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ORIGINAL PAPER

Wilding pedagogy in an unexpected landscape: reflections and possibilities in initial teacher education

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Abstract

This article stems from our participation in the *Wild Pedagogies* colloquium on Tasmania's Franklin River in December 2017. The two authors embarked on the 10-day rafting trip with a group of nine other educators and academics from Australia, Canada and England, engaging in extensive conversations about wild pedagogy principles in education. Conceived and developed by some of the Franklin river participants on earlier colloquiums in North America and Scotland, wild pedagogy thinking and practice is constituted by six key touchstones, including: (1) agency and the role of nature as co-teacher; (2) wildness and challenging ideas of control; (3) complexity, the unknown, and spontaneity; (4) locating the wild; (5) time and practice; and (6) cultural change. The touchstones framed our group's discussions pre-, during and post-colloquium. Drawing on the colloquium's conversations and engaging with a number of the main touchstone ideas post-colloquium, in this paper the teacher educator authors use two distinct case studies (regional and online contexts) to locate the wild within their initial teacher education practice. They do this by initially making links between current teacher education practice and the touchstone ideas, before re-engaging with the touchstones to collaboratively envisage future wilding possibilities. In conclusion the authors advance the touchstone ideas as particularly relevant to those teacher educators seeking to wild their teaching practice in challenging times.

Keywords Wild pedagogies · Higher education · Teacher education · Place-based pedagogy · Online pedagogy

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Introduction and background

The two authors of this paper – Monica and Janet – have had long and varied careers in outdoor education (collectively >50 years). More recently, but for contrasting reasons and at varying points in our lives, we have both transitioned from outdoor education to initial teacher education (ITE) where we currently work in undergraduate and post-graduate primary teaching programs in our respective tertiary institutions in Victoria and Tasmania. For Monica, the transition from outdoor to teacher education occurred in the mid-late 90s and since then she has worked in science, literacy and environmental/sustainability education. For Janet, the transition to teaching fully in the ITE space has been more recent and gradual, with her last outdoor education ITE teaching occurring in 2016. Since then, she has taught in the general ITE areas of curriculum and pedagogy, which occur exclusively online.

In consideration of these broad educational trajectories, this article draws on our participation in the *Wild Pedagogies* colloquium on Tasmania's Franklin River in December 2017. Best known for a famous environmental campaign in the early 1980s that saved it from being dammed, the Franklin is one of Australia's most wild and iconic rivers. Nearly four decades later the river continues to flow unimpeded through the heart of Tasmania's Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers World Heritage National Park. Like previous colloquiums in the wilds of Canada and Scotland, the aim of the Franklin river colloquium was to bring together a group of (eleven) educators and academics from Australia, Canada and England in a remote wilderness environment to engage with ideas pertaining to education and the ecological and social well-being of the planet (Jickling et al. 2018). The trip's key focus involved collective engagement with six wild pedagogy touchstones developed by some of the participants on earlier colloquiums. In conjunction with our river colleagues whose work features throughout this special issue, this article emerged as a direct consequence of our colloquium participation.

The touchstones were first conceived by a small group of environmental and outdoor educators, who, since 2014 have been grappling with the challenge of how education might engage with a broad set of social and environmental imperatives, including how humans could alter their relationships with the world at a time of planetary deterioration in an epoch known as the Anthropocene (Jickling et al. 2018). In lockstep with others attempting to address the dilemma of ensuring a more liveable future for our species and the rest of the community of life on Earth (Segall 2012), the touchstone ideas were designed as "guiding principles" (Jickling et al. 2018, p. 2) to inform alternative thinking and practice in mainstream pedagogy in order to better develop educators in the twenty-first century. While broadly connected to each other, the six touchstones have a distinct orientation that includes: (1) agency and the role of nature as co-teacher; (2) wildness and challenging ideas of control; (3) complexity, the unknown, and spontaneity; (4) locating the wild; (5) time and practice; and (6) cultural change. Many of these themes punctuated our daily river conversations, serving as a central focus and provocation for discussion, contemplation and debate as we rafted our way down the Franklin's tannin-stained waters.

Our earlier private bushwalking and river-based trips had exposed us to the precious ancient ecologies of south-west Tasmania. What distinguished those trips from the colloquium was a unique professional opportunity, provided by the colloquium, to

engage with thinking through how the wild pedagogy offerings might relate to our ITE practice. In the lead-up to the trip, participants read several academic papers that defined and explored the nature and scope of wild pedagogy. As newcomers to this body of literature, our trip preparation involved familiarising ourselves with the wild pedagogy principles, enabling us to make early considerations of the wild in our teacher education work. As teacher educators no longer working in outdoor education, the readings triggered significant questions and uncertainties that would accompany us on the trip. Could we find common ground between the wild pedagogy touchstones and initial teacher education (regional place-oriented education for Monica and online ITE for Janet), which by our initial summation seemed worlds apart? Could we look to our river colleagues for greater clarification and resonance between these two dimensions? Furthermore, what might we offer the colloquium and its participants as teacher educators? Time would tell.

Fast forward to our first meeting day when we were acquainted with our new (and old) river companions. Like them, we had arrived at the Franklin colloquium with our own 'stories' and 'starting points' (Jickling et al. 2018), which we hoped would serve us well in contributing to, and learning from, broader river dialogue and exchange over the coming week and a half. We spent our initial days engaging with the place, each other and the touchstones, endeavouring to grasp their meaning, influence and relevance, and to explore where and how notions of wild or wilding (e.g., disrupting/changing) might inform our ITE pedagogy (e.g., teaching and learning practice).

Throughout the trip, the group offered collective insights into the relevance of the touchstones for education more broadly, particularly in relation to how they might be applied in non-wilderness settings, and considerable time was spent debating the significance of wilding our respective educational practice. These conversations were helpful in strengthening our understanding of wild pedagogy; moving us beyond earlier and somewhat limited interpretations of wild as concerned with a physical space, towards a more expansive and critical appreciation of wilding as a proactive and disruptive action that occurred in places, with people and with the more-than-human world. From these discussions we came to appreciate wild and wilding as pedagogies that involved transcending, disrupting, transgressing and re-imagining traditional educational approaches, which we identified as holding great potential for transforming our own, and our students', pedagogical horizons in teacher education. As the trip progressed, so too did our appreciation and understanding of the wild pedagogy/teacher education interface.

These insights were further magnified early on the trip during an impromptu conversation between Janet, Monica and John (all current teacher educators with outdoor education backgrounds) when walking back to our river camp after a group presentation and discussion on the riverbank downstream of the roaring Coruscades rapid in the Great Ravine. There, sheltering underneath a darkened ancient myrtle-beech forest from the persistent misty rain, John had posed the question: what would happen if the term wild was verb-alised so it became wilding, a term that reflected the process of enacting change in our actual practice to support learning and change (Jickling et al. 2018). Like many of the Franklin discussions, this particular exchange provided further traction for locating the wild in our practice.

This introduction to us and our colloquium participation underscores our early engagement with the touchstone ideas and their associated links to our current teacher

education work. As newcomers to wild pedagogy theory, the aim of the article is twofold. We use two case studies (regional and online teacher education contexts) to draw links between our current teacher education practice and the touchstone ideas. Following the two case studies, we come together to briefly re-engage with the touchstone ideas as a way of envisaging future wilding possibilities in our practice.

We think it important to pay homage to the article's evolution, the origins of which surfaced during the final two days of the colloquium when we dedicated whole group discussion time to considering the importance of theorising and sharing our wild pedagogy insights with colleagues beyond the colloquium, as represented across this special issue.

Having gained a more informed understanding of the touchstone ideas from our colloquium participation, a key intention of this paper is to share our newly developed insights into, and connections to, wild pedagogy discourse as they relate to our teacher education practice. Before exploring those connections, we draw attention to the current Australian teacher education landscape which frames our work.

Initial teacher education in Australia: A challenging and changing landscape

There have been remarkable changes in the Australian ITE space over the last decade. Where the governance and practicalities of teacher education used to lie firmly in the hands of individual universities and other providers, a number of factors have resulted in the roll out of several federal policies and regulations that have dramatically changed the face of teacher education (Mayer et al. 2017). These changes were first prompted in the 1990's, when countries around the world became increasingly mindful of their competitive mark in globally comparative analyses of student performances – for example, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and other OECD reports that compare student performances by countries (Australian Council for Educational Research 2017). As Australia showed some decline in rankings, teacher quality moved to the spotlight. Perhaps teachers were to blame for the declining rankings? Teachers and teacher education were subsequently positioned as the problem that needed to be fixed by the national government. Subsequently, the wider teacher education crisis has triggered multiple reviews, reports, as well as political and public inquiries into teacher education (Mayer et al. 2017).

To illustrate the nature and impact of these recent changes in the teacher education landscape, we cite the reviews initiated by the Australian government (Department of Education and Training 2014). In 2014, the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) was established to provide advice to the government about ways to improve teacher education with a view to enhancing the quality of teachers, which would ultimately improve student outcomes. The TEMAG report generated 37 recommendations that sought to improve teacher education around Australia. The implications of these recommendations have resulted in a significant reform agenda in teacher education with the roll out of a number of centrally controlled policy initiatives and regulations that have influenced the day-to-day realities for teacher education providers, teacher educators (like us) and ITE students. A new and urgent sense of quality control in teacher education has emerged, consisting of explicit standards around program accreditation, entry and exit standards for ITE students, literacy and numeracy tests for ITE students, curriculum content, and professional experience requirements. Suffice to

say, the good old days of individual universities designing their own teacher education programs and courses are truly over: replaced instead by an emergent sense of scrutiny focused on evidence-based outcomes from governmental reform agendas.

Parallel to these reform agendas is another remarkable change in the teacher education landscape: the profile of the typical ITE student. We note that the experiences of today's ITE students differ in important and dramatic ways from our own experiences of studying to become teachers. Anecdotally, we observe many of our students juggling their studies alongside an increasing number of other important commitments, including part or full-time work, and/or caring responsibilities for children or parents, and/or dealing with personal health issues.

In light of these considerations, we now highlight our respective educational settings - regional ITE and the ITE online space - to locate the wild in our teaching practice. The two case studies are initially framed by reflections of current wild practice that connects with ideas embedded in selected wild pedagogy touchstones before we briefly return to the touchstones to imagine future wilding practices.

Monica's case study: Wilding ITE practice in a regional context

Place-based university-school-community partnerships

For the past 10 years my teacher education work has occurred in a regional university in Gippsland Victoria. The wider Gippsland region makes up approximately 18% of the land area of Victoria, extending easterly from the outskirts of the capital city of Melbourne towards to the New South Wales border. My ITE work is situated in the Latrobe Valley, an industrial region that up until recently supplied a good proportion of the state of Victoria's electricity through brown coal-fired power stations. With a long history of intergenerational poverty and unemployment, exacerbated by the recent closure of the Hazelwood power station, the region experiences high levels of major health issues and broad socio-economic hardship (ClimateWorks Australia 2011; Tomaney and Somerville 2010). The majority of students I teach are born in the region and more than three quarters of them will eventually teach in the region post-graduation (Somerville et al. 2010). These contextual considerations give rise to the importance of equipping graduating teaches with place-responsive pedagogy capabilities that might be used in future teaching.

The wilding of my ITE practice began several years ago when I deliberately set out to modify my teaching, and subsequently my students' learning. The shift stemmed from personal and professional disillusionment with orthodox teacher education approaches, for example teacher-driven pedagogy in traditional learning settings, including buildings and classroom choreography that figuratively and literally separated me from my students (Blenkinsop et al. in press). By my reckoning, and substantiated by formal university survey feedback, the teaching and learning outcomes affiliated with those conventional approaches was failing to instil within students (and myself) the capacity to experience and pursue creative and emergent pedagogical ideas. Further to this, the content within the broader teacher education program was bereft of any environmental and sustainability-related education, a reality that aligned with the poorly developed ecological knowledge and concerns of many of my students.

In response to this situation I established (initially one but later several) university-school-community partnerships with Latrobe Valley primary schools and other community-based organisations that brought together diverse sets of stakeholders, including me as teacher educator, my ITE students, in-service teachers and their students, and community representatives who worked together to achieve a broad set of mutual outcomes and agendas. The partnerships were informed by the conceptual framework of 'place', a construct underpinned by relational, dynamic, and spatio-temporal events that provide new possibilities for negotiating ways of knowing, acting and being (Massey 2005). In this approach, place was not regarded necessarily as a physical entity, rather, it was concerned with the ongoing stories produced in place as a consequence of the complex relational entanglements or negotiations that occur between humans and the world, which, according to Massey, take place through the notion of 'throwntogetherness'.

As a way of facilitating my students' learning, I used elements of place-responsive education to promote the pedagogical value of the local, cultural and environmental dimensions of everyday places (Smith and Sobel 2010). By leaving the classroom (lecture theatre and university) to experience learning in places close to home such as wetlands, forests, townships, school playgrounds and gardens, we looked to local knowledge and local places as the central texts for teaching and learning (Smith 2013). A vital wilding element of this procees was to create new opportunities for my students to experience, understand and value the entwined, intermingling, and sensorial connections between people and place (Duhn 2012; Somerville 2010).

Complex and challenging in nature, these attempts to wild my pedagogy have often been met with scepticism and uncertainty by (some) students, who have shared with me a preference to stay in the comfort of the classroom and not stray too far from traditional pedagogies familiar to them. Having participated in a semester-long course with wild and place pedagogy overlays however, many ITE students have come to appreciate the expansive potential for teaching and learning (Green 2016).

Monica's reflections on current practice

In the reflections that follow, three touchstones are used to illustrate connectivity between the touchstone principles and Monica's current ITE practice.

Wildness and challenging ideas of control

The aforementioned partnerships have been the catalyst for my revised ways of doing education differently. The ultimate aim of the partnerships has been to wild my students' learning through experiential opportunities that inform their evolution as beginning teachers, and which expand their pedagogical repertoires by utilizing local people and places in their teaching (Green 2016; Green and Somerville 2014). Such wilding aligns with wider university policy that encourages strong engagement between the university and its regional communities (Anyon and Fernandez 2007), and unites key stakeholders through cohesive collaboration (Smedley 2001). Despite universities and schools having a long history of partnering with one another, such partnerships have tended to be driven by a top-down approach controlled by the needs

and agendas of universities (Walsh and Backe 2013). The university-school-community partnerships I have developed challenge ideas of control via their collective platform, which enables stakeholders to bring their respective agendas and ideas to the planning table. By way of example, some schools seek to improve educational outcomes for their students by linking wetland science/sustainability to classroom-based inquiry learning, some want to renew and improve science curriculum, and others seek to increase opportunities for their students to encounter the natural world. From anecdotal observations and self-study research (Green 2016; Ma and Green Forthcoming) the partnerships have bolstered student confidence to teach beyond traditional settings and to collaborate with peers; they advance their professional networks and capacity to consult others as a way of increasing their professional knowledge; and above all else, they instil within students the reality that they may never completely know the final outcomes, nor the correct or definitive answers within their teaching. Many of these pedagogical aspects correlate with the ways in which I have attempted to work with wildness and challenging ideas of control.

Agency and the role of nature as co-teacher

The touchstone idea of agency and the role of nature as co-teacher is essentially concerned with encountering the natural world in ways that de-centre the taken-for-granted human presence and re-centre the more-than-human voices (Jickling et al. 2018). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate student encounters in an ecological (but artificial) wetland setting that is home to owls, possums, water hens and rats, swans, eagles and other bird life, frogs, native fish and macro-invertebrates. In this setting my students are encouraged to develop inquiry-based lessons (informed by investigative possibilities) that support and enable young children's sense of wonder and interaction with the natural world. After participating in lessons designed by ITE students in the disciplines of science, sustainability and literacy, children generate new 'wonderings' from their wetland encounters, which inform ongoing research and learning back at school. At the heart of these wonderings is the agency of the natural world, which is promoted through lessons that encourage children to observe the 'comings and goings' of this wetland place - water rat trails in the grass, a pair of swans building a nest, discovering frogs under logs and using microscopes to examine the minutiae of bug life in the water, colours and texture of the natural world, etc. Although these dimensions of the more-than-human world can sometimes be found in student's planning and lesson delivery, any emphasis of the agency of place itself is often overlooked pedagogically. Such absence is a significant reminder for how I might better scaffold my students learning to enable greater and more critical engagement with this particular touchstone in the future.

Complexity, the unknown, and spontaneity

The university-school-community partnership (highlighted above) and its associated outdoor learning pedagogies are closely linked with this particular touchstone – embracing the unknown, dealing with an incomplete complexity, and allowing for the spontaneous. In relation to the unknown, many ITE students have expressed concerns about leaving the confines of the classroom to teach outside, which is an

Fig. 1 Learning outdoors

unfamiliar experience for many of them. Some of their fears range from the potential of losing control of their students, insufficient knowledge about a complex learning setting, and not meeting curriculum outcomes (Green and Ma 2018). Furthermore, in knowing that many of the children they will teach have had multiple trips to the wetland site, some ITE students have expressed concerns about children knowing more

Fig. 2 'Wonderings' in a wetland

about the natural world than them. These realities are important grounds for exploring the different ways teaching and learning might be taken up – including their need to build greater knowledge about wetland ecologies as well as utilizing the collective knowledge of the teaching/learning group, which can facilitate teachable moments. These fears are an important reminder about the importance of scaffolding the learning experiences of these beginning teachers to support them in exploring new teaching practices that embrace pedagogies of spontaneity and organised chaos (Somerville and Green 2011), many of which involve sharing control of a lesson. Having observed the degree of ambivalence about deviating from their prepared lesson-plans, I have encouraged students to experiment with these approaches. This new practice requires being open to: learning alongside their students, posing questions as a way of seeking answers, appreciating that answers might not yet be known, working with open-ended and collective problem-solving approaches, and remaining sensitive to the phenomenon of place (Ma and Green Forthcoming; Green and Ma 2018). It also includes students learning to accept the limitations of how they hear, observe, and interpret the encounters their students are having (Blenkinsop et al. 2016).

Janet's case study: Wilding ITE practice in an online context

From outdoor education to online

My work as a teacher educator began in 2005, when I relocated from Canada to conceptualize, design, and roll out the outdoor education ITE specialization at a mid-size regional university. In 2012, regrettably, the university made the decision to no longer offer the outdoor education specialization for a range of reasons (e.g., financial burden, risk and liability, high staff: student ratios) and, with the last students graduating in 2016, I now teach into general teacher education courses.

The transition from outdoor education ITE to general teacher education was challenging for me personally and professionally. Much of my identity was associated with being an outdoor educator and, unsurprisingly, my teaching practices, content expertise, and assessment strategies were all rooted in best practices for teaching and learning outdoor education. I wondered how the experiential and embodied pedagogies I had practiced and refined through my decades of teaching small groups in remote outdoor wilderness settings would be transferable to my new role teaching in general teacher education – with large classes (often >100 students), more diverse learners (variety of ages, abilities), structured teaching patterns (e.g., a 'course' must equal: 13 weeks of one hour lecture + two hour tutorial), and considerable scrutiny and control over curriculum, content, and assessment strategies.

My transition to general ITE was further challenged by my university's decision to offer ITE *online* and I now teach solely in this space. This means I only teach distance students who are based in places around Australia and the world. All my teaching occurs through a technologically mediated space: either in asynchronous spaces (e.g., pre-recorded lectures, discussion forums, video posts) or synchronous spaces (e.g., live web conferences, phone calls, online meetings). This latter transition to online teaching has further challenged my personal and professional identity. My working days are spent in front of a computer – trying to deliver important curriculum to prospective

teachers with whom I am trying to establish authentic and caring relationships via a computer screen. I am regularly challenged with questions that are, at times, too confronting to explore as a sole parent who is not personally positioned to make a career change at the present time. How is it that my career has transitioned from an outdoor educator to someone that teaches fully online? Is it possible to teach teaching online? Isn't teaching teachers online oxymoronic and perhaps objectionable? Given my teaching philosophy is rooted in embodied, co-present, relational pedagogical experiences, interactions and relationships, (how) could I possibly teach virtually? And, in the context of this paper, how could I possible wild my pedagogy in the online space?

While my transition from being an outdoor educator to an online ITE teacher educator has been a lonely and confronting journey, evidence would suggest that I am not alone. In fact, my experience reflects general trends in higher education locally, nationally and internationally (Allen et al. 2016). Like other universities around the world, my university is responding to the market opportunities that accompany 'anywhere/anytime' offerings and, in times of tight budgets, relish the fact that these students do not require additional on-campus infrastructure.

The transitions in my career have been profoundly challenging and disheartening. However, I needed to focus on the challenge that was before me. Possessing a deep commitment to being a good educator irrespective of context, I knew that to survive the transition I had to learn how best to teach online. To facilitate this understanding, I immersed myself in the evidence-based research literature in this area, noting that it confirms both the efficacy of online learning and the benefits for learners. (How) might these benefits emerge for my online ITE students? (How) could I adapt my pedagogies, that have resulted in deep student learning in outdoor contexts, and apply them in online ITE contexts? This forced transition has provided me a confronting and unsettling opportunity to ask important and overarching questions about the nature of my teaching. While it would have been easier to despair, I was challenged with wilding questions. Could I invite 'bold experimentation' into my practice (Jickling 2013)? Could I heed the invitation of Blenkinsop and his colleagues (Blenkinsop et al. in press) to be a wild pedagogue and engage in "fertile … and difficult work" where the "wild may not be easily and immediately apparent"? With this context and the emergent provocations in mind, I turn now to an exploration of how I attended to the touchstones through the provision of ITE online.

Janet's reflections on current practice

In the following reflections, Janet engages with two of the touchstone principles as a way of illustrating how her pedagogies in the ITE online learning space have been (somewhat) wild-ed. Janet admits that finding connections between her online practices and the touchstones has been a difficult, confronting, and challenging endeavour. At times, Janet felt it was too much of a stretch to possibly link the beauty of the touchstones to her current sterile and often so unsatisfying online teaching. To write this next section, she engaged in lengthy conversations with Monica and other educators with backgrounds in outdoor experiential education, some who now teach online as well. What became obvious in these conversations was the need for Janet to locate the

touchstone in her historical outdoor education teaching practice in the first instance and then, with courage, gentleness, flexibility, openness, and a willingness to massage and stretch the interpretations of the touchstones, posit on the (sometimes tenuous) ways that these principles emerge in the online ITE space. In the next sections, Janet reflects on the touchstones to explore what is possible for her as an online ITE educator to wild her practice.

'Nature' as co-teacher

The de-centring of my role as teacher educator has occurred in surprising, profound, and necessary ways in my new fully online ITE teaching role. Given my unswerving belief in place-based learning, I am deeply committed to ensure my online students are learning in, with, and from their local places. This has been a complex pedagogical endeavour requiring my online design to enable prospective teachers to have encounters with *their* local places – such as schools, museums, school grounds, towns, cities, rivers, etc. I'm mindful that these contexts are not 'nature' in the original sense in which the touchstones were perhaps intended. 'Place as co-teacher' and/or 'local as co-teacher' would possibly be more appropriate terms to describe my efforts to facilitate ITE students learning from the places where they are living. Online ITE students have consistently surprised me with their initiative and delight in finding local, nearby places to support their learning. It turns out that these authentic experiences in their local places, with real local people, are critical for these distance learners. Off campus students have repeatedly commented on the connection to place that was fostered through these opportunities and noted the wonderful connections they made with other local educators.

That being said, my attempts to attend to this touchstone principle in the online space have required a courageous leap of faith for me. I have learned to recognize that I can retain my belief in the importance of local places, nature and the wild as co-teacher but also accept that I, as their educator, *may not need to be in that place* with the student. Thus, my belief in the situated nature of learning (Brown et al. 1989) is not undermined, but my understanding of how to facilitate that learning has been deeply challenged and indeed broadened.

Challenging ideas of control

When I was an outdoor educator working long remote wilderness canoe trips in northern Canada, I always enjoyed the final leg of the expedition. During this time, my students would be placed on a three to four-day solo and following this, provided the group was deemed 'ready', they would travel together independently for the final week, bringing together the skills and knowledge gained in the previous weeks. The solo and the final week were the culmination for both the students and me (as teacher) of a carefully designed pedagogical experience, with regular formative assessment checks along the way to confirm student learning and ultimately their readiness for this summative task. During these trips, the amount of control I held, as outdoor educator, shifted remarkably. Early on in the journey, I held a lot of control: if a student put up their tent incorrectly or they were having difficultly starting their fire or they were not mastering eddying in/out of the river, the student's lack of knowing would be

visible to me and I could adjust my teaching and provide support to ensure understanding. Over the journey, my control gradually loosened, to the point where students were travelling separate from me; I was shadowing them, often at a considerable distance, with little control or input in the learning experience. During this final leg of the expedition, I was always so grateful and mindful of this time because it offered a very visible check that my teaching was having impact. This allowed me to have deep trust to support the final leg of the expedition: trusting myself that I had supported student learning; trusting the students that they were ready for whatever might come their way.

When I am working with my online ITE students, it feels like my students are always on their solo and final. I no longer have the privilege of the lead up where I can retain control through endless checks and visible confirmation of learning. I carefully pre-prepare my learning activities and sequences in the online space; most of the material is made available to the students at the beginning of the semester and constructively aligned assessment tasks promote sequential engagement. Students are then invited to participate as they deem appropriate and this varies among students: some students are engaged in the unit, with me and their peers, in regular and sustained ways across the semester. Other students pop in and out. Still other students are never visible in the online space, and my only contact with them is through their assessment tasks.

For those students who do engage regularly, our relationships have been pleasantly and surprisingly connective, spontaneous, and relational and I am confident of their learning. For those students who don't engage visibly, I have learned to trust they are making sense as they deem appropriate and as is possible in their places. I am learning to let go of my control, be less judgmental, and trust in their capacities. I have learned to trust that the students will engage with my teachings in ways that make sense to them. Perhaps the non-visible students are highly engaged in ways that are not visible to me? Maybe they are meeting with other online students in their local place and forming study groups? Perhaps they are highly independent learners who prefer to be quiet to process their learning (like the quiet student in group settings)? Or, worst case scenario, they are only doing the assessment tasks. Being open to what may or may not happen in the online space (and I have been very surprised and delighted at times) has also required me to decentre myself in my own teaching, which relates closely to the previous touchstone I discussed.

Loosening control in the online space has also resulted in pedagogical shifts for me. My teaching has had to become more diverse, stimulating, open-ended, and generative. Trusting that my students are the drivers and determinants of their learning process, I place less emphasis on defined outcomes, known standards and measured results that are often used to assess engagement.

Future wilding in initial teacher education

Building on our case study reflections, this section of the paper explores shared future wilding possibilities in our teacher education practices. The ideas emerged from our

conversations, and our shared dialogue with colloquium colleagues and other teacher educators. As part of this scoping exercise, we returned to some of the on-going challenges we continue to face in our respective attempts to wild our practice, including the national teacher education agenda, which as described earlier in the paper, places considerable constraints on our ITE practice. In the face of this, and in looking forward, we ask the question: In what ways might we stretch ourselves and our students to re-think and critique teaching and learning (Jickling et al. 2018)? Such a stretch, we hope, might guide our ITE students beyond the familiar conventions of traditional teaching and learning towards considering thoughtful alternatives to mainstream education.

While all the touchstones deserve attention and refinement in our future everyday practice, we both share a desire to further explore, as a point of priority, greater engagement with the touchstones of *Agency and Role of Nature as Co-Teacher* and *Locating the Wild.* Based on our observations of the dominant practices of schooling that privilege indoor, teacher-centred, curriculum-driven approaches framed by pre-determined outcomes and control, we deem these touchstone principles as vital elements of ITE. We come to a shared conclusion: is it any surprise that our ITE students are fearful of deviating from delivering the national curriculum via prescriptive lesson plans and assessing and reporting in unimaginative and fixed ways?

As part of our own wild pedagogue expansion, we would like to explore the ways in which we can alert our students to the pedagogical power and significance of the natural world, particularly in relation to its agency. As beginning teachers, many of our students have limited connections with the natural world. One of our greatest challenges with ITE students is how best to guide them towards developing their own affinity with the natural world, thereby altering their relationships with this world, and equipping them with the wherewithal to undertake similar processes with their future students. We look to the current robust body of post-humanist writing and research, particularly from the early childhood sector, which inspires us to find new ways of imagining and acknowledging the agency of this more-than-human world (e.g. Hackett and Somerville 2017; Taylor et al. 2012). This de-centring of the human – or in other words, moving away from humans (children and ITE students) as the centre of attention and the origin of all knowledge – may be fundamental to enabling them to let go of the need to control all learning, and instead, see themselves as educators who guide rather than dictate how and where learning might occur. Further to this, such approaches might encourage empathy and understanding which can lead towards informed conversations about environmental degradation and planetary sustainability.

A second priority is to more actively engage our students in understanding the significance of locating the wild in their own pedagogical practice. In our current practice, we have attempted to contextualise learning through accessing local everyday places as sites for teaching and learning, for example in school grounds, wetlands, community gardens. How do we take students' thoughts and practices further? How do we enable our students to move beyond believing these spaces are fun add-ons to where the real learning occurs (e.g., in controlled classrooms)?

We wonder if our deeper and more rigorous engagement with these two touchstones might have a ripple effect, ultimately allowing our students to question hegemonic systems that underpin so many current educational practices. Perhaps such courageous

practices might prompt ITE students to ask hard questions about the neo-liberal education system that shackles them to restrictive and self-perpetuating practices? Perhaps our practices might help future teachers to imagine an education system not bound by mandated curriculum, national testing and a culture of inspection and accountability and to see the value in educational encounters that are more open-ended and unknown?

Final reflections: Wild pedagogy in action

In the early part of the paper we shared our pre-colloquium concerns about whether we could find common ground between the wild pedagogy touchstones and our initial teacher education work, which we described as worlds apart. In terms of our broader contribution to the Franklin river colloquium, we suggested that time would tell. From our engagement with the wild pedagogy framework, time has indeed helped us to understand the degree of connectivity between the wild pedagogy touchstones and teacher education, as highlighted in our respective case studies. While we agree that our backgrounds in outdoor/experiential education have a direct bearing on how we conceptualise and practice pedagogy, we believe such backgrounds are not exclusive pre-requisites for wilding one's pedagogy. Furthermore, we would argue that regardless of one's teacher education context (e.g., urban, rural, metropolitan, subject discipline, online or face-to-face), and despite the challenging constraints of current teacher education, any educator interested in improving and deepening student learning can contemplate the ways in which their pedagogy might be wild-ed.

In the process of writing this article, we have been reminded of the emergent tensions and levels of discomfort, for both ourselves and our students, when wilding occurs (Dyment et al. 2017; Ma and Green Forthcoming; Green 2016). Wilding one's pedagogy comes with a degree of risk and uncertainty: risk in the sense that pedagogical change produces unknown outcomes and takes everyone (students and educators) into unfamiliar terrain. In implementing change, we have bumped up against the fixed mindsets of our students, many of whom (based on their own schooling experiences), view education as synonymous with teacher-driven curriculum and suitably matching transmission orientated pedagogies conducted in controlled settings. As teacher educators we want to expand our students' viewpoints. In order to do this, we have to continue to expand (wild) our own worldviews.

As other teacher educators will attest, having one's work rooted in an increasingly controlled, standardised and regulated space, coupled more broadly with the demands and expectations of academic life, is challenging. So too is finding time for critical, contemplative, collaborative and reflexive practice that can influence on-going change and improvement in one's practice. Our extended time in the wilds of Tasmania was a timely and generative opportunity for deep(er) consideration of our current and future teacher education work. Our engagement with wild pedagogy discourse has alerted us to its reach and potential in educational settings, and like our colleagues (see Blenkinsop et al. in press), we share the imperative for educators to review and re-orient education as a way of making change, which takes time (Jickling et al. 2018). We hope our wilding ITE reflections and projections can motivate others to implement educational change in their practice.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest statement On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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