a large-scale transformation by individuals, organizations, employers, and policymakers to bring about the systemic change needed for young people.

This working paper begins with an overview of the YES Project's guiding framework—the **"Ready, Connected, Supported" framework**. This overview is followed by a brief review of existing literature outlining the importance and changing nature of work in the 21st century as well as a portrait of the youth employment crisis in the U.S. today. This background serves as context for the Ready, Connected, Supported framework, situating the three domains that make up the framework within the extant literature and research.

Ready, Connected, Supported: A Framework for Ameliorating Youth Unemployment

The Ready, Connected, Supported framework is the conceptual model guiding the YES Project's activities to drive collective action toward addressing youth unemployment.

A Youth Employment Research Agenda

The Ready, Connected, Supported framework is guiding the YES Project's research agenda for the life of the campaign. Over the next decade, the Center for Promise—the research institute of America's Promise Alliance, housed at the Boston University Wheelock College of Education and Human Development—will pursue a research agenda to further examine young people's pathways to employment. The research agenda will examine what it means for young people to be Ready, Connected, and Supported; elevate the voices of young people to ground the discourse about youth employment and workforce development in their experiences; and explore the role of relationships in facilitating positive workforce outcomes. This work advances the Center's tradition of youth-centered research beginning with the Center's *Don't Call Them Dropouts* and *Don't Quit on Me* and building from more recent work on Webs of Support and career pathways for disconnected youth, including two reports, *Relationships Come First* and *Turning Points*, centered on the role of relationships in career pathways programs.

The framework is founded on the shared insights and experiences of programs, researchers, and employers. In June 2018, America's Promise Alliance assembled a steering committee of 20 industry leaders, employers, youth workers, and scholars, to surface their insights on the key conditions that young people need to gain entry and advance in the world of work. What emerged was a belief that all young people deserve and can benefit from being Ready, Connected, and Supported throughout their working lives. The framework, therefore, seeks to capture the insights, lessons, and leanings of the steering committee; existing empirical literature; and ongoing industry efforts within the three thematic domains of Ready, Connected, and Supported to describe the conditions required for youth to thrive in the world of work. The early phases of the YES Project research agenda will leverage youth voice to further refine these conceptual definitions. As a foundational step, the campaign's working definitions of these concepts informed by existing literature are understood as follows:

READY: To provide competitive value in today's rapidly changing world of work, youth must be lifelong learners ready to adapt to occupational challenges, chances, transitions, and change. This requires an adaptive profile of readiness, including an education and collection of flexible cognitive and technical skills, a range of social and emotional capacities, and an array of career management competencies. Youth who are ready will possess the credentials and skills, social and emotional competencies, and career management capabilities necessary to secure decent employment and navigate the world of work as a valued member of the workforce.

CONNECTED: Far too many young people have strengths and skills that render them ready for work but lack access, attachment, and engagement to the key contexts, activities, and relationships that can foster a sense of connectedness to the world of work and facilitate their entry and success within the workforce. Connected describes the strength of young people's affiliation with the world of work and their own career development. Youth who are connected will have developed and sustained access to, attachment toward, and engagement with the world of work and their working lives. This access, attachment, and engagement extends to the broad range of systems and institutions (e.g., school, labor market, workplace), opportunities and learning experiences (e.g., effective education, formal and informal career development, work-based learning, apprenticeships, internships, etc.), relationships, and resources that facilitate positive and developmentally appropriate work-related outcomes (e.g., increased readiness, job search and attainment activities, employment and/or advancement, social capital development).

SUPPORTED: Young people require a range of social supports at each stage of their career development. Support can come from a variety of sources (e.g., mentors, employers, teachers, parents, neighbors, coworkers) and manifest in diverse forms (see Table 1). Furthermore, existing literature and previous research from the Center for Promise indicates that a single source of support may not be enough to provide youth with the variety of resources they need to thrive. A comprehensive web of supportive relationships spanning across the various developmental contexts in which youth are embedded (e.g., family, school, work, community, friends, etc.) can more aptly provide youth with an array of developmental supports that are aligned with the young person's unique strengths and needs.[4]

Table 1. Types of Support (Adapted from Wills & Shinar, 2000)

Support Type	Description
Emotional	Enable sharing of feelings, expression of experiences/concerns; demonstrate sympathy, caring, acceptance
Instrumental	Provide tangible goods, services, or help such as money, household goods, transportation, childcare, assistance accessing health care, help with cooking, cleaning, shopping, repairs, tools/equipment, etc.
Informational	Provide information about resources, provide advice for problem solving, or guidance about effective courses of action
Companionship	Provide sense of belonging, camaraderie, and partnership, often through shared activities such as sports, outdoor activities, arts and entertainment (e.g., movies, theater, museums), restaurants, shopping, parties, trips
Validation	Provide consensus about the prevalence of problems, the normativeness of the individual's experiences/behavior/feelings, and the individual's position relative to the population

4 Varga & Zaff, 2017

Empowering 16- to 24-year-old young people with career readiness competencies, connection to the world of work, and support from a vast web of caring relationships across contexts can prepare young people to walk a clearer pathway towards employment as they envision and actualize their careers. Becoming Ready, Connected, and Supported to succeed in the workforce requires the alignment of various systems, organizations, and individuals to whom the young person is attached. Thus, a young person's likelihood of becoming Ready, Connected, and Supported is influenced largely by developmental and environmental factors, including equity and access (or lack thereof) to developmentally rich contexts and opportunities. As such, the Ready, Connected, Supported framework aims to engage a broad community of actors to effectively reshape the youth employment narrative and galvanize support to ensure that all **Y**oung people who are searching for work are **E**mployed and **S**uccessful.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WORLD OF WORK

The Importance of Work in People's Lives

The prevailing literature on work and careers consistently converges on the notion that work plays a crucial role in people's lives. When individuals are connected with decent work experiences, employment offers a primary means of fulfilling basic human needs for survival, human connection and relationships, and the expression of self-determination.[5] Employment is critically linked to psychological and physical health and the loss or lack of work is associated with grave outcomes ranging from depression and anxiety to higher rates of illness, death, and suicide.[6] Moreover, work represents a key context in which individuals craft and express their identities,[7] personal interests,[8] and individual and collective values.[9] For some, work represents an enduring source from which to derive personal meaning and fulfill one's life's calling.[10] For others, including many young people in America, work's primary function is to provide a means for accessing sustenance, shelter, and other key resources (e.g., healthcare, education, insurance) to support the wellbeing of themselves and their families. What is borne out by decades of research from the psychological, sociological, and economic sciences is that work is essential to our ability to live healthy, meaningful, and dignified lives.

The Changing Nature of Work

The world of work is changing rapidly. Macro-level social and economic changes spurred by globalization, the expansion of capitalism, technology and automation, political change, and demographic shifts are reworking the economic and labor landscape.[11] As these tides turn, the collection of skills required by workers to maintain a competitive advantage in the 21st century global economy continues to evolve. The wake of these currents, however, extends far beyond the scope of occupational performance. The changing world of work has fundamentally reshaped the notion of what it means to construct a career.[13]

Scholars have increasingly focused on the nature by which the changing world of work has dismantled historical 'meta-narratives' describing the lifelong progression through a linear, predictable, and stable career.[14] The process of selecting and entering into a career characterized by stability, advancement, and long-term security has long been a privilege reserved for more socially and economically advantaged groups.[15] However, the changing nature of work yields a broad impact on the working lives of individuals and communities with complex implications stretching across divisions of class, geography, education, and race/ethnicity.[16] Young people today are required to be lifelong learners, who will likely have multiple jobs, if not careers, in their lifetimes.[17] As such, young people are called to develop adaptable competencies, upskill (i.e. learning additional skills), re-skill (i.e. learning an entirely new set of skills), and flexibly anticipate their continued adjustment to the many transitions imposed on the lives of workers by the post-industrial world of work. In the wake of change, opportunities to gain early exposure to work and career development opportunities

5 Blustein, 2006; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016; Kenny & Medvide, 2013; Kenny, Blustein, & Meerkins, 2018
6 Jin, Shah, & Svoboda, 1995; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009; Roelfs, Shor, Davidson, & Schwarts, 2011; Swanson, 2012
7 Savickas, 2005, 2012; Super, 1990; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996
8 Holland, 1997; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994
9 Brown, 1996
10 Dik, Byrne, & Steger, 2013; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007
11 Jacobs & Hawley, 2009; World Bank, 2019
13 Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Savickas, 2005, 2012
14 Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006; Mirvis & Hall, 1994; Savickas, 2012
15 Blustein, 2006
16 Blustein, 2006; Blustein, Kozan, Connors-Kellgren, & Rand, 2015; Savickas, 2012
17 Carnevale, Strohle, Ridley, & Gulish, 2018; Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2005; Illanes et al., 2018; Savickas, 2012

remain integral for young people to foster readiness skills, connectedness to the world of work, and accrue the network of social support required for long-term success.

The State of Youth Unemployment

In 2018, the national unemployment rate in the United States was 3.9%, the lowest rate since 1969 and notable in the context of economic recovery from the mid-to-late 2000s.[18] Although youth unemployment rates have settled below their pre-recession levels and also remain at historic lows, compared to the overall population, **unemployment remains nearly 3.5 times higher (12.9%) for youth ages 16-19 and almost double (6.9%) for young people ages 20-24**.[19] Moreover, unemployment metrics exclude a great sum of disconnected youth who are not presently searching for work for any number of reasons such as discouragement, caretaking, or other life stressors that impede their ability to focus on finding a job.[20] The unfortunate reality is that many young people continue to strive fruitlessly for opportunities to engage with the world of work and chart a career path with the promise of upward mobility.

The influences on the youth unemployment rate are numerous and include both systemic and individual factors that shape young people's readiness, connection, and support in accessing and thriving in employment. They range from broad economic factors to systemic sociocultural barriers and personal circumstances.[21] However, empirical evidence about the drivers and repercussions of the decline in youth employment remains somewhat limited.[22]

Youth unemployment tends to be consistently higher than adult and general population rates.[23] However, youth unemployment is also generally more volatile and disproportionately prone to fluctuation in response to economic and labor market trends.[24] Young people are therefore often more likely to experience the adverse effects of both global and local economic trends such as hiring freezes, layoffs, or industry shifts.[25] Thus, more general labor market forces may disproportionately render young people more likely to experience unemployment. Some hypothesize that this may be the case because, on balance, young people tend to possess relatively less human capital and fewer advanced skills to leverage and sustain opportunities within the economy.[26]

Overall declines in youth labor force participation (e.g., employment or active searching) are likely a large contributing factor to relative lows in youth unemployment. Over the last 30 years, the number of youth out on the job market has significantly dropped as the labor force participation rates of 16- to 24-year-old young people are on par with historic lows.[27] For example, between 2000 and 2014, the total number of employed young people ages 16-19 dropped 36%, despite a 3% increase in the total population of this age range.[28] While the number of working youth has declined, individuals ages 55 and over are continuing to work longer than their predecessors, resulting in a rising labor force participation rate among older workers.[29] Many may retire from their careers but assume part-time, lower-wage positions, thereby occupying positions that might otherwise provide early work opportunities for youth.[30] Declining participation is also due in part to historical trends of young people increasingly forgoing youth employment opportunities in favor of educational enrollment, a point that is particularly salient during and following periods of economic recession and reflected in the sharp declines in youth employment following the 2007-2009 recession.[31] With a tightening market, increasing sociocultural cues to attend college, and the burgeoning proliferation of postsecondary education institutions, many youth may opt for an education over occupation.

Although a concerted focus on education attainment may lead to improved post-graduation career prospects for some youth, there remain considerable issues surrounding equitable access and persistence to and through college that can undermine long-term career prospects. Although the national high school

18 Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019
19 Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019
20 Ross & Holmes, 2019; Zaff, 2018
21 Smith, 2012
22 Smith, 2012
23 Bell & Blanchflower, 2011
24 Bell & Blanchflower, 2011; ILO, 2010; Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007
25 Bell & Blanchflower, 2011
26 Bell & Blanchflower, 2011
27 BLS, 2017; Chancer et al., 2018; Edwards & Hertel-Fernandez, 2010; Hossain & Bloom, 2015
28 Ross & Svajlenka, 2015
29 BLS, 2017; Harrington et al., 2016
30 Macunovich, 2012
31 BLS, 2017; Rice, 1999

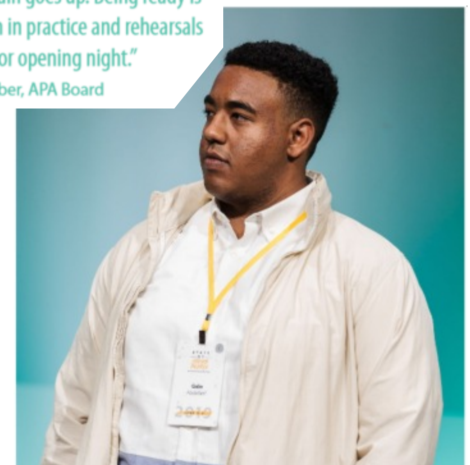
graduation rate has continued to improve, rates for youth of color and youth from low-income communities continue to be lower than the national average, contributing to inequities in preparation and college readiness.[32] Moreover, retention rates for postsecondary degrees remain relatively low and highly variable by institution type and student characteristics. In 2011, only 57% of those seeking a degree graduated within six years.[33] Although four-year nonprofit institutions demonstrated the highest completion rates (76%), graduation rates at two-year public schools were approximately half as high (38%). This may be due in part to the finding that an estimated one third of students who enter college are deemed unprepared and are required to take remedial classes, a practice which bears considerable costs and limited evidence in effectively enhancing students' skills.[34]

Systemic barriers and differences across sociocultural and economic dimensions further contribute to inequitable postsecondary outcomes for students. Better resourced postsecondary institutions and those that spend more on resources (e.g., greater funds used for instruction) have significantly better graduation rates even after accounting for individual differences among the students.[35] Better resourced institutions, however, tend to have higher proportions of affluent and largely White students.[36] Thus, although the number of youth enrolling in post-secondary education is rising, the enrollment, practices, and outcomes embodied by institutions of higher education continue to favor more socially and economically privileged students.[37]

As such, many young people struggle to traverse postsecondary education systems and are forced to confront the labor market with insufficient credentials or education to unlock the gates of opportunity. Less-educated youth have a greater risk of unemployment with recent estimates suggesting that unemployment rates are two to three times higher for youth with a high school degree compared to those with a college or associate's degree.[38] Leaving school without a degree is the most widespread for community college students and those with low test scores who enroll in four-year degree programs.[39] Such leaks in the school-to-work pipeline are critical problems and leaving school early without the necessary credentials is cited as a key factor contributing to youth unemployment.[40]

Further still, the number of in-school youth who work has also declined significantly in recent years.[41] In 2018, only about one third (34%) of youth in high school or college were employed, whereas nearly half of in-school youth held jobs in 2000.[42] Initial work experiences for both in- and out-of-school youth are crucial to establish connections to the world of work, learn how to succeed in the workplace, and demonstrate their value. Internships and apprenticeships, for example, can be foundational entry points to the labor market and can bridge the school-to-work transition by tying together academic learning with applied work experience.[43] Early work experiences also enable youth to signal that they have key readiness skills, as prior work experience means that previous employers can corroborate a young person's self-reported competencies to prospective employers.[44] Work-based learning provides an avenue for young people to develop readiness skills, establish connectedness to the world of work, and cultivate supportive relationships in workplace contexts. Many young people, however, face an uncertain labor market devoid of the education and applied work experience necessary to gain entry.

> "Being ready isn't about one's state of mind when the whistle blows or as the curtain goes up. Being ready is about the work that goes on in practice and rehearsals leading up to the big game or opening night."
> –Gabe Abdellatif, Youth Member, APA Board



32 Atwell, Bridgeland, Ingram, & Balfanz, 2019; NCES, 2019
33 Shapiro, Dundar, Huie, Wakhungu, Yuan, Nathan, & Bhimdiwala, 2018
34 Chen & Simone, 2016; Kurlaender & Howell, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2017
35 Bound, Lovenheim, & Turner, 2012; Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Turner, 2018
36 Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Ross & Holmes, 2019
37 Carnevale, Hanson, & Gulish, 2013; Chancer et al., 2018; Ross & Holmes, 2019
38 Ross & Svajlenka, 2016
39 Rosenbaum, Ahearn, & Rosenbaum, 2017
40 Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007
41 Hossain & Bloom, 2015
42 Child Trends, 2019
43 Stern, Dayton, & Raby, 2010
44 Harrington, Snyder, Berrigan, & Knoll, 2016

Although many youth struggle to get a foot in and leg up in the labor market, there are approximately 7.5 million job openings, many of which include entry-level roles, yet 46% of employers report difficulty filling jobs, often attributing this challenge to talent shortages.[45] The paradox of high rates of youth unemployment amidst an apparent job-rich environment is hypothesized to reflect additional problems with the school-to-work pipeline. Some have attributed this to misalignment between the preparation offered through education systems and the modern demands of the labor market.[46] For example, employers and scholars report that graduates often lack the discipline-specific and transferable skills needed to be successful in today's world of work, suggesting demand for revisioning the ways that education systems and other developmental contexts prepare young people for the workforce.[47] This gap also suggests an opportunity to better align degree requirements and evaluated competencies with college and career readiness standards and labor market demands to improve the transition from school to work.[48]

Others have attributed the mismatch between youth and employers to biases in institutional perceptions and hiring practices that disproportionately affect young people or other candidates that do not fit conventional hiring criteria. Many employers perceive youth as having a "skills gap" in which they lack the tools to be adequately prepared for work.[49] Although recent studies indicate that many out-of-work youth possess similar skill profiles as currently employed individuals,[50] employers continue to depend on indicators traditionally believed to be positively associated with workplace success, such as age, experience, and most notably educational attainment.[51] Employers' allegiance to proxies, such as education level, may not be the most accurate predictors for success in entry-level jobs, yet serve as gatekeepers barring many unemployed young people from positions for which they do in fact have the necessary capacities and skills.[52] Unilateral reliance on such indicators may lead employers to overlook adroit youth who are prepared, capable, and eager to work.[53] For instance, employers want a broader pool of talent to recruit from, yet only 44% of employers are seeking talent through alternative sources such as youth-serving workforce development or career pathways programs.[54] Some companies have begun to realize that they may miss out on talented young people for entry-level positions if they cite a four-year degree as a job requirement; however, historical industry practices remain an obstacle.[55]

Although youth unemployment has rebounded to pre-recession rates, young people, including both currently employed and unemployed youth, may continue to experience the rippling effects of the late 2000s recession.[56] Many young people who were able to find work during and after the recession saw fewer opportunities for career advancement, lower job satisfaction, and suppressed earnings, due to high levels of competition and increased fiscal constraints during the slump.[57] For example, although median hourly earnings remained relatively stagnant for workers over 25 from 2000-2014, wages fell by approximately 6% and 5% for youth ages 16-19 and 20-24, respectively.[58] Such effects pose a dual influence on youth labor participation as some youth may select out of opportunities deemed not economically viable whereas others are confronted with increasingly vulnerable occupational footing. Notably, many young people who became precariously employed during or after the recession took low-wage occupations, which is a well-documented risk factor for future unemployment.[59]

Precarious employment—work that is unstable, insecure, or temporary—among youth, however, is not unique to periods of economic depression. Structural changes globally are imposing new levels of economic precarity on the market at large.[60] Increasing globalization and technological advancements from artificial intelligence to machine learning have given rise to the growing movement toward unpredictable, irregular, and temporary work sometimes referred to as "gig" work. Moreover, some have described the growing chasm between "good" and "bad" jobs wherein the burgeoning growth

45 BLS, 2019; Canner et al., 2015; Manpower Group, 2016
46 Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007; Ryan, 2001
47 Lau, Wilkins-Yel, & Wong, 2019
48 Atwell et al., 2019; Rowan-Kenyon, Savitz-Romer, Ott, Swan, & Liu, 201749
49 Casner-Lotto, Barrington, & Wright, 2006; ILO, 2018; Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011
50 Canner, Carlton, Halfteck, & Irons, 2015
51 Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018
52 Canner et al., 2015; Grads of Life & Accenture, 2018
53 Harrington et al., 2016
54 Manpower Group, 2016
55 Grads of Life & Accenture, 2018
56 World Bank, 2019
57 Kalleberg & von Wacheter, 2017
58 Ross & Svajlenka, 2015
59 Stewart, 2005
60 Campbell & Price, 2016

of high and low-skill jobs persists while middle-skill jobs dissolve, leaving little scaffolding for young workers to find an upwardly mobile path toward opportunity.[61] This can sometimes have the effect of leaving some young people underemployed, stagnating in positions in which their education, skills, and training are underutilized.[62] With the intensifying competition, fewer opportunities, and a transitioning landscape in which workers increasingly bear the risks that were once incumbent on organizations and employers, young people and others with less human and social capital and resources grow ever more vulnerable in the world of work.[63]

In addition to the wide range of economic and educational influences on youth employment, a young person's developmental circumstances and affordances bear immense influence on career and work outcomes. Many risk-immersed young people are confronted by a wealth of barriers to career and workforce development. Empirical research indicates that, compared to their more connected peers, young people who experience disconnection from school and/or work may be more likely to experience homelessness, poverty, early parenting or caregiving responsibilities, major mental health issues, incarceration, disability, peer networks with lower educational achievement, and lower educational qualifications and social supports.[64] While many so-called disconnected youth may not identify with descriptors imposed by industry or academics (e.g., "risk-immersed," "disconnected," "Opportunity Youth"), young people do keenly recognize the many barriers that block their paths to school and workplace success.[65] For example, young people themselves report job availability, work experience, education, transportation, family responsibilities, criminal record, credit issues, and uncertainty about how to engage in the job search process as key obstacles to work.[66] Moreover, young people who experience prejudice, discrimination, and systemic bias may be more likely to disconnect from both education and the job market because of structural barriers, lack of access to opportunities and resources, and internalized messages that they will not succeed.[67]

Exposure to adversity and other barriers does not guarantee that risk-immersed youth will experience negative educational and career outcomes, as protective factors such as social supports or resilient coping can buffer the negative impacts of stressors on developmental outcomes.[68] For many young people who experience disruptions in their education and career trajectories, however, barriers are neither singular nor easily resolved, but rather are cumulative, chronic, and co-occurring. Previous research by the Center for Promise indicated that, among a sample of young people disconnected from both school and work, more than half experienced five or more adverse life experiences—approximately twice as many youth who remained connected.[69] This figure also surpasses thresholds documented within the literature over recent years, which suggest that young people who experience three or more adversities are at heightened vulnerability for less favorable psychological, education, and physical health outcomes.[70] Navigating multiple adversities across developmental contexts and time may require a young person and their support network to divert substantial resources (e.g., internal, external) away from school and career to cope with more immediate demands.[71] Attending to multiple adversities may overwhelm individual resilience, impede one's availability to engage productively with education and career contexts, and negatively influence career development processes.[72]

Overall, trends indicate that U.S. youth labor force participation continues to decline and although youth unemployment rates have similarly decreased, the percentage of young people searching and unable to connect with work remains persistently higher than the overall population. It is important to note that while youth unemployment globally has garnered substantial attention, it continues to be underappreciated in research and as a policy intervention in the U.S.[73] Other countries have integrated work-based learning and vocational training into their education systems, leading to readiness for well-respected jobs with decent salaries.[74] Although international efforts provide useful insights, the U.S. has distinct characteristics (e.g., lower levels of public

61 Autor, 2010; Kalleberg, 2009, 2012; Katz & Krueger, 2016
62 Sum, 2011
63 Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Chancer et al., 2018; Hacker, 2019; ILO, 2017
64 Center for Promise, 2015; Measure of America, 2017
65 Bridgeland & Milano, 2012; Spencer, 2006
66 Bridgeland & Milano, 2012
67 Albritton, Cureton, Byrd, & Storlie, 2019; Carnevale et al., 2018; Hossain & Bloom, 2015; Liang et al., 2017
68 Jelicic, Bobek, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2007; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001; Leffert et al., 1998; Spencer, 2006
69 Center for Promise, 2014
70 Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Anda et al., 2006
71 Masten, 2007; Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014; Spencer, 2006
72 Kenny et al., 2007; Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003; Lent et al., 2002; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, 1997
73 Chancer et al., 2018
74 Symonds et al., 2011

support for government assistance) that prohibit a simple adoption of foreign solutions.[75] Despite the challenges and demand for increased attention toward youth employment, many stakeholders, including youth, political leaders, practitioners, and employers, recognize the power and importance of changing the narrative and practices around youth employment. These individuals and systems are working to address the many barriers to youth career development and employment. However, progress takes time and multifaceted problems require comprehensive solutions.[76]

The Costs of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment comes at a high price. While a range of factors influences long-term employment outcomes, unemployment during adolescence and young adulthood is associated with higher levels and a longer duration of unemployment during later adulthood.[77] Economists have referred to this as a "scarring effect" in which previous unemployment disrupts human capital development and earnings, provides problematic signals to future prospective employers, and invokes problematic downstream effects on earnings and employment.[78] Youth who are unable to obtain steady employment before age 25 will earn 44% less than their peers over their lifetime.[79] The longitudinal economic impact of youth unemployment imposes lifelong constraints on access to resources that are critical to the survival and well-being of workers and their families.[80] However, obtaining a high-wage job following unemployment can buffer the likelihood of future unemployment,[81] underscoring the importance of connecting unemployed youth with high-quality jobs, particularly youth who have experienced involuntary disconnection from previous work experiences.

Early work and learning experiences help youth gain exposure to the world of work, clarify their personal attributes and career options aligned with those attributes, and build the competencies, confidence, and hope to establish a vision of themselves in and through work.[82] Particularly for young people not pursuing four-year degrees, less work experience early on (e.g., high school) is associated with future unemployment and lower earnings.[83] Without the structure and learning that employment provides, youth are at a greater risk for a range of adverse outcomes including criminal activity, future unemployment, and physical and mental health concerns.[84] Unemployment and the inability to establish a positive connection to the world of work early in young people's lives, therefore, pose significant costs on individuals' lives and futures.

Moreover, youth unemployment imposes immense costs to society. In dollar terms, the loss largely accounted for in uncollected taxes is estimated at approximately $25 billion a year and a total of $1.6 trillion over their lifetimes.[85] Lost wages impact the economy through less spending and consequently slower growth for businesses and the economy as a whole.[86] Relatedly, young people who are unable to provide for themselves through work often end up depending financially on their families and government programs.[87] Examining several of the direct costs associated with youth disconnection (i.e. related to incarceration, Medicaid, public assistance, and supplemental security income payments), Lewis and Burd-Sharps[88] calculated the cost to taxpayers at $26.8 billion in 2013; a sum that would pay for 2.2 million individuals to complete community college degrees or more than 800,000 to attain a trade school degree. The financial costs of youth unemployment are tremendous, as is the demand for reenvisioning our collective efforts to empower young people toward more connected work lives in which their endless potential is better understood, supported, and leveraged toward individual and social impact.

"Building your network is important in helping you reach your personal and professional goals. When starting my first company OpportuniMe, I didn't have any knowledge on entrepreneurship or business, but I met mentors who helped me get it off the ground."

–Miracle Olatunji, Northeastern University Student, Author and Creator of OpportuniMe

75 Chancer et al., 2018
76 Tatum Dutta-Gupta, Hampton, Li, & Edelman, 2019
77 Gregg, 2001
78 Arulampalam, 2001; Bell & Blanchflower, 2010, 2011; Gregg & Tominey, 2005; Mroz & Savage, 2006
79 Belfield, Levin, & Rosen, 2012; Canner et al., 2015; Gregg & Tominey, 2005; Mroz & Savage, 2006
80 Kenny et al., 2018; Standing, 2014
81 Stewart, 2005
82 Lent, Brown, & Hacket, 1994; Savickas, 2005, 2012
83 Ruhm, 1997
84 Gregg, 2001; ILO, 2010; Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2015; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009
85 Belfield et al., 2012; Mugglestone, O'Sullivan, & Allison, 2014
86 Ayers, 2013
87 Chancer, Sánchez-Jankowski, & Trost, 2018; Ross & Holmes, 2019
88 Lewis and Burd-Sharps, 2015

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUTH AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Center for Promise adopts a positive youth development approach, which emphasizes the potential of all youth, the importance of youth voice, and the critical value of a robust web of supportive relationships.[89] Moreover, the YES Project and the Ready, Connected, Supported framework assume that there are multiple pathways to success and that young people should be supported in following the trajectory that is well-suited to their unique characteristics, motivations, interests, circumstances, and needs. Finally, the YES Project recognizes that not all employment is created equal and that the quality of one's work experience is a critical determinant of a young person's occupational experience and long-term career and life success. Bearing that in mind, the YES Project supports the notion that all youth have a right to decent work experiences in which they can experience dignified and safe working conditions.[90]

Positive Youth Development

The guiding conceptual position of the Ready, Connected, Supported framework is situated in a positive youth development (PYD) perspective. PYD perspectives derive from Relational Developmental Systems Theory and offer a strengths-based perspective aimed to challenge historically deterministic and deficit-oriented narratives about young people and how they develop,[91, 92] The PYD approach posits that all youth have the potential to thrive, positively shape their own developmental outcomes, and contribute to the people and communities in which they are embedded. To understand how a young person can reach their potential, one first must recognize that human development is characterized by the dynamic relationship between a person and that person's context. A person's context includes all of the people, places, systems, and institutions with which the person interacts. Other outside factors are also implicated in how people develop and are worth consideration. These factors include how teachers and school counselors are trained, the policies that schools and communities design and implement, and the cultural norms of the given society.

One cannot solely focus on one factor in a young person's life (e.g., school, a job training program) to optimize that youth's career and workforce development. Instead, the focus should be on the full "developmental system" within which a young person is embedded, which is referred to as a youth system. The range of contexts and influences within a youth system may offer varying profiles of developmental supports and barriers. Moreover, these context characteristics may be more or less congruent with a young person's strengths and needs. When developmental resources within the system are

89 Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Damon, 2004; Larson, 2000; Lerner & Overton, 2008; Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009; Varga & Zaff, 2018

90 Blustein, 2006; Di Ruggiero, Cohen, Cole, & Forman, 2015; Duffy et al., 2016; Ghai, 2003; Vosko, 2002

91 Benson, Scales, & Syversten, 2011; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007; Lerner et al., 2006

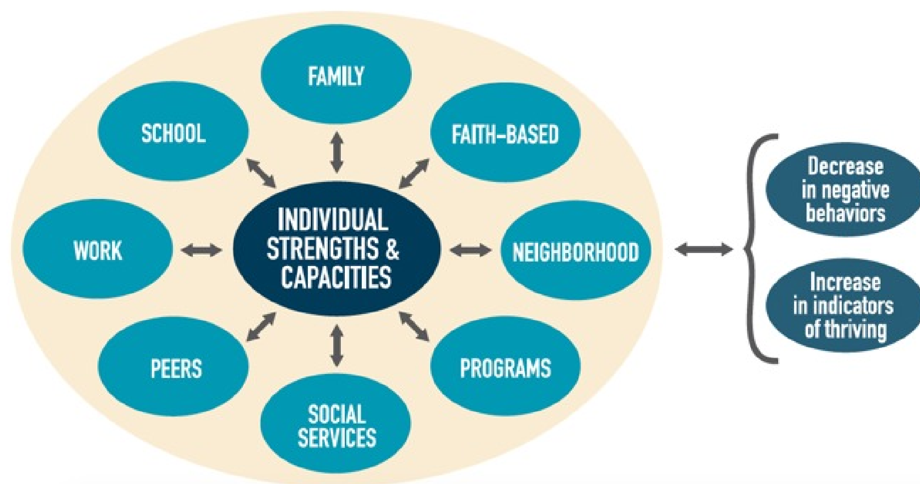
92 Lerner, 2012; Lerner & Overton, 2008; Overton & Lerner, 2014; Overton, 2015

aligned with the attitudes, attributes, and competencies of the young person, it is considered a supportive youth system (see Figure 1).

PYD models seek to promote multiple pathways to positive outcomes by aligning characteristics of youth and their various social contexts.[93] Moreover, differences in developmental outcomes, such as employment and career outcomes, are viewed, in part, as a function of inequitable access to developmental assets and supportive environments.[94] Exposure to supportive conditions, however, can improve developmental trajectories among youth who have not previously experienced such resources, reducing outcome disparities.[95] PYD theory and literature further suggest that positive outcomes are more likely to be achieved when interventions engage more aspects of a youth system rather than fewer.[96]

Bearing these principles in mind, becoming Ready, Connected, and Supported is not an exclusively internal process, incumbent upon the young person or embodied simply by a mindset or maturation. It requires implementing strategies to cultivate supportive youth systems, minding the role of the multiple contexts in which youth are embedded, how those contexts relate to one another, and how those contexts change over time. The agency that young people have and their lived experiences should be acknowledged and should inform how youth are

Figure 1. Positive Youth Development from a Supportive Youth System Perspective



Source: Zaff, Donlan, Pufall Jones, Lin, & Anderson, 2016

Six Features of the Positive Youth Development Perspective

1. All youth have the potential for positive development.
2. Positive developmental trajectories are more likely when youth are embedded in nurturing environments (e.g., relationships, contexts, and ecologies).
3. Positive development is more likely when youth engage with multiple, nutrient-rich environments.
4. All youth, across socio-demographic identities (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic status), benefit from nurturing environments that offer key developmental assets (e.g., support, empowerment). However, PYD strategies may vary as a function of social location.
5. Communities (e.g., neighborhoods, individuals, formal programs) are critical delivery systems for PYD.
6. Youth are agents in their own development and untapped resources for cultivating relationships and environments that facilitate PYD.

Source: Benson et al, 2006

93 Benson et al., 2011; Lerner, et al., 2006
94 Scales et al., 2008
95 Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson, 2006; Taylor et al., 2002
96 Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998 e.g., Spencer, 2006

supported, including and especially on their career path.[97] Anchoring career development in PYD suggests that all youth have the potential to thrive in the workforce when provided with the conditions that support their needs, strengths, and ambitions. The YES Project believes that the best way to optimize workforce outcomes for youth is by shaping the systems in which youth are embedded to cultivate the conditions necessary for youth to be ready, connected, and supported and empower youth to navigate the world of work with agency.

Multiple Pathways for All Young People

"In theory, the path to employment providing financial security in adulthood is simple: Finish high school, enroll in and complete college or training that is affordable and a good fit, gain some work experience along the way, and launch a career. Yet data are clear that this path does not work equally well for all." [98]

Consistent with a PYD perspective, the Ready, Connected, Supported framework embraces the notion that all young people are able to grow and contribute.[99] However, not all young people's careers will progress linearly, in similar directions, at the same rates, or through identical mechanisms. Similarly, the resources and opportunities available to young people may vary widely as a function of the families, communities, systems (e.g., educational, economic/labor, social), and institutions (e.g., occupational organizations/corporations) in which they are embedded. In short, variation in individual and contextual characteristics can lead to diverse trajectories to and through the workforce. The Ready, Connected, Supported framework therefore also acknowledges and values the diversity of pathways along which individual career trajectories may progress. Infinite combinations of individual and contextual factors interact to shape an individual's career path at all phases of one's career.

The YES Project embraces the notion that there are multiple pathways to multiple destinations and no single prescriptive formula can chart the career development of all young people. Communities can optimize those trajectories for each young person by providing school-to-work pipelines and workforce systems that facilitate a "portfolio of options" with "multiple on-ramps and off-ramps" that are responsive to young people's shifting needs and strengths, as well as those of the workforce.[100] This approach is consistent with career pathways models advanced by the federal government and adopted by many youth-serving organizations, education, and workforce development programs.[101] Empowering young people to envision avenues that are well-suited to their attributes and aspirations and providing appropriately tailored support can help young people realize improved workforce outcomes.[102]

Educational attainment remains a critical factor shaping workforce outcomes. The pathways available to young people can vary dramatically depending on their quality and levels of education. For example, prior to globalization and recent technological advances, two-thirds of jobs required a high school diploma or less whereas today, two out of three jobs require at least some post-secondary training or education after high school.[103] Brokering equitable access to effective post-secondary education remains a key issue confronting the country. Investing in human capital development through effective postsecondary education is a key avenue through which young people can optimize their career trajectories. However, opportunities for decent work and sustainable career paths can begin at various levels of education. A recent report by Carnevale and colleagues at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, describes three primary pathways to good jobs: the high school, middle-skills, and bachelor's degree pathways.[104] This report, coupled with a recent study by Ross and Holmes, describing the characteristics of out-of-work young people, provides a deeper understanding of who unemployed youth are and how they traverse educational pathways toward work.[105]

97 e.g., Spencer, 2006
98 Ross & Holmes, 2019, p. 7
99 Lerner, Brentano, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003
100 Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2019, p. 4
101 Kazis, 2016; U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.
102 Goel & Lang, 2019; Gushue & Whitson, 2006; Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011
103 Carnevale & Rose, 2011; Carnevale, Strohl, Ridley, & Gulish, 2018
104 Carnevale and colleagues, 2018
105 Ross and Holmes, 2019

1. High School Degree or Less

Eighteen to 24-year-olds with a high school degree or less make up the largest group of youth who are out of work (62%).[106] These youth often are unattached to the world of work and as they get older (22- to 24-year-olds) are more likely to be disconnected from education as well. Every year in which youth with a high school degree or less are out of school or out of work poses increased challenges to reversing the course. For instance, 22- to 24-year-olds are significantly more likely to have children, be single parents, live in poverty, receive government benefits, and discontinue their search for work compared to their 18- to 22-year-old counterparts.[107] Moreover, many GED programs, postsecondary education, job training, and other community-based organizations lack the funding to provide the intensive outreach required to identify and engage the older cohort of young people under 25. As such, older cohorts of young people may be less likely to receive the targeted supports they require to manage their increasing responsibilities and augment their long-term education and employment prospects.[108]

Despite these challenges, it is important to maintain sight of the fact that the high school degree pathway still comprises 13 million jobs or 20% of good jobs.[109] Many on this pathway begin in entry-level jobs and continuously advance to be managers, supervisors, and other higher-ranking positions across a range of fields including construction, retail, administrative support, and more. [110] Therefore, connecting these young people with entry-level work may be a seminal step to developing along more positive workforce trajectories.

2. Middle-skill

The majority of youth that fall into the middle-skills pathway have enrolled in postsecondary education but do not have a postsecondary degree (32%).[111] The majority are seeking employment.[112] Additionally, they are most likely to identify as a student given that they enrolled in postsecondary education at some point after high school. In general, they are typically in a better position simply through their greater connectedness to school and work than those with a high school degree or less.

Middle-skills jobs were traditionally blue-collar jobs but now include more technical jobs across both blue-collar industries as well as other services such as healthcare, computer programming and operations, surveying and mapping, law enforcement, and more. Much of the workforce development training efforts in the U.S. have focused on preparing youth for this evolving echelon of middle-skills jobs. Many modern approaches to career and technical education, including apprenticeships, work-based learning, career and technical education, and associate degree programs have been designed to respond to the need for middle-skills jobs.[113] Although the number of manufacturing jobs that historically made up the majority of middle-skilled jobs has declined, the changing middle-skills pathway comprises 24% of "good" jobs.[114]

3. Bachelor's Degree

Unemployed youth with a bachelor's degree represent the smallest cluster of out-of-work youth (6%).[115] This cluster of unemployed youth is composed primarily of young people ages 22 to 24 years old.[116] Nearly one-fifth (18%) were in school in the past year, completing college, and almost half (47%) worked in the past year. Two-thirds still live with their parents; however, their median family income ($92,000) is higher than any of the other groups. This is likely a combination of their parents' and their own income. However, almost one-fourth of these youth still live in poverty. Ross and Holmes[117] suggest that this may be a result of being at the beginning of their careers or alternative reasons that are not well understood. Since this group makes up the smallest out-of-work group (6%), the sample size may make it difficult to understand the nuance factors affecting this population. Nonetheless, the small proportion of unemployed youth with bachelor's degrees further reinforces the value of a postsecondary degree.

106 Ross & Holmes, 2019
107 Ross & Holmes, 2019
109 Defined by the Good Jobs Project, a research project by The Georgetown Center and JPMorgan Chase, as a job paying a minimum of $35,000 and an average of $55,000 annually; Carnevale, Strohl, Cheah, & Ridley, 2017; Carnevale et al., 2018
110 Carnevale et al., 2018
111 Ross & Holmes, 2019
112 Ross & Holmes, 2019
113 Carnevale et al., 2018
114 Carnevale et al., 2018
115 Ross & Holmes, 2019
116 Ross & Holmes, 2019
117 Ross & Holmes, 2019

Unsurprisingly, the bachelor's degree pathway accounts for the majority (56%) of "good" jobs available in today's labor market. It is estimated that 74% of all jobs requiring a bachelor's degree are considered good jobs.[118] These jobs include a range of professional and technical occupations including doctors, lawyers, computer programmers, accountants, managers, and others. While youth with bachelor's degrees tend to be more engaged both with school and work, they can still benefit greatly from work-based learning opportunities and apprenticeships, as well as certifications.[119] The degree itself holds a certain signaling value that sets these youth apart, but the degree alone does not guarantee that youth will be Ready, Connected, and Supported to succeed at work. Moreover, although perspectives in the education, workforce, and related policy arenas remain unilaterally supportive of college and career readiness, higher education, and formal credentials, the transition to postsecondary education pathways is often riddled with insurmountable barriers for many youth including adverse life experiences that can knock them off positive pathways.[120]

THE YES PROJECT FRAMEWORK: READY CONNECTED SUPPORTED

The YES Project's basic assumptions suggest that all young people have potential to successfully traverse the various career pathways leading to employment. Moreover, the YES Project suggests that a young person's likelihood of doing so increases when they are equipped with relevant competencies, connected and engaged in key learning experiences, and surrounded by caring relationships and resources necessary for success. Thus, the Ready, Connected, Supported framework describes several elements that can benefit all young people in realizing improved work and career outcomes. Readiness, connectedness, and support do not equate to a simple linear formula for career success, but are rather multidimensional, interrelated, and mutually facilitative constructs that may shape career trajectories in complex and non-linear ways. For example, higher levels of readiness may unlock opportunities to connect with the world of work in new or more sophisticated ways. At the same time, however, connectedness with the world of work through key learning experiences can help grow readiness competencies. Similarly, connectedness with key learning opportunities within the world of work can expose young people to new supportive relationships; however, existing supportive relationships might also connect a young person to an opportunity or teach them a skill that grows their readiness for the world of work. Thus, each of the Ready, Connected, Supported constructs can influence and be influenced by one another as they interact to shape a young person's career development processes. As mentioned, the early phases of the YES Project research agenda will aim to further refine the framework's vision by leveraging youth voice to inform the understanding of what it means to be Ready, Connected, and Supported. As a preliminary step, the YES Project's working definitions of these concepts is described as follows, informed by existing literature.

READY

Young people require a range of skills and competencies to be ready for today's world of work. As the world of work continues to shift, the rungs of the once linear career ladder are disappearing, supplanted by a complex lattice of possible routes. Although acquisition of the skills necessary for the career climb has always posed greater barriers to young people with the fewest social supports, opportunities, and advantages, the "boundaryless and protean" nature of careers in the 21st century presents even greater hurdles to charting and maneuvering one's course.[121] Consequently, conventional notions of career readiness and the strategies by which communities prepare youth for their journey must shift in concert with the evolving work landscape.[122]

118 Carnevale et al., 2018
119 Ross & Holmes, 2019
120 Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2019
121 Blustein, 2006; Briscoe & Hall, 2006, p. 4; Hall, 1996; Savickas, 2012
122 Kenny et al., 2018

Bearing these considerations in mind, what does it mean for young people to be career-ready in today's labor market? In a basic sense, career readiness describes the foundational skills needed across all roles and industries.[123] Readiness, however, is not simply a fixed set of capacities that a young person innately possesses, rendering them universally prepared for all jobs or sectors. Rather, career readiness is a dynamic, developmental, contextual, and relational construct that varies for each young person and their unique situation at various time points across the lifespan and based on the unique historical era in which they are situated.

The YES Project, therefore, views readiness as a function of the unique characteristics of each individual (e.g., ability, motivations, interests), the characteristics of their relevant environments (e.g., occupations, local economy, industry trends, historical periods), and the particular nature of the relation between these individual and environmental characteristics. Thus, from a PYD perspective, readiness describes the alignment between the individual and environmental characteristics that shape a person's capacity for, and optimize the probability of, adapting successfully to develop positively, operate successfully in their work-related roles, and achieve their career and life goals.

Common Terms to Describe Career and Workforce Readiness Skills

- Soft skills
- Nonacademic skills
- Transferable skills
- Work preparedness
- 21st century skills
- Employability skills

Over recent years, a proliferation of efforts to define, operationalize, and measure readiness have emerged in the education, psychological, and economic sciences. These definitions have traditionally emphasized the personal factors describing various adaptive competencies, traits, attitudes, abilities, and behaviors possessed and expressed by the individual in service of successful occupational performance and long-term career outcomes. Although there remains little consensus in defining career or workforce readiness,[124] the existing literature offers valuable insights into some of the common factors across frameworks. An analysis of several available career readiness frameworks (see Appendix, Table 2) illustrates several dimensions that are widely featured in existing research. Based on the authors' approach of crosswalking a selection of existing career readiness frameworks, career readiness describes three areas under which a wide range of discrete skills, competencies, attitudes, and behaviors are clustered: (a) Education/Certification, Skills (e.g., Cognitive, Basic Academic, Applied, Technical, Cross-cutting skills) and Lifelong Learning, (b) Social and Emotional Competencies (c) and Career Management Competencies.

It is critical to bear in mind that the collection of skills that young people require do not lend themselves to neat or easy categorization. The difficulty of cleanly categorizing skillsets, particularly with regard to academic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills highlights the immense overlap across areas and the dynamic nature by which these skills blend together in infinite permutations to form hybrid skills (e.g., collaborative problem solving, written/oral communication).[125] For instance, the modern workforce often demands that workers collaboratively problem solve, critically analyze and communicate technical information in social contexts, maintain individual focus and facilitate collective engagement, and engage in advanced decision making while weighing task-related goals alongside social responsibilities to oneself and others.[126]

Many of these competencies include a blend of cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions that together constitute a layered profile of skills that are both basic and applied, intrapersonal and interpersonal, specific and global, and replicable as well as adaptable. Much of this reflects the growing sophistication of demands imposed by the modern economy. However, complex hybrid

123 Camara, O'Connor, Mattern, & Hanson, 2015
124 National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2019
125 Weber, 2019

kills have undergirded efforts to advance complex solutions to complex problems confronting humankind for centuries.[127] Moreover, the interrelation of these skillsets begins far before young people enter the workplace. Cognitive, social, and emotional competencies develop interdependently from early childhood, connected through their role in, and common reliance on, the biological and developmental parameters that govern foundational brain and skill development and are shaped across the lifespan by the interplay of genetics and lived experience.[128] As such, the myriad competencies comprising career readiness should be understood as interdependent and reciprocally related despite attempts at clear categorization. Moreover, evidence of the relative importance of each dimension is limited. The three dimensions of readiness are therefore presented below with no implied order of importance, but rather as complementary parts of a whole, describing the assets that young people need to thrive in the world of work.

Education/Certification, Cognitive and Technical Skills, and Lifelong Learning

The first component of career readiness involves educational attainment and developing the range of cognitive and technical competencies required to perform successfully in the workplace. Educational attainment remains a key bargaining chip in the labor market with implications on lifelong career opportunities, trajectories, and outcomes (e.g., earnings, health).[129] Formal educational attainment (e.g., high school diploma, post-secondary certifications, associate degree, bachelor's degree, advanced degrees) can unlock new echelons of occupations for young people and furnish access to higher-wage, sustainable career pathways.[130] For example, longitudinal studies indicate that among students with some postsecondary education, high school diploma attainment only, and individuals who do not complete high school, the latter two groups were more likely to work in "easy-entry-easy-exit" industries and experience episodic, lower wage work.[131]

In addition, young people require a range of demonstrable cognitive and technical skills to perform sufficiently the duties associated with a given occupation and justify one's sustained employment or advancement. These competencies range from cognitive skills to core academic skills and basic knowledge to more applied skills and "cross-cutting capabilities".[132] Cognitive skills refer to the basic cognitive processes and strategies that support verbal, literacy, numeracy, scientific, and artistic aptitudes.[133] Previous educational and employment research has emphasized English language abilities (e.g., vocabulary, reading comprehension, spelling, capitalization), mathematics competencies (e.g., math concepts, problem-solving, computation), and other aptitudes falling within the purview of cognitive, intellectual, or executive functioning competencies (e.g., abstract or mechanical reasoning, visualization, memory).[134] Cognitive skills are related strongly to individual earnings, as well as population-level income distribution and economic growth.[135] Moreover, economic studies have demonstrated that the explanatory impact of cognitive skills on wages has increased historically over time in the U.S. and increasingly explains individual wage growth over the course of the lifespan.[136] Cognitive skills, therefore, remain foundationally important as the knowledge economy evolves and appear especially instrumental to career advancement.

Cognitive skills are the building blocks that support the acquisition of basic knowledge and core academic skills, as well as more advanced, applied, or higher order competencies. Examples of basic knowledge and core academic skills drawn from existing models of career readiness include English language (spoken), reading comprehension (English), writing (English), mathematics, and science.[137] Existing frameworks also include core subject literacy in 21st century domains such as government, civics, economics, finance, business, science, environment, health, humanities, arts, foreign

126 Aspen Institute, 2019; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; OECD, 2018
127 Rotherham & Willingham, 2010
128 Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron, & Shonkoff, 2006
129 Sorlie, Backlund, & Keller, 2011; Tamborini, Kim & Sakamoto, 2015
130 Autor, 2010; Brown, 2001; Neild & Boccanfuso, 2010; Ross & Holmes, 2019
131 Neild & Boccanfuso, 2010, p. 270
132 Camara et al., 2015
133 Farkas, 2003
134 Farkas, 2003
135 Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008
136 Murnane, Willett, & Levy, 1995
137 Casner-Lotto, Barrington, & Wright, 2006; Camara et al., 2015; Partnership for 21st Century Skills [P21], 2019

languages, history, geography, and global awareness among others. Exposure to these domains instills key content knowledge relevant to roles within a range of industries, career clusters, and pathways.

Cognitive skills and basic knowledge provide a foundation for higher order competencies, applied skills, learning and innovation skills, and cross-cutting capabilities. These capacities include thinking and learning skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and innovation, communication, collaborative communication and problem-solving, and a range of information, media, and technology skills. Applied skills prepare young people to leverage basic skills and knowledge in service of complex tasks associated with valued occupational objectives or goals. The collection of applied and cross-cutting skills represents the essence of the movement toward teaching 21st century skills as they describe "an emphasis on what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have".[139]

The mechanisms by which education attainment and skill development relate to one another and contribute toward improved economic and workforce outcomes have produced several key theoretical positions within economic and sociological studies of labor. Human capital perspectives suggest that education and training provide a vehicle for skill acquisition, rendering more highly educated and trained individuals more competent to meet the needs of key occupations within the market and thereby more attractive to employers.[140] Credentialist perspectives, however, suggest that the value and effectiveness of education systems as a mechanism for in-demand skill conferral has been overstated, instead asserting education's utility as a cultural status marker, signaling one's trustworthiness and value by virtue of social similarity to labor market power brokers.[141] Relatively recent economic studies examining predictors of economic growth in 31 countries over a three decade period (1960-1990) found that educational achievement test performance (e.g., proxy for cognitive skills) was much more robustly associated with economic growth than was years of schooling.[142] Nonetheless, both positions offer important insights into the relationship between education and employability. The empirical research converges to suggest that both the bargaining capital of degree attainment (e.g., credentialism) and one's cognitive skills (e.g., human capital) provide unique explanatory power, as well as limitations, in predicting workforce outcomes (e.g., employment, earnings). As such, one's education level as well as one's demonstrable competencies represent important complementary dimensions of career readiness.

Moreover, maintaining a proactive stance toward lifelong learning and skill development is instrumental toward managing one's career readiness. Doing so can help workers maintain their competitive value, stay in step with evolving market demands, and take advantage of new opportunities to grow.

Social and Emotional Competencies

Historically, employers evaluated job applicants based on their knowledge and technical skills within a certain domain.[144] However, in today's world, these aptitudes are only a piece of the puzzle; a person's long-term success is based on more than their academic achievement and hard skills. Thus, the need for strong social and emotional skills across domains, in addition to cognitive skills, are of utmost importance in the constantly changing world of work.[145]

Social and emotional skills describe a collection of intra- and interpersonal awareness and regulation competencies required to manage oneself in the workplace. Intrapersonal competencies include personal emotional and behavioral indicators of grit, resilience, perseverance, productivity and accountability, initiative and self-direction, conscientiousness, maintaining composure, self-awareness, positive core self-evaluation and awareness of strengths and interests, making informed decisions, keeping an open mind, and remaining flexible

138 Casner-Lotto, Barrington, & Wright, 2006; Camara et al., 2015; Mishkind, 2014; National Research Council, 2012; Soland, Hamilton & Stecher, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2018
139 Silva, 2009, p. 630
140 Brown, 2001; Weiss, 1995
141 Bossiere, Knight, & Sabot, 1985; Brown, 2001; Weiss, 1995
142 Hanushek & Kimko, 2000; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2011, 2012
143 Boissiere, Knight, & Sabot, 1985; Brown, 2001; Neild & Boccanfuso, 2010
144 Lau et al., 2019
145 Brady, 2010; Cappelli & Tavis, 2018; Lau et al., 2019; Solberg et al., 2018

and adaptable. Social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies also include interpersonal skill sets such as socializing with others, leadership, teamwork and collaboration, acting honestly and ethically, communication skills, and a high priority on cross-cultural skills and global or intercultural fluency. As mentioned, SEL competencies often contribute to higher-order hybrid skills in which a confluence of applied cognitive or technical skills and SEL skills enable workers to achieve more complex tasks or objectives (e.g., collaborative problem solving, flexibility, teamwork, technical assistance or communication).[146]

Employers are increasingly interested in applicants who demonstrate the social and emotional competencies that make them ready to be successful on the job, often citing these as more important than cognitive skills.[147] For example, eight in 10 employers deem social and emotional skills the most important for employee success but perceive these as the skills most often lacking in prospective job applicants.[148] Moreover, emotional intelligence has been significantly associated with resilience and self-perceived employability among young people themselves.[149] Developing social and emotional competencies can support occupational performance as well as brokering access and entry to the world of work as young people are increasingly reliant on internal resources and social relationships to enter and establish themselves in the changing labor market.[150]

Career Management Competencies

Career management competencies describe the range of capacities required to successfully navigate one's work circumstances and career trajectory over time. For example, Career Construction Theory specifies that in the changing 21st century world of work, individuals construct their careers through a process of adaptively aligning their work roles with their changing self-concept throughout their lives and during times of key transitions (e.g., school-work, job-job, unemployed-employed).[151] In so doing, individuals progress through sequences of change, relying on and differing in their adaptivity (e.g., readiness), adaptability (e.g., resources), styles and efforts of adapting (e.g., responses), and ultimately, the success of their adaptation (e.g., results).[152] From a Career Construction standpoint, the readiness to manage one's career most aptly describes one's adaptivity (e.g., psychological readiness) and adaptability (e.g., psychosocial resources).

Adaptivity describes the psychological dispositions that incline one toward flexibility and willingness to change to accommodate shifting personal needs and environmental demands.[153] However, actualizing one's readiness for change also requires a pool of resources to draw upon and guide efforts to adapt. Career adaptability represents the well of psychosocial, self-regulatory competencies that provide the individual with a sense of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence to mobilize responses to impending career development tasks and transitions (e.g., establishing or re-establishing employment). Where adaptivity represents more enduring and stable traits that incline one toward adaptation, adaptability describes the human and psychological capital that enable one to engage in adapting (e.g., responding) to tasks and transitions necessary to realize developmentally productive and appropriate career adaptation (e.g., results).[154] Together, adaptivity and adaptability render the individual ready and resourced (e.g., willing and able) to manage change in their work lives.[155]

Moreover, Career Construction Theory suggests that individuals rely on a vocational identity and career adaptability as two key meta-competencies for effectively adapting to the transitions and tasks inherent to career construction in the 21st century.[156] Vocational identity provides the individual with a sense of direction to guide occupational decisions, anchored by one's evolving self-concept and envisioned fit within the world of work. Accordingly, vocational identity formation describes the process of clarifying an understanding of one's own attributes (e.g., interests, strengths, abilities, values), crystallizing

146 Brady, 2010; Cappelli & Tavis, 2018
147 Farkas, 2003; Lau et al., 2019; OECD, 2018
148 Cunningham & Villasenor, 2016
149 Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015
150 Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015; Rosenbaum, 2001; Vuolo, Staff, & Mortimer, 2012
151 Savickas, 2005; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
152 Savickas, 2005, 2012
153 Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
154 Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
155 Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
156 Savickas, 2005, 2012

this sense of self into a well-defined self-concept, and specifying a congruent occupational choice that enables the expression of one's self through work.[157] The establishment of a positive vocational identity is associated with greater life and career satisfaction, improved well-being and mental health, and a successful transition into adulthood.[158] As described, career adaptability represents the individual's fund of psychosocial resources to be used toward "coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, [and] traumas, in their occupational roles that, to some degree large or small, alter their social integration".[159] In constructing a career or enduring occupational transitions, "the meta-competencies of identity and adaptability give individuals a sense of when it is time to change and the capacity to change".[160] Thus, in managing one's career, adaptivity, adaptability, and identity provide the willingness, ability, and direction that guide career management strategies aimed toward adapting to change and fostering social integration through work.

Existing career readiness frameworks include career management competencies that reflect various aspects of career construction processes. For example, the ACT career readiness framework distills the range of career processes through four components of developing self-knowledge, awareness of environmental factors, integration between the two, and continued management of career and education actions.[161] Other frameworks include aspects such as strong knowledge about oneself, the labor market and occupations (e.g., career clusters, pathways; see Torpey, 2015 for information on the Department of Labor's career clusters and pathways), various processes related to exploration, occupational fit, planning, goal setting, search and attainment, as well as continued management of one's career implementation (e.g., further education, advancement). Whereas the actual engagement in career management activities characterizes one's efforts toward adapting, the traits and competencies, such as the willingness (e.g., adaptivity), resources (e.g., adaptability), and sense of direction (e.g., identity) that underly one's engagement in these career management activities, best describe the individual's readiness competencies for career management.[162]

The construct of career readiness, including a range of education and cognitive skills, social and emotional competencies, and career management capacities, provides a conceptual foundation for projecting one's likelihood of success in the workplace and across transitions throughout their working lives. Thus, career readiness enables the appraisal (e.g., prospectively, in vivo, or retrospectively) of the degree to which one is prepared to cope adaptively with the tasks or demands of one's changing needs as well as those of the labor market. Although focusing on a variety of competencies that young people possess or develop is critical, it is also imperative to focus on the extent to which those skills are relevant to the unique social, educational, and labor contexts in which young people are embedded. By emphasizing the importance of adaptation to the changing world of work, communities can better prepare young people with adaptable capacities that are aligned with the unique opportunities and pathways available to the individual.

CONNECTED

Connected refers to the YES Project's conviction that youth benefit from establishing and maintaining a positive, sustained, and developmentally appropriate relationship to the world of work. Connected describes the strength of a young person's affiliation with the world of work and their own career development. Youth who are connected will have developed and sustained access to, attachment toward, and engagement with the world of work and their working lives. This access, attachment, and engagement extends to the broad range of systems and institutions (e.g., school, labor market, workplace), opportunities and learning experiences (e.g., effective education, formal/informal career development and work-based learning, etc.), relationships, and resources that facilitate positive and developmentally appropriate work-related outcomes (e.g., increased readiness, job search and attainment

157 Chen & Solberg, 2018; Marcia, 1980; Savickas, 2005; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
158 de Goede, Spruijt, Iedema, & Meeus, 1999; Hartung & Taber, 2015; Hirschi, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006; Porfeli, Hartung, & Vondracek, 2008; Porfeli & Lee, 2012; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007
159 Porfeli & Savickas, 2012, p. 662
160 Porfeli & Savickas, 2012, p. 749
161 Camara et al., 2015
162 Savickas, 2005, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012

activities, employment and/or advancement, social capital development). Far too many young people possess the strengths and skills that render them ready for work but lack access, attachment, and engagement with the key contexts, activities, and relationships that can foster a sense of connectedness to the world of work, facilitate their entry into the workforce, and provide a platform for success. Stronger affiliation with the systems, institutions, and people that constitute the world of work can increase the likelihood that young people actively engage with the opportunities, crucial learning experiences (e.g., internships, apprenticeships), resources, and relationships that promote Readiness, Support, and positive career outcomes (e.g., gaining employment).

The YES Project's concept of connectedness derives from developmental and psychological theory, as well as the literatures on school and work connectedness and engagement. The school connectedness literature provides a strong theoretical basis to consider possible dimensions of connectedness. For example, the school connectedness literature suggests that connectedness represents a collection of possible indicators, including one's attachment, bonding, belonging, engagement, sense of connection, involvement, identification with, and even satisfaction with the institutions, people, and experiences related to school and education.[163] Moreover, efforts to measure school connectedness in the literature have commonly included a range of nine common constructs capturing: (1) academic engagement, (2) belonging, (3) discipline/fairness, (4) extracurricular activities, (5) affinity for school, (6) student voice, (7) peer relations, (8) safety, and (9) teacher support.[164] Among these, two hypothesized dimensions of connectedness may bear unique relevance to understanding young people's connection to the world of work: attachment and engagement. Both attachment and engagement have bases in the work and careers literature (e.g., vocational psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, management and human resources studies), lending support to the notion that young people benefit from a strong sense of attachment to, and active engagement with, the world of work and the various opportunities, experiences, resources, systems, institutions, and people that facilitate positive career and workforce development.

Attachment and Belonging in the World of Work

Attachment describes "an enduring affectional bond of substantial intensity".[165] Early studies in the field of psychology examined the attachment responses and patterns of infants toward their caregivers.[166] These studies posited that infants develop unique relational orientations toward caregivers, in part based on caregivers' patterns of responsiveness, which shape infants' distress responses, coping, interactive behaviors, and a range of other relational behaviors (e.g.,).[167] Attachment theorists and researchers suggest that infants with "secure" attachments, typically enjoy high levels of regularity in caregiver responsiveness and rely on their connection to the caregiver as a secure base from which to explore the world around them. Attachment concepts provide a basis for understanding the psychological and emotional bond that the young person experiences toward the world of work, their career, the key institutions or organizations that they are or have been attached to, and the various people in those contexts.

A young person's attachment to the world of work may be multiform, ecological, and complex. For example, in describing the occupational attachment of workers, Maertz & Campion[168] identify several dimensions of attachment. These dimensions include attachment to constituents (e.g., coworkers), affective attachment, alternative attachments (e.g., perception of other opportunities), behavioral attachment (e.g., explicit reinforcers like wages, experience), calculative attachment (e.g., opportunity prospect), contractual attachment (e.g., obligatory), moral attachment (e.g., ethical reasons), and normative attachment (e.g., messages from external sources). Accordingly, young people may express attachment toward

163 Libbey, 2004
164 Libbey, 2004
165 Armsden & Greenberg, 1987, p. 428 as cited by Felsman & Blustein, 1999, p. 284
166 Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1958
167 Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1958
168 Maertz & Campion, 2004

abstract personifications of the world of work broadly, their careers and the role of work in their life, a given organization or institution such as a workplace or school,[169] their particular occupational role or associated tasks, and of course, the many people with whom they interact in key work-related contexts. As such, the YES Project maintains a pluralistic and ecological perspective on attachment to describe various instantiations comprising one's overall sense of relatedness toward the world of work, the relevant systems, institutions, and organizations therein (e.g., school, workplace, training program), and the many people that fill these contexts with whom young people develop interpersonal attachments.

Applications of attachment theory to career development have focused largely on the role of interpersonal relatedness (e.g., attachment, intimacy, mutuality, trust) in facilitating positive individual outcomes. Kenny, Blustein, and Meerkins[170] distill relational perspectives on career development along four key principles outlining the importance of relationships to work as follows:

1. **work is a key context and conduit for human connection,**
2. **close relationships across contexts bear complex and reciprocal interactions with our working lives,**
3. **both past and present relationships influence career development processes across the lifespan (e.g., decisions, exploration, implementation, adaptation, advancement), and**
4. **sociocultural influences and locations (e.g., status, marginalization) condition work and relationships, their meaning, and the interactional dynamics within and across life domains, opportunities, and outcomes.**

For example, numerous studies illustrate that one's sense of attachment to key relationships across life contexts (e.g., parents, peers) positively influences career identity development,[171] career exploration and commitment,[172] career decision making self-efficacy, career orientation, career congruence,[173] greater adjustment to work,[174] and individual wellbeing.[175] Moreover, studies suggest that coworker attachment is associated with positive workplace culture (e.g., civility, psychological safety), exhaustion,[176] attitudes,[177] retention and turnover intentions,[178] emotion regulation behaviors, and organizational citizenship.[179] In fact, among two samples of emerging adult low-wage, low-skill service workers, coworker attachment was found to be the only significant predictor of turnover, even after controlling for attachment to the job itself, job satisfaction, and job commitment.[180] Relational attachments within and outside of work therefore bear immense influence on our working lives.

Social capital perspectives suggest that it is particularly important for young people to develop attachment and integration within networks of relationships with high degrees of social capital. Social capital represents the fund of social resources that are developed, distributed, and accessed among people and institutions within a common network.[181] Youth development research indicates importance associations between social capital and a range of academic, vocational, and psychosocial outcomes.[182] Thus, connected includes the importance that all young people, especially job-seeking youth, develop connection and integration within networks that are high in social capital—particularly social capital relevant to education and work.[183]

For many young people, particularly those who experience disconnection or systemic barriers to the labor market, limited personal and professional network connections pose a barrier to accessing quality opportunities, training, and jobs.[184] Approximately half of all U.S. employees obtain employment through personal connections, creating a stark disadvantage for youth embedded in relational contexts that are low in social capital or connections required to access occupational opportunities.[185] Connectedness to high capital networks can increase a young person's exposure and access to resources, opportunities, and relationships

169 Ashman & Winstanley, 2007; Ng & Allen, 2018
170 Kenny, Blustein, and Meerkins, 2018
171 Blustein, Walbridge, Friedlander, & Palladino, 1991
172 Felsman & Blustein, 1999
173 O'Brien, 1996
174 Hazan & Shaver, 1990
175 Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015
176 Leiter, Day, & Price, 2015
177 Liao, Chuang, & Joshi, 2008
178 Felps et al., 2009; Tews, Michel, & Allen, 2014; Richards & Schat, 2011
179 Richards & Schat, 2011
180 Ellingson, Tews, & Dachner, 2016
181 Bourdieu, 1985
182 Ferguson-Colvin, 2006; Fernandez, Castilla, & Moore, 2000; Thomason & Kuperminc, 2013
183 Freeland Fisher, 2018
184 Hossain & Bloom, 2015

that can broker in-roads to engage with the world of work and support sustained connection to the labor market. The role of social capital in individual young people's success is poignantly summed by Freeland Fisher[186] who notes, "opportunity is social. Achievement may be seen as a proxy for individual merit, but our ability to survive and thrive hinges on social connectedness". Interpersonal connectedness and integration within highly resourced networks offer important benefits for workers with implications ranging from daily experiences within occupational environments to the long-term opportunities one is exposed to across one's career trajectory.

Studies emerging from industrial/organizational psychology over the past several decades also document the immense importance of workers' sense of attachment to organizations themselves—described as "a stabilizing psychological force that ties an individual to an organization".[187] For example, meta-analytic findings from a sample of more than 400 studies indicated that organizational attachment (e.g., psychological) is positively related to employee health.[188] Other studies document the association between organizational attachment and job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity,[189] workplace resource attainment,[190] turnover,[191] and work engagement and corporate citizenship,[192] among other factors. Moreover, individuals, especially women and less-educated individuals, are more likely to take part in the labor market and find work when they are surrounded by a highly educated labor market, even after controlling for education level.[193] Developing a basic sense of connection to the institutions and contexts in which our work lives occur can foster an important attachment and exposure to the world of work that transcends and complements the interpersonal connections that influence careers.

Active Engagement in the World of Work

Drawing again from models of school connectedness, the YES Project assumes that in addition to attachment, connectedness embodies elements of active engagement with the world of work and one's own career. Considered from a developmental standpoint, connectedness can describe the availability of, orientation toward, and participation in proximal processes[194] germane to positive workforce outcomes (e.g., employment, performance, advancement, self-directed transition and choice). PYD perspectives suggest that young people who are strongly connected to one or more developmentally rich educational and/or work-related contexts are likely to have better career and workforce development outcomes compared to young people who are disconnected from such key developmental contexts.[195] However, developmental science suggests that development occurs neither as a function of time alone, nor as a passive process in which individuals simply receive inputs from external contexts. Considering these points together, young people must be actively engaged in experiences and interventions across multiple contexts. Positive developmental outcomes are more likely to ensue when young people are exposed to and engaged in developmental experiences that stimulate both their holistic development, as well as their career development specific to the career and work domain.[196]

This is consistent with foundational theories of career development, which suggest that young people must actively engage in their career development. For example, Social Cognitive Career Theory, one of the most widely researched and empirically supported models of career development, specifies that active engagement in learning experiences provides the basis for developing positive self-efficacy and outcome expectations, which predict successful vocational interest development, career choice-making, performance, and persistence, as well as satisfaction/wellbeing.[197] Moreover, Career Construction Theory suggests that adapting (e.g., responding) to the changing needs of oneself and the world of work requires active engagement in experiences that support the mastery of career development tasks, coping

185 Gardecki, 2001; McDonald, Gaddis, Trimble, & Hamm, 2013
186 Freeland Fisher, 2018
187 Ng & Allen, 2018, p. 2; Shapiro, Hom, Shen, & Agarwal, 2016; Sroufe & Waters, 2017; Sung et al., 2017; Vora & Kostova, 2015
188 Ng & Allen, 2018
189 Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Hunter & Thatcher, 2007; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992
190 Shore, Bommer, & Shore, 2008
191 Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Koch & Steers, 1978
192 Lin, 2010
193 Ross & Holmes, 2019; Winters, 2012
194 e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007
195 Bakshi & Joshi, 2014; Larson, 2000; Vondracek, Lerner, & Schulenberg, 1983, 2019
196 Tilak, 2003; Vondracek et al., 2019
197 Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent, Brown, & Hacket, 1994

with transitions, and adjusting to barriers or hardships.[198] Career Construction Theory suggests that adapting occurs through five key sets of behaviors, involving orientation, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement, which describe the key means of engaging with a career-related task or transition.[199] For example, as a young person adapts to the transition into employment, they must become oriented to a new role, explore the requirements and associated attributes of the role, establish themselves by performing the role, manage successfully in the role for a given time, and disengage (ideally voluntarily due to readiness for new opportunity).[200]

The "adapt" permutations of Career Construction Theory (e.g., adaptivity, adaptability, adapting, and adaptation) also highlight the relationship between Readiness and Connectedness within the Ready, Connected, Supported framework. Recall that successful career outcomes (e.g., adaptation results) require engagement in behaviors (e.g., adapting responses), which rely on one's willingness (e.g., adaptive readiness) and psychosocial capacities (e.g., adaptability resources). Thus, successful career construction requires young people to be Ready (e.g., adaptive, adaptable) and Connected (e.g., engaged in active adapting) to key contexts, experiences, and roles that provide opportunities for successful adaptation. For example, indicators of career readiness (e.g., career adaptability, identity, self-efficacy) have been positively associated with career engagement, suggesting that career readiness capacities may foster more active orientations and participation in positive career behaviors.[201] Moreover, empirical research studying the college transition among first-year students suggests that elements of career adaptability (e.g., optimistic orientations toward school transitions) were associated with positive psychological and academic adaptation, as a function of engagement in coping behaviors (e.g., adapting).[202]

In other words, readiness and exposure to career development contexts (e.g., higher education) alone will not prepare young people to thrive in the world of work. It is through active engagement with the tasks associated with school and work transitions that young people leverage their readiness competencies to realize positive outcomes (e.g., adaptation). Moreover, readiness and engagement across contexts can mutually support positive career development. For example, longitudinal studies indicate that career readiness was associated with increased school engagement in an ethnically diverse sample of youth attending U.S. public high schools.[203] Thus, connectedness to the world of work and one's career requires the young person to engage as an active participant in the various contexts, opportunities, and experiences that will foster positive career growth.

A wealth of empirical evidence within the education and career development literature supports this notion. Studies on school engagement suggest that engagement involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral indications of young people's connectedness and participation in school and educational experiences.[204] Positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment toward school-related tasks, institutions, and people is associated with higher levels of student achievement and enrollment persistence (e.g., not dropping out).[205] Career engagement research has also examined various expressions of actively participating in and responding to developmental tasks associated with constructing one's career.[206] Previous studies of career development have operationalized career engagement as a diverse collection of proactive behaviors reflecting increased investment toward one's own career development (e.g., self and environment exploration, active career planning, participation in work or learning experiences).[207] Engagement in one's career and relevant learning experiences has been associated with a range of positive outcomes including goal decidedness, interest development, choice congruence, performance, and satisfaction.[208]

Engagement can occur through a range of learning experiences. Work-based learning, for example, encompasses a broad collection of

198 Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
199 Savickas, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
200 Savickas & Porfeli, 2012
201 Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016
202 Perera & McIlveen, 2014
203 Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jackson, & Perry, 2006
204 Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Jimerson, Campos, & Greene, 2003
205 Fredricks et al., 2004
206 e.g., Lent & Brown, 2013; Savickas, 2005, 2012
207 Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011
208 Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011; Lent & Brown, 2013

opportunities for young people to connect and engage with the world of work through internships, apprenticeships, service- and community-based learning, and on-the-job learning in part- or full-time employment itself.[209] Research demonstrates that countries with more extensive career and workforce development programming that pairs learning experiences with work-based apprenticeships and vocational education (e.g., Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland), have significantly fewer disconnected youth and lower rates of youth unemployment than countries with less robust workforce development programming.[210] Providing youth with opportunities to connect to the world of work (e.g., work-based learning, apprenticeships) is crucial to expose young people to the world of work, develop foundational skills and readiness for future opportunities, identity (both generally as a worker and specific to the occupation), and to develop work-salient networks that can increase social capital and support.

Young people benefit from a strong and secure connection to the world of work as a basis for encouraging their active exploration of pathways to and through the labor market. The YES Project posits that young people can become more connected through the development of a strong sense of attachment and belonging to the world of work and the many systems, institutions, and social networks therein. Moreover, connection involves actively engaging with these contexts through key learning experiences, opportunities, and relationships that foster positive adaptation to their changing needs and those of the evolving occupational landscape.

Unemployment and other forms of disconnection may represent a lack of regularity in responsiveness to the young person's needs on behalf of the world of work, which may constrain future engagement with the world of work and engender anxiety, uncertainty, or discouragement.[211] When young people are unable to make secure and positive contact with the world of work during their early career development (e.g., experience unemployment), they may internalize feedback that they are unworthy or ill-prepared. These experiences may adversely influence young people's confidence to pursue subsequent opportunities, thereby limiting their immediate and long-term employment outcomes and creating uncertainty and pessimism about their futures.[212] Unemployed youth often experience social exclusion and isolation, alienation, a sense of worthlessness, and a loss of hope in the future, all of which can contribute to a broad range of negative outcomes (e.g., exacerbated mental health problems, poor decision making).[213] However, a strong sense of connection across ecological levels may provide a tether that securely links a person to the context of work, limits their likelihood of involuntary career disruptions, and fosters productive re-engagement and coping during periods of separation (e.g., unemployment). Connection to multiple work-related contexts can foster all components of Ready, Connected, Supported by increasing exposure to opportunities to develop readiness, reinforce the positive effects of connection in any single context, and enable youth to increase their networks of caring adults and access to developmental resources (e.g., learning experiences, opportunities, social capital, and social support).

SUPPORTED

The YES Project views caring relationships and social support as critical aspects of the conditions that young people require to thrive in the world of work. Drawing from the Center for Promise's previous work, the YES Project aligns itself with a Webs of Support approach to understanding the role of relationships in youth workforce development.[214] The Webs of Support framework[215] expands on positive youth development theory, as well as the social capital, social networks, and social support literatures. Application of the Webs of Support framework to career and workforce development[216] also builds upon existing efforts within the career development literature, including relational,[217] developmental,[218] and systems theories of career development.[219] Whereas the relational aspects of the Connected component of Ready, Connected, Supported

209 Johnson & Castine, 2019; Rodridguez, Fox, & McCambly, 2016
210 O'Reilly et al., 2015
211 Kenny et al., 2018
212 Chancer et al., 2018; Ellwood, 1982; Furnham, 1985; Hällsten, Edling, & Rydgren, 2017
213 Chancer et al., 2018; ILO, 2010
214 Flanagan, Zaff, Varga, & Margolius, in press; Pufall Jones et al., 2016; Pufall Jones et al., 2017; Varga & Zaff, 2018
215 Varga & Zaff, 2018
216 e.g., Flanagan et al., in press
217 Kenny et al., 2018; Schultheiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001
218 e.g., Savickas, 2005, 2012; Super, 1990
219 e.g., Patton & McMahon, 2006, 2014

describe the *what* and *why* regarding the value of interpersonal connections (e.g., social capital), Supported describes the *how* (e.g., function) of relationships. The Webs of Support approach captures the campaign's understanding of the way relationships act as a critical vehicle for supporting the career and workforce development of young people.[220]

The Webs of Support framework is predicated on a recognition that relationships are a fundamental but often underappreciated aspect of both positive youth development and career development.[221] There is a growing consensus that relationships represent a key "vehicle that propels adolescent development" and promote wellbeing across the lifespan.[222] In the context of work and careers, relationships are a primary means through which young people learn about themselves, various occupations, and envision their possible paths through the world of work.[223] Insights into the mechanisms by which relationships foster improved outcomes and the exact features of relationships that optimize those processes remain limited.[224] However, one suggested mechanism by which relationships promote improved outcomes is by serving as transactional conduits for the delivery of key social supports that youth need to survive and thrive.[225]

Social Support

Social support describes the provision of key developmental resources (e.g., material, psychological) that are perceived, received, and/or utilized to cope with stress.[226] Complementary perspectives, however, suggest that in addition to helping individuals cope with stress (e.g., buffering hypothesis), social support confers benefits that improve wellbeing for all individuals, irrespective of current stressors (e.g., main effects hypothesis).[227] Social support is associated with a range of positive behavioral, academic, career, and physical and psychological outcomes.[228] Meta-analytic studies suggest that social support is significantly associated with reduced mortality and overall wellbeing in children and adolescents, and is a critical ingredient of career- and work-based learning interventions.[229] Social support has been associated with a range of positive career development indicators, including career search self-efficacy, goal capacity, vocational identity,[230] career decision self-efficacy and career outcome expectations,[231] career optimism,[232] career engagement,[233] and job satisfaction and tenure.[234] Moreover, social support has been demonstrated to buffer the impact of economic constraints on grade point averages among youth from low-SES backgrounds,[235] moderate the impact of work stress on physical and mental health,[236] and represents a dimension of employability that predicts self-esteem, job search, and re-employment among unemployed individuals.[237] Young people themselves identify career, academic, and socioemotional support as key ingredients for their career development and later success.[238]

220 For a more thorough review see Flanagan et al., in press, and Varga & Zaff, 2018
221 Feeney & Collins, 2014; Schultheiss et al., 2001
222 Varga & Zaff, 2018, p. 1
223 Kenny et al., 2018; Schultheiss et al., 2001; Savickas, 2005
224 Feeney & Collins, 2014
225 Varga & Zaff, 2018
226 Cohen, 2004; Cohen & Wills, 1985
227 Kawachi & Berkman, 2001
228 Howard, Ferrari, Nota, Solberg, & Soresi, 2009; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Yeager, Bundick, & Johnson, 2012; Wills & Shinar, 2000
229 Brown & Krane, 2000; Chu, Saucier, & Hafner, 2010; Holt-Lunstad & Smith, 2012; Showalter & Spiker, 2016
230 Chen & Solberg, 2018
231 Gushue & Whitson, 2006
232 Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998
233 Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011
234 Harris, Winkowski, & Engdahl, 2011
235 Malecki & Demaray, 2006
236 LaRocco, House, & French, 1980
237 McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007

A Webs of Support Approach

A Webs of Support approach represents an application of PYD and positive youth systems theories, in which a constellation of key relationships across the young person's developmental context are coordinated to deliver various supports aligned with the young person's needs, strengths, and strivings. Just as the human body requires the regular intake of a diverse palate of key nutrients, young people require frequent exposure to various types of psychosocial supports to properly function and grow. Social support types commonly include a range of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support.[239] Social support can be delivered from a range of sources, such as family, friends, teachers, romantic partners, employers, co-workers, community members and organizations, mentors, or workforce/career development program staff.[240] In order to realize positive career and workforce outcomes, young people need more than a single champion, mentor, or caring relationship.[241] Empowering young people toward more optimal career outcomes requires leveraging caring peers and adults across contexts to engage the entire "web of relational connections in which our career and work lives are embedded".[242] Engaging more aspects of a youth system may increase the likelihood of producing meaningful and sustainable change in a young person's life.[243]

The Webs of Support framework[244] attends to several core principles in understanding the dynamics and processes underlying the provision of support within a positive youth system:

- Youth agency and characteristics: Young people are active agents in their own development and embody a range of personal characteristics that shape the structure (e.g., size, membership) and function of the Web (e.g., dynamics, resource delivery).
- Interrelatedness of actors: All actors in a Web are related to both the youth and one another by virtue of their embeddedness within the young person's developmental system. Moreover, actors may connect (e.g., bridge) the young person to other potential sources of support to whom the young person is not directly related.
- Delivery of developmental supports: All actors have the potential to provide one or more forms of support. Furthermore, integrating the previous ecological principle of interconnectedness suggests that the support provision patterns of one actor may dynamically shape (e.g., regulate) those of other actors in the web.
- Variation in roles and importance: From the young person's perspective, the importance of a given actor within a web may vary relative to others, over time, and according to situational factors. Although all actors are capable of providing support, some may hold elevated and/or enduring importance. It is hypothesized that youth need at least one person of elevated importance (e.g., anchor) for effective development.

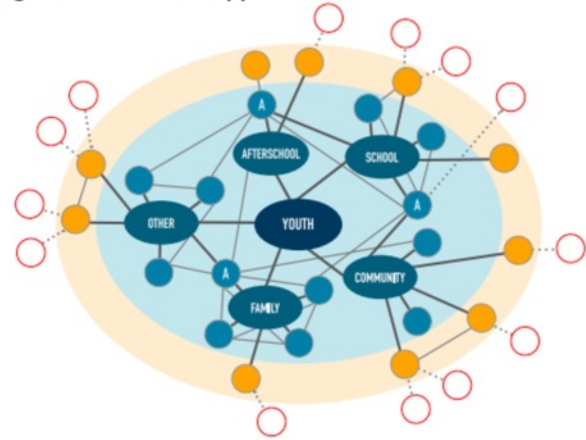
238 Albritton et al., 2019; Pufall Jones et al., 2017
239 see Varga & Zaff, 2018 or Wills & Shinar, 2000 for definitions
240 Chu, Saucier, & Hafner, 2010
241 Freeland Fisher, 2018; Greene, 2018
242 Schultheiss et al., 2001
243 Benson et al., 2011; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011
244 Varga & Zaff, 2018

The structure of a young person's Web of Support will vary by individual. However, several common structural elements are hypothesized to organize the development and activities of a Web **(see Figure 2)**. The representation of actors within a Web are not random but rather may be organized according to the young person's phenomenological experience of the relationships, the social contexts in which the young person and actor typically interact, and the connections across relationships and contexts.[245] The structural elements are derived from PYD theory, social network literature,[246] and youth-adult relationships studies. Key structural elements of a Web of Support include:

- Strong ties: More enduring, consistently supportive relationships (e.g., parents) that may provide the highest levels of direct supports (e.g., bonding social capital; emotional support) and reciprocal investment.[247]
- Weak ties: Less frequent or consistently supportive relationships (e.g., previous acquaintances, a coworker, a former coach or teacher). Weak ties may provide fewer or less frequent direct support but may be called on to facilitate new connections, networks, or resources (e.g., bridging social capital; informational support) that are unavailable within the web. Weak ties may convert into strong ties or vice versa.[248]
- Cores: Clusters of strong ties, often organized by social context (e.g., family, school, work), who engage consistently with the young person and one another, rendering the core interconnected and structurally stable (e.g., resilient). Cores may exist in any and all contexts in which youth are engaged and possess the capacity to adapt when confronted with change (e.g., membership changes, adversity).

  Anchors: A person with an elevated role who may provide the most intensive or varied levels of support.[249] Anchors are the strongest tie in a Web or in a given core, often embodying the person the young person can turn to for anything. Young people benefit from at least one anchor in their web and ideally have one in each key developmental core or context.

Figure 2. A Web of Support



Source: Varga & Zaff, 2017

A key aspect of designing Webs of Support for career and workforce development is building and strengthening ties across contexts with attention toward fostering authentic relationships, robust resources, and a specialized career and workforce development core. All adults are capable of lending some form of support and all communities may possess strengths and resources that benefit the young person's career development. For example, naturally-occurring relationships (e.g., family members, friends, neighbors, teachers) with individuals across contexts in which youth regularly participate have been linked to positive educational, career, psychological, physical, and wellbeing outcomes.[250] The power of a given relationship, core, or Web of Support, however, may be shaped by the collective social capital possessed within the group. Accordingly, the level and type of career support accessible to the young person is largely governed by the membership and collective resources available within the network. In other words, "who you know" matters and networks characterized by a high degree of social capital may have more resources (e.g., material, social) to effectively support the young person's career aspirations and open doors to new opportunities.[251] For many young people, particularly less socially and economically advantaged youth, naturally occurring relationships may be necessary but are not sufficient to provide the comprehensive

245 Varga & Zaff, 2018
246 e.g., Wellman, 1983
247 e.g., Granovetter, 1973, 1995; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Wellman, 1983
248 e.g., Granovetter, 1973, 1995; Wellman, 1983

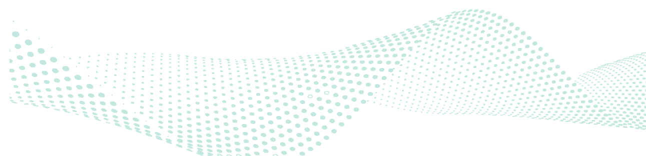
249 Varga & Zaff, 2018
250 DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005
251 Freeland Fisher, 2018

resources and opportunities needed to get ahead in the labor market.

In cultivating a balanced and effective Web of Support to promote career and workforce outcomes, young people may benefit most by leveraging existing relationships and strategically developing connections with individuals who can contribute high social, educational, and occupational capital to the Web. Existing relationships might include a school counselor with a high degree of career development literacy, a former boss with industry connections, or a mentor who deeply understands the young person's lived experience and can connect them with the right programming and people to support their dreams. Building relationships with people outside of youth's primary network who can expose them to work opportunities and familiarize them with new careers is also critical.[252] Fostering close connections with individuals who possess high levels of career-relevant social capital can broker access to a more robust collection of resources and opportunities that the young person can utilize to gain a foothold. Ideally, the young person will galvanize a number of caring relationships devoted toward supporting the young person in establishing employment and pursuing their ambitions. Within the young person's network, these individuals may form a specialized career and workforce development core.

A specialized career and workforce development core is ideally filled with strong and weak ties that are uniquely positioned to support the young person's career needs. For example, weak ties can serve a critical bridging function to connect individuals to new resources, relationships, or opportunities, and literature demonstrates a strong emphasis on weak ties as critical aspects of job-finding networks.[253] Strong ties often provide more intensive and varied forms of direct support throughout the career development process. However, they are also capable of bridging young people to new opportunities. For example, strong ties are particularly important to initial employment, particularly when human capital is limited, unemployment is high, and formal entryways to positions are less apparent.[254] Moreover, employees who enter occupations through strong ties demonstrate longer tenure and wage growth than peers.[255] Additionally important is identifying an anchor with a strong relationship with the young person and unique career and workforce expertise (e.g., school counselors, teachers, work supervisors, work-based learning mentors). The anchor of the career core might provide a range of direct support, guide the young person in strategizing how to best leverage and navigate their web, and bridge the young person to new opportunities, relationships, and resources that facilitate the young person's goals. Together, a collection of key relationships devoted to supporting the young person's employment and career development can improve the likelihood of the young person experiencing positive work and career outcomes.

Social support can optimize the conditions under which young people develop their readiness and connection to the world of work. The Webs of Support framework offers an example of a relationships-focused PYD strategy for aligning social support to promote improved career and workforce outcomes for young people. Empowering youth to construct, strengthen, and navigate a Web of Support that is tailored for their career and workforce development has the power to transcend traditional career and workforce guidance strategies (e.g., dyadic forms of career counseling, mentoring, or apprenticeship) in favor of more distributed, resource-rich approaches that leverage the capital of multiple contexts and actors.

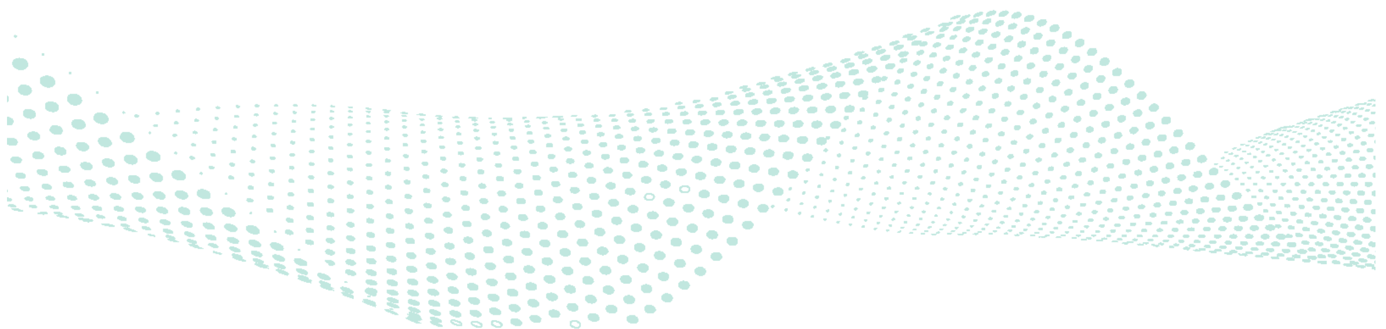


252 Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003
253 Granovetter, 1973, 1995; Montgomery, 1992; Ruef, 2002
254 Goel & Lang, 2019; Kramarz & Nordstrom Skans, 2014
255 Kramarz & Nordstrom Skans, 2014
256 Halpern, 2013

CONCLUSION

Employment and early work experiences provide key benefits to socializing young people into the world of work, cultivating the skills necessary to perform and thrive in the workplace, learn through direct experience, and make positive contributions to society at large. However, many young people continue to struggle in their quest to access and succeed in the world of work.[256] Revolutionary changes taking place in the world of work impose widespread influences on the lives of all workers, especially young people with fewer choices, privileges, and supports.[257] The current landscape is impacting employers in important ways as well, as they experience difficulty finding and retaining employees, producing a ripple effect on the economy.[258] As the unrelenting tides of change continually reshape the nature of work and careers in the 21st century economy, the capacity to learn and adapt are paramount for youth to thrive in the decades to come.[259]

For young people to maintain a competitive advantage in today's labor market, it is incumbent upon communities to support and empower young people to be Ready, Connected, and Supported for the opportunities that lie ahead. Equipping young people with an education and a diverse and adaptable set of skills, key social and emotional competencies, and the vision, willingness, and ability to navigate their careers is paramount for youth to be *ready*. Ensuring that youth are *connected* through a sense of attachment and engagement with the world of work, including the many institutions, experiences, opportunities, and people that they encounter, can foster access and support success in the workplace. Finally, ensuring young people are *supported*, by surrounding them with a comprehensive Web of Support that can provide an array of supports aligned with their needs and strengths can help them to advance along more successful pathways in work and in life.



257 Blustein, 2006; Blustein, Kozan, & Connors-Kellgren, 2013; Duffy, Diemer, Blustein, & Autin, 2016
258 Tatum et al., 2019
259 Raine & Anderson, 2017

APPENDIX *Table 2. Common career readiness components according to existing frameworks*

	National Career Development Guidelines	American Institutes for Research, College & Career Readiness & Success Center (Mishkind, 2014)	ACT (Camara, O'Connor, Mattern, & Hanson, 2015)	Casner-Lotto, Barrington, & Wright with the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006	Partnership for 21st Century Skills	National Association of Colleges and Employers	U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education	National Research Council's 21st Century Competencies (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012)	Naviance by Hobsons College, Career and Life Readiness Framework	Rand Corporation (Soland, Hamilton, & Stecher, 2013)
Education/Certification, Cognitive/Technical Skills, & Lifelong Learning	*Educational Achievement and Lifelong Learning*		*Core Academic Skills*	*Basic Knowledge/Skills*	*Key Subjects and 21st Century Themes*			*Cognitive*	*Academic Skills*	*Cognitive Competencies*
		Academic Knowledge	English Language Arts	English Language (spoken)				Cognitive Processes and Strategies	Learning Styles	Academic Mastery
				Reading Comprehension (English)				Knowledge	Study Skills	
				Writing in English (grammar, spelling, etc.)					Test Preparation	
			Mathematics	Mathematics	Financial, Economic, Business, & Entrepreneurial Literacy				Postsecondary Assessments	
		Citizenship and/or Community Involvement		Government/Economics	Civic Literacy				Academic Goal Setting	
			Science	Science	Health Literacy				Course Planning	
				Humanities/Arts	Environmental Literacy					
				Foreign Languages	Global awareness				*College Knowledge*	
				History/Geography					Postsecondary Opportunities	
									Types of Colleges	
									College Fit and Match	
									College Search	
			Cross-cutting Capabilities	*Applied Skills*	*Learning & Innovation Skills*		*Applied Knowledge*			
		Critical Thinking and/or Problem Solving	Collaborative Problem Solving	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	Critical Thinking skills		College Applications	Critical Thinking
			Thinking Skills	Creativity/Innovation	Creativity and Innovation		Applied academic skills	Creativity	Paying for College	Creativity
			Learning Skills	Oral Communications	Communication	Oral/Written Communication				
				Written Communications	Collaboration				*Transition Skills*	
				Lifelong Learning/Self-direction					School Transitions	
							Workplace Skills		Preparing for College	
					Information, Media, and Technology Skills		Resource management		Preparing for Life	
			Information and Communication Technology	Information Technology Application	Information Literacy	Digital Technology/Information Technology Application	Information Use		Postsecondary Goal Setting	
					Media Literacy		Communication skills		Summer Melt	
					Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy		Systems thinking			
							Technology use			
Social/Emotional Competencies	*Personal Social Development Domain*		*Behavioral/Social Emotional Skills*		*Life and Career Skills*		*Effective Relationships*	*Intrapersonal*	*Social emotional learning*	*Intrapersonal Competencies*
		Social and Emotional Learning, Collaboration, and/or Communication	Sustaining Effort	Professionalism/Work Ethic	Productivity and Accountability	Professionalism/Work Ethic		Work Ethic and Conscientious-ness	Grit	Grit
		Intrapersonal skills, Grit/Resilience/Perseverance			Initiative and Self-direction		Personal qualities	Positive Core Self-Evaluation	Strengths	Intrinsic Motivation
									Interests	
			Acting Honestly	Ethics/Responsibility				Intellectual Openness	Emotional Intelligence	Growth Mindset
			Maintaining Composure		Flexibility and Adaptability				Self-awareness	Learning How to Learn
			Keeping an Open Mind						Informed Decisions	
								Interpersonal	*Interpersonal skills*	*Interpersonal Competencies*
				Leadership	Leadership and Responsibility	Leadership		Leadership		Leadership

				Teamwork/Collaboration		Teamwork/Collaboration		Teamwork and Collaboration	Teamwork	Communication and Collaboration
			Socializing with Others						Communication Skills	
			Getting along well with others				Interpersonal skills		Getting Involved	
				Diversity	Social and Cross-cultural skills	Global/Intercultural Fluency			Support Network	Global Awareness
									Online Presence	
Career-Management Competencies	*Career Management*		*Education/Career Navigation Skills*						*Career Knowledge*	
			Self-knowledge			Career Management			Career Clusters	
			Environmental Factors						Understanding Careers	
			Integration						Career Search	
			Managing Career and Education Actions						Career Fit	
									Further Education	
									Career Goal Setting	

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About the Center for Promise

The Center for Promise is the applied research institute of America's Promise Alliance, housed at the Boston University Wheelock College of Education and Human Development. It is dedicated to understanding what young people need to thrive and how to create the conditions of success for all young people.

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About America's Promise Alliance

America's Promise Alliance is the driving force behind a nationwide movement to improve the lives and futures of America's children and youth. Bringing together national nonprofits, businesses, community and civic leaders, educators, citizens, and young people with a shared vision, America's Promise leads campaigns and initiatives that spark collective action to overcome the barriers that stand in the way of young people's success. Through these collective leadership efforts, the Alliance does what no single organization alone can do: catalyze change on a scale that reaches millions of young people.

About the YES Project

The YES Project is a national initiative launched by America's Promise Alliance that brings together youth, employers, and a diverse network of stakeholders and advocates working to support and grow our youth workforce so that every young person seeking a job can find a job.

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