

The Core Learning Model — The Evidence Behind It

The Grow Space · for school leaders, learning-support staff and clinicians

Every part of a student's Learning Profile is built on established, peer-reviewed psychology and learning science — then **overseen by registered psychologists** (family profiles are individually reviewed; in school cohorts, flagged profiles are reviewed) before release. This page sets out exactly what we use, and what we deliberately **don't**.

The frameworks we use

What we measure	Established framework	Why it's defensible
Personality	Big Five / OCEAN	The consensus model in academic psychology; strong reliability & predictive validity. (We avoid MBTI-style type tools.)
Interests	RIASEC / Holland	The most widely validated model of vocational interests; underpins careers guidance worldwide.
Character strengths	VIA strengths + adaptability	Positive-psychology framework (Peterson & Seligman); a strengths-first, non-deficit lens.
Values	ACT-informed values reflection	Chosen life directions (what matters / the 'why') — a reflective tool to anchor motivation, not a scored test.
Cognition	Working memory, processing speed, pattern / verbal / numerical reasoning, channel	Short screening tasks modelled on recognised paradigms (e.g. digit span, Corsi, matrix & verbal/numerical reasoning) — used to inform study strategy, not to diagnose.
Study & self-regulation	Metacognition & SRL	Based on self-regulated-learning research (Zimmerman; Dunlosky) — the habits that actually move outcomes.

The study science the program is built on

- **Retrieval practice & spaced repetition** — among the most robust findings in learning science (Dunlosky et al., 2013).
- **Dual coding** and **elaboration** — pairing words with visuals; explaining *why*.
- **Cognitive-load-aware strategy** — study tactics matched to each student's working-memory profile.
- **Metacognition** — planning, monitoring and self-testing, the engine of independent learning.

What makes it clinically credible

- **Developed and overseen by registered psychologists.** Family profiles are **individually reviewed** before release; in school cohorts, **flagged profiles are reviewed** and staff get a clinician-led debrief — a human in the loop, not just an algorithm.
- **Honest about its tier:** a strengths-and-strategy *screening* and learning profile — explicitly **not** a clinical or psychometric diagnosis.
- **Australian data residency**, age-aware consent (parental consent + student assent for younger students), and privacy-by-design.
- **Relative-strength banding** (Developing / Solid / Strong / Very strong) shows where a student's strengths sit without implying a standardised score.

What we deliberately avoid — and why

- **"Learning styles" (VAK).** The idea that matching teaching to a 'visual / auditory / kinaesthetic' style improves learning has been repeatedly tested and **not supported** by evidence (Pashler et al., 2008; Willingham). Some tools still sort students this way — we don't. We measure how memory and attention actually work, then build strategy from that.
- **Labels and deficit framing.** We lead with strengths and concrete next steps, not diagnoses or limitations.
- **Score-chasing.** The model is holistic and student-centred — it is not an ATAR-prediction or ranking tool.

Bottom line: the same evidence base a school psychologist would expect — Big Five, RIASEC, VIA and modern study science — delivered as a warm, strengths-first profile and a practical program, with registered psychologists overseeing it (and individually reviewing family profiles).