How schools can move beyond exclusion
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Abstract
Healthy learning environments for young people are underpinned by respectful relationships. Unfortunately, Australian students who do not form reasonable relationships with peers and staff are unlikely to benefit from being at school. These students tend to disengage and are often excluded. However, a growing number of Australian schools have moved beyond exclusion as their default response in dealing with such students. In asking themselves After exclusion what? some Australian schools have found that one answer is to create an onsite enabling space as an integral part of their student wellbeing practice.

Drawing on an Australian Research Council funded research project involving the University of Melbourne, Hands On Learning Australia and a wider team of partners, this article introduces the conceptual framework of enabling spaces to explore respectful relationships through the tripartite lens of connection, control, and meaning. Enabling spaces, built on respectful relationships, foster a sense of belonging in students, encourage and develop self-efficacy, and provide a context for students to derive a sense of purpose. In this way they can help young—often disadvantaged—people maintain their connection with mainstream schooling. We argue that these elements are common features of all enabling spaces, and discuss the Hands On Learning method as an illustrative case study.

Keywords (6): Relationships, Connection, Meaning, Control, Enabling spaces, Exclusion

Introduction
This article introduces the concept of enabling spaces where students can form respectful relationships and derive a sense of meaning, connection, and control over their lives. Schools can be enabling spaces, and are exactly this, for many students. Alternative programs exist which can also be vital enabling spaces, and as other articles in this issue demonstrate, such programs can function in this way for many of the students who have been displaced from mainstream schools.
In Australia, active networks of other education organisations have grown outside the formal education system to support young people to stay connected to learning. These have been documented as alternative settings (e.g. by Cole 2004), alternative education sites (McGregor & Mills, 2011) Learning Choices organisations (Holdsworth 2011, te Riele 2012) and also included within flexible learning programs (te Riele 2014). With a history of having grown in direct response to community needs, and largely independently as not-for-profit entities, such organisations are often conceptualised outside (or on the periphery of) the way in which schooling and education are understood in Australian education policy (te Riele 2012, Hill, 2014, forthcoming). This pattern of organisational separation itself potentially compounds processes of exclusion (Deslandes, 2014, forthcoming).

While recognising that schools can be damaging places for some young people, and that some people do need space from more traditional models of formal schooling, there is also a growing body of thought that suggests dislocating young people from their everyday settings (friends, networks, and possibilities for formally recognised educational credentials) can be counter-productive. For example, Jack Keating (2010) has argued that keeping young people at school is paramount to positive personal and social outcomes. While many individuals need time out, it is also important to keep open the options and pathways to re-enter ‘mainstream’ work and learning institutions. Debra Hayes (2012, p. 647) has highlighted ‘a significant dilemma for designers of learning programmes for marginalised young people – how to make available the benefits of mainstream opportunities, provided through formal learning, without enticing or coercing them to engage in opportunities that have failed to accommodate their needs in the past.’ Hayes’ analysis draws attention to the need to work creatively and dynamically in education partnerships.

Building on this literature, and way of countering a widespread misconception that enabling spaces for disengaging students can only exist outside of mainstream schools, we provide a practice-based example of how schools in Victoria, Australia, have worked in partnership to create such enabling spaces on their own grounds that are integrated into their normal education provision.

Enabling spaces
The concept of enabling spaces has emerged from our research, policy and practice-based investigations of what it takes to keep young people connected to their communities and to learning. An earlier Youth Research Centre project funded by the Victorian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet explored the question ‘how can governments best support communities to work effectively with their most marginal young people?’ (Wierenga et al., 2003). This work observed that the agencies that do the most powerful work with young people do so by creating ‘enabling’ social spaces. Such programs and organisations tend to start small, arising in direct response to the observed needs of local young people, prioritise what is important to them, work on building capacities with the young people, and doing all of their work through the medium of respectful relationship.

More recently, in an Australian Research Council Funded projectii (Wyn et al., 2014), on which we have been working, we and our wider project teamiii have been investigating these ideas and challenges more deeply. Recognising that 10% of 15-24 year olds have completely disengaged from school and work (Foundation for Young Australians, 2012), and that many more are in the process of disengaging, our research team has taken a ground-up approach to documenting and conceptualising the real work that organisations do to keep young people connected to learning.
Our shared conceptual framework has evolved with the concept of enabling spaces at the centre. Organisations and communities that are effective in keeping young people connected to learning—wherever they are—are enabling spaces.

Our team’s analysis indicates that an enabling space is underpinned by three elements: connection, control, and meaning. An enabling space has a richness and a completeness, such that the phenomenon is analytically and substantively destroyed if the three elements of connection, control and meaning become unravelling, or one of them forgotten. Connection is about the existence of real and perceived or felt links to people, institutions and communities. Control is about dynamics such as feeling safe, having a voice, encouraging and developing self-efficacy, or a sense of agency, skill or capacity. Meaning is about people having a sense of purpose in their activities, and about how they relate these actions to their own lives, plans and/or identities.

In recognising the diversity of strategies and approaches, which organisations have adopted to meet local and immediate needs, we also recognise that these three elements will be interchangeable in the order they appear. Below we highlight connection, control, and meaning (CCM) in that order to illustrate the workings of our case study. In relation to students, an enabling space is built on respectful relationships, fostering a sense of belonging and tangible links (connection), encouraging and developing self-efficacy, social and practical skills or capacities (control), and providing a context for students to derive a sense of purpose and personal satisfaction (meaning).

An enabling space is a creative field from which to acknowledge a whole landscape of relationships. It entails a set of respectful relationships within and around the project, activity or response setting, which in turn create the conditions for generating other respectful relationships in the world beyond. In an educational setting the relationship between enabling space and school becomes very important, since while schools act as enabling spaces for the majority of students, many do not experience them in this way and are often excluded as a result. A detailed case study is provided below outlining how schools can create enabling spaces as an integral part of their support for these disengaging students, and illustrates how some schools are providing holistic, creative and inclusive responses to the needs of their students. The case study illustrates how some schools expand their mode of operation to re-include students heading toward exclusion, effectively creating an enabling space within an enabling space.

Through research published earlier in this journal, authors have examined in detail the workings of inclusive school communities (e.g. Graham, 2010; Razer et al., 2013; Persson, 2013; Hill & Brown, 2013; Cefai et al., 2013). Across different settings, contexts and population groups, these and others document the misunderstandings, mechanisms and practices which move schools towards being able to provide support and an inclusive environment for all students. Providing an example of an enabling space, here, potentially makes a theoretical and empirical contribution to this body of research.

Creating enabling spaces for young people through quality relationships

It is perhaps uncontroversial to observe that humans are social creatures who tend to thrive when connected to others, and that individuals cope less well when these connections are damaged or missing. As highlighted in other articles in earlier numbers of this journal (e.g. Nind et. al., 2012; Prince & Hadwin, 2013), relationships are an important part of being connected to school. We note how students who generally relate reasonably well to each other and teachers tend to experience school as an enabling space. Consequently, those who do not (or cannot) form
reasonable relationships with peers and staff would seem to be at risk of not benefitting from what the school has to offer them and begin to disengage from it.

The Hands On Learning (HOL) method, discussed in the case study below, is predicated on the belief that providing quality relationships for students who lack them will have a significant positive impact on their lives. Arguably this notion also underpins the success of institutionalised responses in the form of interventions that provide disengaged students with temporary alternatives to mainstream school such as Teaching Units, alternative education settings, or community agency ‘boot camps’. Such responses are often found to give these students an opportunity to connect to others in meaningful ways, with a concomitant reduction in disruptive and self-destructive behaviours (Cole, 2004; Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). However, a phenomenon not well researched in Australia—although some work has been done in North America viz. McCall (2003) and Reeder (2005)—is that many principals and student wellbeing staff report that students who have come back refreshed from alternative settings often revert to previous negative patterns within weeks of their return, frequently leading to more permanent forms of exclusion. In terms of enabling spaces built on respectful relationships, it is plausible that the successes these students experienced at the alternative sites evaporated along with the relationships they had formed there.

The positive impact of such relationships is reinforced by a growing body of research (Noble & McGrath, 2012). For example, in Moore and Hamilton’s (2010) analysis of 4,000 interviews with students and their parents, they identified the key aspects of programs that are significantly associated with improved outcomes, are where students experience: positive, warm, and trusting relationships; emotional and physical safety; and, a focus on life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution. Similarly, in a meta-analysis of mentoring evaluations Lawner, Beltz, and Moore (2013) identified that the greatest gains were attained in programs: targeting at risk young people; that focussed on the development of their social skills; and, which lasted for a year or more. The conclusions of these studies suggest that a space in schools that can provide disengaging students with opportunities to form positive, warm, and trusting relationships in safety, and where they can develop their interpersonal skills over a long period of time would enable them to remain attached to school and benefit from all that inheres from doing so. HOL is one such enabling space.

**HOL as an enabling space**

The HOL method uses a preventative approach that targets at risk young people, to specifically build enduring multi-year relationships with them in a safe, informal setting. It privileges the development of their social skills through teamwork, leadership opportunities, and shared targets, while they remain at school with HOL as a normal part of their schooling experience.

HOL began in 1999 at Frankston High School, a metropolitan government school in Victoria, as a way of engaging and retaining students at risk of early school leaving. Several years of success attracted the attention of philanthropic organisations who were interested in expanding HOL to other schools. This led to a Harm Prevention Charity — Hands On Learning Australia (HOLA) — being formed in 2008 to take on this work. As a result HOL is currently being applied by 36 schools across Victoria, Australia.

In addition to promulgating the HOL method, HOLA actively helps schools monitor and maintain the quality of their HOL implementations. Part of this involves the collection of data — with signed approval of participants — from staff, students, parents, and community partners. The
quotes below are part of data collected over the past five years. These data have been used by schools to assess the impact of HOL on their students and by HOLA in reporting back to philanthropic supporters. Photographs and videos of students collected through these processes all received prior parental and student consent, and media release consent prior to use. Where relevant, all people and schools have been de-identified for the purpose of this article.

The HOL method consists of cross-age teams of ten students working with two HOL artisan-teachers on creative construction projects in the school and local community. Each HOL team is constant in that the same ten students work with the same HOL artisan-teachers every week, for one day. From the students’ perspective, Tuesday, for instance, might be their HOL day, so each Tuesday they come to school in work clothes and go to the HOL hut they (or previous HOL teams) built on the school grounds, while the other four days of the week they come to school in the normal school uniform and attend their normal classes.

The HOL day is broadly structured as follows: prepare breakfast; go through individual focus plans for the day; first work session; prepare morning tea; second work session; prepare lunch; third work session; pack up and reflect on focus plans and the day’s events. Weather may impact on this sequence, as can any number of other logistical issues associated with construction projects, so having flexibility with the daily structure is an important component of each project.

All HOL schools quarantine Mondays from having students for two main reasons. First, there is no down-time during HOL, so staff do not go to the staff room at recess or lunch, they spend the entire day with the students, thus Monday is when they are able to order materials and plan for the week ahead. Second, since none of the schools running HOL operate with students on Mondays, it creates an opportunity for HOL artisan-teachers from neighbouring schools to come together at morning cluster meetings where they support each other by sharing their experiences, excess materials, tools, business contacts, and coordinate joint community projects. HOLA also delivers professional development at these, and larger regional meetings on relevant theoretical and practical topics such as trauma theory, how to deal with difficult behaviours, setting appropriate focus plans, choosing good projects, how to build pizza ovens, building earth bag walls, the impacts of poverty on young people and so on. Having Monday as a student free day is also important in that it attends to some of the other layers of respectful relationship involved in creating an enabling space. Just as HOL is a one-day-a-week enabling space for students, the Monday is effectively a one-day-a-week enabling space for the staff.

As outlined previously, the concept of enabling space can be viewed through the tripartite lens of connection, control, and meaning in order to help elucidate what makes a space an enabling one. In this context it is useful to think of these as continuous rather than discrete categories, and the following section explores HOL in terms of these spectra.

**HOL through the lens of connection, control & meaning**

Connection is central to HOL since the success of the method is predicated on the formation of respectful relationships. In HOL respectful relationships are deemed to be long term, high quality relationships that are both enduring and endemic to the students’ normal environment. The structure of the HOL method is intended to establish an environment within the school itself where quality relationships can be formed and maintained between disengaged students, peers, and adults for long periods of time. While schools provide many opportunities for students to form relationships outside of classrooms, many of these are ephemeral - such as excursions, camps, or intra/inter-school sporting competitions. These kinds of events do not typically provide sufficient opportunities for students who already struggle socially to find a reliable point of
connection with others, rather they tend to enhance existing quality relationships instead of helping to establish new ones.

*Connection.* One of the first tasks in establishing HOL teams is identifying a location on the school grounds from where they will operate, and where they will ultimately build the HOL hut. HOL huts are often unusual and interesting designs – for instance hexagonal pole and beam huts with various infill (straw bales, mud bricks, angled roofing iron etc.), rustic barn structures, ‘bushy’ cottage shapes (Figure 1 shows the first HOL hut built in 1999).

The hut is ideally located in a visible, but somewhat removed area of the school grounds – often in an area deemed ‘out of bounds’ to students during recess or lunch times which simultaneously adds an element of *street cred* to participants while reducing opportunities for non-HOL students to ‘visit’ and disrupt the team dynamic during their breaks.

![Figure 1. The hut and pizza oven built by HOL teams at Frankston High School.](image)

Positioning an unusual hut in a prominent location serves a number of purposes: it literally provides a presence within the school ensuring HOL is not an invisible activity but rather a normal part of the school’s offerings and of which the school can be proud; it stimulates curiosity amongst students, staff, parents, and other community members – thereby making it better known, accepted, and valued; it provides a setting where marginalised students can be observed engaging in productive activities which frequently changes how they are perceived by peers and their teachers; and it provides an obvious landmark that students can (and do) show to family and friends as evidence of what they are part of and connected to. The following quote is typical of the feedback HOL schools receive:

HOL has made school a good experience for Chris. I used to be on first name basis with all the teachers as Chris spent more time on suspension than he did at school. The last two years have been a big turnaround. Chris has developed his skills for later in life, he wants to be a chef and the teamwork and communication skills he has developed are making such a difference. Now I’m constantly dragged to school to see all the great projects he’s worked on or to meet his teachers.
and friends at the regular HOL parent nights. I’m stoked Chris has something like HOL and the chance to grow from that boy to man.

Sue, Parent, Noonan Secondary College.

This comment illustrates the sense of ownership and pride students derive from the finished products they have helped to create. It exemplifies a strong sense of belonging to the places they have helped improve, and the overall increased sense of being connected.

While a dedicated setting provides many advantages, it would be just an empty building without the HOL teams. As described earlier a HOL team consists of two adults and ten students across a range of age groups and a mixture of male and female students and staff, as can be seen in Figure 2. The primary purpose of spending the entire day together each week is to get to know each other in a context designed to resemble a worksite rather than a classroom. Everyone is on a first name basis, and everyone ostensibly engages in the same work. Older students are encouraged to take on leadership roles within the team, and jobs are apportioned equitably.

Figure 2. Part of a HOL team working on a new feature wall for their school in metropolitan Melbourne.

Being part of the same group of people over the course of one or more years provides an effective means for students to form robust, quality relationships. These connections can have enduring positive impacts on young people’s lives.
HOL gave me a break, people to talk to. It was a safe haven for kids like me who needed space when I was struggling at school. We worked in small groups, felt accepted, people cared, and it was the first time I learnt that grown-ups can help us, instead of force things upon us all the time. Most of all it taught us how good it feels to work hard for something, see the finished result, walk around the school see all the things we built together and it felt great to see people valuing and enjoying what I had worked hard on. That lesson is just as useful now I’m at university.

Kate, past student Boulder High School.

Before HOL I didn’t like going to school. I didn’t want to do the work, it wasn’t that I wasn’t capable, I just had no motivation. Sitting listening to talking all day, not doing, and being expected to retain all that information wasn’t the way I engaged in learning. It didn’t interest me so I didn’t give it a shot. Getting a chance to do things with my hands was a defining time for me. Being out of the classroom, doing something useful, and having the chance to try new things was brilliant. I fell in love with it straight away and the teachers were awesome. Hands On was a great way to learn the teamwork and relationship skills that I use every day of my working life. I’m so glad I stayed at school so I could get this job.

Toby, past student, Gallery Secondary College.

For these ex-students the formative nature of the relationships they developed in HOL led to powerful life lessons. In this way HOL provides young people with a sense of personal connectedness that has a positive influence on their lives well beyond the actual time spent in HOL.

It is also evident that students derive a strong sense of meaning and control from HOL. In their international review of education innovations Lucas, Claxton, and Spencer (2013) described HOL as a “powerful example” of real-world learning that promotes “group collaboration, problem-solving, and empathy for and care of the natural world” (p. 102). Such skills contribute to the students’ sense of self-efficacy or control.

Control. The nature of schooling has arguably become increasingly dominated by abstracted curriculum of limited immediate relevance to students. As a result many young people find themselves disadvantaged or less connected to the core business of the classroom, especially those whose temperament is not well disposed to sitting for long periods of time, or those who do not naturally absorb or process information delivered in a predominantly visual manner. Compounding this effect is the sequential nature of curriculum—especially in Mathematics and English—such that a student who disengages at some point can easily become locked into an experience of feeling left behind and lacking the ability to catch up, contributing to a sense of being out of control – a passive spectator in the classroom.

In HOL the emphasis is not on a set curriculum but rather on practical tasks that have an inherent purpose. For instance, constructing a beach volleyball court that students use during lunch provides direct relevance to the HOL students’ lives (see Figure 3). In this instance students are creating a product of utility from which the whole school community will benefit. Furthermore, the skills they develop to build it have an application beyond the immediate project.
Collaborating on real projects helps to give students a sense of achievement in a way that is qualitatively different from completing a set of textbook exercises. The idea that students view HOL as somewhere that they engage in real work – unlike what they perceive themselves to be involved with in the classroom, is a recurring theme in their feedback.

Helping out around school feels like real work instead of writing in a book. Last year we helped build a huge deck around an old maple tree outside the principal’s office. Each time I go past I think this is brilliant. If I can do that, imagine what else I can do, you get a real confidence boost.

Max, Year 10, Papal Catholic College, metropolitan Melbourne

I hate doing school work, but this is something I can actually do because I’m a hands on person. We use maths every day with the measurements, but it’s real, not like class. Most people can relax when they’re doing Hands On instead of stressing you’ll get bad grades, but when we do Hands On if you make a mistake you can work on it next time.

Dylan, Year 9, Bayward College

Data from independent studies and evaluations reveal that amongst the benefits students derive from HOL are: enhanced confidence; a sense of genuine success; and the development of practical skills (Delloite Access Economics, 2012; KPMG, 2009; Burke, 2007). Many are able to start connecting the curriculum they encounter in class to the real world and thereby start to appreciate what they had previously rejected as irrelevant (Lamb & Rice, 2008). Disruptive students who need to strengthen their pro-social skills are unable to use the irrelevance of the work they are engaged in as an excuse for their misbehaviour. This creates an opportunity for the
HOL artisan-teachers to help such young people become aware of the underlying weakness in their social skills and to work on strategies that will strengthen them (Hands On Learning, 2013). Feedback from these young people reveals that they can be oblivious to the impact their behaviour has on others, and consequently, themselves. Developing insight and better social skills can free students from counterproductive and limiting behaviours giving them greater self-awareness, more self-discipline, and a greater sense of control over their lives.

The benefits that accrue from engaging in undeniably real work also helps to diminish the sense of disconnection and irrelevance that otherwise dominates these young people’s experience of school, helping to introduce or strengthen the sense of purpose and meaning in their lives, as explored further below.

**Meaning.** There are clear benefits for marginalised students who come to be viewed in a more positive light by peers and teachers. However, there is a more subtle, and potentially more significant impact that grows from young people performing a service for their community, or giving back. Such actions can shift these young people’s self-perception from being of limited or no worth to being someone who has something valuable to offer society. The act of contributing something of value to others contains the implicit message that you must have something valuable to contribute, and that there are others who you can help. The following quotes illustrate the implicit benefits of contributing to the local community and the sense of meaning it instils:

HOL community work takes the student away from looking at themselves as a person in need and helps them see that other people have different needs as well.

**Ken Nugent, Principal, Bayward College**

We also built a chook shed for a charity that supports the intellectually disabled. We went to a celebration BBQ and they kept showing us all the eggs they got. It was real cool to see they were so excited about something we did.

**Max, Year 10, Boulder High School**

Hands On Learning students rebuilt the Seacross Scout Hall, one of our most graffiti-infested buildings that had been kicked to death, broken into and badly battered around. This program achieves so much. Not only is the work great quality, but the real magic is how valued the students feel doing something that other people really appreciate.

**Don Skelton, Graffiti Management Coordinator, Boulder City Council**

Such comments as these are routinely encountered amongst those who are involved with HOL community projects, including students, principals, and community members. They illustrate the way in which students’ connections to themselves, their school, and their community are enhanced through HOL. They also demonstrate the transitive nature of respectful relationships: as students demonstrate respect for others, others gain respect for these students, and everybody benefits.

While connection, control, and meaning are embedded in HOL, to some extent they follow a cycle that starts with forming strong respectful relationships with other young people and adults that builds confidence and security. This creates an environment conducive to building a greater sense of control through developing a variety of useful skills — both practical and social — which in turn
enables them to make positive contributions to their school and community and thereby derive an authentic sense of purpose and meaning from the value placed on their efforts by others.

Implications

Schools and alternative settings are both enabling spaces, but seemingly for different cohorts of students and, for many students, experiencing school as an enabling space varies with time and personal circumstance. Those who are excluded from school—socially, academically, physically—by definition did not experience school as an enabling space. Viewed in this way the emphasis is on a more nuanced and personal appreciation of the needs and capacities of individuals, and the possibility of re-defining the existing relationships around them. It also helps to explain why a school can potentially be both excluding and enabling simultaneously, because it only caters for the needs of a subset of students, and consequently alienates those not catered for. The implication of this are three fold. First, enabling spaces are not panacea because one student’s enabling space likely excludes another. Second, enabling spaces can be extended by nesting one within another. Last, by nesting—or integrating—enabling spaces, it is possible to cater to a wider range of young people and allow them to move between the different institutional and relational spaces as needed.

In terms of connection, control and meaning, if a student feels connected and in control, then they are well placed to be able to extract a sense of meaning from the learning opportunities that are on offer, making that space an enabling one for them. While traditional schooling may offer the potential of meaning and purpose for all students, those who do not feel connected and/or in control in the classroom will struggle to appreciate or benefit from the various sets of meanings on offer. HOL helps to rectify this by providing a connection point, and assists students to develop their sense of control. Interestingly students are then able to tap into two types of meaning trajectories. The first trajectory is when students start to derive a sense of purpose from their physical labour and community work such that many of these students choose to pursue an apprenticeship or similar pathway. The other common trajectory is where once the missing/weak connection and control issues have been tackled, students become open to the meaning already available in school and reconnect to the classroom in pursuit of a school based pathway. Nesting enabling spaces in this way provides the conditions necessary for young people to be able to achieve a sense of meaning in their lives, which can be achieved once their individual level of need for connection and control are being addressed.

Since this level of need varies across individuals, it is incumbent on schools to provide sufficient supports, like HOL, to cater for those whose immediate needs threshold (for a sense of connection, control and or safety) are higher than the majority. While alternative settings external to schools are themselves enabling spaces, separation into alternative settings may ultimately have the effect of reducing the scope for students to reconnect with the academic mainstream trajectory. Instead they are more akin to stand alone HOL programs which can only provide outcomes by themselves. Integrating enabling spaces like HOL into the fabric of mainstream schooling creates the possibility of students pursuing, and/or swapping between both meaning trajectories and support young people to find some real points of traction within their schools, within their communities, and within social and academic life more generally.

Separating these two kinds of enabling spaces into a forced choice between school or alternative setting entrenches each as a single trajectory institution for students, effectively only allowing them to pursue one track or the other. By our definition this deprives young people of choice and
therefore control over their lives, and restricts the meaning trajectories they might pursue. Nesting enabling spaces (as HOL is nested within mainstream school) helps to expand the capacity of both types of enabling spaces and better accommodate students – particularly those who go through different phases and cope with volatile personal lives. In turn, this makes it possible to increase their sense of control through the preservation of options, and opens up meaning trajectories that they can swap between as needed.

As described in the HOL case study, an enabling space is essentially about recognising key relationships, and creating a culture or a zone of safety in which these relationships can be nurtured, while surrounding relationships are re-defined, at times even transformed as respectful relationships. With all the demands that are placed upon them, schools will usually need support to undertake such process, i.e. the enabling space needs to function as much for schools and staff, workers as it does for students. This helps to explain the (often) short-lived nature of similar initiatives that schools spontaneously create from time to time (for example see Lamb & Rice, 2008). Without adequate connection, control, and meaning for the practitioners within enabling spaces, the spaces themselves become alienated and in jeopardy. So, for example, one of the explicit functions of HOLA is to create a network of HOL programs, training for HOL artisan-teachers, and liaison between schools, workers, and bureaucracies – in effect creating an enabling space for the HOL approach itself to help ensure its sustainability. Building outwards, another function is to support the emerging work of a community of like-minded people and programs by drawing them into a policy focussed dialogue about inclusive education, and the contribution such programs can make to education practice more generally.

Conclusion
Naming and recognising enabling spaces means recognising the powerful work being done, both on the ground and also in terms of the growth edge that they present to educators conceptually. Creating enabling spaces for learning for all young people means recognising the value of both school and alternative settings outside of schools. It also means creating new enabling spaces within schools and pushing beyond existing policies that serve to restrict discussion, funding, and ultimately innovation. While supporting the powerful practice that is already happening on all of these sites, it is time to embrace the question of how schools might become more enabling spaces for all students.
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1 Education in Australia is broadly delivered through three school sectors: public State government run schools; a national system of diocese based Catholic schools; and, the Independent sector consisting of other religious and
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