

Initial Teacher Education

Session 5

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Questions to be addressed

Drawing on findings from my doctoral thesis



1. What opportunities are there in ITE to prepare teachers for the reality of out-of-field teaching in schools?
2. How can we manage the interface between university and school to better prepare teachers for out-of-field teaching?

Acknowledgements

SUPERVISORS

Associate Professor Michael Cavanagh

Professor Mary Ryan

Associate Professor Rod Lane (February 2019 - October 2020)

PARTICIPANTS

'Anna', 'Emily', 'Grace', 'Karen', 'Matt'

PLEASE NOTE:

- Results presented are from my doctoral research about transition into the profession and transformation of pedagogical practice.
- Out-of-field teaching arose as part of the transition experience for each participant in my study, it was not a pre-determined research focus.

Thesis Overview

Transition and transformation: 5 participants, 18 months of qualitative theory-practice reflection focused data generation activities in 3 phases, and conceptualised around pedagogy and reflexivity



What makes my geography lesson geographical?

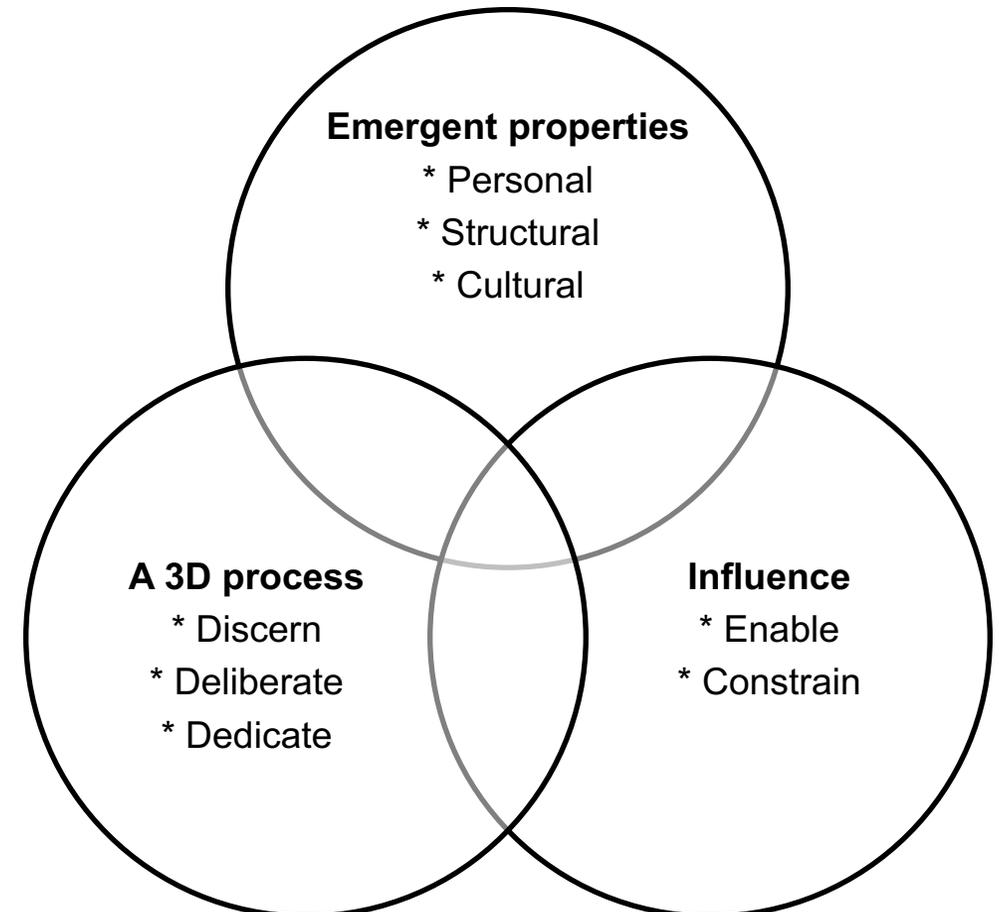
GEOGStandards

(Hutchinson & Kriewaldt, 2010; Kriewaldt & Mulcahy, 2010)

Item	Summary of the professional standard for geography
1	Knowing geography and the curriculum
2	Fostering inquiry and fieldwork
3	Geographical thinking and communication
4	Understanding students and their communities
5	Establishing a safe learning environment
6	Understanding geography teaching
7	Planning, assessing, and reporting
8	Professional growth and development
9	Learning and working collegially

Reflexivity theory

(Archer, 2003, 2010, 2012)



Initial Teacher Education

What **opportunities** are there in ITE to prepare teachers for the **reality** of out-of-field teaching in schools?

Defining what 'out-of-field' means

Specialisation? Stage Of Schooling? Identification? Scale?

Anna (History major – self identified as out of field in geography)

Phase 1: Preparation

- I feel less trained to teach geography ... I don't always have complete confidence that I know the materials and skills well enough to teach someone else ... discussion in the method class helps
- When I think about what it means to think historically, I think 'well, it means to look at ideas, insert it into moments of time and have a context ... I can easily access that point. In some ways I take that learning and insert it into thinking about geography ... and I think I'm taking concepts and ideas into a physical space instead of a moment in time, it becomes a physical location — in this instance, India

Limited opportunities from a pre-service teacher perspective

OOFT was a reported **entry-point** of constraint into the profession and a **feature** of the first year of teaching

Reported structural constraints:
lack of preparation from ITEP;
precarious employment;
timetabling decisions and faculty
organisation

Reported consequences:
an increase in classroom
management problems; feeling
stressed and overwhelmed

Limited opportunities from a pre-service teacher perspective

“I feel constrained by teaching commerce, I’ve never been prepared for that, so there you go ... it comes with a level of stress and expectation so that reduces my excitement [about teaching].” (Matt)

Phase 2, Profession-entry

I’m casual teaching in two schools and I ended up teaching multiple subjects: art, geography, commerce, legal studies, future learning. I’m only trained in one of those, so it was definitely a new thing learning about different subjects, their content, and then learn about the students, the school, and the faculty ... and that leads into classroom management problems, so I’ve been focusing on my classroom management skills. (Karen) **Phase 2, Profession-entry**

Limited opportunities from a pre-service teacher perspective

“Overwhelmed” and
“underprepared”

(most often mentioned in

Phase 2, Profession-entry and
Phase 3, Positioned in schools)

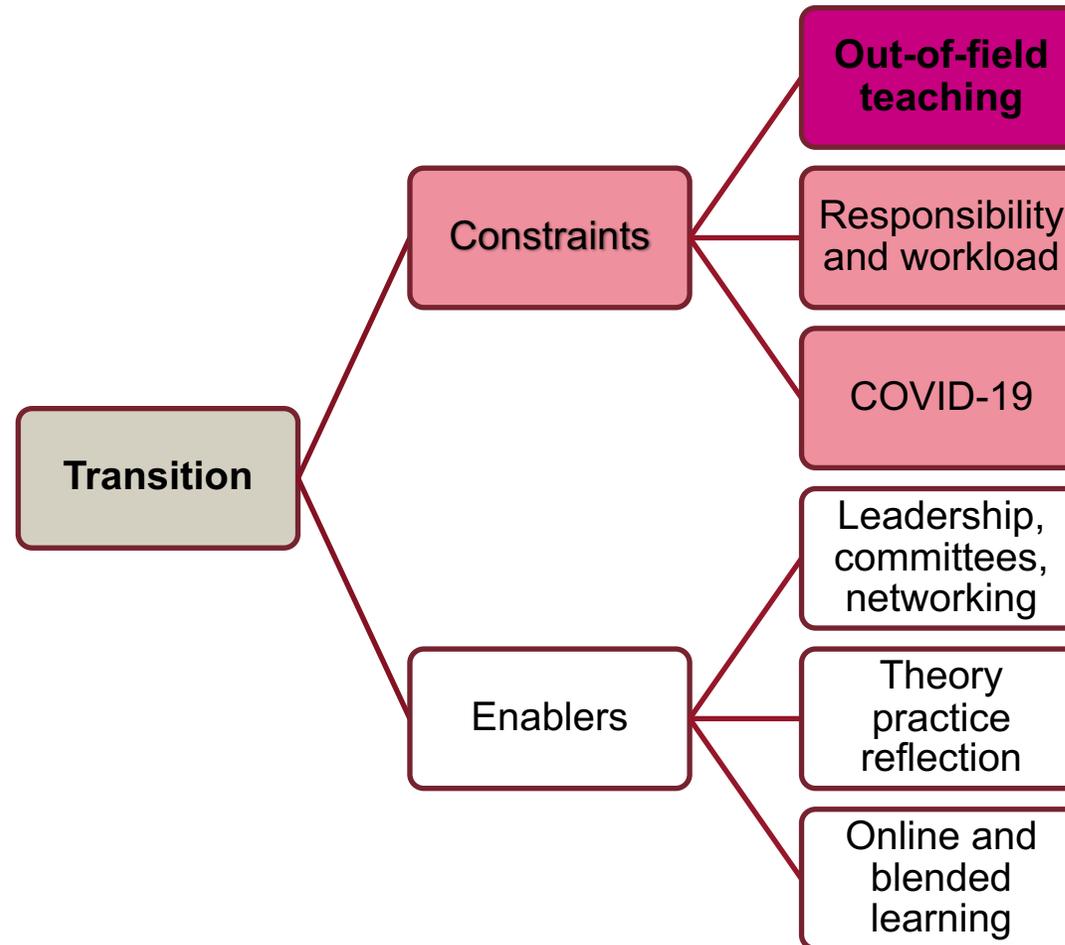
Phase 3: Positioned in schools

- Anna faced many structural constraints during this research phase and overcame them by drawing on her personal values and beliefs about what it means to be a teacher: that “country kids have the right to access the same quality of education as city kids and its my responsibility to do that”. Anna identified teaching out-of-field as indicative of her ‘year in review’

Through moving cities, churches, and homes, from COVID-19 to the amount of responsibility, new levels of behaviour management and out-of-field teaching and being observed by a prac student and teaching boys because all my professional experiences were in all-girls schools and teaching Stage 3 [primary], technology ... but in another twist, teaching languages in 2021, it’s been a lot and I developed anxiety. But I survived under pressure so that is a success

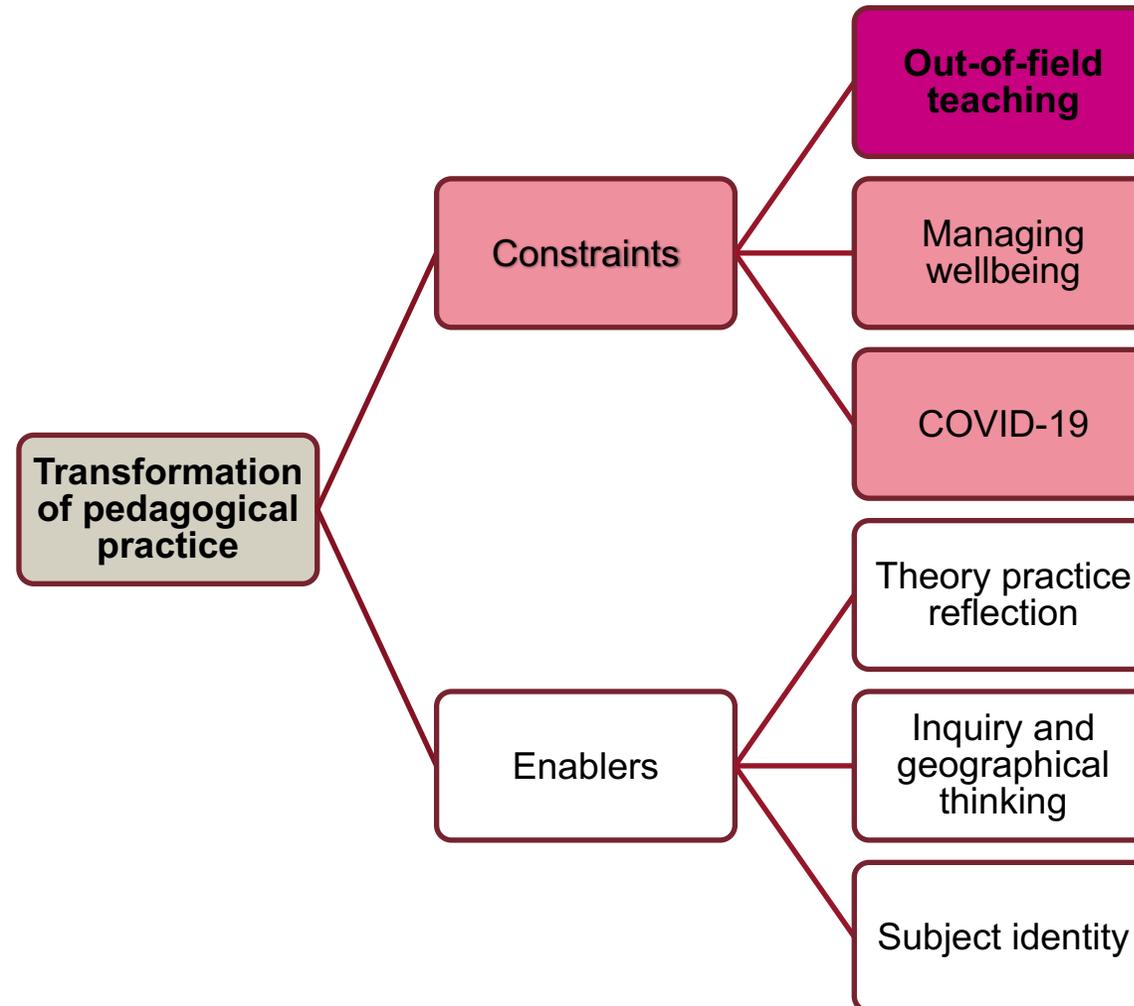
Yet the opportunities should be more prevalent

Theme: Transition



Yet the opportunities should be more prevalent

Theme: Transformation of pedagogical practice



Initial Teacher Education

How can we manage the interface between university and school to **better prepare** teachers for out-of-field teaching?

Possibilities for managing the interface from a pre-service teacher perspective

Sustained explicit **theory**
practice reflection in a dialogic
safe space – **mentoring**
structure to interpret context

Engaging with expert others:
communities of practice,
professional associations, the
doctoral study participant group,
FaceBook groups

Personal beliefs and values
about what it means to be a
teacher

Possibilities for managing the interface from a pre-service teacher perspective

“Now I start my lessons with ‘what makes this lesson geographical?’”

(Anna)

“Teaching is not an individual profession”

(Karen)

“I’m a specialist geography” teacher

(Emily)

Arising possibilities from my research

For Initial Teacher Education Programs and future research



Out-of-field teaching

- Out-of-field teaching (OOFT) was a key feature of transitioning into the profession. Empirical research about OOFT amongst geography teachers is limited although reports show geography is a subject with one of the highest rates of OOFT and that geography teachers are most likely to teach OOF.
- **Recommendation:** for accrediting institutions to deem proficient status as being conditional upon meeting professional standards from a fully in-field teaching context.
- **For ITEPs and future research:** to understand the views about OOFT from a larger cohort of TES and ECTs, within and beyond geography methodology, and focus on how the participants respond to OOFT. Such evidence will inform development of units within ITEPs; appropriate support structures in school-university partnerships; and provide an evidence base to understand the extent of out-of-field teaching occurring in a secondary geography education context.

Arising possibilities from my research

For Initial Teacher Education Programs and future research



Entering and transitioning into the teaching profession

- A discernible **entry-point** to the profession from the view of the TES is a new and important contribution to educational research
- A lack of mentoring and induction programs meant the doctoral study group became a “safe space” to reflect on and work through the transition experience, particularly the constraints of out-of-field teaching
- **Recommendation:** establish formal ‘practice-focused mentoring’ and induction programs through school-university-association partnerships to support TES in their journey to becoming an ECT
- **For ITEP and future research:** The design of this current study could inform a pilot study to explore ‘practice-focused mentoring’ as an induction strategy in university-school-association partnerships



Theory-practice reflection

- Sustained and explicit theory–practice reflection helped participants respond to the experiences of transition. GEOGStandards, crucial.
- **Recommendation:** a ‘teacher as researcher’ professional learning program in a school-university-association partnership focused on subject identity and GEOGStandards as a transformative influence
- **For ITEP and future research:** repeat the design of the present study with a larger group of TES participants drawn from geography methodology units around Australia to build on findings from the current research about the relevance and impact of the GEOGStandards as a reflective tool for pedagogical practice in a TES and ECT context

Considerations...



How can a range of methodology courses be accessed within initial teacher education programs to better prepare pre-service teachers for known out-of-field teaching at 'scale'?



How can timetabling structures better cater for the needs of those transitioning into the profession?



Why is it that the proportion of teachers who are specialised in geography but do not teach it is greater than the proportion of teachers who teach geography out-of-field (Weldon, 2016).



School-university partnerships to create 'bridging' mentoring structures for transitioning teachers with a known and trusted other

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