Speaking back to the mainstream from the margins: Lessons from one boutique senior secondary school

Stewart Riddle, University of Southern Queensland
David Cleaver, University of Southern Queensland

Introduction

This chapter considers how the daily practices and underpinning philosophies from one particular school site might inform the broader project of reframing mainstream schooling in more socially just ways. Like our colleagues, Mills, McGregor, Hayes and te Riele (see Chapter XX??), we feel that there are particular lessons that might be taken from schools that work in the margins by catering to young people who have disconnected from schooling. We feel that there are three key lessons that can be taken from this chapter for mainstream schooling: (re)engaging students who have disconnected from schooling; fostering a commitment to belonging to a community of learners that is based on an ethic of care, trust and respect; and (re)imagining education in more socially-just, equitable and counter-hegemonic ways.

Schools are active sites of economic, political, cultural and social ideologies (Apple, 2004) that serve to legitimise particular discourses, while silencing and marginalising others. Current neoliberal discourses are dominant in many developed nations and these have resulted in the move toward the intensive mainstreaming of education through standardised testing, national curriculum, increased measurement and accountability of teaching and teachers. As this mainstreaming tends to create homogenised, 'one size fits all' education landscapes, there is much that mainstream, or mass-produced schooling can learn from alternative approaches that seek to be more socially just and inclusive (McGregor & Mills, 2011). In addition, the rich learning opportunities afforded to students in alternative schooling contexts provides further justification for a case to speak back to the mainstream from the margins (McGregor, Mills & Thomson, 2012). While contributing to ongoing dialogue about the impacts of neoliberalism on education (see Connell, 2013) and the lessons we can draw from alternative schools working in the margins, this chapter gives voice to a particular school that serves as a model.

In this chapter, we share some of the findings from a study of students' and teachers' lived experiences in an alternative, or *boutique[1]*, senior school. *Harmony High[2]* is an independent senior secondary school in Queensland, Australia that uses students' interest in pursuing a career in the music industry as a magnet (Cleaver & Riddle, in press). This boutique college meets the needs of disengaged and disaffected students who have been marginalised through their experiences with mainstream schooling, and in so doing manages to both "work within and against the grain of policy simultaneously" (Thomson, Lingard & Wrigley, 2012, p. 4).

Through our work with the staff and students at Harmony High, we have found a productively shared ethos and commitment to a social justice ethic and this has the effect of binding the school community together (Riddle & Cleaver, 2013). While there is a kind of powerful becoming that is afforded to students and teachers, who live, learn and work in contexts such as Harmony High, too-often alternative schools are pushed to the margins of our education systems when research shows that they can do much to reengage those young people who have dropped out or disengaged from their education (Quinn, Poirier, Faller, Gable, & Tonelson, 2006; McGregor, Mills & Thomson, 2012). Research has also revealed much about the conditions and pedagogical strategies employed in alternative schools (for example, see: Mills & McGregor, 2010; te Riele, 2007; Thomson, Lingard & Wrigley, 2012).

However, the next phase requires finding appropriate ways to connect the rich learning from the alternative schooling experience to the more mainstream structures of mass schooling. It is our intention that this chapter will assist in drawing needed attention to some of the creative and effective educational practices taking place in the peripheries of formal education. As education researchers who are focussed on democratic and critical perspectives in education, we argue that schools like Harmony High, if brought from the margins into the mainstream, can serve to "inform many of the practices within mainstream schools that currently contribute to the marginalisation of certain categories of youth" (McGregor & Mills, 2011).

The neoliberal machine and marginalising educational mainstreams
Across much of the developed world we are experiencing what Connell (2013) refers to as the neoliberal cascade, where "education has been defined as an industry, and educational institutions have been forced to conduct themselves more and more like profit-seeking firms"

---

[1] This is how the school principal, Neil, referred to the school.
[2] Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of the school and participants.

(p. 102). Apple (2012) describes neoliberalism as a force that applies market logic and commodification to all areas of society, not least of all, education. He goes on to describe, in detail that:

> Increasingly, under the growing power of neoliberal ideological forms, education is being commodified. Its institutions are being turned into "products" that are to be subjected to the logic of markets... And the people who work in educational institutions at all levels are to be valued only by their contributions to an increasingly unequal economy, with test scores as a proxy for national and international competitiveness (p. 16).

The implications of the neoliberal cascade are multiple and diverse, including the centralisation of educational decision-making, implementation of high-stakes testing regimes and performance-based accountability measures for schools, students and teachers, as well as the homogenising of curriculum and pedagogy through national curriculum initiatives. These feed into a much broader societal push to the centre-right, where neoliberal mechanisms pervade areas that have been traditionally public goods, turning them into private profit-driven enterprises. Education and health are both obvious examples of this.

Harber (2002) describes the increasing psychological and physical harm, including stress and anxiety, that impact upon students and teachers through "increasingly technocratic, standardised, regulated, ordered, inspected and test-driven schooling systems aimed primarily at classification and ranking" (p. 14). These operations are central to the neoliberal project in education, where the commodification of it widens inequality and undermines social inclusion efforts (Francis & Mills, 2012) at the expense of many young people.

Perhaps one of the most troubling aspects of the neoliberal cascade is the increasing mainstreaming of education, where we begin to see "the centre masquerading as the margins" (Apple, 2012, p. 8). Troubling because this centring effect makes invisible the powerful effects of neoliberal discourses on education; obscuring the damaging effects of market forces. Indeed, it has been argued that neoliberalism centralises "as immutable to the education system those very mechanisms of distinction that widen educational inequality" (Francis & Mills, 2012, p. 252).

The political construction of 'youth at risk' as a deficit metanarrative (te Riele, 2007) is both misrepresentative and problematic, through the political, social and moral questions it draws on. The assumption that students who are disaffected and disengaged with mainstream schooling are somehow broken and need fixing underlies the neoliberal discourses of accountability and individual responsibility in education. The problem is that students who do not 'fit' the standard mass-produced model of education are "left floundering with little

intervention providing appropriate realistic and authentic schooling" (Yuginovich & O'Brien, 2009, p. 15).

We take careful note of Harber's (2002) compelling argument that "mass formal schooling does not inherently or uniformly provide good and positive experiences for individual pupils and that it can also be harmful to the wider society" (p. 7). The centring effect of education can be likened to a factory-model, where students are batch-stamped and processed in a linear fashion, with the focus on standard outputs of production. This model of education is "damaging both in its institutional impact on children/young people and teachers as individuals, and in its fundamental perpetuation of social inequality" (Francis & Mills, 2012, p. 252).

Australia, in parallel to the UK and USA (see Apple, 2012; Connell, 2013; Francis & Mills, 2012; McGregor & Mills, 2011), has seen a shift over the past couple of decades towards a homogenising educational landscape built on the premise of surveillance, competition, ranking and classification as the drivers of education reform and improvement. Market-measures, discourses of 'choice' and individual merit permeate the narratives that are paraded in policy and media treatments of schools and schooling. League-tables, high-stakes testing of literacy and numeracy both on the national and international level, work to legitimise neoliberal truths. While considering the important work that schools such as Harmony High do, it is important to note that they must do so at the cost of buying into neoliberal discourses of choice.

Students who fall into narratives of failure are problematic within the neoliberal discourse, where the individual is assumed to be in control of social, economic and educational mobilities. The neoliberal agenda removes any responsibility by assuming that society simply provides the opportunity, not a guarantee of success for all. However, in the interest of those least advantaged in our education systems, it is important to reject deficit constructions of young people as requiring 'fixing' (McGregor & Mills, 2012); shifting the focus instead onto schooling sites that premise alternative education on principles of social justice and an ethic of care.

Also, with consideration of the need to support students who are marginalised or 'drop out', rather than attempting to 'fix them', we agree with Smyth (2006), who argues for further understanding of "the existential experiences of young people, and from there, (we can) begin to construct more feasible reform platforms from which to pursue forms of school organisation, culture and leadership that acknowledge those important realities" (p. 288).

Social justice and equity concerns should be foundational in the provision of high quality education opportunities that are accessible to all young people and we argue for the need to create opportunities to destabilise the logics of a neo-liberal system that works to advantage few and disadvantage many. One approach is to look at how schools like Harmony High work as a site for (re)engaging marginalised, disaffected and disengaged young people.

In the next section, we present a short narrative portrait of Harmony High as one particular site of (re)engagement for marginalised students who are disaffected and have disengaged from mainstream schooling. We have selected what we believe are poignant comments from our participants, recorded during the interviews and focus group discussions. Rather than giving attention to any one particular voice, we have intentionally constructed a montage of the voices and present them as 'sound bytes'. We have deliberately not attributed labels to these 'sound bytes', such as teacher, principal, Year 11 or Year 12 student. This process of de-identification is designed to 'free the voice' by creating a space that will help avoid preconceived notions of agency, power and situation that work counter to the narrative being shared. The intent of our narrative here is to highlight the boundary work that is done to reconnect young people to meaningful forms of education.

(Re)engaging marginalised students in education

Harmony High operates in a manner somewhat similar to magnet schools[3], where students choose to attend based on a shared interest, in this case for a possible career in the contemporary music industry. Housed in one building amidst the inner-urban landscape of the city, Harmony High has little obvious outward appearance as a school. Significantly, on each of our visits we were struck by the formal and informal types of industrious learning taking place and the atmosphere of creativity that exudes from every room. Music infects everything at Harmony High; from the posters on the walls, to the students in the hallway sitting on armchairs, listening to music on mp3 players while working on laptops, or focussed on instrumental music practice. The sounds of an electric guitar being recorded in the studio mingle with percussion coming from another room. We are invited into a classroom where the teacher is instructing the students on elements of music videos while a pop music video is being screened on the projector. In another room students are working on the financial accounts for the business plan of a national band tour.

---

[3] The term *magnet school* was used to describe particular institutions in the USA, designed in the early 1970s that focused on specific features, such as a single disciple area, to attract students. While there is a technical and generic meaning, we also use the term descriptively. This is not to be confused with contemporary charter schools.

Data were collected in the form of surveys, focus group meetings with Year 11 students and Year 12 students and individual semi-structured interviews with students and teachers conducted over a number of visits to the school. Further data collected included anecdotal observations and filming of the daily college activities by students who carried video recorders around for a period of time. Three major themes arose in the narratives generated for this study, including: community and culture; curriculum connectedness; and commitment. We use these themes as starting points from which to explore particular notions of: (re)thinking progressive educational leadership as politically and pedagogically emancipatory (Apple, 2006); (re)constructing the mainstream to embody the interests of those least advantaged (Connell, 1993); in order to (re)imagine school change by speaking back to the mainstream (Thomson et al, 2012).

Elsewhere, we have looked at the role played by the principal in providing innovative leadership and philosophies of democracy and participation (Riddle & Cleaver, 2013), as well as looking at the importance of music as a matrix in the student experience (Cleaver & Riddle, in press). These papers present different aspects of one school's experience of engaging with alternative schooling philosophies. By investigating the situation from various directions, our research design takes a crystallising approach, which Richardson (2000) describes as providing opportunities to reflect and refract on various layers, which affords a deeper and more complex understanding of phenomena.

Here, we focus on illuminating the role of the school as a site for (re)engaging marginalised students in education. While common sense might claim that one size does not fit all, observation of Harmony High as an example in practice will offer understandings on just how and why this is so. Our intention is that through working in the margins with this alternative school we can raise important questions, and perhaps demonstrate some useful lessons that will speak back to mainstream schooling.

We keep sacking good kids from schools.

We call them naughty kids; we call them bad kids. I just call them disengaged kids; and it's not the kid that's the problem, but sorry education systems across the world.

It's not the kids that are the problem; we've got the problem. And if a kid doesn't comply then they're a naughty kid; they're a bad kid.

I hated, honestly, everything about my last school; it was just the worst place in the world for me to be.

The system didn't work for me. They weren't very accommodating.

They just let me slip through the cracks because there are, like, 2000 students in the whole school. So if you weren't doing very well, they wouldn't help you.

They would just let you float on.

There was nothing at my old school that enticed me to learn.

This school has made me a lot better person.

The problem with public schooling was that it kind of lets you slip through the cracks.

Deficit discourses of youth sit at odds to the teaching and learning philosophy at Harmony High. The model of alternative schooling as a place to send 'troubled' teens to, or the second-chance schooling philosophy is not what makes the teachers and students at Harmony High tick. While such schools certainly have their place in the educational landscape (Mills & McGregor, 2010), the (re)engagement of young people in schooling works in a focused manner at Harmony High. Music is the glue (Cleaver & Riddle, in press) that binds the teachers and students together.

Marketing materials for the school contain statements like the following, "It is our belief that true learning will only take place when the staff and curriculum meets the student's real interest and educational needs". It is a belief that lies at the very core of the business of teaching and learning at Harmony High. It is important to note the focus is on changing teaching and learning, rather than attempting to change young people themselves (McGregor & Mills, 2011). There is no doubt that the emphasis on the music industry at Harmony High would not appeal to everybody. However, the philosophies and pragmatisms of the daily life at the school are certainly transferable to other contexts.

I think you've got to make some allowances to just make it a bit easier for them.

You know they're all working part-time jobs, plus trying to do one of the busiest periods of their life, plus go through the most incredible biological changes in the human body.

I'm more interested in learning because it's things that I'm interested in.

There's such a strong student-teacher relationship; we respect them a lot more and then that relates back to how you act in class.

I'll never get a better job than what this is here because I put music into everything.

I think it's a bit more of a family and community than a school.

It's on a more personal level because there's a lower student-to-teacher ratio.

I think it means the teachers can interact more one-on-one with students, and we also call the teachers by their first names instead of their last names.

There is a strong buy-in of students and teachers to shared philosophies of education that include democratic pedagogies, holistic education, a social justice ethic, a *community* of learners and connectedness in every aspect of the school's daily life. Indeed, we note how the created community is more akin to a family than a school. Smyth (2012) describes schools as requiring significant levels of risk-taking, experimentation and innovation, which in turn requires "high levels of trust, care and respect" (p. 15). These views are supported by Schussler (2009), who claims, "a combination of care and high expectations is essential for students to reach their highest capacity" (p. 116). This could be due to a range of factors at the school, including the curriculum, pedagogies, philosophies and relationships (Mills & McGregor, 2010).

One of the biggest ticket items at Harmony High is the constant opportunities provided for marginalised young people to re-engage with education in positive ways (McGregor & Mills, 2011). This comes through consistently in the comments by students, which fit the basic narrative of "hated my last school because I [didn't feel valued/didn't feel challenged/wasn't engaged/was left behind]; love this school because I belong to a community that respects and cherishes me". Relationships were stressed as being critically important. The traditional disciplinary teacher model is broken apart and replaced with a

more informal, mentoring relationship that is focused on care and respect, rather than authority and conformity.

In their work on alternative schools, McGregor and Mills (2012) found that teachers are more likely to be committed to high quality engagement and learning when provided with opportunities to focus on the educational, physical and emotional needs of young people, and also when given recognition of their professionalism and creation of collegial, authentic and valuable relationships with other staff and students.

Schussler (2009) describes how teachers need to not only allow students multiple and flexible opportunities for learning success, but also to have a strong belief in and respect for students as learners. This is certainly the case at Harmony High, where supportiveness and respect underpin relationships as well as curriculum (McGregor & Mills, 2011). Smyth (2012) refers to the importance of high-stakes relationships that "coalesce around placing the interests and life chances of young people at the centre of all aspects of teaching and schooling" (p. 18). These high-stakes relationships play an important role at Harmony High, where students are invested with relational power and relational trust.

There is a reduced emphasis on rules & uniforms working alongside an increased emphasis on student engagement in school governance. This goes against the disciplinary discourses of mainstream schooling, where students have limited control and power in decision making, organisation and curriculum choices (Harber, 2002) and are seen primarily as "recipients of knowledge and instructions" (p. 10). There is a lack of focus on behaviour management (Mills & McGregor, 2010); instead, staff and students speak about relationships, trust and care.

> *Yeah, in my last school there were so many rules over pointless things, like you're not*
> *allowed to wear certain socks or whatever, and I'm like, pretty sure I can wear these socks*
> *cos it's not illegal and it's not going to kill anybody.*

The small size of the school (less than 70 students) is also a factor in the community-building work that takes place. Harber (2002) describes how "large schools have often been described as factory-like in the way that students are treated as products" (p. 12) and goes on to caution that large mainstream schools necessitate "necessitates a particularly high degree of bureaucratised and regimented control and order that has worrying results" (p. 12). The whole-school assembly is replaced by 'family meetings', where students are involved in the

school governance processes, addressing discipline issues and engaging in planning activities (Yuginovich & O'Brien, 2009). Student voice is central, rather than an add-on.

Everyone has a lot in common because we all love music.

The teachers are so good. Everyone just gets along with them really well and you can talk to them like normal people.

That would never happen at my old school. I would see them and run away from them.

It's, kind of, more like a person – person relationship than a teacher – student relationship.

In any class they actually ask us at the start of the term what we want to get out of it.

I came here wanting to do performing with my guitar and singing, except now I got into film.

Everything is put into context so it seems relevant to us.

It doesn't seem we're learning things that we're going to go, 'When are we going to use this in life?' You think about it and go, 'That's useful. I'm going to remember that'.

Half these kids are mentoring bands or running club nights and things like that.

Ever since I've been here my grades have gone up; so much improvement.

I want to learn because it's not boring and I want to show my parents that I've actually improved a lot and that it was the right choice for them to send me here.

If you don't want to be here, leave; but no one leaves.

Engaging, real world experiences lie at the curricular heart of Harmony High, where "teachers foster opportunities to succeed and provide flexibility through a curriculum that is student-driven, rather than curriculum-driven" (Schussler, 2009, p. 116). There are multiple music industry connections that students make through their engagement with the Harmony High community. The students' shared interest – a desire for a career in the music industry – creates a collaborative space for working on authentic projects within the school and broader

10

community. For example, students work together to plan and run various events throughout the year, including a musical/music video festival, all-ages music festival with local and interstate touring bands, regular underage shows and club nights, as well as booking and performing shows around the city. They work on budgets for recording, marketing and touring bands, which they are then given the opportunity to actually undertake with an independent record label that is connected to the school. They participate in masterclasses and workshops with professional recording artists, managers, record label executives, concert promoters, venue bookers and other key music industry people.

These co-curricular experiences are not simply added onto the school's formal academic studies, but are closely intertwined with the daily studies of students across the curriculum. This enables the development of a rich culture that goes well beyond the four walls of the classroom to include the facilities and expertise of the music industry. It is a bottom-up curriculum, tailored to individual needs, rather than top-down imposed curriculum.

This broad structure sits in contrast to the narrowing focus of curricula through neoliberal mechanisms, where control of teachers, pedagogy and curriculum are paramount. Smyth (2012) cautions that these control mechanisms distance teachers "from students – their background, histories, families, lives and cultures and aspirations – then students are likely to resist this kind of disembodied curriculum and label it as irrelevant" (p. 21). The curriculum merges with the pedagogies and philosophies at Harmony High, to a point where they are indistinguishable from one another.

Speaking out, talking back, and shouting from the rooftops

Given the purpose of this book as a space for connecting, rupturing and blurring boundaries between mainstreams and margins in education research, it seems appropriate to consider some of the ways that we might speak out, talk back, and shout from the rooftops. It is with this in mind that we now turn towards some considerations of researching in the margins and how we, as researchers, position ourselves and are positioned by, the personal, professional and philosophical motivations and ideals we work with.

It is important that we make apparent our own personal and professional understandings and biases regarding the experiences, knowledges and values that emerge in our work. Both of us have a background in music, as professional musicians and performers, as well as music teachers. We both trained in university music departments and taught in high school music classrooms. It is of little surprise that when we heard of Harmony High, we

were interested in studying the school for a variety of reasons. We saw an opportunity to link into the pedagogical and philosophical practices that are operating in the school as being similar to those we share. We were also keen to establish what has become an ongoing relationship with the school community; one that will hopefully provide us with further research insights, community building and professional development opportunities.

We felt rapport with the students and teachers at Harmony High because, like them we place music at the centre of much that we do. Our positioning as researchers provided the impetus for inquiry into the pedagogies, philosophies, curriculum choices, relationships and community building processes witnessed at Harmony High and how these might be shared more broadly with the education community.

We believe that there are three key lessons for mainstream schooling that can be taken from Harmony High: the (re)engaging of students in their learning who have disengaged from mainstream schooling; the fostering of a commitment to belonging to a community of learners that is based on an ethic of care, trust and respect; and the capacity to (re)imagine education in socially-just, equitable and counter-hegemonic ways.

It is important to continue resisting the meta-narratives of failing students, students at-risk, problem students, and drop-outs. Instead, we propose that the counter-narrative of changing schools to fit students become dominant. This is not something that should be limited to alternative schools, but is necessary for even the largest of mainstream schools. Otherwise the unequal distributions of human, social and economic capital that plague our society will continue to be exacerbated under neoliberal mechanisms. Young people thrive when presented with the opportunity to engage in meaningful and productive work; schooling is no different. As long as we try to treat mass schooling with a cookie-cutter approach, we are going to continue to see young people disengaging and becoming disaffected with schooling.

However, the (re)engagement of young people in learning is only the first, albeit vitally important, step. It is just as necessary to foster a commitment by all members of the school – parents, staff, students – in a learning community. This requires a deep and abiding commitment to democratic principles of civic responsibility, alongside the development of an ethic of care, trust and respect that permeate every aspect of the relationships within the community. This is the bedrock of a commitment to social justice in schooling.

We agree with Connell (1993), that social justice is fundamental to schooling, rather than an add-on. Francis and Mills (2012) make the claim that there is a moral imperative of educators committed to pursuing socially just ends to not only critique existing models of

education, but to also propose potential alternatives. It would be counterproductive to claim that other schools might take Harmony High as a model for themselves. The complex contextual factors of every school are different. We are not suggesting that schools attempt to refashion themselves, as this would simply result in the mainstream masquerading as the margins. Rather, we advocate that schools engage in dialogue with the peripheries of education, as there is much that can be learnt and adapted from such encounters.

One possibility is in the development of democratic and collaborative approaches to education through the development of local communities of learning that are unique to every school. Francis and Mills (2012) explain that "the provision of a non-damaging education would require attention being paid to the organisation of schools, curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, with a more democratic, collaborative ethos underpinning all these" (p. 264). We have witnessed these elements at work in our interactions with the students and teachers at Harmony High.

There is no single panacea for the complexities of education, despite the assumption by neoliberal pundits and conservatives that it is so. A simple formula for addressing inequities in education systems or reconstructing mainstream schooling in the interests of the most disadvantaged, does not exist. However, there are clearly ways forward that will allow for the blurring between boundaries of mainstream schooling and alternative schooling models, such as that provided at Harmony High. If we really do wish to take up Apple's (2012) call in changing society through education, what better place to start than by mainstreaming our margins and bringing the margins into the mainstream?

References

Apple, M. W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Apple, M. W. (2006). *Educating the "right" way: Markets, standards, God and inequality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2012). *Can education change society?* New York: Routledge.

Cleaver, D., & Riddle. S. (in press). Music as engaging, educational matrix: Exploring the case of marginalised students attending an 'alternative' music industry school. *Research Studies in Music Education*.

Connell, R. W. (1993). *Schools and social justice*. Toronto: Our Schools Ourselves Education.

Connell, R. W. (2013). The neoliberal cascade and education: an essay on the market agenda and its consequences. *Critical Studies in Education, 54*(2), 99 - 112. doi: 10.1080/17508487.2013.776990

Francis, B., & Mills, M. (2012). Schools as damaging organisations: instigating a dialogue concerning alternative models of schooling. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 20*(2), 251 - 271. doi: 10.1080/14681366.2012.688765

Harber, C. (2002). Schooling as violence: an exploratory overview. *Educational Review, 54*(1), 7 - 16. doi: 10.1080/00131910120110839

McGregor, G., & Mills, M. (2011). Alternative education sites and marginalised young people: 'I wish there were more schools like this one'. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1 - 20. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2010.529467

McGregor, G., & Mills, M. (2012). Teaching in the 'margins': rekindling a passion for teaching. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. doi: 10.1080/01425692.2012.740813

Mills, M., & McGregor, G. (2010). Re-engaging students in education: Success factors in alternative schools. Brisbane: Youth Affairs Network Queensland Inc.

McGregor, G., Mills, M. & Thomson, P. (2012). Educating in the margins, lessons for the mainstream. In T. Wrigley, P. Thomson, & B. Lingard (Eds.), *Changing schools: Alternative ways to make a world of difference* (pp. 47–60). Abingdon: Routledge.

Quinn, M., Poirier, J., Faller, S., Gable, R. & Tonelson, S. (2006). An examination of school climate in effective alterantive programs. *Preventing School Failure,* 51(1), 11 - 18.

Riddle, S., & Cleaver, D. (2013). One school principal's journey from the mainstream to the alternative. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 16*(3), 367 - 378. doi: 10.1080/13603124.2012.732243

Schussler, D. (2009). Beyond content: how teachers manage classrooms to faciliate intellectual engagement for disengaged students. *Theory into Practice, 48*(2), 114 - 121. doi: 10.1080/00405840902776376

Smyth, J. (2006). Educational leadership that fosters "student voice". *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 9*(4), 279 - 284.

Smyth, J. (2012). Problematising teachers' work in dangerous times. In J. Smyth & B. Down (Eds.), *Critical voices in teacher education* (pp. 13 - 25). Dordrecht: Springer.

te Riele, K. (2007). Educational alternatives for marginalised youth. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 34*(3), 53 - 68.

Thomson, P., Lingard, B., & Wrigley, T. (2012). Reimagining school change: the necessity and reasons for hope. In T. Wrigley, P. Thomson & B. Lingard (Eds.), *Changing schools: Alternative ways to make a world of difference*. London: Routledge

Yuginovich, T., & O'Brien, P. (2009). Staff perceptions of an alternative educational model for at risk adolescents in Queensland. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, 3*(12), 15 - 26.