

A national audit of academic literacies provision in enabling courses in Australian Higher Education (HE)

Report compiled for the Association of Academic Language & Learning

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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
1 INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 AIMS	10
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	11
2 CONTEXT	12
2.1 READING AND WRITING FOR UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND LITERACIES	13
2.2 DEVELOPING A WORKING DEFINITION OF ENABLING EDUCATION	14
2.3 ALIGNMENT WITH AALL'S STATED GOALS	15
3 METHODOLOGY	16
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	16
3.1.1 DESKTOP REVIEW	17
3.1.2 TELEPHONE SURVEY	17
3.1.3 KEY TEACHING AND LEARNING DOCUMENTS	18
3.2 EVOLUTION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	18
3.3 ETHICAL APPROVAL	19
3.4 ANALYSIS	19
3.4.1 IVANIČ'S (2004) DISCOURSES OF WRITING AND LEARNING TO WRITE	20
4 FINDINGS	23
4.1 TYPOLOGY OF PRE-DEGREE PROVISION IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES	23
4.2 ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND LITERACIES PROVISION	24

4.3	PATTERNS OF CONTENT: WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ALL UNITS?	24
4.3.1	TASKS AND PRACTICES	25
4.3.2	ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT	25
4.4	ENABLING CURRICULA VIEWED ACCORDING TO THE POSITION OF ALL	26
4.5	LOCATION OF ENABLING PROGRAM(S) IN THE INSTITUTION	30
4.6	AGE OF EACH ENABLING PROGRAM	32
4.7	DURATION OF PROGRAM(S)	33
4.8	MODE OF DELIVERY	34
4.9	THE NUMBER OF UNITS IN THE CURRICULUM	34
4.10	DIAGNOSTIC TESTING AT APPLICATION	35
4.11	SUPPORT FOR ALL FOR ALL ENABLING STUDENTS	36
4.12	SUPPORT FOR ALL FOR LANGUAGE BACKGROUND OTHER THAN ENGLISH (LBOTE) STUDENTS	37
5	DISCUSSION	39
5.1	THE HISTORICAL–INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND THE EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIC LITERACIES PROVISION	39
5.2	OPEN ACCESS V. GATEKEEPER DIAGNOSTIC TESTING: A NECESSARY INTERVENTION OR AN IDEOLOGICAL CHALLENGE TO THE PURPOSE OF ENABLING EDUCATION?	43
5.3	INSTITUTIONAL VIEWS OF ALL IN ENABLING PROGRAMS, AND IN THE FIELD OF ENABLING EDUCATION MORE WIDELY	47
5.3.1	UPREP UNIT NAMES	48
5.3.2	ALL-EXPLICIT UNIT NAMES	48
5.3.3	WHAT DO ENABLING EDUCATORS VIEW AS CONSTITUTING ACADEMIC LITERACIES?	49
5.3.4	UNPACKING THE ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING ENABLING EDUCATORS’ VIEWS OF ALL	52
5.3.5	ANALYSIS OF ENABLING EDUCATORS’ DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC LITERACIES USING IVANIČ’S DISCOURSES OF WRITING AND LEARNING TO WRITE	54
6	CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	57
6.1	REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	57
6.1.1	WHAT ENABLING/ FOUNDATION/ PATHWAYS PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE AT EVERY HEI IN AUSTRALIA?	57
6.1.2	WHAT ALL MODULES THEY OFFER (CORE OR OPTIONAL)?	57
6.1.3	WHAT ALL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?	57

6.1.4	WHAT LBOTE SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE/ IS THERE ANY SPECIFIC LBOTE DELIVERY/ SUPPORT AVAILABLE?	58
6.2	WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?	58
6.3	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND PRACTICE	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY		63
APPENDICES		66
APPENDIX A—INTERVIEW SCHEDULE		66
APPENDIX B—UNIVERSITY PATHWAYS		67
APPENDIX C—NAMES OF UPREP AND ALL UNITS		69

List of Abbreviations

AALL	Association for Academic Language and Learning
ACU	Australian Catholic University
ANU	Australian National University
ALL	Academic Language & Literacies
BOND	Bond University
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CQU	Central Queensland University
CSU	Charles Sturt University
CU	Curtin University
DEAK	Deakin University
ECU	Edith Cowan University
FED	Federation University
FLIN	Flinders University
GRIFF	Griffith University
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme
JCU	James Cook University
LA TROBE	La Trobe University
LBOTE	Language Background Other Than English
MQ	Macquarie University
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
MON	Monash University
MURD	Murdoch University
NES	Native English Speaker
OUA	Open Universities Australia
RMIT	RMIT University
SCU	Southern Cross University
SWIN	Swinburne University
UNIAD	The University of Adelaide
UNICAN	The University of Canberra
UNIMELB	The University of Melbourne
UNE	The University of New England
UON	The University of Newcastle
UNSW	The University of New South Wales
UND	The University of Notre Dame
UQ	The University of Queensland
UNISA	The University of South Australia
USQ	The University of Southern Queensland
USC	The University of the Sunshine Coast
SYD	The University of Sydney
UTAS	The University of Tasmania
UTS	The University of Technology Sydney
UWA	The University of Western Australia
UOW	The University of Wollongong
VIC	Victoria University
WSU	Western Sydney University

Acknowledgements

This report is the product of an extensive engagement in the field with many colleagues from across Australia, and was made possible by the awarding of an AALL Research & Resource Development grant. We would like to acknowledge some colleagues at the University of Newcastle who advised, discussed and supported us in this endeavour: Associate Professor Seamus Fagan, Associate Professor Jo May and Dr Barry Hodges. We are also indebted to Lisa Goldacre at the University of Notre Dame for her invaluable insight into the muddling funding context and to Kathy Lawson at Curtin University who offered additional detail on the history and workings of the UniReady program at Curtin as a point of comparison with Open Foundation and Newstep at UON. Most of all, we would like to send a shout out of our gratitude and respect to the participants who contributed so much to this project and their colleagues who helped to navigate the tricky ethical labyrinth that led to our eventual co-engagement.

Executive Summary

Enabling education in Australia has grown sporadically since 1974 in response to a number of key national policy and funding interventions around equity of access to higher education. While all enabling programs share the characteristics of being free to students, providing an entry pathway to higher education and (largely) bearing no credit towards a degree, enabling education is a relatively disparate field. Despite the evolution of the enabling field being shaped by government policy, it remains largely unregulated in terms of curriculum standards and there is a lack of cohesion with regard to many aspects including how programs are structured, application procedures and entry requirements, and how students are supported.

This report presents the findings from an AALL-funded project that attempted to address this lack of cohesion as it explored the academic language and literacies provision in enabling programs across Australia seeking to present both their commonalities and disparities. The report offers the first comprehensive and detailed overview of the enabling field and includes: an inventory of pre-degree pathways (including enabling, sub-bachelor and access programs) available via Australian higher education institutions; a typology of Australian enabling programs providing information on mode of delivery, age of program, age requirements, location of the program in the institution, and whether diagnostic testing is used during application procedures; and a detailed picture of the academic language and literacies provision in enabling programs—including five models of enabling curriculum viewed through the lens of academic language and literacies. Taking an evaluative stocktaking approach, data was collected via: a desktop audit of pre-degree pathways; telephone and email interviews with key representatives from higher education institutions that offer enabling programs; and key teaching and learning documents provided by those participants. Informed by the academic literacies critical field of enquiry (see Lea & Street 1998) and using Ivanič's (2004) discourses of writing and learning to write framework, the qualitative, interpretive analysis of the data revealed that many institutions and practitioners view academic language and literacies as primarily decontextualized, transportable 'skills', and that a 'genre' discourse—which views writing as a product with a purpose—is often used when describing academic literacies. The analysis also found that academic literacies are positioned largely on the margins of enabling curricula—although

some examples of curricula which ‘centre’ academic literacies have emerged in newer programs or where older programs have been recently re-designed. It is suggested, therefore, that curriculum shapes and possibly practitioner attitudes are influenced by each program’s unique historical–institutional context.

The findings from this study provide the first comprehensive overview of the enabling field for practitioners and researchers in enabling education, (the resulting Enabling Typology will be available from November 2015 at <http://enablingeducators.org/enablingtypology/>) which we hope will act as a springboard for further discussions around (but not limited to): the underpinning values of enabling education; the nature of open access; enabling curriculum design; and effective support for enabling students. These discussions and potential future projects will strengthen the theoretical foundations of enabling education as it moves from a ‘field’ to a ‘sector’.

1 Introduction

Entry to university is often conceived of as a ritual (Archer, Hutchings, & Ross, 2003; Quinn, 2010) for ‘traditional’ students, who can be defined broadly as straight-from-school entrants, predominantly from higher social class groups. However, a global ideological shift across the developed world over the last two decades has contributed significantly to a changed university system, as the widening participation agenda has purposefully opened access to students who were traditionally underrepresented in the academy. In Australia, widening participation is visible through the discourses of access and equity, and enacted in part through the creation of alternative pathways into higher education (HE). Such pathways both facilitate entrance into HE for often-marginalised students and also visibly demonstrate institutional efforts to address social justice and equity issues inherent in the academy (Bennett et al., 2012; Gray & Irwin, 2013).

In Australia, university-based enabling education is one such pathway offering opportunities for often marginalised groups of students who may have had fractured schooling experiences or have re-entered education after a period of time away from studying. However, despite the obvious positives of opening access to HE to a significantly varied student body, the massification of higher education has brought myriad challenges for institutions, academics, and students, and these challenges are arguably more complex in the context of the sociocultural and geographic diversity in the Australian educational landscape. Both empirical work and anecdotal accounts report that this diversity of the student body has required the development of new ways of thinking about how to design, deliver and support learning in HE, especially with core language practices around which all teaching and learning in HE is based.

1.1 Aims

This project was borne out of practitioner concern with the position of ALL in the curriculum of an enabling program and the constitutive content, tasks, practices and assessment literacies. In particular, this project grew out of concern with the ways that the needs of Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) students were sometimes overlooked with regards to their language and literacies development. Although two teachers are employed in this program to support both Native English Speaker (NES) and LBOTE students—which is in itself a recognition of the complexities of developing confidence with ALL—the positioning of language and the shape of the curriculum make it very difficult to help students beyond the assessment tasks.

Therefore, this project set out to examine how language and literacies are positioned, taught and assessed in other enabling programs across Australia so as to be able to make comparisons, identify ‘good practice’ and to enact evidence-based change in the areas considered problematic. The stated aims of this project were to:

- 1) Create an inventory of the Australian HE enabling field—what is offered, where it is offered and what ALL courses/ delivery/ support is available
- 2) Identify what specific provision, if any, is made available to LBOTE students with regards to ALL
- 3) Critically evaluate the ALL provision across the field
- 4) Report recommendations for further research
- 5) Contribute to knowledge in the form of a peer-reviewed journal article that summarises the results of this audit.

1.2 Research questions

The research questions listed below emerged from our own experiences working as the English Language Support Teacher for the enabling programs offered at the University of Newcastle (UON). This role is a 0.6 permanent position and is an important part of the enabling-specific suite of support offered at UON, which also includes Learning Development for NES students, a Student Liaison Officer, a counsellor and a careers advisor. Out of our experiences of working in this role, we shared concerns about how LBOTE students in particular were challenged by some of the tasks they were set, which were underpinned by assumptions about students' culture and language backgrounds. As a result of our shared interest, we set out to explore what other enabling programs offered their LBOTE students, and we expanded our gaze to include all of the academic language and literacies provision (content and support) for all enabling students. Therefore, in order to achieve the aims stated above, and to follow our own interests and concerns, the following Research Questions (RQs) were posed:

- What enabling/ foundation/ pathways programs are available at every HEI in Australia?
- What ALL modules they offer (core or optional)?
- What ALL support is available?
- What LBOTE support is available/ is there any specific LBOTE delivery/ support available?

These Research Questions were informed by our conceptual frame (Section 3) and guided our research design (Section 3.1). In what follows, we briefly scope the contextual background in which this project is situated, before moving on to discussion of our methodology and the findings.

2 Context

Enabling education programs have a long-established and growing place in the Australian Higher Education (HE) landscape. The oldest program in Australia—Open Foundation, offered at the University of Newcastle (UON) to mature age students—is over 40 years old and was developed so that people may “try universities before committing themselves” (Smith, 1973 in May & Bunn, 2015); what Hodges et al. (2013) refer to as a “characteristic ‘open door’ strategy” (p. 5). From this ideological model, other such programs have been developed that also offer students a second (or third or fourth) chance at furthering their education. The number of enabling programs has exponentially increased in the last four decades, particularly following two major policy developments. Firstly, the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (otherwise known as “Our Universities Backing Australia’s Future”), introduced Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) and because enabling students could be included in the CSP load but did not pay into the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), the Government provided \$51 million for five years to compensate institutions for this and called it ‘enabling loading’. Secondly, the implementation of a demand-driven system, and the commencement of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) in 2010, which was a response to the Bradley Review of Higher Education (2008), incentivised many institutions to develop enabling programs. This scheme provides government funds to facilitate access for people from low socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in higher education.

However, despite this increase in enabling programs, there is little dialogue across Australia, the range of provision is diverse and there appears to be relatively little cohesion within the field. We have been careful to use the term ‘field’ rather than ‘sector’ because it is arguable that there is not enough cohesion and conversation amongst enabling programs to form a sector at present. Enabling programs open access to ‘non-traditional’ students, many of whom will have previously struggled in the schooling system—particularly with the reading and writing requirements of English and the numeracy requirements of Mathematics. Given the space that enabling education occupies in Australian higher education, and the role it has in facilitating access for students who have ‘non-traditional’ backgrounds and trajectories, helping students to enhance their academic self-efficacy (Habel, 2012) and develop confidence and competence with language is arguably the core business of enabling

programs. Moreover, students who enter enabling programs are highly unlikely to have engaged in *academic* reading and writing successfully before or for a significant amount of time (Cullity, 2003; Klinger & Murray, 2012). An inability to communicate effectively or to engage with and produce a range of disciplinary genres and texts can have a profound impact on how students experience university, not to mention on their potential success or failure in their degrees. Therefore, it is critical to explore how academic literacies are perceived, delivered and supported in enabling education so as to develop a view of what is currently happening in the field and initiate key conversations within the field about the position of academic literacies and identifying and sharing good practice.

2.1 Reading and writing for university: academic language and literacies

Academic reading and writing are commonly accepted to be difficult, yet ‘writing’ is often viewed unproblematically as a ‘product’. This reduces it to a text written for assessment, rather than the complex web of activities, ideologies, and contexts that constitute it as a process and practice. In the context of widespread acceptance that students’ academic writing needs support, it is broadly acknowledged that generic study skills approaches to teaching academic writing have serious shortcomings regarding practices and epistemology (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Mitchell, 2010; Wingate, 2006), with a growing body of research emerging from the UK that explores literacies as social practice. This shift in thinking about literacy is captured in Brian Street’s (1984) dichotomy of ‘autonomous’ and ‘ideological’ models of literacy. The autonomous model views reading and writing as neutral and transferrable ‘skills’, underpinned by a view that language is a transparent code; in contrast, the ideological model views language and literacies as deeply embedded within sociocultural contexts and acknowledges them as contested and value-laden.

Many researchers (Chanock, 2013; Percy, 2014; Thies, 2012) have called for academic reading and writing instruction (commonly known as academic literacies in the Australian context) to be embedded in disciplinary teaching and learning. However, while this concept is gaining recognition in Australia as a desirable way to support students’ reading and writing (Chanock, 2013; Percy, 2014; Thies, Wallis, Turner, & Wishart, 2014), insufficient attention

has been paid to exploring academic literacies in alternative entry pathways into undergraduate study. As we have already noted, attention to academic literacies is particularly necessary in this context because students are more likely to have experienced challenges with academic literacies in their past education than traditional students. Klinger and Murray's (2012) essay on academic language and literacy in the context of a diversifying student population in Australian higher education, points to tensions between diversity and quality, arguing that "disparity in cultural capital and related socio-cultural incongruities [arise] from a lack of 'fit' between nontraditional students and the milieu of the academy" (2012: 39). Although their argument is not specifically situated in enabling education, Klinger and Murray identify two core issues that create challenges for students seeking access to higher education through an alternative pathway. Firstly, the academy's expectations about language and literacies are based on assumptions about an 'ideal student'—someone who speaks English as a first language and who has had some experience of the Australian education system. Secondly, these assumptions lead to problematic pedagogies, practices, assessments and support mechanisms which fail to acknowledge the "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al. 1992) that students bring from their home contexts.

2.2 Developing a working definition of enabling education

Australian enabling education is a disparate and eclectic field, operating with relative freedom in terms of how, what, where, when and to whom. Enabling courses operate under names such as 'foundation programs', 'preparation programs', 'pathway programs' and 'enabling programs'; however, there is a paucity of understanding about what constitutes enabling education. Therefore, in order to fully explore how language and literacies are positioned in enabling education, it is first necessary to craft a working definition of what constitutes an enabling program. The *Higher Education Support Act 2003* offers the following definition:

*"enabling course" means a course of instruction provided to a person for the purpose of enabling the person to undertake a course leading to a * higher education award, but does not include:*

- a) a course leading to a higher education award; or*
- b) any course that the Minister determines is not an enabling course for the purposes of this Act.*

This definition is vague, offering researchers little in the way of concrete explanation of what comprises enabling education; yet it does clarify one important point: enabling education does not include courses that offer credit or advanced standing towards an undergraduate degree. We add a further criterion for defining enabling programs: they must bear no cost to the student, other than a Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) or the cost of course materials, such as textbooks or study equipment. Therefore, an enabling program is one that:

- is offered by an Australian Higher Education Institution (HEI);
- is free to students; and
- carries no (or limited) credit towards an undergraduate qualification.

2.3 Alignment with AALL's stated goals

In terms of meeting AALL's stated goals, the compilation of a resource that outlines the AL support available in enabling courses nationwide contributes towards enhancing institutional teaching and learning environments (goal 2) by giving an overview of provision and practices, which is intended to initiate conversation across the enabling field (goal 3). The dissemination of this stocktaking report, and the subsequent publication(s), meet AALL's stated goal (6) to foreground the importance of considering the core language work of enabling (and university more generally) to the wider academic community.

3 Methodology

This project is located within a qualitative, interpretive methodology and takes a particular view of academic literacies as situated within a multi-layered view of language (Ivanič, 2004), which includes textual, cognitive, situational and socio-cultural layers of the context within which interactions take place. Our take on language and literacies is informed by the critical field of inquiry of Academic Literacies¹, which has a particular ontological position—that literacy is transformative—and epistemology, viewing reading and writing as social practices, informed by and informing the social contexts where they are enacted (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007).

This project is informed by the Academic Literacies methodological shape, which takes an ethnographic approach and privileges the emic (insider) view over the etic view of the researcher/outsider. In this case, the emic view was sought via interviewing key insiders in each enabling program. This project was also participatory in that each participant was then offered the opportunity to ‘member validate’ the entry for their program via email. The responses gathered from this cycle of feedback were fed into the project design and findings.

3.1 Research design

This study adopted an evaluative stocktaking approach to scoping enabling provision. The research design had three main components:

- 1) A ‘desktop’ review of information or course structure documentation offered publicly by each HEI (via university websites)
- 2) A telephone-based survey with key staff in all HEIs that offer enabling courses across Australia, with follow-up phone calls organised if necessary
- 3) Collection of key curriculum documents that underpin ALL teaching and learning, such as course outlines, assignment rubrics and marking matrices

¹ ‘Academic Literacies’ is capitalised here to distinguish from the more general use of the term to describe reading and writing support provision and programs in Australia

² PASS = Peer Assisted Study Support

Following this design, an evaluative and interpretive analytic approach was taken, with key interview data/ documents collected and analysed for thematic links across the sector.

3.1.1 Desktop review

In order to begin the initial review of the publicly available information about each project, it was necessary to first identify the key terms that would be used to explore each university website and navigate to the appropriate page(s). The key terms that we used to do this included:

- Pathway
- Foundation
- Preparation
- Tertiary preparation

We elected not to use the term ‘transition’ because it connects strongly with ‘First Year Experience’ (FYE) initiatives and interventions which are largely aimed at undergraduate students.

This desktop review resulted in the identification of 27 universities that offer enabling programs, according to the definition outlined in Section 2.2. A further six programs were identified that shared characteristics of enabling programs but which charged a fee or offered course credit or both. Six universities do not offer any enabling or enabling-like programs.

3.1.2 Telephone survey

As part of the desktop review, key personnel from the 27 universities that offer enabling programs were identified where possible; alternatively, key people were identified via institutional human research ethics departments. These people were then approached and invited to participate in the project; 26 of the 27 institutions accepted this invitation. Each participant (occasionally pairs of participants) took part in a semi-structured telephone interview that lasted between 30–45 minutes (see Appendix A for the interview schedule) and responded to follow-up questions by email. The first question on the interview schedule asked the participants to offer their definition of how they understand the term ‘academic

literacies'; these responses were transcribed and constitute a subset of data. After completing the first draft of the data analysis, each participant was also invited to review the entry for their institution to member validate the information recorded.

3.1.3 Key teaching and learning documents

In addition to the interview data gathered via the telephone survey, we also requested key documents from each participant, pertaining to the shape, content and assessment practices within each module that includes ALL. The participants were free to decline this request and it was made clear that the documentation would be anonymised to protect their institutional identities. Through collecting these documents, we have assembled the first archive of institutional records of how ALL teaching and learning is organised and assessed across enabling programs in Australia.

3.2 Evolution of the research questions

In addition to the four central research questions, another sub-set of more specific research questions emerged out of the ongoing data collection process and through the research conversations that took place:

- Where is the program located in the university? Which faculty or division is responsible for enabling provision?
- What mode(s) of delivery does the program use?
- What is the minimum and maximum length of the program?
- How much does the program cost (including associated costs if the course is Commonwealth Supported and free to the student)?
- Does the program have any English language proficiency requirements?
- Does the program use an ALL-diagnostic test (with a gatekeeping or stratifying function) or are there any other gatekeeping mechanisms in place at point of entry?
- Does the program support incarcerated students?
- Is the program recognised by the home state/territory's tertiary admissions centre?

- Is the program recognised as an entry qualification by other higher education institutions in Australia?

In order to ensure that similar themes could be explored in each participating site and program, any additional questions that emerged through the interview process were added to the post-interview question schedule and emailed to each of the participants.

3.3 Ethical approval

The breadth of this project presented ethical complexity; it was not only necessary to get ethical approval from UON's Human Research Ethics Committee, it was also stipulated that it was necessary to gain institutional or gatekeeper endorsement from every university before inviting key personnel to participate.

3.4 Analysis

The data were iteratively analysed throughout data collection, so that the data gathered from the desktop review fed into the interview schedule and the responses from the interviews fed into further questioning and collection of curriculum/ teaching and learning documentation. We engaged in a process of thematic analysis, whereby the audio recordings of the interviews and associated notes taken were reviewed, which fed into the creation of tables based around the emergent patterns and salient issues. These tables will be reproduced as a digital resource hosted by the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA) and jointly funded by UON's English Language and Foundation Studies Centre (ELFSC) and the Centre of Excellence in Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) (<http://enablingeducators.org/enablingtypology/>). This digital resource will be launched in November 2015 at the NAEEA conference. Out of the process of thematic analysis, we observed commonalities in the curriculum design of enabling programs, which we worked into five models of enabling curricula (see Section 4.3).

In addition to this broad thematic analysis, we also explored the sub-set of data that relates to the participants' understandings of what 'academic literacies' means (referred to as 'definitions of academic literacies'). We used Ivanič's (2004) framework of discourses of writing and learning to write to probe the implicit assumptions and beliefs about language and literacies that are manifestly and interdiscursively instantiated (Fairclough, 1992) in the language chosen by the participants. The participants' talk around how they understand the term 'academic literacies' was analysed by both researchers several times, using different analytic lenses and at each phase of analysis we independently engaged with the data and then cross-referenced our findings. As the analysis became more nuanced, we moved away from a surface-level/ linguistic analysis and engaged in an interdiscursive analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Ivanič, 1998). This kind of analysis requires more interpretive work, in that connections made between language and discourses are less obvious and more dependent on the analyst's understanding of the context and the relationships/interactions with the research environment.

3.4.1 Ivanič's (2004) discourses of writing and learning to write

Ivanič identifies the following six discourses which are characterised as six sets of beliefs about writing and learning to write: *skills, creativity, process, genre, social practices* and *socio-political*. These discourses are offered as a framework for understanding and analysing the "underlying beliefs" and "particular ways of conceptualising writing" that exist in policy, practice and opinions about literacy and literacy education (2004: 220). Broadly, Ivanič describes her discourse of writing and learning to write as:

...recognisable associations among values, beliefs and practices which lead to particular forms of situated action, to particular decisions, choices and omissions, as well as to particular wordings. The ways in which people talk about writing and learning to write, and the actions they take as learners, teachers and assessors are instantiations of discourses of writing and learning to write.

(2004: 220)

For Ivanič, the six discourses of writing and learning to write are underpinned by a multi-layered view of language—a conceptualisation of language which views the "textual aspects of language as embedded within, and inseparable from, mental and social aspects" (2004: 222).

Ivanič's six discourses are mapped to six sets of ideas and beliefs by making associations between particular clusters of terms and words. For example, according to Ivanič:

- the *skills discourse* encapsulates beliefs of writing as “a unitary, context-free activity, in which the same patterns and rules apply to all writing, independent of text type” (2004: 227). The assumptions about writing that underpin the skills discourse are text-centric, focusing on the application of knowledge of “decontextualised linguistic rules and patterns” (p. 228). According to Ivanič, the beliefs and practices that underpin the skills discourse inform “a great deal of policy and practice in literacy education” (p. 227), although the dominance of this discourse is “highly contested” (p. 228).
- the *creativity discourse* characterises particular ways of thinking about writing that foreground meaning making, therefore viewing writing as “the product of the writer’s creativity” (p. 229) and a valuable activity in its own right.
- the *process discourse* is based on the belief that writing involves understanding the cognitive and practical processes of composition. By placing the process discourse across two layers of language—the mental processes of writing and the writing event—in her framework (2004: 225) Ivanič acknowledges that these two processes are distinct and should not be collapsed into one reductive view of writing. However, this set of beliefs encompasses both the practical and cognitive processes, with the cognitive processes learned implicitly and the practical processes “extremely amenable to explicit teaching” (p. 231).
- the *genre discourse* is concerned with both the written product and the writing event, viewing writing as constituted by texts that “vary linguistically according to their purpose and context” (2004: 232). As such, primacy is placed on both linguistic form and the social contexts that shape, position and constrain writing. Writing, viewed from this belief, requires knowledge of particular linguistic characteristics of different text-types, making it possible to distinguish between texts on the basis of whether they are spoken or written, what purpose they have, how formal they are and the certainty of the situation (p. 233).
- a *social practices discourse* views writing as “purpose-driven communication in a social context” (p. 234), so that writing is implicitly learnt through participating in real-life literacy events with real-life purposes, including the social meanings and values ascribed to writing. Writing is therefore viewed as a set of practices embedded within the

sociocultural context, with meaning bound to the social relations that construct and are constructed by writing events.

- the *socio-political discourse* is an extension to the social practices discourse and encompasses critical views of writing that are specifically interested in the dynamics of power which affect the writer's identity and which direct, dictate and restrict what kind of and how writing is valued (2004: 238). Ivanič argues that within this discourse, writing "involves drawing on socially constructed resources, both 'discourses' which represent the world in particular ways, and 'genres' which are conventions for particular types of social interaction" (p. 238), which weave together to preserve hegemonic interests. Therefore, the beliefs underpinning this discourse view writing as a complex mix of social and political factors which can both open and close discourse positions and identities available to authors. The view of learning embedded within this discourse is one that promotes criticality: exploring the assumptions and power underlying particular types of writing and realising the potential of rejecting hegemonic types of writing and enacting socio-political change through literacy.

Ivanič's framework is characterised by flexible boundaries between the identified discourses, and the groups of words and terms offered within these boundaries are not definitive. This lack of rigidity allows analysts the opportunity to interpret the clusters of terms and words freely, providing perhaps greater nuance than a less flexible framework. However, Ivanič acknowledges the limitations of her framework as an incomplete analytic tool. She suggests possibilities for adding to and developing it, for example, by including discourses of reading and learning to read (2004: 240) while Baker (2011; 2013) suggests that an *assessment* discourse of writing and learning to write may also be a useful addition to the framework as well as an *affective* layer that acknowledges the emotional dimensions of writing and learning to write.

Using Ivanič's framework permitted the analytic gaze to be focused on the assumptions and beliefs about language and writing that underpin enabling educators' views of academic literacies. This analysis is presented in Section 5.3.

4 Findings

As the first known comprehensive audit of enabling programs and ALL provision in Australia, this section provides an overview of the following aspects:

- Typology of enabling, sub-bachelor and access programs across Australia
- Academic language and literacies provision
- Patterns of content: what's included in the programs
- Composition of the curriculum and models of enabling programs
- Location of enabling program(s) in each institution
- Age of each program
- Duration of program(s)
- Mode of delivery
- Diagnostic testing or other gatekeeping/streaming mechanisms at entry

4.1 Typology of pre-degree provision in Australian universities

Working from the definition of enabling programs offered in Section 2.2, we identified that of the 40 universities—including Open Universities Australia—in Australia (Universities Australia, 2015), 27 offer courses that meet this definition (see Appendix B), and there are 35 enabling programs operating out of these 27 universities. Twenty-six of these 27 universities elected to participate in this project. Of the remaining 12 universities, one offers a preparation program at a cost to students, seven offer sub-bachelor programs (either diploma programs or associate degrees) and two offer a Certificate IV in Tertiary Preparation, run in conjunction with a local TAFE institute. Three of the universities offer an 'access pathway' to 'non-traditional' students which permit personal circumstances to contribute towards the admissions process but do not constitute any additional study. Of course, all 40 universities may offer one or all of these three options, which we are calling:

- Enabling programs;
- Sub-bachelor programs; or
- Access pathways.

4.2 Academic Language and Literacies provision

All of the enabling programs offer some form of explicit ALL provision with the exception of one. Some programs offer only one ALL-focused module (often those programs comprising four units); while others offer up to four ALL modules and these are offered as either core (compulsory) units or elective units. Detailed description of this provision is presented in the enabling typology resource to be launched in November 2015

(<http://enablingeducators.org/enablingtypology/>).

Many participants described how ALL was also embedded into other core 'UPrep' modules and/ or disciplinary units. A 'UPrep' unit can be defined as a unit that is usually compulsory and that seeks to unpack what it means to learn at university and seeks to teach to become a successful university student. Such a unit may include aspects such as: time keeping, self-management, navigating university systems, unpacking notions of 'academic culture', accessing the library and other resources and academic communication (including ALL). More than half of the programs (22/35) offer a core 'UPrep' module, many of which cover elements of ALL, such as locating information, referencing and citation and essay writing (see the enabling typology resource: <http://enablingeducators.org/enablingtypology/> available from November 2015). A much smaller proportion of programs (9/35) offer a stand-alone ALL unit without a 'UPrep' module. One-third of the programs (12/35) offer both 'UPrep' units that include ALL and explicit ALL units.

The distinction and blurring between 'UPrep' and ALL units, in terms of unit names and content, illustrates the complexity in defining what constitutes academic language and literacies in the enabling context. A further set of data collected in this project relates to how the participants view 'academic literacies' and supports the development of such a definition. Moreover, this diversity in modules offers insight into how each program positions (and values) ALL, which is also evident in how ALL is positioned in the overarching curriculum of the program.

4.3 Patterns of content: what is included in the ALL units?

In this section, we will summarise the most prominent patterns in terms of the tasks, practices, assessments and the content around which the academic language and literacies

are based. The detail of each program is included in the enabling typology digital resource available from November 2015 at <http://enablingeducators.org/enablingtypology/>. The most common broad genres taught and assessed are the argument essay and the scientific report. Some of the UPrep units also include 'study skills' (however, see Section 2.1 for critique of 'skills' approaches), such as time management, study planning and becoming familiar with university culture and systems, such as Learning Management Systems (e.g. Blackboard) or the university library.

4.3.1 Tasks and practices

The tasks that feature most regularly in the 35 enabling programs (as class tasks or homework tasks) include:

Reading

- Reading and understanding a range of texts
- Identifying sources (using the academic library, using databases)
- Critical evaluation of sources (sometimes including journal articles)
- Note-taking
- Referencing and citation

Writing

- Sentence construction (including grammar focus such as: run-on sentences, sentence fragments)
- Writing a paragraph
- Topic sentences
- Overall text structure (including writing introductions and conclusions)
- Paraphrasing and quoting
- The writing process (drafting/ editing/ proof reading)

4.3.2 Assignments and assessment

The spread of assignment types differ depending on the focus of the unit. At least two or more of the programs use one or more of the following assessment tasks:

- Online quiz(zes)
- Learning portfolio/ reflective journal

- Writing a paragraph
- Writing an essay plan
- Annotated bibliography
- Argument and/or research-based essay (from 750–1500 words)
- Reports (scientific-experimental/ recommendation)
- Oral presentation

All but two programs use graded marking matrices (Fail–Pass–Credit–Distinction–High Distinction, or a variation of this scale).

4.4 Enabling curricula viewed according to the position of ALL

From analysis of the 35 enabling programs and the composition of their curriculum, we propose five models of Australian enabling programs, which have been created through the lens of exploring specifically where ALL fits in the curriculum. These models are not comprehensive; there are programs that exist in the enabling field which do not fall easily into these broad models and therefore stand as anomalies. We acknowledge also, that there are many other factors which contribute to a comprehensive curriculum and we make no claim that the models presented here capture aspects of curriculum such as embedded support or assessment design.

Explanation of terms

Language/Literacies—unit/course exploring academic literacy practices which has been mapped across all other units/courses in the program

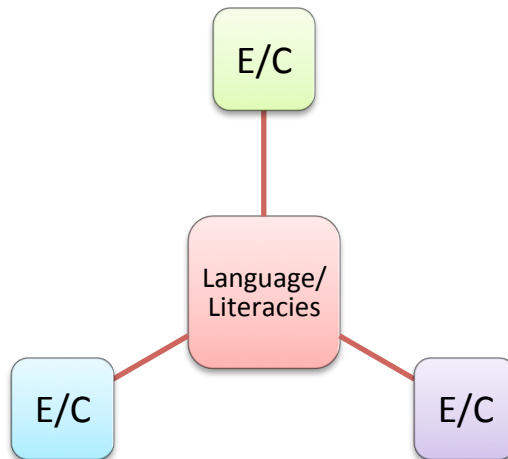
E/C—elective or compulsory unit/course

UPrep—unit/course exploring university preparation skills and culture (may or may not include writing) which has not been mapped across other units/courses in the program

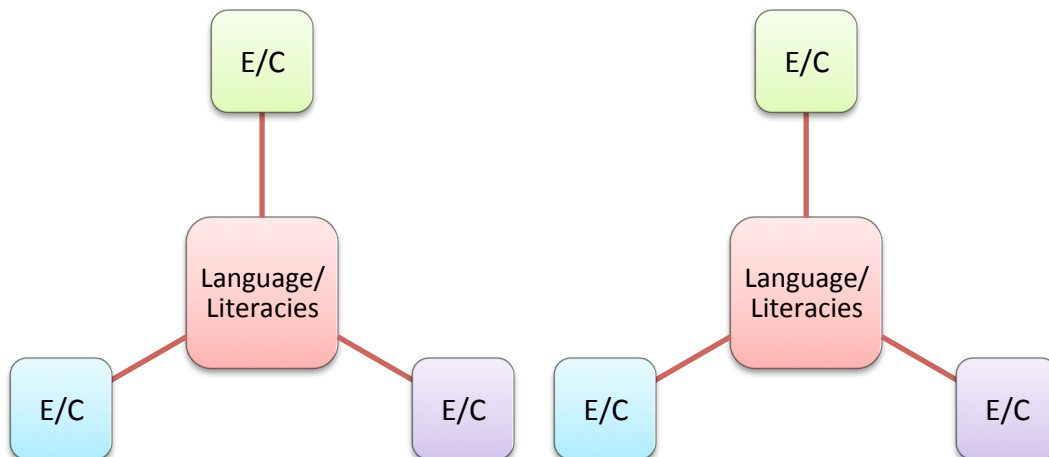
UG—unit/course from undergraduate program (usually credit-bearing)

DS—unit/course part of compulsory discipline-based stream

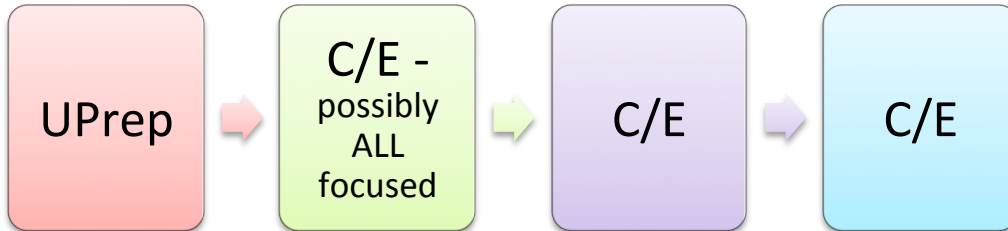
Model 1a—Language and Literacies at the centre/core of the program and either compulsory or elective modules curriculum-mapped to core course (1 semester)



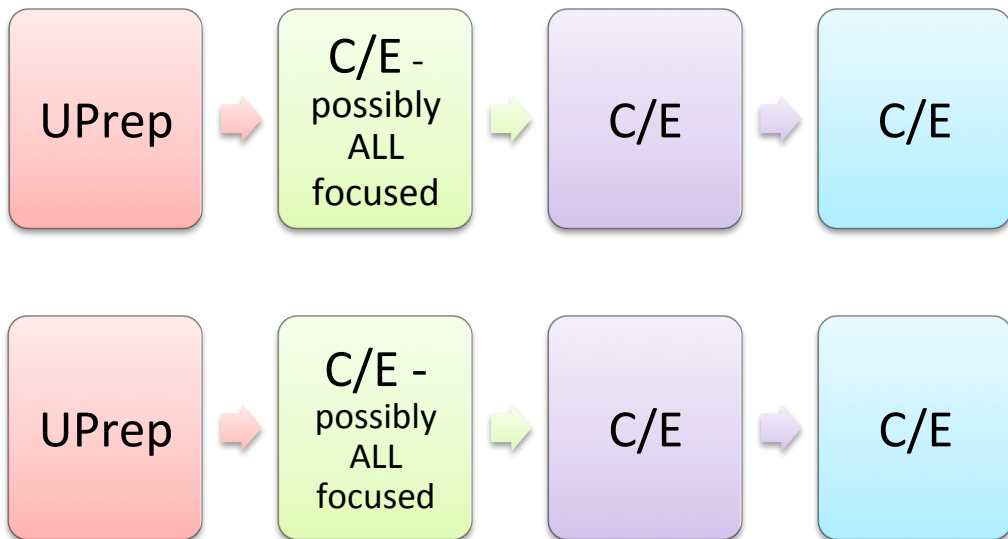
Model 1b—Language and Literacies at the centre/core of the program and either compulsory or elective modules curriculum-mapped to core course (2 semesters)



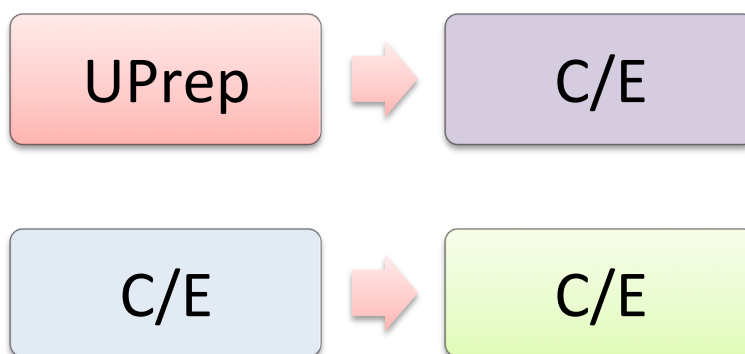
Model 2a—Compulsory UPrep module plus either compulsory or elective modules not curriculum-mapped (1 semester)



Model 2b—Compulsory UPrep module plus either compulsory or elective modules not curriculum-mapped (2 semesters)



Model 2c—Compulsory UPrep module and other electives or compulsory modules (2 courses x 2 semesters)



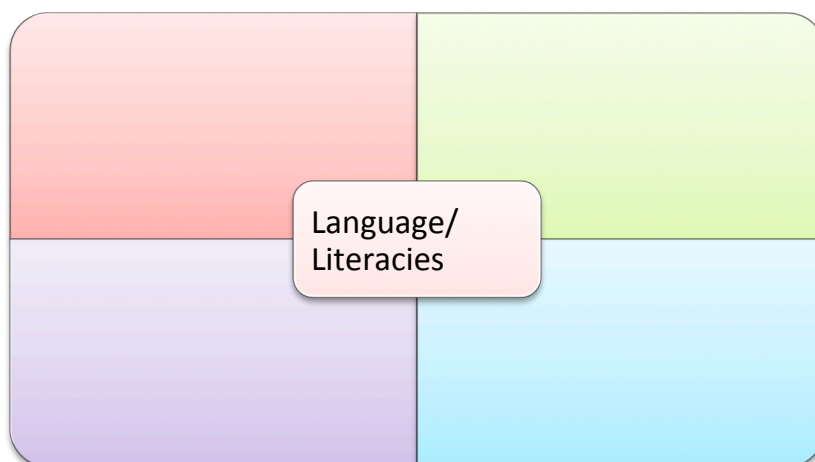
Model 3—Compulsory UPrep module plus either compulsory or elective modules and one or more undergraduate/faculty-based modules not curriculum-mapped (1 semester)



Model 4—Compulsory UPrep module plus discipline-based streamed units/courses not curriculum mapped (1 or 2 semesters)



Model 5—One Program, one course with language and literacies/study skills at the centre



These five types of enabling curriculum have been member-validated by all the participants in this study. We believe these are significant for the following reasons:

- 1) This kind of comprehensive exploration of enabling programs across the country is a new contribution to the enabling field
- 2) This is the first overview provided of enabling programs that specifically looks at the position and shape of ALL teaching and learning in Australia
- 3) This kind of review offers a strong foundation for generating conversations within the field and the sharing of 'good practice'
- 4) This report has the potential to start conversations more widely with other ALL practitioners, both nationally and internationally.

It is our view that Models 1a and 1b, and possibly Model 5, offer the best shape and conditions for foregrounding the importance and relevance of academic language and literacies, tying in with disciplinary epistemologies, exploring the possibilities for the writer, situating language within the sociocultural context of studying at university, and studying within a preparatory course for undergraduate language and literacies. By tying in the core unit around the ALL requirements of the other core/elective units, most of which have a broad disciplinary focus, the core practices and knowledges around reading and writing in an academic context are centralised. If curriculum mapping does not occur, we argue that the opposite becomes true: if ALL is treated as a stand-alone unit, the connections and practices that thread through the program are not made visible. Instead, disciplinary knowledge and practices are privileged, and the units become siloed, resulting in less cohesion between the units and the program as a whole. It is clearly not the case that students cannot be successful if an enabling program is based on Models 2a, 2b, 2c, 3 or 4, but we would argue that valuable opportunities to enhance learning and future success are potentially lost.

4.5 Location of enabling program(s) in the institution

There was little commonality across the 35 enabling programs presented in this report in terms of where they were located within the institution. As can be seen from .

Table 1, eight of the 26 institutions house their enabling programs in university colleges.

Table 1: The location of each enabling program within their institution

Institution	Name of enabling program	Location in the university
CDU	Tertiary Enabling Program 1 and 2	Faculty of Law, Education, Business & Arts
CQU	Skills for Tertiary Preparatory Studies	Academic Learning Services Unit
CSU	Study Link	Office for Students
CU	UniReady UniReady Intensive	Vice Chancellery
ECU	University Preparation Course	Faculty of Education and Arts/ in Dean's Office
FED	Foundation Assisted Student Transition	Federation College
FLIN	Foundation Studies	Central Academic Unit
GRIFF	Griffith University Preparation Program	Griffith Health Group
JCU	Tertiary Access Course	Learning, Teaching & Student Engagement Unit
LA TROBE	Tertiary Enabling Program	Education Faculty Partnership with TAFE
MON	Monash Access Program	Faculty of Education
MURD	On Track	Centre for University Teaching and Learning
SCU	Preparing for Success	Southern Cross College
UNIAD	University Preparation Program	Faculty of Arts
UNICAN	UC Connect UC PREP UCAN REACH	University of Canberra College
UNE	Pathways Enabling Course	Teaching and Learning Support
UON	Newstep/ Open Foundation	English Language and Foundation Studies Centre
UNSW	UNSW University Preparation Program UNSW Preparation Program	Learning Centre
UND	Tertiary Pathway Program Foundation Studies Tertiary Enabling Program	Student Services (Sydney)
UQ	Tertiary Preparation Program	UQ College
UNISA	Foundation Studies	UNISA College
USQ	Tertiary Preparation Program	Open Access College
USC	Tertiary Preparation Program	Faculty of Science, Health & Engineering
UTAS	University Preparation Program	Centre for University Pathways and Partnerships
UOW	University Access Program STEP to UOW	UOW College
WSU	University Foundation Studies	WSU: The College

4.6 Age of each enabling program

The creation of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) in 2010 appears to have been significant, as Table 2 suggests:

Table 2: The age of each enabling program

Institution	Name of enabling program	Year the program commenced
CDU	Tertiary Enabling Program 1 and 2	2009*
CQU	Skills for Tertiary Preparatory Studies	1987
CSU	Study Link	1999
CU	UniReady/ UniReady Intensive	2010: online 2014: face-to-face
ECU	University Preparation Course	2003
FED	Foundation Assisted Student Transition	1992
FLIN	Foundation Studies	1983
GRIFF	Griffith University Preparation Program	2013
JCU	Tertiary Access Course	2015*
LA TROBE	Tertiary Enabling Program	1990
MON	Monash Access Program	2014
MURD	On Track	2008
SCU	Preparing for Success	2012
UNIAD	University Preparation Program	2012
UNICAN	UC Connect	2003
	UC PREP	2009
	UCAN REACH	2009
UNE	Pathways Enabling Course	2008
UON	Newstep (NS)	1974 (OF)
	Open Foundation (OF)	1990 (NS)
UNSW	UNSW University Preparation Program (UPP)	1989
	UNSW Prep	2011
UND	Tertiary Pathway Program	2010
	Foundation Studies	2011
	Tertiary Enabling Program	2012
UQ	Tertiary Preparation Program	2011
UNISA	Foundation Studies	2011
USQ	Tertiary Preparation Program	1989
USC	Tertiary Preparation Program	2006
UTAS	University Preparation Program	1996
UOW	University Access Program	1998
	STEP to UOW	2005
WSU	University Foundation Studies	2008

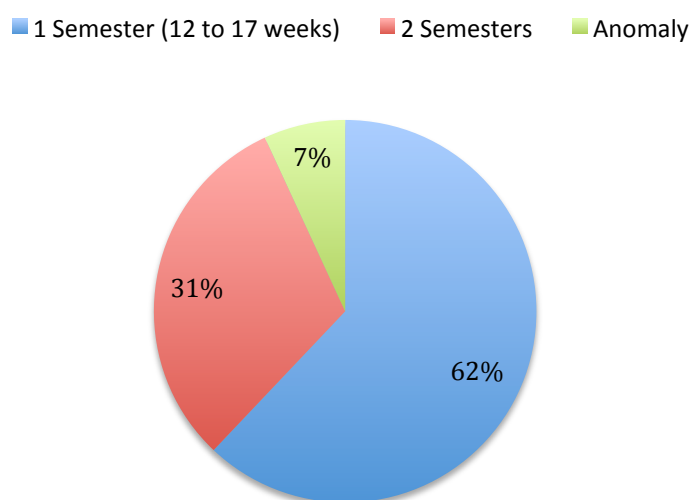
*In its current form

There appears to be two broad patterns in terms of the age of the enabling programs surveyed in this audit. As can be seen from Table 2, one of the courses was developed in the 1970s, four were developed in the 1980s, six were developed in the 1990s, eleven were developed in the 2000s and thirteen programs have been developed since 2010. These thirteen can be labelled ‘Post-HEPPP’, with the other 22 created ‘Pre-HEPPP’. Therefore, HEPPP appears to have been highly significant in shaping the enabling field and leading to its rapid expansion in recent years. The ages of these programs is also highly likely to be a contributory factor in terms of how enabling programs are constructed and the position of ALL in the curriculum (see Section 5.1).

4.7 Duration of program(s)

The majority (23/35) of the enabling programs last for 1 semester (12 to 17 weeks) as a full-time option, although most of these (15) offer a part-time equivalent. In contrast, nine of the programs last for 2 semesters (up to 1 year). There are anomalies, for example, Study Link (CSU) offers subjects that are self-paced, University Preparation Program (UTAS) is a flexible program, and students can take up to 4 years to complete the Pathways Enabling Course at UNE.

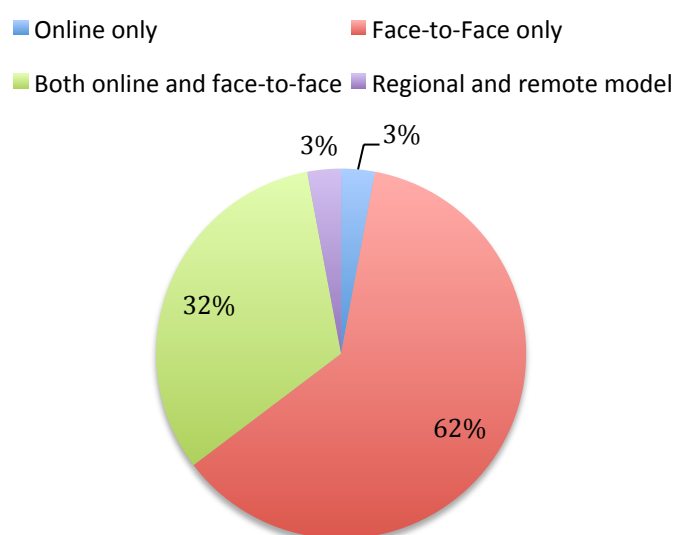
Figure 1: Minimum full-time duration



4.8 Mode of delivery

Of the 35 enabling programs, the majority (21) are offered exclusively face-to-face. These programs take place in a variety of locations: on campus, in local TAFEs or community centres and schools. Eleven of the programs offer both a face-to-face and an online version. Only one program (UNE) is offered exclusively online and one program uses a ‘rural and remote delivery model’ (Tertiary Pathway Program, UND).

Figure 2: Mode of delivery



4.9 The number of units in the curriculum

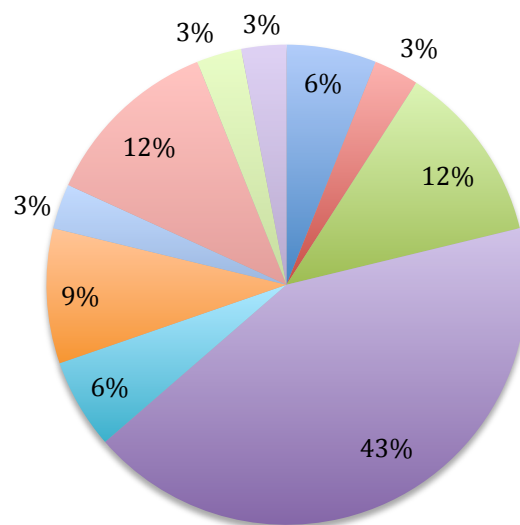
The most common curriculum design among the 35 universities comprises a 4-unit structure, often including an ALL unit; a numeracy unit; and a science and/or humanities unit (see Section 4.3). The next most common curriculum design is to have three or eight units (4 universities for each category), followed by six units (3 universities), then one unit (2 universities). Charles Sturt University is unique, in that it offers 18 units and students can elect how many and which units they do (see enabling typology available from November 2015 for full details—<http://enabligeducators.org/enablingtypology/>).

The number of units offered in the program often align with the length of the program (see Section 4.6), with most of the 4-unit programs offering a session-long (either a semester or a trimester) full-time option or a two-semester part-time option. The larger programs (6–

9 units) were all spread over two sessions, with the exception of UND’s Tertiary Enabling Program which currently requires students to take 6–7 units in one session. This program is currently under review.

Figure 3: Minimum number of units/courses

■ 1 unit/course ■ 2 units/courses ■ 3 units/courses ■ 4 units/courses ■ 5 units/courses
■ 6 units/courses ■ 7 units/courses ■ 8 units/courses ■ 9 units/courses ■ Anomaly



4.10 Diagnostic testing at application

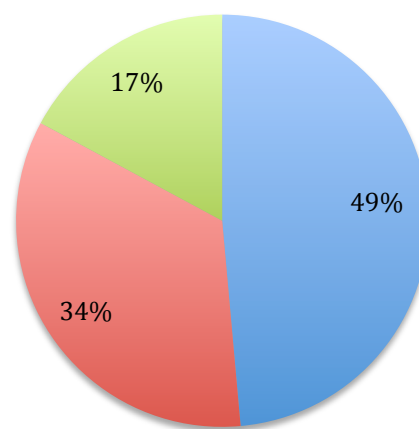
The question of whether diagnostic testing is used provoked interesting discussion among participants, largely because it resonates strongly with, and is a manifestation of, the varying values and ideologies that underpin the programs. Just under half of the courses (49%) do employ some form of diagnostic testing and some of those use that testing as a gatekeeper. A further 17 per cent of the courses use students’ writing (in the form of a personal statement or some reflective writing) to assess students’ literacies (and numeracy) on entrance.

Eleven of the courses (34%) do not use any diagnostic testing of students’ literacies or numeracy. For many of these universities, the decision not to use a diagnostic test is closely related to the open nature of the program; instantiating the belief that enabling programs

should be open to all students, irrespective of their previous educational experiences or socioeconomic/ language/ cultural background.

Figure 4: Diagnostic testing at application

■ Yes ■ No ■ No (but personal statement)



4.11 Support for ALL for all enabling students

The types of support offered to all enabling students as part of their studies varied from institution to institution. Broadly speaking, most (30/35) programs consider their enabling students to be students of the university, and these students are therefore offered the opportunity to access centralised academic support services, which include generic workshops and individual consultations.

The remaining five programs do make support provision available to their enabling students, but this is located within the department or college in which the program(s) is located. Most (24/26) programs offer support from their enabling staff—in some cases the support is part of the teacher/lecturer’s teaching workload, in other cases the support is offered as additional paid hours to the teacher. In some cases the institution runs additional classes for

support, or peer-to-peer support groups. Two institutions employ learning advisors who are specific to the enabling program(s). The enabling-specific support offered throughout the country can be summarised as:

- Individual consultations with enabling staff
- Online support from enabling staff
- Additional support classes
- The program is designed to be a form of support
- PASS² programs

4.12 Support for ALL for Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) students

The support offered to LBOTE enabling students differs significantly across Australia. Firstly, there is almost an equal division in terms of who identifies LBOTE students (12/26 institutions do not formally identify LBOTE students; 14/26 do identify LBOTE students). However, the spread of universities that offer specific ALL support to LBOTE students (not International students) is markedly lower. Only one university has a specific LBOTE support teacher attached to their enabling programs; the remaining institutions offer varying forms of support for LBOTE students, such as:

- LBOTE enabling students could be offered a lighter study plan;
- LBOTE enabling students could be connected with ESOL³ classes outside of the university;
- Additional LBOTE support can be offered on an individual needs basis;
- LBOTE students can access centralised EFL-specific⁴ workshops
- LBOTE students are asked to attend additional ESOL-specific content to support mainstream classes

Many of the enabling educators who participated in this project made the comment that they do not identify or offer additional support to LBOTE students because their enabling programs are targeted at 'domestic students'. We contend that this position is on one level

² PASS = Peer Assisted Study Support

³ ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages

⁴ EFL = English as a Foreign Language (largely aimed at International students)

understandable if looking at the student population as either domestic or international (fee-paying, temporary) students. However, a more nuanced lens exposes tensions in this view because domestic students whose language backgrounds are not English-speaking, which includes students who might be the spouse of an Australian national or have arrived in Australia on a Humanitarian Entrant visa, may need additional language support like their international counterparts—from surface level (grammar, punctuation, syntax) to higher order literacies (synthesis, evaluation). It is our contention that LBOTE students—studying at enabling, undergraduate and postgraduate levels—fall between the gaps created by the reductive dichotomy of domestic/ international student categorisation. And although there are some enabling programs recognising and addressing these gaps, it is certainly an area that warrants further consideration and, we believe, policy change at institutional level.

5 Discussion

What is clear from exploring enabling education in Australia, and from the analysis of the data collected through this project, is that this field is extremely diverse and in many ways disparate. However, there are also many areas of commonality that can be probed to create more cross-institutional collaboration and conversations. In what follows, we have identified three key areas of significance that we think warrant further exploration and thinking.

5.1 The historical–institutional context and the evolution of academic literacies provision

From the variation evident in this report, it appears likely that many enabling programs have evolved organically and their current shape is the result of their historical and institutional backgrounds. While there are examples of ‘mature’ enabling programs, many of the programs that constitute the enabling field are relatively new. Eleven of the 35 programs surveyed were created after 2010, suggesting that the introduction of HEPPP had a significant impact on the field and drove its unprecedented expansion. The diversity in enabling education is clearly evident in the different shapes of the programs, in the varied composition of the curriculum, and in the various locations from which the enabling programs are administered. It is particularly interesting to observe that eight of the programs are located in university colleges, suggesting that those institutions view enabling education as a detached element, perhaps sharing a campus but badged as a separate entity of the university proper. Furthermore, the development and expansion of enabling programs is reflective of the changing policy context. The changes to federal funding of higher education have made developing enabling education an attractive proposition for many institutions, which could be seen as constituting an additional revenue stream at a time of contracting budgets and funding avenues.

We consider the age of the enabling programs to be highly significant in terms of the location and value placed on academic language and literacies. From this overview of enabling programs across Australia, it appears there is a pattern in terms of the age of the program and the position of academic language and literacies in the curriculum. A higher percentage of the newer enabling programs appear to have engaged in curriculum mapping

of ALL, whereas the older programs have particular shapes informed by the historical–political–institutional contexts within which they were created and where they currently exist. As an example, we here look at two universities briefly: the Open Foundation and Newstep programs at UON and the UniReady program at Curtin University.

Open Foundation (University of Newcastle)

Open Foundation was established by Dr Brian Smith in 1974 and originally sat in the then Department of Community Programs at UON. Dr Smith had previously taught at the Open University in the UK, and he championed the introduction of an equitable pathway for ‘non-traditional’ students. Open Foundation runs two programs for students aged 20 years+: a part-time, year-long iteration (also available with limited subject availability as a fully online program) and an ‘intensive’, semester-long version. Both versions consist of two disciplinary modules, which can be chosen from a list of eighteen subjects. In 2015, approximately 2200 students enrolled and the program has an average attrition rate of approximately 50 per cent across all forms of the program (online, part-time and intensive).

In terms of academic literacies and language provision, Open Foundation stands as an anomaly in the field because it has no stand-alone/ explicit delivery of ALL; instead it embeds ALL within the disciplinary units it offers. The embedding of ALL is the responsibility of individual Course Coordinators, who may elect to seek advice from language practitioners. Open Foundation is the oldest enabling program in Australia and does not align with any of the five models presented in Section 4.3.

Newstep (University of Newcastle)

Newstep is the sister program to Open Foundation, offering open access tertiary preparation to 18–20 year olds (although potential students must provide justification if applying to enter without having attempted a Year 12 certificate). Newstep was developed in 1990, meaning that it is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2015. The Newstep program has a substantially different shape to that of Open Foundation; students study a full-time load over two semesters (a full academic year), and study 7 units over the duration of the course. Newstep has a core module each semester,

Academic Literacies 1 and 2. This course requires students to learn how to write a structured paragraph (the 'SEXXE'⁵ paragraph), read a novel and write an essay, write a report on Australian culture and an argument essay on the death penalty. Significantly, while the lecturers who teach into Open Foundation hold academic (permanent/casual) positions, the lecturers in Newstep hold teaching contracts. We view Newstep as fitting in with Model 2b, presented in Section 4.3.

In 2012, students from UON's enabling programs, including Open Foundation, Newstep and the ATSI program, Yapug, accounted for 17 per cent of UON's undergraduate enrolments (Bennett, et al. 2012).

UniReady (Curtin University)

UniReady, operating in its current form, was established in 2010 as part of the Centre for elearning, which sat under Deputy Vice Chancellor Education. In its previous iteration, the course ran for 12 months, rather than the 6-month/1-semester shape it now has, and originally sat in the now defunct Centre for Regional Education, located in the Faculty of Humanities. Now, UniReady runs its semester-long program twice a year and also offers a summer-intensive program for recent Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) students. In 2014, UniReady had almost 1750 students enrolled at census (both semesters) and an average of 50 per cent completed the program in full, with slightly under 500 students proceeding on to undergraduate programs at Curtin. Approximately one-third of these students take UniReady online, with the remainder opting for face-to-face tuition. In summer 2015, UniReady Intensive had 438 students enrolled at census; slightly over 70 per cent of these students completed the program in full and 247 students went on to study an undergraduate program at Curtin.

In terms of academic language and literacies, Curtin has mapped the content of the elective units into the two core ALL units (Fundamentals of Academic Writing and Foundations of Communication), so that these units fully support UniReady students with the ALL requirements of their elective units. The elective units on offer are Maths, Introduction to the Humanities, Introduction to Commerce and Introduction to Health

⁵ SEXXE: Statement, Expansion, Example 1, Example 2, Ending

Science. We view UniReady as fitting in with the shape of Model 1a, presented in Section 4.3.

We chose these institutions and programs—Open Foundation, Newstep (UON) and UniReady (CU)—here because they provide a pertinent and relatively representative comparison of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ programs that exist in Australia. Moreover, Open Foundation is an anomaly in the enabling field, because it has no explicit ALL teaching and learning within the program, whereas Newstep and UniReady appear to align with two of the five models presented in Section 4.3.

The overviews of these three programs suggest that the history and position of the programs have influenced their provision and the position of ALL in them. Open Foundation is the oldest program in Australia and was designed originally to mimic the style of teaching and learning that students will experience in undergraduate study; however, the result of its long history may be that traditional views of language and literacies (language is neutral and transparent, disciplinary knowledge is the core focus) have been transported into its modern iterations. In contrast, Newstep is comparatively younger and has a course addressing academic language and literacies at its core; however, the shape of this course, particularly evident in the inclusion of a novel and with prescriptive and reified ways of writing (the SEXXE paragraph) connect strongly with the epistemology of high school English. In this way, Newstep’s ALL focus is looking backwards to school, rather than looking forward to the kinds of reading and writing the students might do in their undergraduate studies. On the other hand, UniReady has two core ALL modules which have been designed to interlink with the elective units that students can also take. A critical factor at play here is UniReady’s relative ‘youth’: UniReady began as an online program in 2010 and was only developed into a face-to-face program in 2014, which offered a chance for curriculum renewal and reconfiguration. Without a long history influencing it, UniReady has been able to react to more contemporary concerns with language and literacies, and has been able to redesign the relatively new shape of the course to foreground ALL’s centrality in the student experience. We believe it is the case that many of the older programs align with Model 2 (a/b), reflecting traditional and perhaps out-dated views on language and literacy; whereas many of the programs that we view as fitting with Models 1 (a/b) and 5 are less than five years old.

5.2 Open access v. gatekeeper diagnostic testing: a necessary intervention or an ideological challenge to the purpose of enabling education?

One of the most interesting and ideologically challenging aspects of the design, delivery and ethos of enabling programs is the question posed around whether it is feasible, desirable or ethically-appropriate to implement gatekeeper diagnostic testing. This disparity across the enabling field points to an interesting tension in what enabling education is for. Many in the enabling field talk about the role such programs play in “attracting under-represented cohorts” (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2014: 55) and “equipping students from under-represented backgrounds with the skills to make a smooth transition to degree-level studies” (Crawford, 2014: 15). Enabling programs “provide an alternative pathway” (Atherton, 2015: 81) for students “who lack prior qualifications yet nonetheless aspire to a university education despite being unable to meet standard entry criteria” (Murray & Klinger, 2012: 119). However, despite these descriptors, there is little published literature that theorises enabling education or offers conceptual discussion of the ideological principles that underpin enabling education. There are, however, some clues in the literature. Taking UON’s Open Foundation as an example, it is clear that this program was a response to two guiding forces: firstly, the introduction of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS) by the federal government in 1974 set the scene for new forms of higher education in Australia. Secondly, the influence of the Open University in the UK was significant in developing similar forms of ‘open access’ courses in Australia (May & Bunn, 2015). In their paper exploring its history, May and Bunn (2015) report how Brian Smith—the architect of Open Foundation—described the rationale for its inception, saying:

[the development of the program] does not mean that everybody should take a university degree, or even that everybody has the capacity to do so. It does mean that people who feel the urge to do so, for whatever reason, should be given encouragement and opportunity

(Smith, 1974, cited in May & Bunn, 2015, p. 140).

The idea that access to university should be expanded beyond the traditional university student demographic (predominantly male and from elite backgrounds) was relatively

radical in the 1970s, although May and Bunn (2015) report that earlier federal reports on higher education had called for universities to be more open to ‘less-traditional’ potential undergraduate students. In this sense, May and Bunn argue that Open Foundation “can be viewed as part and product of the next wave of this great change to open up higher education then underway” (2015: 137). The open shape of Open Foundation, what Hodges et al. (2013) refer to as a “characteristic ‘open door’ strategy” (p. 5), has thus been a defining feature of the program since its inception.

However, other than this example of (rare) exploration of the underpinning values of one course, there is little further to draw on. Moreover, because enabling education falls outside of the standardisation that comes with alignment to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), there are no prescribed entry requirements for enabling programs. As such, it is therefore perhaps unsurprising that there is such disparity across the country in terms of what ‘open access’ means and how each institution interprets and polices the notion. As outlined in Section 4.10, slightly under half of the 35 enabling programs use a diagnostic test—it should be noted that there is slippage in how ‘diagnostic test’ is interpreted across the field, with some tests used as gatekeepers, others used to offer a holistic view of students, and others used as streaming mechanisms. A further 17 per cent of programs ask potential students to do some form of diagnostic writing, such as writing a personal reflection on why they want to join the program, which may or may not determine whether the student can enter the program; an “informing tool” according to one of the participants. Of the institutions surveyed, many reported that they advise students who appear to have low literacy/ numeracy/ IT proficiencies to return to TAFE to improve them before reapplying for the enabling program. This was true of both NES and LBOTE students. Just over one-quarter of the programs offer ‘open access’, in that they do not use any kind of pre-entry requirements or diagnostic testing.

However, all of these approaches (totally ‘open access’ with no entry requirements; analysis of personal statements; diagnostic testing) have their own pros and cons. With the first option (‘open access’), there are questions regarding how to manage the difficulties that arise with students whose language and literacies (understandings, practices and proficiencies) make success⁶ difficult to achieve. From a practical perspective, the language

⁶ We acknowledge here that ‘success’ itself is a contested notion

and literacies proficiencies and experiences that students bring with them to enabling programs constitute a problematic area. As enabling programs are only open to domestic students, it appears that there is a sense of ‘benign neglect’ around Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE; otherwise known as Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)) students. Since LBOTE students are domestic students, they do not need to meet the entry requirements that are used to oversee the entrance of international students into Australian higher education; consequently there is no requirement for enabling educators to enforce entry requirements. However, by making assumptions about the prior language and literacies experiences that domestic student cohorts have, LBOTE students can get lost and their particular needs (linguistic, literacies, cultural differences in practices and experiences) can be overlooked. In the course of the interviews with each of the participant universities, the question of whether the program has any English language requirements or uses a diagnostic test was asked. One of the participants working in an ‘open access’ program gave the following answer, which captures a key ideological tension that exists within enabling education:

We do let anyone into the program. We do accept students with English that we can probably say at the very beginning ‘they’re not going to make it through the program’ and we’re still struggling with how to support those students.

This quote highlights the contradictory situation that can arise with open access courses. As Bretag (2007) argues, in the context of international students in Australian higher education, if we complain about students struggling with the language requirements of their studies when we have no entry requirements, it is tantamount to lamenting “The Emperor has no clothes” (2007: 18). If open access programs are intended to provide opportunities to all, then it stands that there cannot be any impediments to entry; however, if a student enters the program with forms of language and literacies that will not well serve the purposes and expectations of the program, making it difficult for the student to participate in or engage with the program, this unrestricted access actually becomes inequitable.

One way open access programs attempt to address this inequity is to provide academic and language support in addition to or as part of the program; however, this may result in staff possibly struggling to support these students if they are not trained in language and literacies concepts and pedagogy—Jacobs (2005) argues that ‘discourse teachers’, that is

teachers with backgrounds in TESOL (teaching English as a second or other language), language and critical thinking, are best placed to engage in unpicking disciplinary discourses because of their experience working with “students who have failed to master mainstream discourses” (p. 478). Similarly, Cocks and Stokes (2012) highlight how “the absence of an English language entrance test makes it near impossible to identify students with critically low proficiency levels” (p. 849) at any point in the program until a substantive assessment ‘reveals’ language issues. This corresponds with Joan Turner’s (2011) assertion that the institutional treatment of language means that it rarely becomes visible until it is seen as a ‘problem’ that needs to be fixed. Indeed, Cocks and Stokes argue that:

While it may seem contradictory to the principles of enabling education programs, implementing an English language entry test may be the best way of filtering students who are clearly not at the minimum proficiency level necessary for academic coursework. (2012: 849)

Moreover, as signalled in the participant quote above, it is likely that students who do not have proficiency or confidence in their language and literacy before starting an enabling program will drop out. This cannot be labelled as “positive attrition” (Hodges et al. 2013), where students decide through their participation in a course that university is not where they want to be; rather, this is where a system that is designed to be inclusive may, despite its intentions, end up being exclusive.

At the heart of these issues there are two debates: an ideological one and an ontological one regarding the ‘true’ purpose of enabling education. Firstly, despite the wonderful ideals of Brian Smith in 1974, as quoted above, it is worth probing whether the idea of totally unrestricted access in contemporary times is still feasible. In 1974, the typical student was still male and of European descent. Nowadays, with intentional massification of higher education well underway, and making considerable in-roads with particular equity groups, enabling education is arguably never more necessary, but also never more subscribed. As enabling programs grow larger, it is fair to say that the amount of resources allocated do not necessarily grow at the same pace; as such, enabling educators are being asked to do more with less. And while it might be appropriate to do some pedagogical tweaking to make the most of the time and resources, such as flipping the classroom, there are limits to how much assistance can be offered when there are fundamental barriers to learning in the shape of

undeveloped repertoires and understandings of language and literacies (and numeracy as well).

This in turn leads to an ontological debate regarding how language is viewed and ‘operationalised’: when viewed as a neutral (invisible) conduit to communication, a ‘skills’ based approach to language and literacies (or treatment of language within disciplinary courses) is usually offered; however, there are limits to how effective this kind of provision can be and ‘study skills’ approaches have been heavily critiqued (for example: Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2006; Turner, 2011). In contrast, taking a view of language as a set of contested and social practices is a more holistic and inclusive approach to teaching and supporting language and literacies development, particularly if provision has been synthesised throughout the program. However, it is certainly the case that such holistic/ disciplinary approaches are more resource-intensive than generic study skills modules, and to be successful it is desirable to take a whole-of-program/ whole-of-department approach to embedding language and literacies provision and support throughout the entire program. And yet, to some degree the view of language that underpins teaching and learning in any educational space is irrelevant if a student cannot communicate informally with clarity before using language in the academic and disciplinary space where their learning will be assessed.

We—the authors of this report—do not wish to align with either view of unrestricted or controlled access via gatekeeper diagnostic testing; instead, our intention here is to raise questions over the desirability versus the practicalities of totally ‘open’ access and to generate a conversation across the country, seeking a negotiated understanding of what enabling education is, who it is for and what it should do. Language, we would argue, is at the heart of all these questions.

5.3 Institutional views of ALL in enabling programs, and in the field of enabling education more widely

A third pertinent area of exploration that this project has opened to discussion is what the (meta)language used within the enabling programs can tell us about underlying assumptions and understandings of language and literacies. This is evident in three key ways: the names

given to units that cover ALL in the programs, the language inscribed in the assessment criteria and the language used by enabling practitioners to describe and define ‘academic literacies’. Roz Ivanič’s (2004) discourses of writing and learning to write has been used as the analytic frame to probe these three forms of language.

5.3.1 UPrep unit names

As is perhaps characteristic of the field, the names used to label ALL units are diverse (see Appendix C). Eleven of the UPrep unit names clearly instantiate a view of ALL informed by the skills discourse, as seen in the use of the word ‘skills’ in some of the titles (for example, *Study Skills, Preparation Skills for University, Learning Skills*). According to Ivanič’s framework, the skills discourse is underpinned by “a belief that writing is a unitary, context-free activity, in which the same patterns and rules apply to all writing, independent of text type” (p. 227); as such, the word ‘skills’ suggests a preoccupation with rules and prescriptions. Other units have more general titles (such as *Introduction to Tertiary Studies, University Studies, Learning at University*), which suggest a more generic approach to teaching and learning. In contrast, other units are labelled with names that are clearly oriented towards particular aspects of studying at university (for example, *Critical Thinking, University Culture, University Research*). This diversity, and the implicit assumptions that exist underneath the unit names, remind us it is important to remember that the wording chosen to describe the courses can communicate particular messages to students.

5.3.2 ALL-explicit unit names

There is comparatively less diversity in the names of the ALL modules than there is in the UPrep modules. Most of the ALL units use a variation of the following words: academic, writing, communication, literacy(ies) and English with ‘academic’ being used in 16/32 unit names and ‘writing’ used in 13/32 unit names. Ivanič’s discourses of writing and learning to write framework (2004) suggests that a genre approach may underpin these ‘academic writing’ units, where specific purposes and contexts shape the characteristics of writing, for example, the academic context. At the core of the genre discourse, writing is a product which is shaped by its context and purpose and good writing is “linguistically appropriate to

the purpose it is serving” (Ivanič, 2004: 233). Fewer (9/32) of the unit names situate writing/ language/ literacies in the social context of ‘university’, for example, *Writing for University*. The social practices discourse of writing conceptualises writing as “purpose-driven communication in a social context” (Ivanič, 2004: 234) and, unlike the writing-as-product view of the genre discourse, views writing as a broader set of social practices. A much smaller number (2/32) of ALL units foreground the word ‘critical’ in the unit name and appear to view writing as what Ivanič calls a “socio-politically constructed practice” (Ivanic, 2004: 225). Learning to write within this socio-political discourse means thinking critically about how writing is shaped by historical, political and social factors (Ivanič, 2004: 237–38). What is evident in this analysis of ALL unit names using Ivanič’s (2004) framework is that across the enabling field, the dominant view underpinning academic literacies teaching and learning seems to be that writing is a product and that academic writing is a genre of writing of which the characteristic linguistic features may be explicitly taught (Ivanič, 2004).

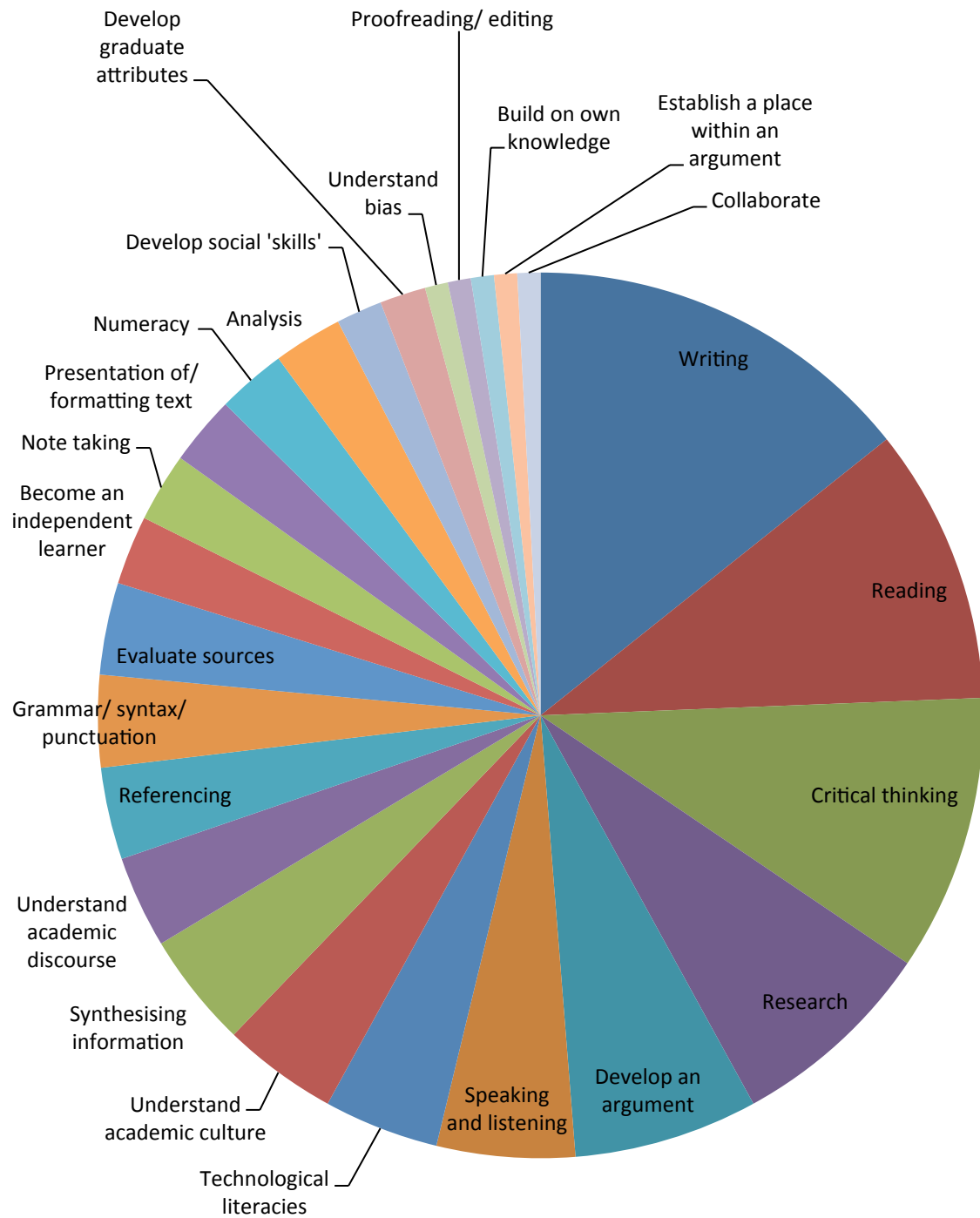
5.3.3 What do enabling educators view as constituting academic literacies?

As part of our evaluative audit interview schedule, we asked participants what they understood by the term ‘academic literacies’. Preliminary findings from this data have been drawn from a content analysis to identify common lexical items used to describe the meaning of ‘academic literacies’. As with the analysis of ALL unit names, it is clear from this data that ‘writing’ features strongly in enabling educators’ understandings of what ‘academic literacies’ is along with ‘reading’ and ‘critical thinking’. In total, 25 different components of academic literacies were identified in the interview responses to our question, indicating the broad range of understandings of this term across the enabling field (Table 2; see also Figure 5).

Table 3: Distribution of components of academic literacies according to enabling educators

Components of Academic Literacies that emerged from interviews with enabling educators	Number of participants who mentioned these
Writing	17
Reading	12
Critical Thinking	12
Research	9
Develop an argument	8
Speaking and listening	6
Technological literacies	5
Understand academic culture	5
Synthesising information	5
Understand academic discourse	4
Referencing	4
Grammar/ syntax/ punctuation	4
Evaluate sources	4
Become an independent learner	3
Note taking	3
Presentation of/ formatting text	3
Numeracy	3
Analysis	3
Develop social 'skills'	2
Develop graduate attributes	2
Understand bias	1
Proofreading/ editing	1
Build on own knowledge	1
Establish a place within an argument	1
Collaborate	1

Figure 5: Responses to the question: "What do you understand by the term 'academic literacies'?"



The list of elements illustrated above suggests that academic literacies is understood as a multi-faceted, complicated and expansive set of practices that students need for undergraduate study. It is perhaps unsurprising that writing was the most common element mentioned by just over a half of the participants (17/30) because writing is the most visible product from the learning that takes place. Reading and Critical thinking were also both well represented, albeit by less than half of the participants (12/30). These three categories (writing, reading and critical thinking) are particularly interesting because they are umbrella terms that capture so many other aspects, many of which are represented in other categories such as: 'note taking', 'presentation of text' and 'develop an argument' for *writing*; 'research', 'note taking' and 'building on own knowledge' for *reading*; and 'analysis' and 'evaluate sources' for *critical thinking*. Again, it is perhaps unsurprising that these three elements were most common in the participants' listing, but it does suggest that many enabling educators are working from a commonsensical (tacit) notion of what academic literacies means, and of what they do and should do in both the enabling and undergraduate contexts.

5.3.4 Unpacking the assumptions underpinning enabling educators' views of ALL

In addition to the analysis of the perceived constituent parts of ALL presented in Section 5.3.3, a deeper, more interpretive analysis of the participants' talk illuminated the assumptions that underpin their understandings of academic language and literacies. In this phase of analysis, we probed the participants' talk for connections to wider discourses, remaining mindful of the enabling context within which the participants work and which shapes their understandings. This analysis can be broadly broken down into two categories: common metaphors and significant patterns of language.

Metaphors

The most common metaphors evident in the data are:

- Academic literacies as *tools for success* (cited by 8 participants)
- Academic literacies as *building blocks/ foundations* (cited by 6 participants)
- Academic literacies as *codes* (cited by 6 participants)
- Academic literacies as *essential for survival* (cited by 2 participants)

- Academic literacies as *navigational tools* (cited by 2 participants)

These metaphors are illustrative of the kinds of beliefs and assumptions that the participants hold about the place and role of academic literacies in enabling education. The idea that academic literacies are ‘tools for success’ was most common, both in the definitions of what constitutes academic literacies and in the wider talk with the participants. This metaphor also connects strongly with the idea that academic literacies are the ‘building blocks’ of learning (and success) and the idea that students need academic literacies ‘to survive’. The alignment of academic literacies with codes suggests a view of academic literacies as a (set of) key(s) that students can use to ‘unlock’ their future learning. The last metaphor—academic literacies as ‘navigational tools’—is also similar, in that it connects with the idea that higher education is a mysterious terrain that requires a map, and that academic literacies can help students ‘find their way’.

There are connections to be made here with Lea and Street’s (1998) seminal heuristic for viewing language and writing in higher education. In their paper, Lea and Street make the case for three models of writing support: study skills, socialisation and Academic Literacies. Study skills operates at the level of generic and remedial provision, often siloed into periphery spaces and positioned as distinct from disciplinary content; socialisation incorporates the study skills model and takes a genre approach to language whereby students are inculcated into the language and literacy conventions of their discipline through a novice–expert model. Academic Literacies subsumes both study skills and socialisation, but takes a social practices approach to language and literacies, which acknowledges the power of the institution to open and constrain ways of being, knowing and doing; that views writing as an issue of disciplinary epistemology; that considers the role and responsibility for and to the author. Rather than being separate entities, there can be—and often is—overlap between these three approaches.

The metaphors of ‘tools for success’ and ‘building blocks’ connect with Lea and Street’s (1998) study skills approach, in that these views are underpinned by a view of writing as a set of “atomised skills which students have to learn and which are then transferable to other contexts” (p. 158). This generic and transferrable conceptualisation also connects with Ivanič’s skills discourse (see the following section). Such views, when dominant, are problematic because they reduce complex phenomena into simplistic and unhelpful entities.

The metaphor of ‘code’ connects with Lea and Street’s socialisation model, in that disciplinary genres are composed of particular sociolinguistic conventions, which act as codes. In contrast, the metaphors of ‘life skills’ and ‘navigational tools’ could be interpreted as connecting more at the level of Academic Literacies because they connect with a sense of macro-overview of the social purposes of academic literacies. In particular, the metaphor of academic literacies as tools for navigation connects with the view taken by the Academic Literacies approach that the universities are “sites of discourse and power” (Lea & Street, 1998: 159), with the dominant institutional position - that students need to change for the academy and not the other way round, - necessitating a need for students to learn how to find their way around.

Significant patterns of language

Other significant patterns of language in the data include ‘meeting the expectations of the institution’ and ‘understanding disciplinary differences’. These patterns of language feature highly in how enabling educators see the role of academic literacies and demonstrate participants’ understanding of the power of institutional and disciplinary discourses. This aligns with Lea and Street’s (1998) academic literacies model where student writing and learning are viewed as “issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill and socialisation” (p. 159) and where students must change their social and linguistic practices and identities as they shift between disciplines. However, such a view of academic literacies seems to sit at odds with further analysis of this data using Ivanič’s (2004) framework of discourses of writing and learning (see Section 5.3.5 below) perhaps indicating the disparate nature of these understandings across the enabling field as well as revealing an opening for further analysis.

5.3.5 Analysis of enabling educators’ definitions of academic literacies using Ivanič’s discourses of writing and learning to write

Further to the analysis of what enabling educators consider the constituent parts of academic literacies presented above, we also subjected these definitions to analysis through the analytic lens that Ivanič’s framework of discourses of writing and learning to write offers.

As described in Section 3.4, Ivanič’s framework offers a lens into identifying the often implicit and unpacked assumptions and beliefs about language, ergo academic literacies, that exist in talk, texts, practices, assessments and policies. In order to do this identification, the dataset that was collected on enabling educators’ definitions of academic literacies was both manifestly and interdiscursively analysed, meaning that the data were explored for both linguistic instantiations (whereby a word might connect directly with one of Ivanič’s discourses: manifest analysis) or where the ideas that underpin the language used connect more opaquely to the discourse: interdiscursive analysis). It is worth reiterating here that this analysis is clearly grounded in a qualitative-interpretivist paradigm and therefore is open to contestation. It is also the case that this analysis has not been member-checked and all the contributions here have been de-identified so as to protect the anonymity of each of the participants.

Table 4: Analysis of the definitions of academic literacies using Ivanič’s (2004) framework of writing and learning to write

Ivanič’s six discourses of writing and learning to write	Number of instantiations (manifest and interdiscursive)	Examples of instantiations within the texts
Skills	14	<p>[Academic literacies is] essentially about communicating within academic conventions and codes of academia ...</p> <p>[Academic literacies] encompass all of the skills—either generic skills, transferrable skills, discipline-specific skills ...</p> <p>... it’s those transferrable skills: communication, writing, thinking critically, looking at study skills ...</p> <p>[X unit looks at] common errors that students might make at sentence level ...</p> <p>[Academic literacies are] a kind of composite of generic and transferrable skills that are required for academic study ...</p> <p>[Academic literacies] relates to the foundational elements of writing, reading, comprehension, punctuation, communication and the like ...</p>

Ivanič's six discourses of writing and learning to write	Number of instantiations (manifest and interdiscursive)	Examples of instantiations within the texts
Creativity	0	
Process	1	[Academic literacies includes] understanding the writing process ... [the unit] does spend time looking at proof reading, drafting, that kind of thing ...
Genre	7	<p>[Academic literacies is] whatever the text they should be writing is structured, what purpose is it serving ...</p> <p>[X unit] prepares them for different disciplines ... and the expected styles and standards of academic writing</p> <p>I think academic literacies is the way you get to communicate with a particular subject area of a discipline, really</p>
Social Practices	3	Academic literacies is the ability to navigate knowledge traditions ...
Sociopolitical	2	<p>[Academic literacies is] being able to view through a critical lens ... understand their own bias and be able to work around that.</p> <p>Academic literacies is around being able to negotiate in linguistic and social ways the academic environment generally and university in particular ... [it's] a language use thing to start with but I guess it kind of brings in that post-structuralist idea that language is experience and is everything ...</p>

As can be seen in Table 4, the skills discourse was most commonly instantiated in the participants' definitions of academic literacies. The genre discourse was the second most common discourse evident in the participants' talk. These findings correlate with a recent UK study of A-level (Year 12-equivalent) students' and teachers' discourses of writing in the context of their transitions into undergraduate study (Baker, 2015), which found that the most common discourses in A-level teachers' feedback, students' talk and texts and curriculum documents and assessment criteria are the skills, genre and assessment

discourses of writing. In contrast, analysis of university lecturers' discourses—as evident in the assessment criteria used to mark undergraduate assignments of varying disciplines—were broader in range, capturing elements of writing related to disciplinary epistemologies, creativity and risk. The analysis presented in Table 4 therefore suggests that many of the enabling educators draw on similar conceptions of language and literacies to those of dominant school-level views. This connects with the discussion in Section 5.1 about the direction in which the enabling program is facing: backwards to mimic school or forwards to imitate undergraduate study.

6 Conclusions and future directions

6.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

Before we move on to making our concluding remarks and recommendations for practice and further research, we first return to the Research Questions:

6.1.1 What enabling/ foundation/ pathways programs are available at every HEI in Australia?

This project has produced a typology of the different preparatory (pre-undergraduate) programs and pathways for students wanting to enter university without the requisite qualifications or without recent/ Australian educational experience. This typology has been developed into a digital resource and can be found at:

<http://enablingeducators.org/enablingtypology/>

6.1.2 What ALL modules they offer (core or optional)?

This project has engaged in a comprehensive audit of the academic language and literacies provision—both implicit and explicit—that is included in each participating enabling program. The detail of this audit is presented in Chapter 4 and is also available in the digital resource.

6.1.3 What ALL support is available?

This project has shown that the types of support available to enabling students differ significantly across the country. There are few examples of universities that have specific

support for enabling students; most institutions offer ad-hoc tutor support and/or advise their students to seek help from centralised support services. A minority of universities do not consider their enabling students to be ‘students of the university’ and therefore the main avenues of support are closed to these students, although other local forms of support are offered in their place. In some ways, this situation evokes the classic phrase by Vincent Tinto and Cathy Engstrom (2008) “access without support is not opportunity”. Supporting students with their studies in enabling programs, particularly with language and literacies, is as important—if not in some senses more important—as the (disciplinary) content of the programs.

6.1.4 What LBOTE support is available/ is there any specific LBOTE delivery/ support available?

One of the key ‘foreshadowed problems’ we entered the field with was a question about how best to support LBOTE students with the language and literacies requirements of their enabling studies. We do not feel that we have been able to learn much from this inquiry, as there is very little explicit support available for LBOTE students, and even less specific support for students from refugee backgrounds, studying in enabling programs. As such, these students can ‘fall between the cracks’—their home languages and sociocultural experiences are often not recognised, yet because of their status as domestic students they are not able to access support designed for international students. Within the context of a field that promotes ‘open access’ education as an equitable ethos and social good, the (lack of) targeted support for LBOTE students’ language and literacies opens a contested ethical space. How can we truly enable these students’ aspirations and educational journeys without making provision for their language? This is an area that we consider warrants further and pressing attention.

6.2 What have we learned?

The research presented in this report illustrates how enabling education has evolved into what is currently a disparate and semi-disconnected field. The 35 enabling programs in Australia audited in this report vary substantially—for example, in terms of length of program, number of units, age of program—meaning that the portability and currency of

any enabling program is relatively limited in a national sense, although we acknowledge there are agreements between universities at a state/territory level. Moreover, we have used the descriptor ‘semi-disconnected’ to describe the field because of the limited detailed conversations that take place across the country. We contend that in order to become a *sector*, there needs to be more sustained dialogue between enabling educators at a national level so as to facilitate tighter links between universities and ‘what works’ discussions so that ‘good’ and ‘not-so-good’ practice can be shared. Moreover, in the absence of any formal alignment with national standards frameworks, enabling education remains relatively uncharted territory, making it susceptible to the sharp end of the neoliberal agendas that have permeated higher education. Rather than wait for standards to be imposed on the field, enabling educators could work together to develop their own national principles relating to academic literacies and language, creating sets of recommendations, toolkits and resources that could be shared across the country.

It is evident in the data that many enabling educators are approaching ALL—what we argue is the ‘core business’—in varied and (often) creative ways; the data also suggest that some approaches are more traditional or face backwards towards school knowledges and practices, rather than facing forward towards undergraduate study. This is reflected in the educators’ definitions of what constitutes academic literacies in the enabling context (Section 5.3.5), and, significantly, points to the contrasting views of language and discourses of writing that underpin enabling programs. It is our contention that when the underpinning conception of language is as conduit, the corresponding pedagogy is necessarily informed by deficit framings. These are a particularly concerning and dangerous set of assumptions for enabling students because by viewing students as lacking skills and knowledges that constitute the currency of academic practice, we may ‘close down’ rather than the intended ‘open up’ pathways to ‘success’ and future opportunities. This could arguably be true of all levels of undergraduate study. Instead, what is needed is the development of what Gale and Mills (2103) call “socially inclusive pedagogies”; creating *spaces* for underrepresented students, as opposed to the institutional focus on creating *places*, and shifting dominant perspectives to view students positively in terms of what they bring, rather than focusing on what they don’t have (p. 11). The development of such transformative pedagogies necessitates discussions at all levels of enabling programs: developers, teachers, support services—to work beyond transmission models of language and discourses of writing that

extend beyond skills and genre. What's needed is the development of understandings of language as multi-layered, along with a more nuanced account of how language fits into the ethos of enabling education so we can work towards:

...equipping students with academic skills⁷ and competencies that make up cultural capital valued by dominant groups while contesting the disempowering effects of the hegemonic curriculum by embracing the notion of multiple knowledges that are equally valid.

(Gale & Mills, 2013: 13–14)

So how do we work towards the development of counter-hegemonic/ counter-deficit approaches to teaching and learning in the field of enabling education? In the last section of this report, we propose our recommendations for pushing academic language and literacies—as a space for social inclusion for NES and NESB students—to the fore; bringing the enabling field together more cohesively to move towards gaining sector status; and forging stronger links together to design national 'good practice' toolkits for practice, research and evaluation.

6.3 Recommendations for further research and practice

This report has outlined and discussed the findings of a project that has surveyed and audited the enabling field in Australia. From our analysis, we have identified four key areas that warrant further empirical exploration:

- 1) Further research is needed to probe whether Models 1 (a & b) and/or Model 5 (Section 4.4)—where ALL have been curriculum mapped with the other units that constitute the enabling curricula—provide the best model to teach and support students with their language and literacies development. This would include the collection and analysis of student achievement data from enabling programs with different models, to see if there are any clear patterns in terms of participation, engagement and success within both the enabling program and their undergraduate studies.

⁷ We contest the widespread and commonsensical use of the word *skills*; instead we prefer the word *practices* because it captures a more socially-contextualised view of language and literacies

- 2) We should consider the importance of numeracy—a relatively hidden element of academic literacies in this audit—by seeking to explore how numeracy fits into the models we have proposed and what is considered necessary content for tertiary preparation.

- 3) We should also consider how academic language and literacies are taught and supported in enabling programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students—does teaching and supporting indigenous students impact on the best ways to structure enabling curricula and teach for success?

- 4) We find the seemingly simple ethos of ‘open access’ complicated and multi-layered when viewed through the lens of academic literacies, especially when we consider that students can enter enabling programs with any level of ALL experience and proficiency. We therefore contend that engaging in a nationwide exploration of the efficacy of diagnostic testing, its relationship with the ideological notion of ‘open access’ and language and literacies provision is a necessary next step for continuing this body of work.

For enabling practitioners, we propose a set of recommendations to strengthen the teaching and supporting of academic language and literacies in enabling programs:

- It is important to develop conversations that explore and unpack the views of language and discourses of writing that underpin the positioning of ALL in enabling programs. These necessarily need the guidance and support of trained language practitioners, particularly teachers who have ESL/TESOL experience.

- Language practitioners can also be supportive in terms of helping to check course materials, assignment briefs and assessment criteria for clarity of understanding for all students—both NES and LBOTE.

- LBOTE students need specific support to engage in courses that are mostly written for students who have English as a first language and which draw on assumptions about cultural familiarity with Australian–western education systems.
- Wherever possible, enabling units should be checked for cultural and ALL assumptions that could disadvantage LBOTE students, or inadvertently evoke past trauma for students from refugee backgrounds.

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Appendices

Appendix A—Interview Schedule

1. What do you understand by the term ‘academic literacies’?
2. Do you have any English Proficiency (EP) requirements for your course?
3. What, if any, course content explicitly includes language and/or academic literacies?
4. If you don’t have any academic literacy-specific modules/courses, do you intend to develop and implement anything with a specific focus on language and/or academic literacies in the future?
5. What support do you offer to help NES students with their language and academic literacies?
6. Do you identify LBOTE students? If so, how and why?
7. Do you identify HEB students? If so, how and why?
8. What support do you offer to help LBOTE/HEB students with their language and academic literacies?
9. What, if any, course content is specifically designed for LBOTE/HEB students?
10. Do you adapt any of your course content to accommodate LBOTE/HEB students?
11. What pathways can HEB students take to enter your course?

Appendix B—University pathways

University	Enabling programs	Sub-bachelor programs	Access programs
ACU		ACU certificates, advanced certificates and associate degrees	
ANU			
BOND		Bond University Preparation Program	
CDU	Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP1 & TEP2)		
CQU	Skills for Tertiary Preparatory Studies (STEPS)		
CSU	Study Link		
CU	UniReady Enabling Program		
	UniReady Intensive		
DEAKIN		Associate degree of Arts	
		Associate degree of Education	
ECU	University Preparation Course (UniPrep)		
FED	Foundation Access Studies (FAST)		
FLIN	Foundation studies		
GRIFF	Griffith University Preparation Program (GUPP)		
JCU	Tertiary Access Course (TAC)		
LA TROBE	Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)		
MON	Monash Access Program (MAP)		
MQ		Next Step	Mature Age Jubilee Scheme
MURD	On Track Program		
	On Track Sprint Program		
OUA		OUA Pathways	
RMIT		Certificate IV in Tertiary Preparation	
SCU	Preparing for Success at SCU Program (PSP)		
SWIN		UniLink Diploma	
UNIAD	University Preparatory		

University	Enabling programs	Sub-bachelor programs	Access programs
	Program (UPP)		
UNICAN	UC CONNECT		
	UC PREP		
	UCAN REACH		
UNE	Pathways Enabling Course		
UNI MEL			Non-school leaver pathway
UON	Newstep		
	Open Foundation		
UNSW	UNSW Preparation Program (UNSW Prep)		
	University Preparation Program (UPP)		
UNISYD		Diploma of Tertiary Preparation	Mature Age Access Scheme
UND Freemantle	Tertiary Pathway Program (TPP)		
	Foundation Year		
UND Broome	Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)		
UND Sydney			
UQ	Tertiary Preparation Program		
UNISA	Foundation Studies		
USQ	Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) Lower/Higher		
	Tertiary Preparation Program Intensive		
	English for Academic Purposes 2		
USC	Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP)		
UTAS	University Preparation Program (UPP)		
UTS		INSEARCH diplomas	
UOW	University Access Program (UAP)		
	Special Tertiary Entrance Program (STEP to UOW)		
UWA	UWA Smart Start		Mature-age Access Program
WSU	University Foundation Studies		

Appendix C—Names of UPREP and ALL units

INST.	Name of 'Introductory' module(s) (UPREP)	Name of ALL module(s)
CDU TEP 1	Study Skills	Reading and Writing for Further Education
CDU TEP 2		Academic Language and Learning
CQU	Preparation Skills for University	Essay Writing for University Technical Writing for University
CSU	Transition to University (NOT A CORE UNIT)	Writing at University Grammar Essentials for Writing at University Academic English for Students from Other Language Backgrounds
CU		Fundamentals of Academic Writing Foundations of Communication
ECU	Learning Skills	Academic Writing
FED	Introduction to Tertiary Studies Understanding University Learning	Academic Writing
FLIN		Introduction to University Study through Academic Writing Developing the Skills of Academic Literacy
GRIFF		Communication and Literacy
JCU	Introduction to Academic Learning	Critical Text Analysis
LA TROBE	Critical Thinking	Academic Communications
MON	Learning in a University Context	Academic Writing
MURD	ONE CORE COURSE	
SCU	Managing Your Study	Communicating at University
UNIAD	University Culture University Research	Academic Literacy for University A English Literacy for University B
UNICAN UC CONNECT	Academic Techniques*	
UNICAN UCPREP	ONE CORE COURSE	
UNICAN UCAN REACH	Learning at University Understanding Community	

INST.	Name of 'Introductory' module(s) (UPREP)	Name of ALL module(s)
UNE	Foundation Skills for University Learning 101 and 102*	
UON OF		
UON NS		Academic Literacies
UNSW PREP	Academic Skills 1 and 2	
UNSW UPP	University Orientation & Study Skills 1 and 2	
UND TPP	Communication and Essential Study Skills	
UND FY	Applied Learning and Critical Reading	Conventions of English Writing for Academic Purposes
UND TEP		Conventions of English Writing for Academic Purposes
UQ		Academic English for University Study
UNISA	University Studies	Critical Literacy English Language Studies
USQ	Orientation to University Study or Study to Succeed	
USC	Academic Skills for Success	
UTAS	Study Skills	Academic Writing
UWS		Academic English 1 & 2
UOW UAP		Language and Literacies
UOW STEP	Skills for Academic Study 1 and 2	