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**Wandering with a shepherd's hut:
fragments of a vagabond methodology**

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Abstract

This work makes use of a methodological vehicle to investigate how informal gestures of hospitality can be integrated into formal educational settings. The arts-based inquiry explores this with a cohort of student teachers in Scotland. Research participants are invited to enter a shepherd's hut on a regular basis. All they are asked to do is to take time off in an unusual location. They sit down and welcome storytelling and wonder to make sense of their busy lives between university and school placements. As the wood fire crackles, relational stillness helps to explore paths towards self-care, identify the mountains of too many struggles, breathe, rant, laugh and dream. Nothing tangible appears to occur, but a lot is happening on the intrinsic roads of those who take seat. The use of subjective mapping encourages playful life story arts. Student teachers imaginatively spatialise their own trajectories. The shepherd's hut as a host holds open a temporary 'safe space' for existential time and helps to draw the contours of formalised, introspective peer care.

Structured as a festival of encounters and detours, the thesis proposes to wander away from the 'gap trap' which frames educational attainment debates in an exclusive focus on instrumental progression according to a measurable norm. The provocation is to provisionally suspend the linearity of outcomes to facilitate a decelerated alternative to restless societal optimisations. Journeys into meaningful teaching are investigated through a 'vagabond' lens. Vagabond vagueness challenges the idea that professional belongings require a standardised path. Fixed templates for resilient teachers tend to overlook intrinsic nuances in negotiations with ambivalent educational spheres. This work contributes to debates around teacher retention by focusing on individuals' silent, unaudited struggles with meaning. The existential sphere often remains invisible in traditional initial teacher education programmes. The significance of inner worlds for long-term professional belonging is demonstrated in the research participants' artistic mapping artefacts which open up to profound conversations.

Findings suggest that the crafts for nurturing singular teacher becomings are not limited to reflexivity modules in compartmentalised curricula. Inner riches require broader existential care as spatio-temporal refuge within institutions. This implies taking further risks to reimagine university and school timetabling from outdoor positionalities. The unlearning of teaching-to-the-test formats is sustained by public disruption. Undomesticated 'vehicles-in-residence' then circulate between communities, conferences and degree programmes. A future orientation for arts-based research as societal transformation therefore lies in curating long-term, micro-scale frameworks for affective academic hospitalities.

Lay summary

Increasingly, scientists in educational fields are asked to investigate why so many teachers leave their profession and depart from an initially promising, personally selected career track. Experts have already suggested that this so-called crisis of teacher retention relates for example to issues of overwork, precarious employment and an overall lack of recognition.

In debates about the future of teaching there is a focus on what is missing and concerns to build a resilient work force that can cope with this crisis. I suggest not to look directly at the deficits. In my doctoral study, I was given the chance to wander around in Scottish education in order to reconnect to something so simple that we often think that we can just do without it in busy daily work life: to sit with people and provide room for intrinsic sparks. Concerned with imagination, wonder and dreams, my indirect form of inquiry investigated what gets lost over time when we fail to notice important parts of education that are not voiced or documented. I cared for the invisible that is not measured and easily seen. This focus comes out of my own professional trajectory as an itinerant educator.

To better understand immaterial ways of knowing, I installed a mobile shepherd's hut and invited people, from student teachers to conference delegates, around the wood fire stove to share what is meaningful to them. As I was invited to witness their inner roads to a sense of purpose and belonging, my own vagabond ecology became a hospitable vehicle inside universities but outside of their institutionalised walls. I found out that the proposed arts of listening are also a science of caring for the crafts of questioning.

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Declarations

Several published works which were written between October 2018 and December 2022 are listed below. These publications (all single-authored) are not submitted as part of my thesis, they have become an indirect scaffolding for this doctoral work which is not a cumulative thesis by publication. I still want to mention them here to highlight the importance of peer review and feedback from various fields and different methodological traditions throughout the degree. These short, focused outputs are at the same time dispersed inputs into the monograph submitted here and have contributed to making a wandering thesis possible.

The introductory chapter has been inspired by the following journal article from 2020:

- A space between: Social work through the lens of a mobile tiny house encounter space. *Qualitative Social Work*, 19(3), 380–405.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325020917428>

The second chapter is informed by writing an article and book chapter published in 2023:

- Une pratique vagabonde des histoires de vie : réflexion sur une utopie spatiale de la formation pour adultes en cabane itinérante. *Le sujet dans la cité*, 14, 15-30.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/lhdlc.014.0015>
- Pop-up civic sanctuary and the right to retreat in the city: disrupting mobility regimes through pause and rest in a mobile 'tiny house' encounter space. In: Hamman, P. (Ed.). *Sustainable Urban Mobilities*. Lausanne: Peter Lang.

Broad reflections about temporality have been published in an article in 2020. An essay on the methodological experimentation of chapter four was published after thesis submission:

- Eine Bildungshütte vor dem Bildungshaus: Einblicke aus einer selbstgebastelten Berufspraxis zum gemeinsamen Tagträumen im mobilen Tiny House. *Magazin erwachsenenbildung.at. Das Fachmedium für Forschung, Praxis und Diskurs*. 41.
<https://erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin/20-41/meb20-41.pdf>
- Hanser, C. H. (2023). Teaching temporal reflexivity through a vehicle: Experiential-existential time around the wood fire stove of a mobile shepherd's hut. *Time & Society*, 32(3), 301–317. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X231187701>

Chapter seven is inspired by and uses excerpts of a book chapter and an article from 2021:

- Touring academic events with a tiny house "conference fringe": Artistic welcome in a mobile storytelling shed as relational research into invisibility and (non-)belonging. In A.S. Jepson & T. Walters (Eds.) *Events and Well-being*. London: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003044932>
- Collective Temporal Activism as a Game changer for the Academy: Reframing Conference Hospitalities Among Colleagues Under Pressure. *International Review of Qualitative Research*. 14(1), 137-154.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1940844720968207>

Prelude to a wandering PhD

A failure to fit in? Bulky applications

Alternative routes have become the very feature of my researcher becomings. There had been no direct, straight-forward route into a wandering thesis, rather a prolonged failure to fit in. This does not have to be hindrance to a promising start. The promise here is one of a different set of perspectives. How about telling scientific “stories that not only admit limitation, frustration, even failure, but that recognize such failure as ground for theory itself” (Kafer, 2013, p. 141)? This could be the soil on which to stand during the itineraries to come.

To introduce my doctoral trajectory, the first thing I would like to do is to revisit the numerous attempts from 2016 onwards to obtain funding for the entry into a PhD programme. This is about acknowledging the often understated, hidden effort before the success. It is a tribute to the hopeful failings before I got this one decisive chance to enter by inviting an assessment panel out. In total, there were hundreds of e-mails written to many highly interested potential co-supervisors in six countries, and a dozen completed applications submitted to boards for assessment, most of them in 2017. I felt estranged from the once familiar academic writing after an absence from the formal university system for almost a decade. I could not have anticipated how difficult it would become to get back into a jargon framed by the rules and regulations of the academic pen. The motivation for a PhD in my mid-30s came from the wish to analyse my ‘vagabond’ educational practice (using shepherd’s huts) through arts-based and relational inquiry. But I did not know how to frame this intrinsically meaningful ambition for the institutional world. My unusual practice initiative, sketched out theoretically in 2008 during an MSc degree in Adult Education in Scotland, featured in all my PhD applications. But the potential of my ‘Welcome Hut’ was measured in terms of scientific impact.

The experiential, immersive prose I used did not bring reassurance about my future capacity to have a scientific voice. One application feedback I was able to obtain, from early 2017, stated how unusual my proposal appeared to the reader: his “use of the word “effectiveness” in the one research question can be problematic in this context, e.g., the researcher is an active participant facilitating the sessions which will influence the outcomes of the empirical exploration. There may be a conflict of interest as the student is proposing to use a specific

methodology in which he is founder (of the French Travelling Cultural and Community Centers Storytelling Shepherd Huts)” (anonymised internal communication from one assessment panel). For some funding bids, I heard that my future PhD had to fit a discipline and then there may be money to go further. And in other talks, potential supervisors said that this had to be all about the hut, this fascinating, deeply personal creation of mine, but that I would likely have to fund it all by myself. While it was my unexperienced use of terminologies that disqualified me in some calls, there were also incomprehensible internal funding allocation systems across countries that confirmed the impossibility to classify my particular case: “Je suis au regret de vous annoncer que la Commission Recherche a choisi de ne pas classer votre projet [...] car il ne répond pas aux exigences d'éligibilité financière de l'appel Amorçage” (anonymised internal communication from one assessment panel). For panels in Education there was ‘too little’ evidence of links to the Sustainable Development Goals, and in a German transdisciplinary scheme, the hut as suggested PhD focus was not considered scientific at all: “Aufgrund unseres strengen Pass- und Anforderungsprofils können wir Ihnen leider keine Zusage erteilen” (anonymised internal communication from one assessment panel). Responses went into all directions, there was a confusing simultaneity of contradicting advice. In the rare cases when I received clear feedback to improve, I understood that there may be a fit in the future, but there was no academic present despite my strongly evidenced, but far-away scientific past: “We were all very impressed by the time taken to consider your work within the remit of the [...] and while, on this occasion, the 'fit' of your project was less certain than others especially in relation to urban [...] it is evident that there are a lot of possible connections between yourself and [...] that can perhaps be explored in the future” (anonymised internal communication from one assessment panel). Hopes dropped with every notice of unsuccessful trying. Standing in front of academia’s gates requires tenacity to keep knocking: “Hanser’s bid was very strong, however not compelling enough for this extremely competitive call [...] which gives you a success rate of 5%” (anonymised internal communication from one assessment panel). Most importantly, success presupposes the financial and temporal resources to keep standing on that liminal spot so that knocking remains a possibility. How long is it possible to hope for the fit into these exclusive 5%?

I must have covered all application options on the continuum between locating the hut instrumentally in a disciplinary field and making the hut the central element to stand out. I

firmly believed that it is this concrete hut, and certainly not my previously suspended academic CV that would speak volumes about my skills and any future potential as a researcher. I did not have any major publications on record, but I had my own initiative as applied voice of everyday public engagement. It requires certain skills set to be able to write PhD applications in fields as diverse as Education, Counselling, Social Work, Child and Youth Care, Geography, as well as the Humanities and the Arts. I always found potential supervisors who patiently stood by my side but who could not vote in these stipend allocation decisions. While I found many incredibly helpful individuals inside the academic walls, there appeared to be no direct way to take seat and start. My expressions did not want to fit into *written* funding applications. I began to doubt that further PhD applications would really lead my wanderings back inside formal university spheres.

[A nebulous route into the Moray House Quad](#)

At some point, when I had lowered my expectations to receive direct funding for a UK PhD, I still felt motivated to organise a tour with the hut through Scotland. My proposal for a first academic educational conference submission had been accepted by peer review in the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms network. The conference was planned at Moray House School of Education in June 2018. I began to embrace the idea of travel to Scotland with the hut primarily as a civic way to thank all those individuals inside UK universities, mostly from the University of Glasgow, who had tried to make the hut fit inside a scheme through their small and big gestures of insider support. Sitting together in the hut at different community locations in Scotland would be a good way to be less upset about the fading chances to find a fit, and instead celebrate the significant and deeply meaningful encounters which had been enabled on this discontinuous road. I had also obtained a partial fee waiver to return to Masters studies in Geography at the University of Glasgow, a precarious path but also a significant small step. At that time, I had no concrete financial plan how to combine this return to full-time studies with the need to work fully as a freelancer back home in continental Europe to make ends meet. But the journeys of the shepherd's hut are fuelled by hope and by the curiosity for the unexpected while wandering along. Henri Desroche wrote in his book on the sociology of hope: "no route has ever led any caravan to reach its mirage; but only the mirages have set the caravan in motion" (Desroche, 1979, p. 144). The advantage of my

mirage may appear blurred on paper but was clear to me. I did have a real, wooden caravan which had already been set in motion.

Few people who soon discovered my educational initiative installed at the University of Edinburgh know through which indirect routes the hut made its way from continental Europe to Scotland. This is a long story in which the money for the actual trip came from a European civic engagement grant. The hut's arrival in academia was not funded from within. It is was a civic grant obtained by internet voting for a tri-national tour (DFI Deutsch-Französisches Institut Ludwigsburg, 2020) which made the conference appearance financially possible in the very first place. A series of small payments (a conference bursary, a Summer School intervention, an artistic intervention for the Scottish Refugee Festival) also ensured that the hut would have the fuel to circulate in Scotland. Logistically, the ESREA conference organisers, Jim Crowther and Margaret Petrie, further enabled that plan. They had spoken with the Head of School of Moray House and surprisingly, my shepherd's hut which they jokingly called 'the wacky hut' was invited with a smile. The campus facilities team on site trusted that it would be a good fit and great fun. My suggestion, after many failed formal applications, to temporarily sneak my vehicle into the highly bounded spatialities of academia was met with a lot more curiosity than suspicion and doubt. I was in an ambiguous and dynamic state of anticipatory excitement and latent exhaustion. This is the tension by which the farewell tour to the increasingly unaffordable dream of a UK PhD route in times of Brexit was fuelled.

[Setting a precedence: the conference](#)

When the Head of School followed my invitation directly after her ESREA conference keynote to discover the hut, she really took time to sit down and to learn more about my educational stance. It appeared like a normal gesture for her to want to listen. The time she spent in the outdoor hut after her celebrated talk was fully exceptional for me, as she could have been networking inside the keynote hall instead. As I embraced the hospitality of the School of Education, the hut sparked a lot of attention. During the days of this academic event, the conference organising team, staff and many students came to discover who and what this Welcome Hut was about. For this first appearance of the hut in Scotland, my friend Freya joined the gesture of open doors and we were continuously surprised. When the hut left after intensive conference days, something had shifted. I had delivered my first theoretical

conference presentation indoors. But what mattered most was that feeling that it is possible to be part of an event while remaining mainly outside, around the wood fire stove.

During the drop-in encounter hours, I missed many panels of the conference, but the hut had also never been so visible in any academic setting before. These were university grounds, but also somehow civic, universal grounds. I had been stunned by the multiple voices of that Quad. During that ESREA conference and thanks to that special kind of visibility afforded by the quadrangle, it was possible to be outside and at the same time inside the academy. The hut felt like a refuge within a university-owned agora, the wood fire storytelling sanctuary was wrapped into and being held by the Moray House village square. This temporary public hub blurred the lines between the conference delegates, researchers, staff, students and tourists. The affiliations became more porous, hard to trace. I could not have guessed the status the many visitors of the hut had in the university. And it did not really matter if everyone had a conference badge. Anyone could come to sit, many people just happened to meet in and around the hut. Potential supervisors that I had contacted in advance, but whose suggestions about PhD funding routes had never materialised in the previous years, now stopped by. They discussed ideas directly on site, manifested their interest – not just for a PhD, but for taking some more of their time right into the passing places between buildings.

During such conference ‘lingering’, decisive things can happen. During one of the many talks with Moray House staff, I had received that one precious insider tip-off that some funding in teacher education research with an outdoor focus may soon be released. The researcher who informed me was convinced that this hut would fit. I had never been a school teacher. But in her view, eligibility could be demonstrated because I had created this outdoor space. When the funding call was released, I wrote from Germany to the panel and asked if I could have a chat about the PhD position, but that I would like to do this inside the hut. Shortly after, I travelled back to Scotland where the hut was still stored (in the greater Dundee area), which an experienced traveller will not consider far from Moray House. I did not have any permission for installation, but on this quiet July morning I simply parked the vehicle on a city council parking spot. The encounter with the two members of Moray House staff occurred in the same natural way that I had met others during the conference a month earlier. The future PhD supervisor wrote me after the meeting that this visit to the hut had ‘made her day’.

If my improvised sidewalk gig with the hut could make the day of someone, could I maybe also formally make my way back into this unique, harbouring Quad? My academic writing now significantly improved, simply by the fact that I was certain that one member of that future panel would understand something about the *experiential* language of the hut. When my written application got accepted for the final stage of an in-person interview, I wrote again to the future supervisor of this scheme and asked if I could come back with my hut. This was an odd request, but like the Head of School earlier in the year, now the panel chair, or maybe even the whole panel again said: 'Actually, why not? You are welcome'. There was no objection from the facilities team and after driving the hut from its provisional storage - this time the 'small' distance was in the Cairngorms - I was back in this strangely familiar spot.

[Back in the Quad: from passing place to academic home](#)

Interview day was the first time in my life that I entered an assessment with the actual hut standing on my side. Other candidates did not have a hut to bring for their interview. This changed all the rules of the game. The formats of these interviews often ask for a capacity to speak a standardised language where the most convincing pitch eliminates those whose language is not straight away a perfect fit. A narrow set of abilities decides about the failures to fit in. It may have been unfair not to let other candidates bring their own vehicle into a selection and assessment setting. Another way to look at it is that the accommodation of my request allowed me to express my potential in a language that I did not get a chance to use before. Now I had the unique chance to invite the interview panel out.

On the interview day, I was nervous as always, conscious of stress and as always fearful of a panic attack. But this time the anxiety level did not rise very high. Just before the big hour, I stayed in the Quad, calmly observed people passing, seeing the normal life of normal people, the diversity of people coming in and out. There was a Centre for Open Learning, not the exceptionality of an intimidating elite. I walked to this big interview differently than before. I had support in my back. As I walked to my formal indoor part of the interview, I knew that there would also be an outside part. From the interview room one could actually see the hut. There would be a connection. Where interview formats are usually tailored to self-confident, extravert high-achievers, the hut stood in the Quad modestly waiting for us to return. The final words of this interview would not be spoken indoors. When I arrived at the door of the interview room, I met two enthusiastic members of the selection panel. Instead of reminding

me of scheduled timing, they immediately asked: 'Can we see the hut? The others on the panel have already seen it.' They were genuinely curious, they themselves were happy to disrupt the formal protocol. Because of this sneak preview, the next 30 minutes of indoor questioning took place in a positive flow. The authentic words just came, not stumbling, shyness or insecurity. Somehow every question that was asked matched a spontaneous, inner intuition to make my points. For a second part of the assessment after the formal indoor interview, we all went back to the hut. Four panel members were now sitting next to the wood fire stove, discovering books, spinning tops, sensory crafts while sharing stories about meaningful detours. The wish to go on the Trans-Siberian route overlapped with new visions and old dreams for educational research. In this informal moment, all of us encountered a sphere of possibility, spontaneity and improvisation, held in that one beyond-textual space.

How does the temporary guest become part of an academic home? Half an hour after this encounter, I was asked to quickly come back in. The panel members were sitting there smiling, presenting me the unanimous decision with those decisive words: "we know that it is a risk to select you, but we just see too much potential here not to do it". All of a sudden, I was in. I still cannot grasp this miracle today. Could speaking through my educational vehicle actually be the only way to have a chance to get inside, other than the 5% lottery? This small day which transported a mirage, the recurring maybe-future-fit, into the very present had just rescripted, for a brief instant, the usual patterns of scientific selection. There was an obvious risk this hut could turn into a Trojan horse. But based on several witnesses, it did not seem that I was just 'smuggling' my miniature educational world into a fully funded PhD scheme. There were both formal as well as informal approvals that had to be obtained.

While an unusual and for me unprecedented academic hospitality transformed into a landscape of trust, it is also important to acknowledge those who did not become part of the journeying to come, but who had been part of the story from a much earlier stage. I had received strong reference letters for this application by those who had continuously helped me to find a way in. These recommendations were crucial elements to get to the stage of an in-person interview in the first place. More people from other institutions could have continued their unconditional involvement which they had manifested from a distance, long before the hut arrived in Scotland and Moray House. There could have been a cross-institutional enlargement for this different type of a hut PhD. Ultimately, none of those inside

the hut on interview day got to decide up to which point the disciplinary references of my wanderings could be deterritorialised and multi-sited. When one sits in the hut, everything seems possible. Without the *experience* of the hut, the prospects of unbounded possibilities can trigger a sudden institutional urge to draw clearer lines. This specific day opened a yet unwritten landscape of mutual journeying housed within *one* institution. Ultimately, in-betweenness has limits in academia. However, there is evidence that ‘bulky singularity’ is more than assumed or internalised incapacity of undisciplined ‘vagabonds’ to fit in.

What would happen if out-of-placeness was a strength in job interviews?

For a short glimpse of time, the indoor standards of funding allocation were waived in a moment of outdoor surprise. Because of the absence of competition, the inside and outside stood side by side. I wonder how interview panel members would decide if they were more frequently taken outdoors. Let us imagine if selection panels for outdoor PhD scholarships were expanded, reframed, if candidates were encouraged to invite the seated panel to stand up, to move and discover the candidate’s unique world beyond institutional walls. What would change if the role of the panel was not primarily to check suitability to an existing frame, but if the panel had to explicitly assess the candidate’s capacity to unsettle routine locations, contribute other frames of reference and ‘uncategorised’ leadership skills for the unexpected and the unforeseen? Let us imagine selection panel preparations where the candidate is not only asked to specify their accessibility needs, but explicitly invited to notify of any out-of-placeness that they want to bring to that assessment encounter: a taste, a smell, a little sensory glimpse of from their outdoor livelihoods. I got the unprecedented chance to bring one vehicle of my shepherd’s hut ecology along. Universities may have to start looking for temporary parking spots for circus wagons, mobile allotment cargo bikes, food trucks, theatre yurts etc. But what incredible stories would then come out of an interview assessment routine? Academia follows specific channels of validation which are not only played out in books. One could write the most brilliant book and still be ignored. The “social nature of scientific knowledge production means success depends not only on performing certain actions, but also on those actions being recognized and interpreted as worthy” (Bacevic, 2021, p. 4). There was a value in all my PhD proposals, but only one format enabled *and* recognised this potential. Without a diversification of formats, it may not be possible for universities to identify the divergent others struggling in front of the solidly locked gates of the academy. All

that it sometimes takes is a parking spot to speak one's own educational language. This thesis suggests that scientific inquiry is not *only* and *exclusively* about academic literacy.

The Moray House Quad, this location of open gates that hosts an institutional routine as well as daily flow of outsiders, is in fact a welcome hub to celebrate difference. The Quad is managed, supervised, checked and locked after opening hours, but it provided a secret, inclusive code for otherness to sneak in. The crucial role of the Quad as enabling host of my outdoor positionality provided the sphere from which to enter all subsequent indoor spaces required for PhD progress. It is not possible to fully comprehend how this 'funding miracle' happened. But the significance of welcome will be felt in the successive pages, especially in those times when agitated writings temporarily rest in this Quad, my institutional anchor.



Memory board 1: The indirect routes into this PhD

Errancy alert: How (not) to read this thesis

“You have to take the reader by the hand”

If one expression sums up mutual agreement at the end of *every single* doctoral supervision, then it must certainly be this one. So let me try and guide you from the very start.

You may proceed in this thesis at a random page. This will serve as good preparation for the moment when you eventually do get lost in the attempts at linear reading.

And maybe you will wish to come back here immediately after, or take things from that one instable, rambling point.

Or you may go straight to the festival map introduced in section 1.1.2. It may feel reassuring to find some concrete visual signposting for the itinerancy to come.

But wait until you discover that my guide is for strolling. This is actually a **disorientation** map.

Why not run this whole document through the Google Translate app to convert into a language of your choice. Start reading that translated version first.

And you may be relieved to know that, despite its imperfect English, an undefined multiplicity of angles and a simultaneity of imprecisions, this work does have an untranslatable language of its own. One of coherent somewheres, not just the anywheres of ‘anything goes’.

And maybe through the disjointed festival flows of an itinerant inquiry with indirect prompts and deliberate detours, we will finally meet nowhere near to the middle, but something will still resonate surprisingly close.

Chapter 1: Introducing the shepherd's hut

1.1 Approaching the mystery of the shepherd's hut

1.1.1 Acknowledgements to (mobile) cultures

Most of the writings to come evolve around the use of a mobile shepherd's hut. The hut is the vehicle that has enabled me to become an itinerant educator and to develop a practice based on a simple gesture of hospitality. This educational idea of a pop-up encounter space has previously been classified as a social innovation, but in my view the contrary is true. This is an old idea. The hut is installed by invitation and people can enter and sit together around the wood fire stove. What happens in the hut is inspired by traditions. If there is a simple way to say what the shepherd's hut idea is about, then it is by acknowledging some roots before my own professional routes. I have been inspired by many mobile and sedentary cultures.

Shepherd's huts as dwellings

While shepherd's huts as commercialised reproductions (like the one I bought) are nowadays mainly used for touristic purposes, they are also vernacular vehicles of shepherders, taking different shapes in many regions of the world. As marginal 'out-dwellings' (Hunt, 2019), they allowed shepherds to live close to the flock. The shepherd's huts which entered my life world are built in rural Bavaria. So far, no shepherd has been able to buy these commercialised vehicles. The price range has made them largely unaffordable to that profession to which the vehicle originally belongs. Even today, albeit heavily romanticised, shepherds are the publicly visible workers who remain at the socio-economic margins of provisionality. They do not own the land on which they roam. Many historical and ethnographic accounts across pastoral cultures and country borders confirm the austerity of the shepherd daily lives (Lassure, 2013; Morris, 2013; Moudopoulos-Athanasiou et al., 2022). Based on a collection of many historical representations of shepherd's huts in paintings, Lassure (2013) concludes that the shepherd's hut is mainly depicted in its decorative function in the background of works of art. In this thesis, the hut is not part of any decorative furniture and instead wanders as a central and actively evolving narrative thread from door to door. My 'Welcome Hut' comes to the foreground of a certain idea of public art.

I see learning spaces as explicit invitations for artistic creation. Inspired by Paulo Freire's reminder that art works can take the shape of classrooms, the plasticity of my 'classroom' holds the potential to break out of standard ideas of education as institutionally housed:

“Artists work in predictable materials like oils or marble or music. In what ways are teachers like sculptors, painters, conductors, and composers? One way I see this aesthetic aspect of teaching is posing the classroom as a plastic material already shaped into one thing and capable of being reshaped into another” (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 28).

This is an explicit encouragement to find one's own educational language in spatial terms. A differently crafted classroom can be meaningful to others and resonates artistically through its difference. This also means that the land the shepherd's hut classroom roams will be provisionally traversed but is not one that the itinerant educator owns.

Itinerant classrooms in the global South

In order to take the unusual shepherders' dwelling-place on the road for educational purposes, I have been inspired by the inventiveness of thinking beyond walls. On a global dimension, more and more micro-scale initiatives emerge that roam streets, not only school corridors: “mobile schools – flexible, dedicated provision that can come to learners, rather than vice versa [...] Such provision is unconstrained by form – the 'school' may be a tent, a bus, a boat (e.g. Maksud and Rasul's (2006) discussion for Bangladesh), or a couple of boxes on the back of a camel or donkey” (Dyer, 2014, p. 167). My own hut practice can be connected to a wider body of literature on travelling initiatives, often situated in the global South. The hut classroom used in this work seeks to fill a gap in European institutional conceptions of classrooms. What must feel “alien to children coming from home places in which they can wander freely, and choose time to work alongside older family members, is an environment in which boundaries have been erected on age lines, and workplaces constructed for individualised use” (Levinson & Sparkes, 2005, p. 764). In the barriers that have been built around processes of learning also lies the paradox of hospitality.

Transcultural hospitalities

While the hut provides a stable physical space for meaningful time together, there is no fixed definition of the inside. There is a multiplicity of hosting encountered on the road, a plurality of connections and flows. There is not just one way of being hospitable. I have learned from

my own travels to South Africa that there is a more radical hospitality than the prestructured encounter formalised by professionalised invitation. There had been situations in my life when I was given the chance to see thresholds dissolve through unscripted meeting, arriving without prior announcement and still being welcomed, without premeditated controls. I had received one of the most transformative gestures of hospitality in the township of Kurland village. This experience was the exact opposite of my own upbringing within private homeownership. It shaped my professional drive to reduce instrumentality in encounter:

“as soon as there are a door and windows, it means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality. There must be a threshold. But if there is a threshold, there is no longer hospitality. This is the difference, the gap, between the hospitality of invitation and the hospitality of visitation. In visitation there is no door. Anyone can come at any time and can come in without needing a key for the door. There are no customs checks with a visitation. But there are customs and police checks with an invitation. Hospitality thus becomes the threshold or the door [...] Hospitality can only take place beyond hospitality, in deciding to let it come, overcoming the hospitality that paralyzes itself on the threshold which it is” (Derrida, 2000, p. 14).

By opening the hut as my own work routine, there are less border controls than what I am used to from my own cultural upbringing in the institutionally stabilised life of a family of teachers. Working as an educator for me means liminal space and the need for what initially feels like discomfort but is also suspension - of unsettling and wanting to be unsettled. There is no fixed routine with the hut as the arts of encounter can only be anticipated but cannot be programmed.

Storytelling traditions

What happens inside the shepherd's hut - the idea of pop-up storytelling - is equally inspired by cultural references that are not of my own making. The *veillées paysannes* in rural France brought all generations together around the wood fire stove (Luxardo, 1984). I have never experienced this tradition through locals in villages directly, but knowing about this past made me understand the importance of story and the need for a site of sensory experience as playful encounter. When I install the hut and people sit down and start to share their own memories, the experience can also resonate with their cultural storytelling practices. And so I learn as I go along. I only recently discovered the role of the *Seanchaí* in Ireland, for example.

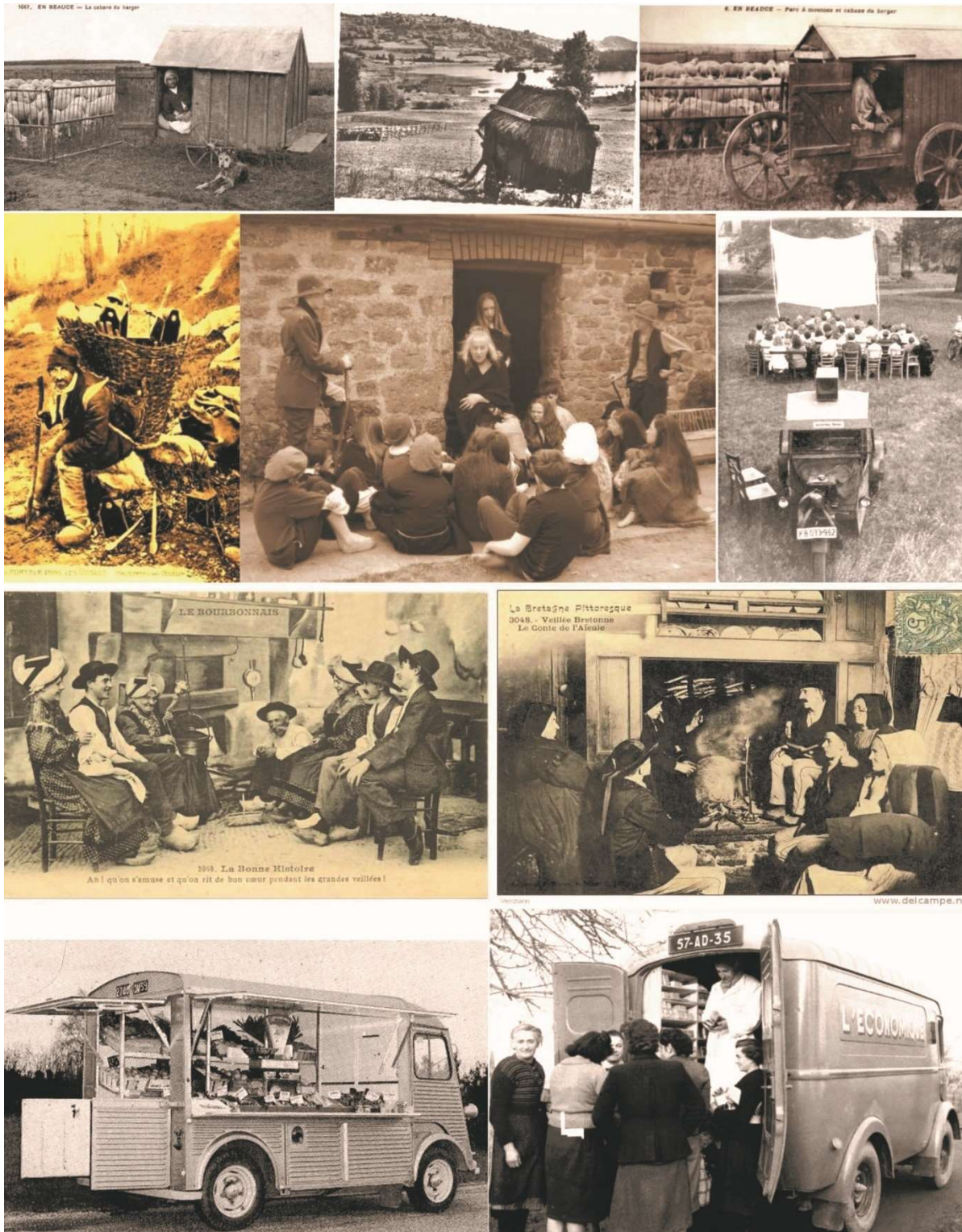
The majority of people think of a scheduled storyteller's performance when they hear about my story hut. I explain to them that the hut is about them becoming storytellers themselves.

Huts on wheels and grounded hutting

Parallels between my practice on wheels and place-based cultures are numerous. The idea of meaningful rest proposed inside my shepherd's hut links to revived outdoor traditions (Thousand Huts, 2020). My mobile interpretation of a professional work space connects to hutting practice revivals in Scotland, mixing the old and the new, the private with the public, the leisure with work, the itinerant with the place-bound:

“Across much of Europe, weekends and holidays see thousands of families head out to their hytte, hydda, cabaña or dacha – in other words, their hut – to recharge their batteries and spend time in nature without the distractions of city life. There used to be a hutting tradition in Scotland too [...] This new Scottish hutting tradition aims to have sustainability built in from the start, with huts defined as simple, small structures, built of natural materials, off-grid and able to be removed without trace at the end of their lives” (Reforesting Scotland, 2021).

Finding temporary refuge as encounter with self, others and the more-than-human world is a desire of many. Hence, the idea of my shepherd's hut is not about novelty. But as an experiential ecosystem compacted into 6 m², it can show the crafts of my own educational *becoming*. As a 'classroom beyond walls', I have come to take seat in the educational world through the lens of my shepherd's hut, in order to unseat myself again shortly after. Instead of building a career up as a linear progression grounded in a professional title and degree, a deontological code or an institutional belonging, I have spent the years since my postgraduate graduation creating ideas that evolve around a homely but relatively unhoused, in-between educational space. My professional experience is therefore built up as a dispersed coherence. The trajectory has been about curating itinerant educational crafts with this vehicle as my companion. The challenge now is to connect unprecedented experiential knowledge emerging from this stance to a possible use of the hut as a methodological vehicle.



Memory board 2: Historical references for my shepherd's hut educational project

1.1.2 Chapters overview: wandering on a festival map

Context

This is not a ‘conventional’ thesis. There are research questions, but they are deliberately spread as fragments on a ‘festival map’ of affinity spaces. These research questions will only make sense later in this text, they are only introduced in detail in chapter 3. By withholding detailed explanation for now, I want to invite the reader to think of a PhD which is more than its research questions and becomes something beyond the mastery of these three predefined areas of interest. During a festival, many small surprises rescript narratives about the ‘event’.

Festivals could not happen without funding. This PhD was funded (2018 – 2021) by the Scottish Government through the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) Attainment Challenge Project. My research was housed at Moray House School of Education and Sport where a focus on outdoor education and pluriliteracies has been developed in relation to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. I defined three key questions to answer during my first year:

1. How do student teachers navigate between their own ideas, hopes and dreams for meaningful teaching and the professional reality and routine of their placement?
2. In what ways do student teachers and MSc TLT graduates make use of the Welcome Hut as a classroom space and integrate spatial literacies in their teaching practice?
3. How can this PhD contribute to the re-scripting of the Scottish Attainment Challenge as a cross-sector, transdisciplinary and deeply existential societal challenge rather than a technical procedure where the solution is reduced to a ‘teaching to the test’ agenda?

The Early Career Researcher stage offers a certain freedom to approach the overarching topic of attainment differently. In order to understand the experiential and experimental approach, mixing arts-based, narrative and participatory research approaches into a *hut-centred* and hut-guided methodology, it is necessary to clarify the itinerant positionings within the project.

Strolling on a festival map

In order to navigate visually within the flows of a certain *vagabond vagueness*, I now introduce a festival map as the visual signposting of what will inevitably be an itinerant, messy thesis. This festival map of scientific detouring shows the dispersed character of chapters to come. This metaphorical language is inspired by my own experiences of working more at outdoor

cultural festivals than in formal educational environments in the first years as an itinerant educator. I therefore metaphorically transpose some of my own familiar terrain. Knowledge can roam in many worlds. A change of setting allows for very different investigative flows. The festival as a semi-institutional, logistically challenging but distinctly outdoor road map of science therefore reflects my own positioning as a researcher which is deeply immersive rather than detached, testing a movement-based methodological infrastructure of huts.

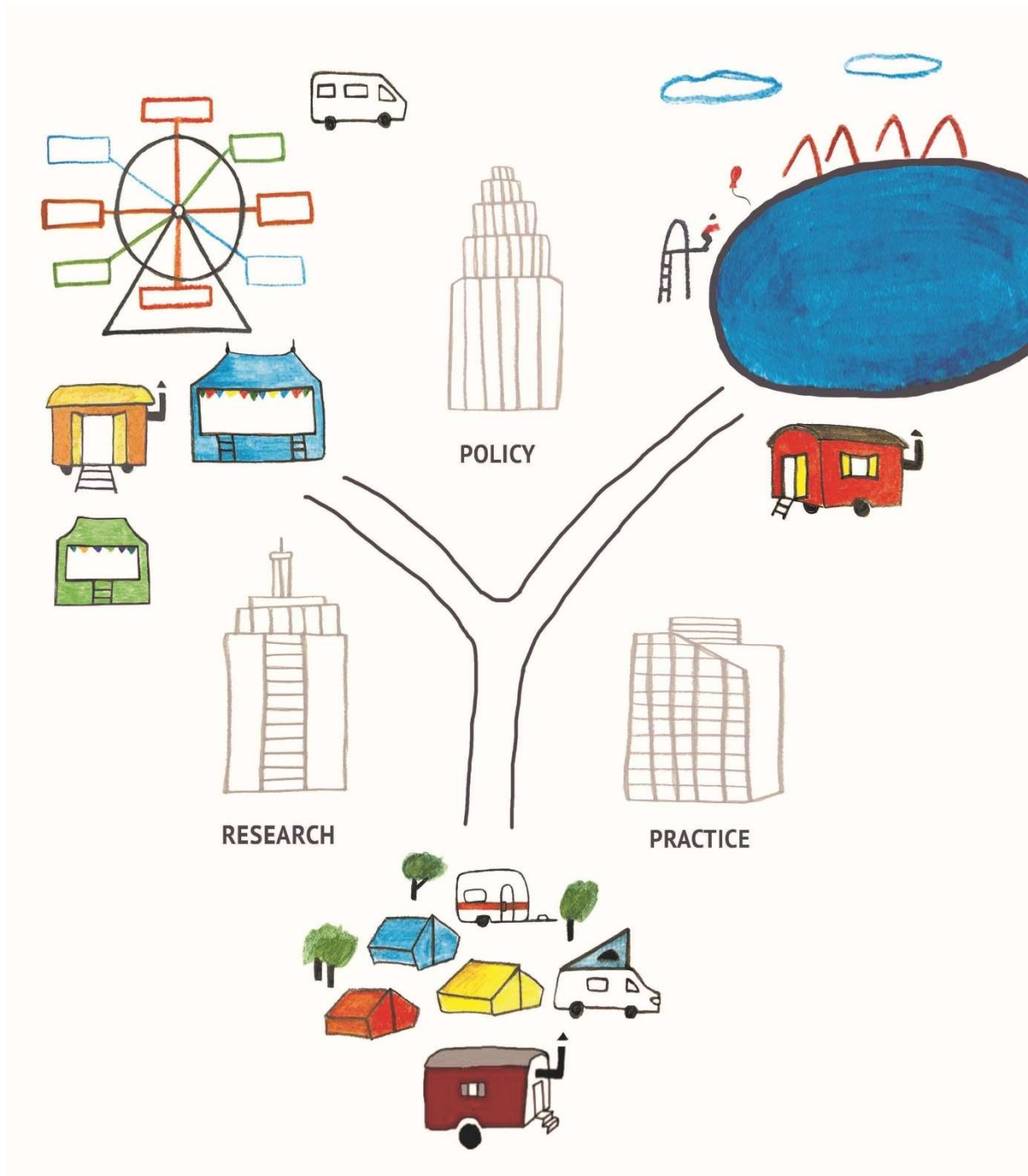


Figure 1: The thesis festival map

Chapter 1 as arrival: encounters inside the formal educational setting

As a starting point through other people's words, I want to share the perceptions collected from a cohort of student teachers who were willing to engage and imagine what the shepherd's hut could become for their own teaching. During their participation in a 'hut experience day', these student teachers reflected in what ways a shepherd's hut, if used within their own teaching, would consolidate, disrupt or expand their emerging ideas for classroom practices. Additionally, my own reflection around the circumstances of this first formal research activity and the discovery of Ethics approval procedures will also serve as an exemplary narrative for the challenges of this non-linear PhD which renegotiates the tools for navigation and approved timelines of a doctoral journey. The hut is the principal methodological driver of the thesis, but the road signs of the formal institutional setting of a university put the hut's spontaneity and the applied pluralism of improvisations to the test.

Chapter 2 as detour: the experiential campsite of vagabond educating

When a disruptive space enters a highly formalised institutional environment, several tensions and opportunities emerge. This is why chapter 2 will provide an agentic figure of migration (Nail, 2015) as navigational friend. The conceptual frame here is a 'vagabond' ecology of knowledges. Santos (2018) has theorised the need for horizontal ecosystems which valorise experiential ways of knowing. My own experiences with professional becomings on the road are then loosely tied to his writings, narrating my existential vehicles in a distinctly vagabond way. Undomesticated vehicles appear, disappear and reappear throughout this thesis. The thesis never rests on any one dominant theoretical framework. The ecology of knowledges and epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018) come very close to providing this frame, but when I was about to write up my thesis in a way to fit one canon, I was reminded by my supervisors that it is my vagabond restlessness of not taking residence that could also be my strength. In the detours of chapter 2, promenading through the *campsite* of this thesis can lead to the discovery of transient roots in my practices of vagabond educating. My vagabond methodology tested later on builds on these years on wheels.

Chapter 3 as a 'gap trap': the research-policy-practice triangle of Scottish Attainment

Now the thesis finally finds its way to the 'centre stage'. This has been a long way to get there, but by now the reader will have had the chance to leave the institutional walls and instead

set up the own tent, if need be. The Scottish Attainment Challenge is both the foreground flagship and the background noise of an ongoing construction site in this PhD. Formally, it appears as centre stage and at the same time, giving it all this attention would mean falling into a trap from which this writing could never recover. This raises the question to what extent one can speak another one's language without losing the *Vibrato* of the own voice. What I mean by this, and how I have tried to balance it out will be explored from chapter 3 onwards. The languages of policy are at odds with my more personal writings, but working with them taught me to navigate around the road closures laid out in the middle of my more intrinsically motivated PhD track. 'Sub-optimal', the artist would say. 'De-optimised', I will now respond after having researched in the sociological worlds of Rosa (2020) and Bröckling (2015). The tensions allowed me to formulate my own stance around (but not inside) dominant spheres of data-driven measurements. This chapter is then about the celebration of dreamers' vagabondage within the central research-policy-practice triangle. Zooming out of the centre stage of attainment and embedding cartographic imagination beyond standardisations in novel areas of the festival map sets the frame for possible alternatives to the 'gap trap'.

Chapters 4 and 5 as existential care: meaningful journeys into teaching

The emerging methodological language of the hut helps to tone down my own, very present voice and let others speak about their own intrinsic landscapes. In chapters 4 and 5, singular voice is experientially and existentially expressed by student teachers while nested in the *lingua cabana*. This is research with student teachers which never enters the classroom of a school. But this is also a real-world methodology concretised around usually immaterial philosophies of indirectness in education (Sæverot, 2022). The chapters from my field work interrogate how the singularity of one voice can help reveal the singularity of another, how it is possible to take seat ethically without occupying. This methodology of uncontrolling and of waiting feels a bit like floating in the *sea of possibilities* of teaching. It is about hosting relational, inter- and intrapersonal belongings as existential-experiential becomings, not about translating exceptionalism or drilling for spectacular data. The use of subjective mapping encourages playful life story arts. Student teachers imaginatively spatialise their own trajectories. The shepherd's hut as a host holds open a temporary 'safe space' for existential time and helps to draw contours of formalised, introspective peer care in teacher education.

Chapter 6 as crafts and fragments: ethics, validity, accountability and impact

Evaluating an arts-based vagabond approach is a tricky task. In order to make sense of what stays when the shepherd's hut is gone, the following scenario should be imagined: the festival of this thesis is cancelled and locked down for two years in a row. And at the same time, it is expected that the festival will relocate to another site. That is what it felt like to report back 'clearly packaged findings' from that intrinsic ITE world interrupted by Covid-19. How, as a researcher, can I deal with the ethical dilemma of validity, accountability and impact during a pandemic and beyond? Modest findings and hesitant claims emerge. This only highlights how important itinerant flows of knowledges and the possibility of relational encounters really are. This chapter makes sense of methodological confusion after personal paralysis to circulate in creative ways further. It is off the map, but it brings back the festive touch.

Chapter 7 as vehicular language: affective wheels of in-betweenness

The conclusions are not endings, but further *ways of becoming*. They are concerned with the wildlife corridors for difference in knowledge ecosystems under constant threat. How did knowledges interact to shape new translations? Here, affective academic hospitalities are expressed by means of a conference fringe. As a student-led inquiry, the PhD created novel pathways into the policy debate by reworking the idea of public engagement. Here, I am restarting the process of unlearning the rigorous academic literacy that I had acquired in order to write this thesis up. Other *bodies* of knowledge will then emerge, I speak through the language of concrete application and sustained in-betweenness. This thesis is a balancing act: trying to make the singular resonate and relate with the external 'standards', keep speaking and also take the right moment to lower a certain kind of legitimate, validated voice.

My line-up: the cognitive processing within transdisciplinary flows

Every festival has a line-up. But every festival is more than its line-up. My PhD seen from a festival perspective vibrates in the in-betweens and temporalities of pop-up. This is a transdisciplinary thesis. It also means that it wanders between disciplines without taking permanent residence. This reflects my own inner cognitive processing, a neurodivergent way how I come up with ideas and dwell in my own constantly rearranged conceptual worlds. My thinking is guided by a horizontal, immersive understanding of theory, which can be misinterpreted as a lack of depth. Leaving the vertical frameworks means that there is not one single conceptual headliner theorist to be found, but the many simultaneous centralities

of what is usually not even scheduled, maybe just considered circumstantial sound. The contours of this thesis are therefore not defined by the distinctly western urge (Ray, 2022) of conceptual purification. Many fragments from my dispersed theoretical readings are in constant rearrangements. Visitors to my festival are given the option to stroll across a variety of affinity spaces (Gee, 2004) but do not have to stay in one single community spot. They can rest with some conceptual fragments, but no one prevents them from moving on. This embracing of an itinerant continuity requires a shift in how the educational world perceives the wanderer between systems, inhabiting sparsely populated interstices. Locations on the festival map are moorings and resting spaces for a packed but unobtrusive programme to come. To give a still shot of these ongoing rearrangements, below is a poster of my festival line-up (figure 2), a 'bric-à-brac' of my conceptual strolls without schedule and without tribal affiliation. There is deliberate incompleteness, there will be some 'missing out'. And there is constant rescheduling and reshuffling of line-ups in my fluid ways of coming to preliminary conclusions by zooming in and zooming out. This is the way my brain works. Such restlessness would be problematic in the opera. But outdoors, this can be compatible with moving around.

A festival has multiple timetables, parallel scenes such as the main stage with headliners as well as smaller tents. But unlike the timetabling in university teaching or most conferences, the festival explicitly invites for promenade. No one will be irritated if a festivalgoer suddenly ventures away from the centre stage right in the middle of the headliner show. If there was only one headliner who really counted, it may be better to go for the full-length live show at the big concert hall. Only the background texture of my festival line-up poster comes from the Scottish Attainment Challenge's map. My festival challenges the idea of fixed communities and proposes affinity moorings instead. I should not forget to mention that this festival map is a *disorientation* guide. It "helps us re-orient ourselves within, against and beyond the filtering mechanisms of the modern British research university" (Counter-Cartographies Collective, 2010). In a festival, the hierarchical filters sometimes forget to be on duty. The festival carries the chance to discover that there is something more than the headliner act. Missing out on the central stage can bring a different kind of value. Allowing this to happen can lead into drifting, to roam on a horizontal, connective understanding of science.



Figure 2: The festival line-up on the campsite, the central stage and festival fringe

The role of language(s)

I would like to point out the simultaneity of languages in which my thesis thrives. My own educational practices were called Geschichtenstube, then Träumothek in my native Germany, La Cabana dos Sonhos in Portugal, La Cabane Itinérante/ La Rêv'othèque in France and the Welcome Hut project in the wider Anglophone world. My multilingual understanding of communication is not one of mastery 'at home', but one of navigating around in the constant

abroadness of my itinerancy. To a certain extent, my professional native tongue is this *lingua cabana*. One of the *foreign* languages I embrace is the one of academia. I used to be fully absorbed in scientific writing during my earlier degrees until 2008, but then realised I needed to unlearn most of its expressions in order to communicate in practice fields, with almost anyone else than those in the academic bubbles. I needed to be grounded in a different language for the hut practice, one beyond my *conceptual* imagination. I enjoy the opportunity of a PhD to return to this institutional, predominantly textual language. But I enjoy this as another way of navigating continuous abroadness rather than making such wordings fully my own. Throughout the thesis, I use a lot of verbatim and direct citations from academic texts. Paraphrasing academically is the skill one learns in the first degrees, it builds up slowly and then one never forget it... Well, unless there was this choice to deliberately unlearn academic jargon like I did for several years. As I had stepped out of scientific writing in my 'unhoused', non-institutional years, there are certain standards in the monolingualism of the academic anglosphere (Houssay-Holzschuch, 2020) that I have almost forgotten to maintain. Writing the scientific at times 'clumsily' is neither deliberate nor lazy, but evidence of the fact that I situate my own contributions in between the many languages rather than let my writings be framed by one standard. This is also a way to embrace imperfection in the potentially infinite accountabilities as wanderer bridging languages, literacies and ways of being in the world:

"The in-between scholar is accountable to several disjointed communities: the one that (co-)produces her data or where the data is collected, the academic community of the country where she does her fieldwork, her national academic community, the global academic community, and the general public in the country where she lives and works. These communities differ regarding their locations, languages, journals of reference, theoretical frameworks, access to academic literature etc. In such a situation, the in-between scholar's accountability work is increased exponentially" (Houssay-Holzschuch, 2020, p. 46)

An example may be helpful here. I had brought a shepherd's hut to Scotland whose logistical use (insurances, maintenance etc.) depended on an associative infrastructure in another country (France). Many non-academic partners trusted in my work. People backed 'vagabond educating', but not my individual academic research project. What would they gain in return? I had to preserve trustful communication with a completely non-academic sphere, and thankfully so. In this way, I neither have to 'unlearn' my PhD language again, nor lose the vocabulary from the field. I do not *master* any of these registers but reciprocity is still possible.

1.1.3 An educative agent for affective choreographies

Who or what is this hut? People who have experienced sitting down inside the shepherd's hut thereafter simply refer to this vehicle as 'the hut', almost as if it had a personality on its own, as if the hut was a person, an educator. Among those who have lived an experience inside the hut, there is a tacitly shared understanding of a range of things encountered. 'The hut' stands for something that Conradson has conceptualised as an affective choreography:

"Affects such as stillness can be induced through particular forms of individual and collective practice. This is about the orchestration of feeling, in terms of the capacity of actors to summon, modulate and sustain certain kinds of affective state and field. Examples of such affective choreography are all around us" (Conradson, 2013, p. 73)

What is happening inside the vehicle is rarely recounted in minute detail because it is tangible as an atmosphere, a frame, a proposition within which all kinds of things can and will happen, not all of them rationalised. A task for me in this PhD is to allow the reader to catch more and more glimpses of something which resonates "on an experiential level yet remains intellectually and linguistically inaccessible to the conscious subject" (Pirrie et al., 2021, p. 184). An 'unthought known' (Bollas, 2017, p. 139) will to some extent remain. The hut will not be fully defined. While the hut has no formula and escapes a definition, the materiality of the hut connects. The affective atmosphere feeds back to self, creates resonance with the intrapersonal sphere. This "entanglement of constitutive human and non-human elements" (Jackson, 2013, p. 743) reveals itself to be a microcosm of relational solitudes within a more-than-cognitive and intrinsically connected web of encounters and intensities.

There is something quite refreshing in this undefined mystery. It is impossible to pin down where it belongs and into which category it needs to be placed and stored. From an anthropocentric understanding of education and to satisfy the thirst for impactful acts of effective pedagogy, the focus would have to be placed on the itinerant educator taking the hut on the road. But this whole hut mystery is not so much about individual agency nor about being 'on the road', and certainly not about a professional who will make a difference all alone. The hut experience facilitator is neither hero nor *décor*, but embedded and interconnected with wider ecologies of knowing:

"this relationship always involves the learner and knowledge. Sometimes this learner is a place or environment. Sometimes the place or the context may hold the knowledge. The relationship may not involve an 'other' in the role of teacher

or pedagogue [...] The learner and the teacher collapse in the public as they become an educative agent. The teacher may not be human. It may be the knowledge itself or the land/place/objects which teaches” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 31).

It is crucial to understand that the shepherd’s hut used in this educational research is never primarily an object reduced to technical use, although the affordances of spaces (Gibson, 1979) at points need to be discussed in the educationalist terms of policy impact. There exists an ambiguous classroom ‘personality’ of the hut which holds knowledge differently, with distinct material-discursive entanglements between humans and “things” (Barad, 2007). In the interrelational sphere that exists between humans and vehicles, the hut has taken me, educator in search of meaning, onto the road and helped create an ecosystem of connectivity.

Threshold work: in flux and in between

The hut has worked as interpersonal connector and affective glue between people of different professions, nationalities, languages during numerous transnational tours, participatory community schemes and Higher Education teaching. In a Bavarian village, at a Burgundy festival or in central Glasgow, something resonates irrespective of the geographical location of its installation. However, if we frame and code the hut as an insider experience that needs to be lived and fully embraced in order to witness its magic, then this whole investigation remains largely intangible to those who did not get a chance to sit down inside the hut. Many reasons can prevent the access to the ‘hut experience’: from geographical distance, temporal unavailability to challenging logistics, different cultural perceptions and personal reactions about the vision of proximity and distance that the hut communicates. I highly recommend an initial hesitation when invited to enter a mysteriously undefined, semi-closed setting in which the notion of activity and outcome remain obscured in a floating affective atmosphere.

If someone proposed me to enter such a space, I would not be the first to jump in. I would observe with great interest and high alertness from a safe distance before I come closer. I am delighted that this is now my turn to invite the reader to come closer, but let us all keep our feet firmly on the ground. I would describe my work as facilitator of hut experiences as a threshold work, as an accompaniment to face liminality and learn to navigate in the unknown, providing an ‘out-of-nowhere’ perspective of pop-up welcome. I open this unusual classroom, meeting space, reflection site etc. for which no fixed manual or lesson plan is written, and

then apply a simple gesture of hospitality. This gesture of welcome and generosity is about allowing people to re-enter their daily lives through a back-door entrance, as if they look at their own daily workplace habits from the spirit of a comforting retreat. One gains another perspective into the familiar settings of the own organisational routine and professional belonging. The unfamiliarity of the hut proposes a few invisible thresholds: “This is an “in-between” state, a sense of normlessness that arises from moving from one state to another (Turner, 1969). The doorstep, hallway and porch carry danger, because they straddle the threshold between public and private worlds, they are neither in nor out. Within them, we experience the world differently, we quite literally do not know where we stand” (Ferguson, 2018, p. 70). Passing the threshold towards the hut is therefore not an easy, straightforward exercise. Let us not do anything else than stand still for now.

Imagine you hear about a hut, but you could not pass the threshold to sit down and understand it better. Focusing on the in-group of the initiated can potentially create exclusion and certainly provokes suspicion and distance. The bubble of the small space can be perceived as exclusive, as a member’s club where the fact of having lived the experience defines who is in and who is out of the conversation. It is not clear where one stands inside the hut, but also not clear where one stands outside. This raises questions about the own positioning. Maybe this selection interview with the ‘funding miracle’ described in the Prelude was flawed? Could this ‘magic’ operate again and would the hut be recognised as an open and accessible space for the many, not just the chosen few? As the thesis progresses, more and more people will have entered the hut and provide a bit more clarity of what it can be. For most of my doctoral years I have wondered how best to prepare this threshold in writing, lay out to you the textual entrance door to the hut for which this introductory chapter stands. I now invite the reader to move on to the next step. What is the threshold from the informal to formal spheres, from my personal feelings about the hut practice to making it available for others?



Memory board 3: The threshold of the entrance door (pictures in Dundee, Dijon, Igé, Cascais)

1.2 The hut and student teachers: notes from the hut experience day

1.2.1 Organising my first research experience

For a first multi-voice capture of the shepherd's hut, the student teachers of my first research experience are ideally placed to speak. This is because they have only just discovered that 'hut experience' for themselves, and they have passed this threshold and then try to write about their immersion. The notes by student teachers shared in this chapter aim to provide a range of possibility, of what can happen inside. These notes are non-exhaustive, but they are very representative of the feedback that I have accumulated over many years of working with this hut practice in all kinds of different educational, cultural, social and health care settings. Many of these comments reflect what has been said in another (European) civic tour, among a group of professionals or in another (Western) university degree programme where the hut was invited. So let us begin by opening the door of the hut, a backdoor into classroom worlds, to a new group before any of my research questions are spelled out in detail to you. Let us just welcome the genuine curiosity of a cohort of student teachers from a novel programme centred on activist teacher identity. They are taught to inhabit the gap of transition teachers working at the intersections between primary and secondary school, maybe they like the idea of thresholds and of the in-betweens.

Context

The voluntary 'hut experience day' took place on 18/01/2019, after having prepared the student teachers about the purpose of this activity in a short presentation on 14/01/2019. The photograph below shows the central setting of the Moray House Quad in which the 'hut experience day' took place. In the midst of the Moray House Quad, I was going to light the wood fire stove and open the door of the shepherd's hut space. The aims of this experiential encounter were outlined in a script to my supervisors:

- Sound out the motivations of student teachers to work with the hut for the doctoral field work over longer periods of time
- Allow students to express their inspirations but also their concerns for using this unconventional classroom
- Establish dialogue with student teachers as early as possible in the PhD and let the focus of my PhD angles be driven by their input

I wanted to test a very modest hypothesis: ‘spatial literacies as an experiential-theoretical frame will be relevant enough to student teachers to engage them in the activity and make this hut-based curriculum meaningful to their MSc’. It was key not to impose a classroom on them, just because their programme director shared my own passion for the hut.

Collaborative supervision: the right to roam from my supervisors

For the hut experience day, I planned to do exactly what I always do with the hut. In an initial phase, student teachers would discover music instruments, hand-crafted and unusual objects and play. In a second phase, they would be invited into storytelling about their life dreams and existential motivations. In a third phase, they would be given the space to let thoughts roam freely and imagine the hut as their classroom. Each student would experience the hut for 40 minutes in a small group accompanied by one of my PhD supervisors. After this, they could then reflect on the experience in an indoor teaching room of the university and write up their observations. For this, they could pick words from a selection of papers that described the space of the hut that I had prepared (see memory board 4). In a final plenary, all three small groups could then share their thoughts with the rest of the cohort.

Not only did my competences acquired through the years as itinerant hut experience facilitator become valuable for the programme. I was also in charge of a team around me. The three persons assisting me on that day were my supervisors. They had proposed a kind of help that I would not have dared them to ask. They had kept a whole afternoon free, trusting in my capacity to run this experience. This day became a collaborative field work of PhD-led organising, as my supervisors were genuinely ready to learn from my ways of using the hut. I was being offered three co-researchers and was asked to tell them what to do. Assigning clear roles allowed me to keep my own role during the activities: be in and out of the hut, always in movement, while my supervisors stayed with one fixed group.

The continuum of in- and outdoor learning spaces

Integrating a shepherd’s hut into an existing educational sphere means navigating between worlds which do not usually meet. The distinctly outdoor positionality of the hut is important in order to understand a continuum on which the sensory experience builds. The hut experience day as a ‘direct delivery’ into the Quad does not antagonistically oppose indoor

and outdoor sites for learning but brings their flows together, turning them into neighbouring spheres within the same institution. This was picked up in writing by one student teacher:

“After the hut we came into a long florescent room in Paterson’s Land. I’ve been in these rooms many times before. The noise is of central heating & traffic. The light is unnatural. Desks & chairs dominate for here, we must sit & work. Why desks? There is nothing creative to engage with. Even the smell of the woodburner was interactive & I enjoyed the aroma it left on my coat. Perhaps I enjoyed the hut more as it reminded me of childhood holidays by the sea in our caravan... small spaces where treasures are neatly tucked away in secret drawers. It feels safe, happy, where simple fun can be had away from the world :)” (Notes from Group 3)

The student teacher pointed out how precious and rare this other locality had appeared beside the conventional settings. Operating this ‘away-from-the-world’ setting had always been my normal day job. University students and staff walk corridors every day, just as I walk through the outdoor thresholds of setting up the hut in new locations every day. It was important for me to see how these very different environments that we roam in each other’s respective routines came together. The hut experience day can be understood as the chance to transcend a series of thresholds in the continuum between indoor and outdoor learning spaces. My invitation for the participants was to visit the unusual domesticity of my own professional home of the hut. This afternoon became an unsettling ‘home visit’ of my own itinerant work space for provoking reflection around spatial set-ups: “to make a transition from a static experience dominated by being seated in front of the computer screen and based on use of the mind rather than the body, to an experience that is mobile, deeply sensory and embodied” (Ferguson, 2018, p. 72). I did not document this passing of thresholds during the day in 2019, but I have enacted the same trajectory two years later to illustrate the stark contrast in materiality between the experiential hut space and the indoor room as a side-by-side. It is possible to visually trace back the journey that the student teacher described above, the sensory features of different learning spaces in institutionalised lives.

Script for the 18th January Hut Experience Day:

Group	A : Robbie	B : Do	C : Yvonne	Christian
13:20 – 14:00	Hut experience	-	-	At hut
14:00 – 14:40	Reflection PL Room LG 46	Hut experience	-	At hut
14:40 – 15:20	-	Reflection PL Room LG 46	Hut experience	At hut
15:20 – 16:00	-	-	Reflection PL Room LG 46	break
16:00 – 16:30	Plenary PL 1.26	Plenary PL 1.26	Plenary PL 1.26	Animating plenary
16:30 – 17:15	Supervision discussion in the hut	Supervision discussion in the hut	Supervision discussion in the hut	Supervision discussion in the hut



Memory board 4: Hut experience day between shepherd's hut & indoor teaching

1.2.2 The delayed threshold of the Ethics approval: *vagabond* (PhD) or (vagabond) *PhD*

A few days before the event, everything had already been planned in detail. Or at least, this is what I had thought. After a successful presentation of the activity to the full class of student teachers, I received an unexpected question by the MSc programme leader: “Did you get ethical approval?”. I was confused. At this stage, in my fourth month of the PhD, I did not want big data, I just wanted to get a feeling, by means of a structured yet improvised experiential encounter, if student teachers were interested in this unusual pedagogical space that I had brought from afar. This was a way to connect, this was not going to be a randomised control trial! I had planned a pedagogical reflection mediated by the hut in a way I had always done in my life, in so many institutions. Because of my eagerness to meet real student teachers as soon as possible, and not just read about student teacher identity in libraries, I had steered myself into a grey zone. I wanted to test the *practice*, but did not know about the need for Ethical approval for things that appeared natural and self-evident to me. As soon as I had formally become researcher, my practice also became part of it. Not organising an external review incurred potential hazards for unethical *research*. In a sense of urgency, I wrote to my supervisors and we all acknowledged that this ‘hut experience day’ was in this vague liminal sphere where it would be best to be on the safe side. I knew how to dwell in the liminalities, because of my borderlands as a free-lance educator. But I had always done so without being institutionally housed. I had not anticipated how the lines would be drawn between a pedagogical encounter and evidence-based research, and how the unapproved methodological vehicle would be perceived from within. I had to pass my very own thresholds into correct institutional protocol, now that I had become a registered PhD student.

In a last-minute attempt to fulfil all formal requirements, I submitted an Ethical Approval request which got speed-tracked and forwarded by my supervisors. But a technical problem on the platform stopped our attempts. I remember panicking as I was trying to resubmit the approval form from my mobile phone just minutes before the student teachers arrived in the Quad on the actual hut experience day. Wrestling with the formality took energies off from focusing on the pedagogical experimentation. When it became clear that there would under all circumstances be a delay in the official approval, the meticulously prepared pedagogical side of the day could have been lost in all the stress. But I had the hut as safe anchor to remind me that the pedagogical encounter itself was not prohibited. I calmed quickly and could focus on the aims of the day. Ultimately it would not matter if the writings collected as part of the

pedagogical exercise were allowed to be used as data for my thesis. If they were banned from featuring in future data sets, then I would still always have the intuitive encounter with student teachers to guide the next steps of my tentative research questions.

After a very successful hut experience day, the Ethics Approval came to the foreground again. I had to explain my incomplete Ethical approval to the School's Ethical Committee. This last-minute submission could have been interpreted as the disrespect of clearly set-out guidelines. My supervisors supported me with a joint letter. One explanation states:

“The main reason for the short notice was a series of coincidences that arose that provided an unexpected opportunity for Christian to meet with MSc TLT students and their Programme Director at a time the Shepherd's Hut was available and on site. As Christian is in the very early stages of his thesis, this was not part of the long-term research plan but the alignment of co-incidences was an opportunity we did not want to miss. [...] This would be exactly the same as if there had been a guest lecturer doing a session in dance or drama as part of the course”

As the experience taught me, being a guest lecturer or doing an indoor PhD are very different things for someone who was used to being institutionally unhoused. The practice with the hut inside institutional walls implies a new negotiation: anticipating the stages of approval. I was no longer the guest lecturer dipping in from outside and moving on. Now, for the first time, an institution had given a sheltered home to my hut activities, but this hospitality implied learning the rules of the indoors in order to be correctly working outdoors in the Quad. I had not made a deliberate omission, but was taken completely by surprise that my usual day-to-day now needed the oversight of an external board. Could I have known better?

My entire professional life has been built on improvised sensing of what may emerge without a predefined script. This was when I realised that my strength, the spontaneity around the hut, could in this highly formalised environment now easily be interpreted as careless opportunism and its flows be disabled with just one e-mail, one formal complaint from an invisible hierarchy. I had to learn to speak through forms and digital portals before I could be on the safe side of constructively disrupting classroom teaching conventions from within. Pre-approval became necessary in order for my actions to have scientific legitimacy. To what extent can spontaneity be part of academic research if pre-approval slows the options of wonder and surprise? This is a continuous thread of this PhD, which is negotiated very differently from here onwards. I learned to gain ethical approval where it was possible to

anticipate, but I also crafted an ‘accidental’ conference fringe (see last chapter) where there was no way to plan ahead as it would have halted a natural flow. The hut is much more than an itemised research tool to be contained in a predictable order, but its use was from now on scrutinised very closely from high up. A contract with academia, a need for balance started being negotiated here, between ‘magic’ and data, between flows and evidence.

The threshold of the Ethical Approval was passed with a delay of several weeks, but ultimately the combination of further explanations and the supportive letter by all of my supervisors led to School Ethics Level 3 approval, which “*applies to novel procedures, research without consent, sensitive personal data, or the use of atypical participant groups. Also projects in which ethical issues might require more detailed consideration but are unlikely to prove problematic*” (see Appendix 1). The visibility and equally disturbance caused by this small hut’s presence in the big institution led me to unexpected encounters with a new system of functioning. The repercussions go beyond the wooden walls on the trailer. Translation across institutional cultures sets many processes in motion. The early wanderings away from the safe comforts of a desk-based literature review were not premature but actually allowed me to understand as early as possible how empirical knowledge inside walls is administered. By facing the possibility of scientific delegitimation as an unethical ‘vagabond’ between informal and formal ecologies of knowledges, I needed to learn rules so that a space for surprise and improvisation could be used in *legitimised* relational way. The purpose of the hut was to bridge divisions, not to create new ones. I learned because the “*utopia of inter-knowledge is learning other knowledges without forgetting one’s own*” (Santos, 2012, p. 57).

The student teacher notes are clarifying torches into the vagabond obscurity. Without the Ethical approval, I would have missed an opportunity. I would not have kept the trace. I am relieved to be officially allowed to include the words of the student teachers from this very memorable day in the very beginning of journeying towards a thesis.

1.2.3 Findings: signposts into the hut obscurity

This section discusses the written notes by student teachers (see full transcriptions in Appendix 2). I had not taken observational notes during the facilitation of the different group experiences but received written notes from my supervisors. Each group had eight or nine participants. Some participants picked multiple sheets to reflect on the hut. The level of detail

in the explanation of the chosen words varied, as some student teachers were drawing elaborate diagrams while others shared short bullet point observations.

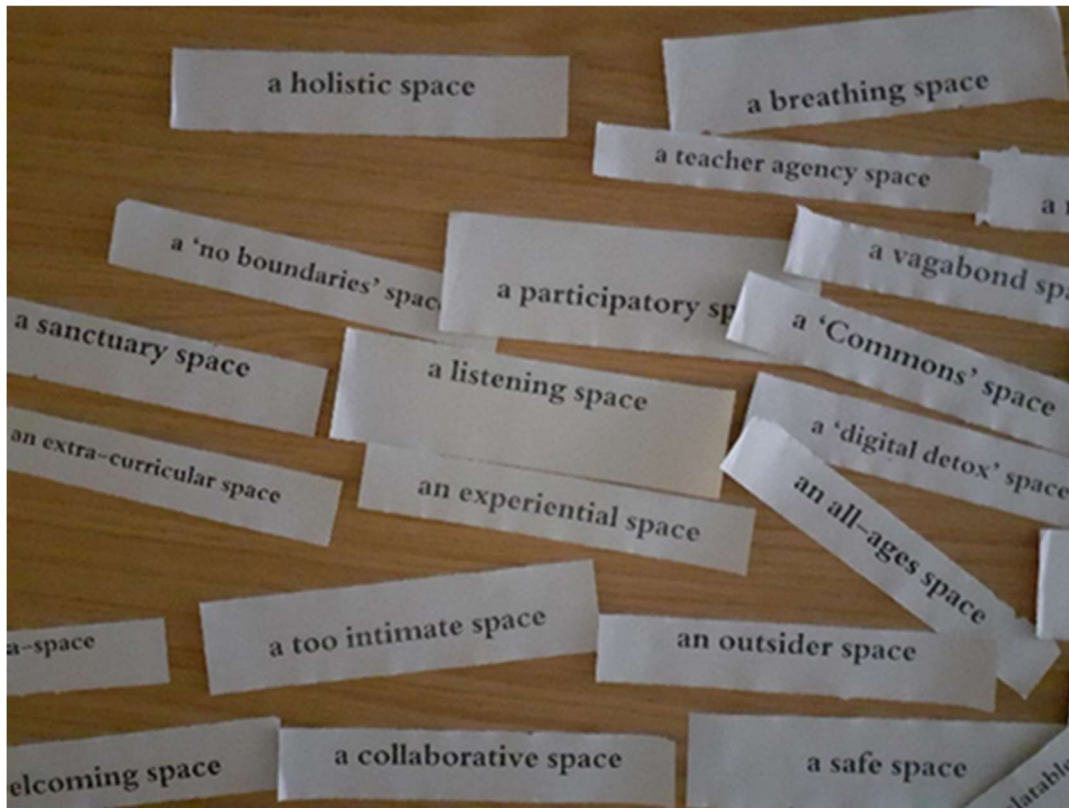


Figure 3: A choice of affordances

From all notes gathered after the hut experience, the small sheet with the descriptions as 'a timeless space' and 'more-than-a-space' were picked up in all three groups. Descriptors chosen in two of the three groups were: a *meaningful space*, a *sanctuary space*, a *community-led space*, a *nested space*, a *warm space*, a *relational space*, an *experiential space*, a *digital detox space*, an *imaginary space*, an *improvised space*, a *collaborative space*. There were equally descriptors selected once across all three groups: an *intimate space*, a *too intimate space*, an *enabling space*, a *safe space*, a *children-led space*, a *'commons' space*, an *impractical space*, a *technology-free space*, 'space', a *wood fire space*, an *all-ages space*, a *metaphorical space*, a *challenging space*, a *welcoming space*, an *unregulated space*, a *sensory place*, an *affective space*, a *removed space*, a *questioning space*, an *extra-curricular space*. Added to my pre-selection of adjectives were two further descriptors: 'an *open space*' and 'a *bridging space*'. There was no conceptual introduction into the nuances of space and place, as the focus was placed on the adjective/ descriptor. The omission of definitions for space and place was deliberate to collect sensory, affective expression rather than discuss conceptual nuances

and respond to an intellectual tradition. The following section guides through some of the highlighted notes with the aim to better understand the student teachers' perceptions of the shepherd's hut as resonant (or not) with their (imagined) future teaching practice.

Being nested in a timeless sanctuary

The strongest thematic strand focused on reflections on timelessness and the experience of taking oneself out of the immediacies in daily life. The temporal dimension of the shepherd's hut experience was mentioned on several layers, understood as relief from the linear clock time of the school as well as making a link to intergenerational aspects: "A space where you feel free from the pressures of timetables, schedules, appointments...and time itself! Also timeless in the sense that it is useful/ meaningful to all age groups" (Notes from Group 2). The lifting of constraints occurring in the hut is seen by student teachers at the same time as a form of disconnection (from the wider world) and as reconnection (beyond the categories such as age or temporal availability): "A sense of possibility without being constrained by time limits or age. Children/ Young people may come to see themselves as defined by their class/ year group or (later) by their generation. [...] A feeling of being insulated from the outside world" (Notes from Group 1). The introspective potential of the hut is highlighted by several participants: "Silence and thinking space is possible, away from the chaos of everyday life" (Notes from Group 1). Interestingly, the inward-looking focus through the hut does not alienate from but rather invites into a sense of belonging and dialogue: "The silence it can represent in moments of loneliness which can trigger mindfulness, but equally a sense of belonging when/ if sharing a dialogue or activity together" (Notes from Group 3). Making sense of this experience has parallels to imaginary 'time travel' allowing multi-layered playfulness with temporality: "so it transported us into a different dimension. Even though it meant we were focusing only on the present moment, this 'unreal' aspect of the hut also meant we were removed from the present moment" (Notes from Group 3).

This experience of increased attention and intrinsic focus, checking into own emotions and taking one's attention away from the surrounding stressors, was transferred by some student teachers to the benefits and 'balancing effects' for their pupils:

"it's a good 'non-digital' space for this generation of children who have been 'over-digitalized' in the highly-advanced technology era. When I sat in the hut I didn't notice there is a clock. There I felt the peace and calmness floating in the

atmosphere. Also the decorations and artefacts are put inside the hut will not remind you a particular period of time, which provides a “balance” feeling. I think it’ll help children who easily get anxious in a busy school environment. To help them be released from a traditional “school” busy environment, from the time pressure, and to calm down, to focus better.” (Notes from Group 3)

Anxiety can then be reduced by creating a safe space in which children can make their own ‘nest’, something rarely imagined within schools: “I would probably let everyone decide where to sit, making them free to find a position in their nest” (Notes from Group 3). Student teachers were reminded of their own childhoods:

“I thought of building forts/huts and creating spaces when I was a child and how this seems to be something that many children do. Create a small and cosy space for themselves. I think the small size of the spaces that children create is why the hut felt warm. It reminded me of a part that a child would create. But this was created for adults and children – so both could feel comfortable. It works because children naturally seem to enjoy small, dark and warm spaces (pillow forts or tree houses) and adults can remember liking these spaces” (Notes from Group 1).

The family home is not always experienced as safe, so the feeling of sanctuary cannot be experienced by every child. Integrating a cosy space of belonging into the school then allows to experience safety elsewhere than in the domestic sphere and relates to the right to a protective space that is not provided equally to all children in their family environments: “positive feelings to the word ‘nested’ and obviously links to a positive experience of ‘home’ as a place. This is something that many students may not have. So how fantastic for them would it be for them to experience something such as the hut. I think this idea of a ‘nested’ space is something very unique and not often associated with formal evaluation, yet it is needed” (Notes from Group 1). The need for enlarging the notion of assessment to allow non-judgmental spaces in schools is then also picked up in all groups.

From assessment to non-hierarchical encounter

During the short shepherd’s hut experience, student teachers were invited into several playful and pressure-free activities. One student teacher reflects on one of these activities which could not be concluded successfully by the group: “No one managed to solve one of the puzzles, that was okay, turning the space into a secure space where emotions and also mistakes were allowed” (Notes from Group 3). The storytelling activities taking place in the hut between student teachers did not lead to the discomfort of exposure but to the possibility of authentic expression, as the framing of these activities “created an equal level for

everyone. Where we could all share experiences, knowledge & stories without worrying about our place in the world beyond the hut. Social standing, age, politics etc. felt worlds away” (Notes from Group 1). Confidence for being rather than pretending also was increased: “Being able to share personal or intimate information without feeling awkward” (Notes from Group 1). While the presence of the hut in itself is not always seen as a guarantee for an inherently meaningful space, the delicate use of it through the direction of the conversations can make the hut experience meaningful: “What makes the space meaningful is often not the space itself but the memories within that space. Or it could be the deep and emotional conversations that are held within that space. For some the hut could be a place of safety. To talk about issues and open up to others that then may make the hut meaningful to them” (Notes from Group 2). In this sense, it was suggested to use such a safe space in order to rescript the type of assessments that can trigger anxiety before the scheduled evaluation as meaningful, welcoming encounters: “Could be a great space for children to do oral literacy assessments as comforting, warm, less scary? Reciting poems?” (Notes from Group 2). The notion of a safe space is directly related to uncomfortable aspects of school life.

The hut as an alternative site for learning then embodies the vision for alternative assessment, enlarging the idea of acceptance to the sphere of identity by hosting differently: “A physical representation of ‘difference’ when set against the body of the traditional school. Can parallel a feeling of acceptance and importance of difference in other aspects of life, inc. ethnic/ gender/ special needs identities” (Notes from Group 3). The dominant roles and separations along the lines of professional roles and masks are reduced to allow inter-human encounter beyond the function each person has been assigned to in the school mechanisms: “A way of getting to know each other in a different context as ‘people’ not just pupils, but also as impetus to rethinking the traditional learner-teacher environment.” (Notes from Group 1). The experience of an ‘other-worldly’ classroom enables the student teachers to critique the normative definition of a classroom: “Getting to experience something like this with learners would allow you to challenge the traditional power dynamics that often accompany teachers in a traditional setting” (notes from Group 1). However, this type of classroom beyond walls of the shepherd’s hut is not only identified as an empowering space.

Critique and limitations of this approach

Some students suggest small changes as complementary to the hut experience, pointing at a lack in the variety of prompts while generally approving the hut classroom for their own activities: “I would probably add a touch of another little sensory idea. It seems missing a very simple food or drink preparation that in my opinion would make the hut even more inclusive” (Notes from Group 3). For one student teacher, the integration of a shepherd’s hut into schools would bring with it more problems than benefits: “Too ‘close’. How to treat fire. Problems to solve. Saw a lot of problems” (Notes from Group 2). Indeed, others also point out that there is no guarantee that what may be experienced as a warm space by student teachers would also be experienced as a safe space by children: “For some students this could be too much, whereas for others this could be a ‘safe space’. Truly enjoyed the experience, it could be used in many ways. Hoping I get the chance to use it. [...] However I don’t think it could be used for everyday subjects depends – not inclusive for every child. I also think for everyday its too small. But I truly enjoyed the experience for once. Also Health & Safety plays” (Notes from Group 3). The worry of Health & Safety protocols was persistently mentioned during the group experience as well as in the final plenary, both as a logistical issue and as a fear of being judged and restrained to existing rules as a new, incoming teacher who is not yet full member of the school during the ITE placements. Becoming known as a logistical troublemaker is understandably not the best way to start a teaching career. Astonishingly, all five student teachers who had agreed to bring the shepherd’s hut into their placement school (in November 2019 and planned for April 2020) encountered no problems with the preceding Health & Safety aspects. The logistical difficulties imagined in January 2019 did not manifest and the schools were happy to welcome this different kind of educational venue without hesitation.

Another critique of the approach does not focus on the logistical but interpersonal aspects. A student teacher pointed at the way how groups entering the hut should be composed: “It would also be a bit weird if two persons who don’t get along are using the Hut, and it would make an interesting experiment to check if after the Hut experience if they get along or their relations it’s the same or worse” (Notes from Group 3). Even if the small space of the hut does not feel too intimate as a physical classroom set-up, it is a legitimate concern that the arrival of another person, maybe of a bullying pupil, may break the cosiness of the hut and trap other pupils in the tensions of complicated relationships amplified through physical proximity. At

the same time, working with the hut may also offer other approaches to dealing with interpersonal tensions which are not provided by the typical classroom setting. Every alternative site of learning therefore requires safeguarding, in the same way as conventional classroom designs have to be scrutinised for their role in aggravating or alleviating interpersonal tensions. The hut was generally not identified as primarily a site of 'instruction' and control and rather as a site of exploration in which the systematic control of interactions would appear difficult to enact. While some focus on its 'closed' aspects, others highlight its possibility for opening up their classroom practice.

Exploration, collaboration, improvisation

Instead of focusing on an in-school phenomenon such as bullying, student teachers rather valued the possibility to open up their classroom practice to outside inspirations through integration of the wider community. Using the hut creates new connection: "People realise that many people out there believe in same things, can connect where maybe wouldn't in 'everyday life'" (Notes from Group 2). In that way, instead of perpetuating a 'schooling shell' and what can be experienced as the silo of indoor teaching, the hut is identified as "a unique space to be used to connect people from different backgrounds when people generally feel difficult to step out of their shells to make friends & to share etc..." (Notes from Group 3). What is missing in conventional classroom designs may be accessible through the hut: "Associations of traditional classroom – lack of exploration" (Notes from Group 1). Discovery then becomes part of the fluid lesson plan: "Through exploration and discovery of small, meaningful treasures and objects, children and young people can open their minds to the unlimited world of learning and teaching" (Notes from Group 2). This multidimensional richness of the shepherd's hut in stark contrast with classroom standardisation is pointed out: "There is the opportunity to experience a variety of things including discussions, play etc. which is not possible in a traditional classroom set up. The hut created an experience!" (Notes from Group 1). Collaboration understood as the intrinsic engagement of the individual interacting through own interests with others is identified as a potential of the hut classroom: "individual discovery through all the toys, instruments, books and other physical or visual stimuli. The warm and safe setting was also a collaborative experience which meant we could all learn in our own way but together" (Notes from Group 1).

In relation to an acceptance of difference through the hut space, student teachers point at the multifaceted readings of the space that are possible, an indicator of the transcending of neat categories and dichotomies. The notion of collaboration here includes the possibility to reach different 'ages' within the same comforting spatial set-up: "this was created for adults and children – so both could feel comfortable. It works because children naturally seem to enjoy small, dark and warm spaces (pillow forts or tree houses) and adults can remember liking these spaces." (Notes from Group 1). The lines between inside and outside become blurred as encounter involves both: "The inside and outside of the hut mean the space is not just intimate, it can be replicated by reaching into outside spaces, while using the artefacts from inside" (Notes from Group 1). Additionally, the hut is identified as welcoming in a different way. Because it is not part of the school 'furniture' or the community infrastructure, it connects from a different position: "The space neither belongs to the school or the wider community and so provides a more neutral meeting point that both children and community members feel equally at home or not at home in" (Notes from Group 2). This free-roaming nature of the mobile classroom brings hospitality into the discussion of teaching practice.

An intentional disruption of the school setting

The shepherd's hut session does not feel like school: "No desks no chairs no feel of school no teacher, no rules! Anything goes... I can be creative, I can explore, it's timeless & I won't be corrected or caught out, my mind can happily drift..." (Notes from Group 3). This commentary reveals a desire to break free from the limitations to creativity experienced in the 'feel of school'. The experience inside school can be negatively perceived and student teachers critique the scripting of classroom standards: "many classrooms or teaching spaces almost seem to come with a 'script' that dictates the learning that is possible, and the characters that are welcome. With improvisation, or a space open to 'improv' there is no script or set characters" (Notes from Group 3). The predictable and functionalist model of learning environments, a spatialised version of the hidden curriculum of classroom designs, is pointed out many times.

Others share cultural references and memories from worlds that one would not immediately associate with in-school activity: "The hut is very similar in terms of a fire, space and storytelling to many Gàidhlig traditions of hospitality and storytelling" (Notes from Group 2). One could even perceive the transcriptions of the notes collected here as mere traces of

expressions of oral storytelling, as many of these written comments had been expressed during the session in the hut. In this stark contrast between the memories of historically rooted community experiences which had emerged and been sustained away from educational institutions and the dominance of models of institutionalised teaching also lies a worry that some student teachers can see for the long-term application of the hut. They doubt if the benefits for the children's lived realities can be secured over time: "like any new space – i.e. moving from primary to secondary – the experience might seem novelty at first, but is that feeling sustainable? Can they take ownership in a more meaningful way amidst scripted solutions to its use" (Notes from Group 3). The same person previously commented about the importance of not relegating the shepherd's hut to an extra-curricular add-on: "when I remember my school days, one-off experiences/ excursions were fantastic, but they were seen as 'other' to 'real' learning in the classroom. I would hate for the Hut to become an 'extra-curricular' space which children see as separate to their classroom experiences. How can I try and do this? There must be genuine/ authentic links made with pupils lived experiences" (Notes from Group 3). How is it therefore possible to use the disruption triggered by this alternative learning environment within the structures of educational hierarchies? The hut experience day is identified by student teachers as meaningful learning that is relevant to them as student teachers, but they are concerned that the educational status quo would not sustain such other approaches. Would the hut experience then be a one-off diversion and entertainment in Initial Teacher Education that can never take hold in schools?

At this early stage of the PhD, we have now discovered a certain 'magic' of the hut operating during a PhD scholarship interview and during a half-day field research with a cohort of student teachers. And based on the wide range of reflections, reservations and doubts of the student teachers, we can see that it is still possible to maintain one's rational mind after a 'hut experience' while at the same time encouraged to dream. These encounters with self and others inside the hut in the most varied locations are not isolated one-off experiences. Over the next months, other student teachers on other ITE programmes would occasionally knock on the door of the hut in the Moray House Quad to inquire and get a look inside this unusual locale.

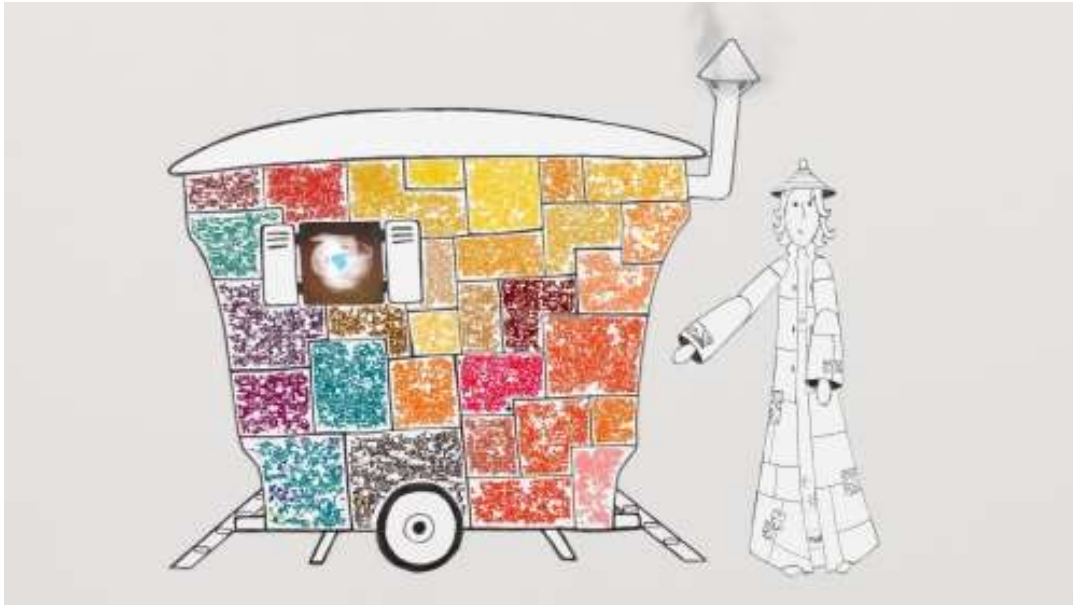


Figure 4: The hut 'magic' of multifaceted experiences

1.3 A pluralistic framework for existential care

1.3.1 Wandering professionally between education and counselling

Each student teacher saw nuances in this hut experience day where the concluding remarks were: “barriers were broken down between us”. As one student teacher observed in the closing plenary: “When the window went up it changed the feeling – into a shop with counter”. This flexibility, as the embracing of many faces of the hut behind the one wooden façade (and provisional protective walls), can be understood through a pluralistic lens. Notions such as timelessness, the nest, the non-judgmental spirit are features of an environment which are more easily linked to the idea of a therapeutic safe space such as a counselling room than to a classroom. Still, these affordances have been observed and strongly articulated by the student teachers for their own *school*-based practice. Health and wellbeing have become key concerns in Scottish curricula and improving this area increasingly falls into the remit of schools staff, not just of external health services (McLellan et al., 2022). It may come as no surprise to find out that the ‘activity’ with student teachers, in the way it was facilitated as a hut experience day, was significantly inspired by my own training in counselling. Professional training also has influenced the way I will later use ‘existential care’ as a methodological frame. I therefore introduce here my understanding of the hut as a caring

space, connected to research into emotional landscapes which suggest that inner worlds are not the exclusive remit of psychotherapy (Bondi, 2013).

From 2009 to 2014, I completed a full training course in my native Germany in logotherapy, the existential-humanistic school of counselling and psychotherapy building on the works of Viktor E. Frankl (1985). My own aim never was to practice in a clinical health setting. Informal settings for listening and life stories interested me. There appears little questioning of the standardised idea of counselling spaces as indoors, face-to-face consultation rooms in most psychotherapeutic networks, including the one I trained with. When I discovered the network of pluralistic counselling and psychotherapy, well represented at Abertay University Dundee (Pluralistic Practice, 2022) in Scotland, my long-term efforts of diversifying the spatialities of listening practices could also be theorised. It is a particularly Western understanding of safe spaces to be private, individual, walled refuges decorated in neutral terms (Ahsan, 2020). The whiteness and ableism that certain localities of care suggest can lead to experiences of perceived hostility rather than hospitality. There are many links to be made with educational spaces here, for example in the experience of the research participant Bryzzheva retold through the lens of a white, female academic:

“educational spaces, spaces that I imagine to be neutral enough in their architectural blandness and, sometimes, institutional ugliness, are spaces already marked by whiteness in the sense that they echo white structures, white social orders, and white expectations. I can see these spaces as “neutral enough” because I already inhabit the whiteness that is required for what Bryzzheva describes as “showing up in this space” (Ruitenbergh, 2018, p. 258).

By acknowledging that my own culturally constructed vision of educational spaces breathes whiteness and privilege, there is a possibility not to settle in a sanitised atmosphere. Ahmed has narrated the vehemence that one can receive through hostile atmospheric conditions:

“I think whiteness is often experienced as an atmosphere. You walk into a room and you encounter it like a wall that is at once palpable and tangible but also hard to grasp or to reach. It is something, it quite something, but it is difficult to put your finger on it. When you walk into the room, it can be like a door slams in your face. The tightening of bodies: the sealing of space. The discomfort when you encounter something that does not receive you” (Ahmed, 2014, n.p.)

The way I operate the shepherd’s hut emerges out of my long-term reflection on the diversity of perceptions and sensory needs surrounding the question ‘what constitutes a safe space?’ across cultures and professions. This is informed by my own neurodivergent perceptions and

the feeling I have when I enter buildings which manifest the institutional ableism of functional belongings. The caring environment of the hut is the *indirect* host. I have attempted to create an *atmosphere* that holds. It is a conversation with a space, not a consultation with a counsellor like in face-to-face therapy sessions.

1.3.2 What is pluralism?

The acceptance of dissensus (Rancière, 2010), not the search for consensus is placed at the centre of the pluralistic framework: “Pluralism is a philosophical and ethical tradition based on the idea that there is no single perspective or truth that is universally valid (Rescher, 1993). Pluralism represents an acknowledgement of the ultimate impossibility of reducing the interconnectedness, complexity and uniqueness of life to a set of laws or theories” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 2). What counts as knowledge is not defined by the expertise of the professional but by learners themselves: “effective practice draws on multiple ways of knowing: ethical, personal, theoretical, cultural and scientific” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 2). This socially situated model, explicitly drawing from cultural resources in the communities to integrate a social justice angle, moves away from individualistic counselling traditions (McLeod, 2017) and commits to dialogical responsiveness to life worlds, not manuals: “a key principle of pluralistic therapy is that different people are likely to be helped by different things at different times” (Smith et al., 2021, p.2). This reflects the many ideas that student teachers had expressed, for example to support health and wellbeing in schools. No universal strategy for using the hut can be devised from collected testimonies. Not designing a recipe is a stance rather than lack.

How does pluralism translate into practice?

For the purpose of this PhD, pluralism does not need to be treated as a philosophy of detached relativism, as it often happens in theoretical debate. In the context of the shepherd’s hut, it becomes an applied posture. Taking a pluralistic position only in theory risks blocking the conversation in categorical legitimacy claims. Indeed, the radical in-betweenness advocated by pluralism makes one vulnerable without the possibility of a rallying cry for the own position’s ‘tribe’. In a world organised into neatly guarded intellectual territories (Lugosi, 2010; Pirrie & Macleod, 2009), there is a fair chance that in-betweenness will be met with rejection. Let us not invest these fixed spheres where pluralism will be fought as a threat, if it actually could be a humble connector. One can better understand the implications of pluralistic practice through its embeddedness in constant interaction - not only with theories

- but also with concrete existences. Applied practice reveals the benefits of the pluralistic stance.

1.3.3 What do I mean by existential care?

In the shepherd's hut, I try not to have my own agenda when I apply my own existentially inspired philosophy for a mobile encounter space. Still, this 'non-agenda' of existential care has the 'agenda' of rejecting agendas. A distinction can be made. The "existential stance tends to emphasise a non-agenda driven by 'being with' the other, while the pluralistic approach emphasises working towards explicitly agreed goals" (Cooper & McLeod, 2011, p. 30). I remain flexible to perceive the flows of hut visitors: what do they want to get out of the hut? I will have to let my own existential focus go when I feel that an individual or the group wants something else and opts for a defined agenda within that open no-agenda space that I propose. This interaction between a fixed personal grounding (existentialism) and an eclectic pluralism will become clearer when the methodology of existential care is expanded through the activity of arts-based mapping, manifesting through a pluralism of expressive approaches (see 4.1). Pluralism is therefore the capacity to meet the other with own competences and stances as well as the alertness to leave one's own affiliations and certainties when necessary: "existentialism can be seen as one particular worldview, combinable with others, that is of greater or lesser value to different people at different points in time" (Cooper, 2015, p. 102). Pluralism is about the capacity to trust the own roots, while staying in movement.

1.3.4 Inevitable in-betweenness

The hut perceived as a pluralistic methodological encounter space then allows to observe how knowledges interact from the freedoms of their own knowledge base and not coerced into categorisation:

"dialecticalism will enable people to continually interact with different ontologies, epistemologies, ethical principles/systems, disciplines, methodologies, and methods in order to produce useful wholes. The process should continually build on what we know and feel and value now and produce new, dialectically derived, "knowledge(s)," programs, theories, and deliberative democratic human coalitions" (Johnson, 2017, p. 158)

This discussion of the overall pluralistic frame shows why detailed analysis of disconnected parts matters less than the coexistence of multiple, sometimes undefined interconnections. As one student teacher put it: "the space itself, the material used, the wood-burner, the close seating arrangement and much more means *the hut becomes more than the sum of its parts*"

(Notes from Group 2). A certain level of vagueness would remain, even with the most profound thematic data analysis of singled-out notes from the hut experience day. It was however important to let a small sample of student teachers speak first about their comforts and disquiets with the hut before I share some more of my own experiential vignettes, which are also accounts from a pedagogy of discomfort.

To illustrate the geographical, linguistic, experiential, disciplinary, professional as well as conceptual in-betweenness, a wheel in constant rotation (see figure 5) has guided the initial phase of my PhD research. The wheel of itinerancy at the centre facilitates the movement beyond binaries and dichotomist opposition, reshuffling the betweens of, for example, mobility and stillness, hospitality and retreat.

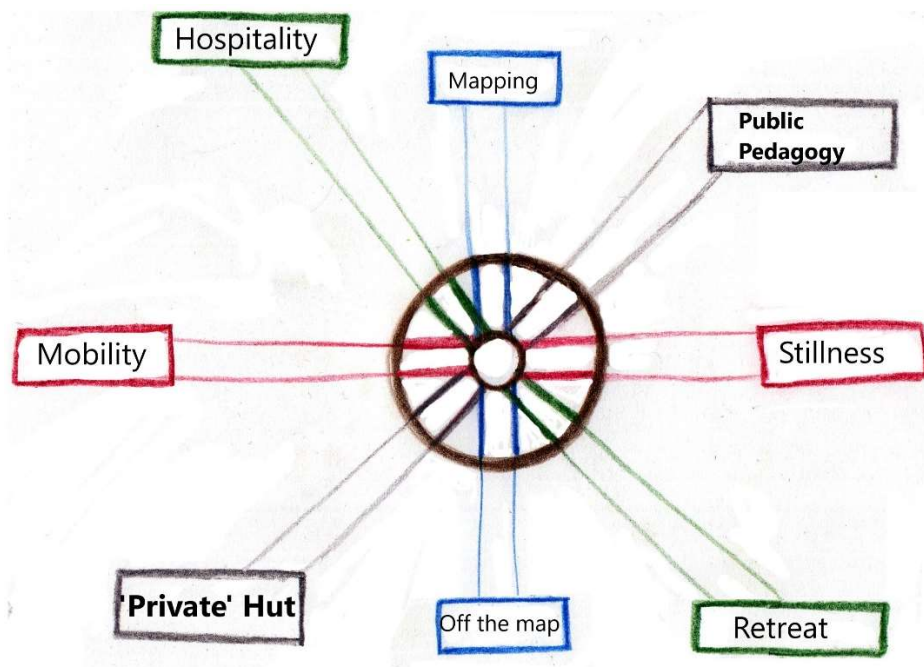


Figure 5: The wheel of in-betweenness

The interprofessional positioning in my educational hut space unsettles belongings. No single professional sphere has ever made the hut practice a priority to allow full funding for its intangible, non-functionalist cause. The hut is not a vehicle of social work, of schools, of universities, but it could be in all these structures within the same week. The hut has become a vehicle of the arts and crafts of 'vagabond educating'. Funding has always come from a combination of different interventions, a constant assembling and reassembling. I never put forward any professional, hierarchical titles or affiliations when facilitating the hut space.

While I have trained as an existential therapist, it is my *spatialised* enactment, not person-centric skill, which guides this horizontal practice away from the omnipresent vertical status games of the therapy cultures and health care industries. Spelling this out makes transparent how I have come to approach the wide field of health and wellbeing (particularly in the school context) as a professional listener holding open an environment for co-existence of multiple truths. The gesture of hospitality is not about therapy, but about intuitive existential care. In the next chapter, the aim is not to deconstruct the hut, to dissect the elements of this shepherd's hut and to reassemble it with a formula for reproduction. Let us instead look further into the conceptualisation of non-instrumental movement and vagabond vagueness as allies for pluralism and hospitable educational environments.

Chapter 2: A vagabond ecology of knowledges



Figure 6: A chapter to discover the thesis festival campsite

2.1 Working with vagabond vagueness as subversive inventiveness

2.1.1 Does professional belonging require a fixed abode?

The text so far has not yet been able to pin down the hut. Its intangible presence rested a while with student teachers and with elements of health and wellbeing, but then moved on,

fuelled by inevitable in-betweenness. In this chapter, the reader will discover that the hut does not just pop up from nowhere. Few locals will have a clear idea about the scheduling or the logistics of its whereabouts. They often discover the hut by surprise. We will be tracing back the roots of the practice which I refer to as 'vagabond educating'. This *modus operandi* also raises the question if there can be meaningful professional belonging in itinerant living despite prevailing Western framings of the educational and social professions as sedentary. I therefore explore a movement-based understanding of professional home that is not primarily fixed or place-bound.

The emergence of my shepherd's hut initiative cannot be attributed to one single dominant factor that sustained its growth. There is not one employer, not one country, not one language, but the vagabond ecology holds the simultaneity of these. This means there is no continuous place-bound presence, but there is a different form of connectedness. When belongings are experienced as processes, the attention can shift from external to intrinsic endeavour. Conceptually, the question of professional home then drifts away from institutional affiliation, but also without taking seat in the antagonism against the institution (such as in de-institutionalisation critiques). As a process, "homing highlights the processual and often incomplete constitution of home, rather than essentialising it" (Boccagni, 2022, p. 2). A vagabond professional becoming then escapes to some extent the normativity of institutional logics while staying in cyclical, non-antagonistic and overlapping relations with multiple conventional sedentary homes. What I hope to convey by linking movement-based theories with my own experiential account is the possibility to let itinerant practices be considered as initiatives in their own right rather than extensions, add-ons or outreach tools to expand adherence to a certain settled rule. By bringing some positive aspects of existences on the move into the foreground, I do not seek to reduce or romanticise the struggles and dangers of a life on the move. Discussing the potentialities of transience ought "not to dismiss, of course, the large inequalities within and between groups in homing capabilities and opportunities" (Boccagni, 2022, p. 2). Instead, my aim is to prevent the overemphasis on stigma and victimisation attached to perceived forms of 'uprooting' when, in fact, some (but certainly not all) non-homes are to a certain extent chosen. Bringing out that nuance of agentic transient belonging is also a question of dignity. A conceptual engagement with mobile belongings as an "invitation to investigate the portability of home" (Boccagni, 2022,

p. 6) does not have to read failure *per se* into the absence of rootedness of the permanent traveller and provisional guest. Troubling the fixity of homes encourages “transforming the marginalisation of mobility into its acceptance and celebration as a valid, viable and valuable mode of existence” (Kenny & Danaher, 2009, p. 2) alongside more sedentary perspectives.

The appreciation of flow has been argued by the philosopher Thomas Nail, providing a recent theoretical framework (Nail, 2015) that challenges the historical roots of sedentary scientific perspectives on mobility and migration as inherently attached to deficit thinking:

“the migrant has been predominantly understood from the perspective of stasis and perceived as a secondary or derivative figure with respect to place-bound social membership. Place-bound membership in a society is assumed as primary; secondary is the movement back and forth between social points. [...] a static place and membership are theorized first, and the migrant is the one who lacks both. Thus, more than any other political figure (citizen, foreigner, sovereign, etc.), the migrant is the one least defined by its being and place and more by its becoming and displacement: by its movement. If we want to develop a political theory of the migrant itself and not the migrant as a failed citizen, we need to reinterpret the migrant first and foremost according to its own defining feature: its movement.” (Nail, 2015, p.3)

Often, studies are reduced to a lens where only place *attachments* are seen to be constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Giving movement a status in its own right, ontologically as well as epistemologically, changes this logic. ‘Aimless wandering’ in its specific form is frequently categorised as a form of non-belonging and therefore judged as a shortcoming. Based on the argument that mobilities are not *per se* negative or positive (Gustafson, 2009), it would be an erroneous assumption to classify movement in advance as either legitimate or suspicious: “Much of the relevant debate is shaped by the pre-assumption that home as a social experience already exists – even when it is de-essentialized and reframed as a matter of homemaking rather than just a location, such as the place of origin or the present dwelling” (Boccagni, 2022, p.2). Unsettling this requires novel analytical openings which posit non-home as “a category of analysis, as it illuminates the emergence of a relationship with place that is more nuanced, and possibly unsettling, than simply not-feeling-at-home in place itself” (Boccagni & Miranda-Nieto, 2022, p. 527). Nurturing this lens challenges the belief that fixity of home is an ideal everyone is supposed to strive towards.

It is necessary to open educational spheres towards the otherness of belonging on the move, and by doing so “recognizing and legitimating other ways of knowing: particularly, those that open up rather than close down opportunities for students to engage with knowledge claims [...] from their own knowledge base” (Gale et al., 2017, p. 346). What if restlessness was reinterpreted as enabler for relational dialogue? My ‘undomesticated’ educational stance engages with the perception of society as a composition of continued flows. This unbounded perspective actively troubles the Western explanatory apparatus of ‘voluntary-versus-involuntary travel’ binary, one which cannot be universalised (Ray, 2022). Among the many figures of migration, in what ways could precisely the vagabond shift the understanding of educational movement as more than the linear progression according to a measurable norm?

2.1.2 The figure of the vagabond: from legal, literary to educational vehicle

Vagabundus

The history of the term ‘vagabond’ has gone through many transformations. Its application ranges widely and can be found in juridico-political documents as much as in literary form:

“The term ‘vagabond’ became widespread in both Britain and France in the fourteenth century. Derived from the Latin *vagari*, meaning to wander or err, it is variously defined as ‘roaming or wandering from place to place without settled habitation or home’, ‘leading an unsettled, irregular, disreputable life’ or even, ‘good-for-nothing, rascally, worthless’. It is closely linked with the French *errance*, from the Latin *errare*, meaning to wander and seek adventure, but also to go the wrong way, and fall from grace” (Bird, 2012, p. 30)

Literary accounts are documented widely since the eighteenth century (Bird, 2012). Initially, the Western understanding of the vagabond related to

“the process of “wandering” on a case-by-case basis, regardless of the (social) status or milieu of the wandering person. Hence, *vagabundus* was neither used to label a heterogeneous roaming fringe-group or a social category nor to designate the “traveler-lifestyle”. The term did not point to a specific group of persons at all.” (Brüggemann, 2015, p. 1).

It would therefore be too quick to assume that the term has always been negative and that it could fit into contemporary sociological categories such as class. So-called vagabonds could not be classified. Equally, not every language provides evidence of an ongoing stigmatisation:

“the Bangla word for “vagabond,” *bhabaghure*—an amalgamation of *bhaba* (meaning “earth”) and *ghure*, derived from the Sanskrit root *ghum* (meaning “to

travel”)—does not invoke the pejorative connotation already embedded in the English word, derived from Latin *vagari* (<*vague*, that is, lack of clarity). Likewise, the Sanskrit synonyms for “vagabond” are rarely pejorative. Conversely, the pejorative element in the English language has accrued over time” (Ray, 2020, p. 110).

It is possible to situate the term in a category escaping clear definition. Sedentary society used the term to make sense of a broad range of movements: “Suitable for a wide range of people living rough, by the Middle Ages *vagabundus* had become the synonym for vagrants and goliards as well as a generalizing label, a social category *sui generis* that subsumed any kinds of people who lived on the streets permanently or temporarily.” (Brüggemann, 2015, p. 1). But what if the streets of the uncategorised case-by-case offered belonging as a form of agentic non-home?

Few extended studies in social sciences exist (Ray, 2020) to make sense of the “profusion of meanings, allusions and cultural connotations, often contradictory, that cloak the idea of the ‘vagabond’” (Ray, 2022, p. 45). The vagabond, conceptualised as an agentic figure in movement-oriented theoretical frameworks capable of migratory counterpower (Nail, 2015), challenges the Western-utilitarian value system. The nebulous term flows in between externally perceived reductionisms: either contained in a deficit-lens of errancy or romanticised through projections of escapist desires. Both dominant lenses overlook intrinsic nuances in someone’s active choice of a precarious non-home (Boccagni & Miranda Nieto, 2022). In his monograph, Avishek Ray (2022) details the significant variation across time and cultures which to some extent “explains why the vagabond is celebrated as a dissident figure in Critical Theory or apotheosized in the Romantic literary tradition, but is marginalized in the statist discourse” (Ray, 2020, p. 108). Applying the nebulous term of the vagabond becomes problematic in scientific terms for maintaining neat sociological categories of analysis. The “concept of vagabond(age) within the discourse of colonial modernity ranges considerably across the span of marginalization and romanticization, contempt and encouragement, and therefore characterizes a floating signifier” (Ray, 2022, p. 18). It may be unhelpful to maintain floating signifiers at the core of this thesis’ questioning of belonging, and by doing so to accumulate multiple layers of vagueness: “home irremediably conflates conflicting interests, power asymmetries, and inequalities along gendered lines (but also along racialized and classed ones, among others). In a nutshell, it is a dubious category of analysis, and yet one hard to replace” (Boccagni, 2022, p. 3).

A danger exists to gloss over the systemic power differential and the unequal structural distribution of mobility privileges depending on intersecting categories. The vagabond cannot be pinned down. At its best, “the concept of ‘vagabond’, though working as a functional umbrella, is notoriously nebulous. Can we say with a modicum of certitude that we know what (the word) ‘vagabond’ exactly means? In other words, how many of us can define a ‘vagabond’?” (Ray, 2022, p. 6). I argue that the figure of the vagabond offers subversive and inventive ways through which *vagueness* as an itinerant educational practice of unsettling and discomfort can hold open a space for being at home on the move, and ultimately to act meaningfully in the world. This is about the agency of being unhoused.

Undefining the vagabond

Vagabond vagueness does not follow the rigour of defining terminology. In my educational stance, the vagabond narrative will un-occupy “to different degrees, at different times, and in different circumstances” (Nail, 2015, p. 16). This undecided figurative wandering leaves open the possibility to weave conceptual possibilities into the ‘concrete utopia’ (Bloch, 1986) and empirical fragments of a vagabond ecology of knowledges. The

“figure is a social vector or tendency. Insofar as specific individuals take up a trajectory, they are figured by it. But it is also possible for individuals to leave this vector and take up a different social position, since it does not define their essence. In other words, the figure of the migrant has a “vague essence” in the etymological sense of the word: a vagabond or migratory essence that lies between the ideal and the empirical.” (Nail, 2015, p. 16)

This vague essence can be considered as deliberately leaving open a space that could be used for something yet unknown. Research as itinerance is “not the manifestation of a preconceived design. In an itinerant fashion, it occurs without a script, without a preplanned path. It unfolds not as a study of but rather as a way of learning-as-you-go: an itinerant journey of learning along with things, people, and materials which is constantly unfolding in often unexpected directions.” (Vannini & Vannini, 2020, p. 869).

Instead of providing a distinct definition that would claim how a vagabond space has to be designed, what a vagabond educator needs to be, how vagabond educating can be improved, or what protocol vagabond research needs to follow, I start with a figurative approach. This position also avoids “pitfalls of conceptual ‘purification’ [...] conceiving ‘vagabond(age)’ as a ‘pure’ object of study” (Ray, 2022, p. 3). By working with figures rather than neat categories,

I seek to maintain - not contradict - the original spirit surrounding vagabondage as an expression of singularity; a case-by-case phenomenon (Brüggemann, 2015). The vagabond can be a figure transporting dissent across Western imperialism, remaining an intangible activist: “From the abyss of the colonial intent to discipline the vagabond would emerge the postcolonial vagabond who [...] cultivates the ethos of dissidence in practicing itinerancy” (Ray, 2020, p. 113). While I apply this term throughout the overall PhD structure, as an evocative *fil conducteur*, this terminology does not become occupied and owned by my writings but invites itself, disappears, reappears. The figure of the vagabond is passing through this text as one would expect it from a vagabondage that cannot be predicted. In order for indeterminacy to unsettle the upcoming processes of inquiry, the vagabond ‘*license to roam*’ is required. But who issues this driver’s license for the in-betweens?

2.1.3 From ‘anything goes’ to subversive inventiveness: beyond conceptual purifications

Who can then legitimately claim to be a vagabond? If the vagabond is more than a lyrical figure, issues of cultural appropriation have to be addressed. The term is situated at the edge of power differentials that govern modes of travelling, reserved to certain mobility privileges. I would like to clarify that I use the term vagabond either as the conceptualisation of practices when I refer to ‘vagabond educating’ or as a descriptive complement, for example in ‘vagabond space’ or ‘vagabond PhD’. I try not to use the sole noun ‘vagabond’ when I refer to myself as the author of this thesis, in an aim to avoid hijacking the term and tie it to myself as an individual. Equally, calling oneself merely a ‘conceptual vagabond’ could lead to academic romanticising, something certain forms of ‘nomadic inquiry’ have been accused of. When “academics appropriate and romanticize the experience of the nomad, they are ignoring the lived experiences and practices of those who actually live that way of life” (Kabachnik, 2010, p. 95). This is the reason why I have decided not to situate my thesis in the immediate vicinity of contemporary circles of academic nomadology (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and new materialist approaches (Braidotti, 2006). I have read very inspiring accounts in this field but I have also witnessed the “potential for nomadism to become ‘a romanticised misinterpretation’, presenting a vision of limitless mobility that does not in fact exist” (Bird, 2012, p. 34), for example at conferences where the most privileged nomadic intellectuals can meet in their own bubbles. This is where I see a clear distinction between the way *nomadic* inquiry (as tribal circulations) and the way a *vagabond* PhD unfolds (in voluntarily more solitary ways). I never intended to write a Deleuze-Guattarian PhD in which I would write for

an audience from that same tribe. This tribelessness is a risk. But taking away the attractive scaffolding offered by academic nomadology is a deliberate omission which has allowed me to let the figure of the vagabond guide my doctoral trajectory. A vagabond inquiry is relational, but differently from the nomad's sense of tribal communities. The vagabond choice of selective company may not be romantic but it is not antisocial either (Nail, 2015). Bird writes about female *vagabondes* and their literary genre:

“vagabondage, unlike the more familiar nomadism, is largely anti-romantic. The word itself holds the threat of containment, and therefore of freedom negotiated through restriction. [...] Vagabondage situates not one's belonging but one's distance from cultural and gender norms. This systematic displacement helps to create a politics of temporary location based on transient contact zones.” (Bird, 2012, p. 34).

My conceptualisation of vagabond educating (largely taking place in rural France) has not come out of the study of the famous French nomadologists, although it could fit the rhizomatic template of academic nomadism. Vagabond educating for me is about an embodied relational practice away from coded, intellectualised language. This vagabond angle ought not to be reduced to an intellectualised break-out room.

In this chapter I intend to show that the framing of my thesis as a 'vagabond' scaffolding does not imply that 'anything goes'. Still, my positioning “demands a different understanding of what rigour is and how it might be pursued. Rigour in this [...] case emerges not from closely defining what a concept is, how it operates as part of a wider epistemological set of categories and relations” (McFarlane, 2019, p.31). Beyond the playful and disruptive wordings, vagabond educating has a distinct capacity to disrupt, sourced deeper than what can be imagined to be a vagrancy of thought. If anything could be said under the alibi of the vagabond, if it became too vague of a category and collection pond for the unsayable, then it would reinforce the epistemic injustice of knowledge production where those rhetorically elaborate in academic literacies of migration will be able to speak loudest. The fact that a white, middle-class male got this unprecedented chance to write a 'vagabond PhD' inevitably uncovers some aspects of the receivability of discourses and allows questioning the gatekeeping mechanisms based on systems of academic legitimacy. Returning to my pre-PhD wanderings raises questions about whose knowledge counts and what kind of knowledge is legitimised as innovative within Western science and, in turn, whose wandering disruptions stay relegated as obscure

subjectivity. Claiming to be a vagabond could be a shallow disruption and a trendy catchphrase to avoid accountability.

And indeed, I was surprised how many gates opened at conferences and for publications by giving my work the label of the vagabond - without precisely outlining in my abstracts what I meant with such a positioning. This advance of trust by peer review allowed me to be sitting in debates which in turn challenged me out of my own comfort zones of the undefined. In my first French conference presentation, I was asked about the link to real Traveller life styles. At that time I had no answer, referred to the specificity of the *cabane de berger* as a shepherd's hut. Pastoralism, too, is not my area of expertise or my own ethnographic frame of reference. The appropriation of itinerance by a type of academia which stays very seated and place-bound can do epistemic harm: "detachment has produced a 'theoretical and academicised' account which distorts Travellers' lifestyle and tells us little about the realities that Travellers face." (Martin, 2002, p. 728). I have travelled far from an academic safety net in pre-doctoral years, but I could still never claim to know Traveller lives.

The possible imposture of the vagabond can then be multilayered: a fake Traveller, a fake shepherd and also a fake academic? Who gets to write about a vagabond methodology as a new way of imagining the academy in peer-reviewed journals and who will still be perceived as a swindler, an exposed imposter eternally excluded from scientific debate? I provide accounts of vagabond educating as modes of professional *becoming*, not as fixed representations. The term 'vagabond' as "subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing" (Ray, 2022, p.4) can be conceptually discussed *and* pedagogically enacted beyond discipline.

2.1.3 Marginal mobilities: troubling the 'voluntary-versus-involuntary travel' dualism

Characterisations of the vagabond are often ascribed from the dominant cultural lens, not based on intrinsic perceptions of vagabonds themselves: "vagabonds" are determined from the outside. Far from conceiving an autonomous definition [...] the master narrative comes with a delimiting corollary that perceives vagabondage necessarily as a socioeconomic condition of being, at which one arrives at only when compelled" (Ray, 2020, p. 113). One also needs to acknowledge the untranslatability of "specific life-worlds into universal sociological categories" (Chakrabarty, 2009, p. 78). There is a continuum, more than a binary:

“The conventional classification of mobilities as either voluntary mobilities (tourism, lifestyle migration, business travel) or forced mobilities (asylum migration or economic migrants in search of employment or improved economic position) bears hardly any relevance to marginal mobilities. The people that we have encountered in our ethnographic fieldworks are characteristically neither entirely free nor forced to adopt life on the road” (Juntunen et al., 2014, p. 15).

The loose terminology of ‘marginal mobilities’ defined below claims that the marginalities of the Global North and the Global South are interconnected (Juntunen et al., 2014). I deliberately step away from a positivist strive for fixed definitions about mobility phenomena. This allows to perceive tinkering and hybridity as a professional trajectory. Traditional place-bounded categories no longer suffice to comprehend the inner logics of contemporary mobilities composed of multiple improvisations:

“As the contemporary analytical language of migration and mobility studies lacks an appropriate term for such mobile lifestyles, we prefer to conceptualise them as marginal mobilities. In short, marginal mobility refers to growing number of highly mobile people from Global North and South who are wandering along loosely defined transnational trajectories, without extended settlement anywhere in particular and rely on peripatetic nomadism as an economic strategy. Their social world is marked by marginality, but also subversive inventiveness, which is in function of better social navigation through precarious everyday life” (Juntunen et al., 2014, p. 14)

This stressing of inventiveness allows conceptualisations of the vagabond as a figure of resistant force. The vagabond appears to resist dominant pressures by escaping them in precarious yet creative ways, hence moving as an active societal force of being at the same time and in parallel ways confronted with lingering portability (of own ways of knowing) and latently paralysis (of own ways of being). The vagabond’s visibility has the merit to “challenge the deeply rooted academic convention to separate analytically the mobilities of the people from the Global North from those of the Global South” (Juntunen et al., 2014, p. 14) according to the explanatory apparatus of voluntary-versus-involuntary travel.

There is a body of research emerging that allows to comprehend alternative lifestyles from within the protagonists’ own philosophies. Although my journey had been solitary in the sense of not having been part of any specific movement or group (such as the Tiny House movement, New traveller, Intentional Communities, circus, travelling theatre etc.), I have constantly been inspired by encounters with such multifaceted lifestyles, forging fragments of cultural repertoires through the portability of belonging. The creativities and resilient

precarities of living away from mainstream cultural models have informed my own vagabond bricolage of on-the-roadness. I consolidate my own philosophy of itinerance on these overlaps. These are appreciated with their limitations. The alleged freedom may not be shared by everyone: “while some take up mobility as a means to acquiring a more fulfilling life, for others movement is not necessarily a desired mode of being” (Juntunen et al., 2014, p. 12). Idealising fragmented trajectories would be ethically problematic. Rather, we need to “question any celebration of the fluidity, a-spatiality, and global portability of home – even only for the few cosmopolitans who can afford it. In practice, the de-territorialization of the home is no inherently positive, desirable, or emancipatory development” (Boccagni, 2022, p. 14).

At the same time, granting the potential portability of belongings only to affluent cosmopolites can also become a dangerous reductionism and class-based divisive trope as it overlooks fluid ways how the margins and edges can share solidarities and connect. The migratory counterpower (Nail, 2015) revealed in figures such as the vagabond precisely allows to imagine beyond the affluent cosmopolite. Connectivity between edges and marginal provinces is then not only a question of judging or moralising about perceived privileges. In a case-by-case scrutiny, attention has to be placed on the material conditions for performing mobility as meaningful and emancipatory. The question is therefore if the figure of the vagabond is helpful for shifting societal recognition from ‘private jets’ to the less glamorous modes of travel on the ground which escape a dominant commercial logic of neoliberal tourism. Pedagogies of discomfort offer subversive inventiveness.

2.2 An itinerant ecology of pre-doctoral knowledges

The figurative vagabond perspective applied in the narration of my ecology of knowledges is not meant to delegitimise mainstream forms of inquiry. Santos (2012) has theorised the pluralising of ways of knowing through embracing an ecology of knowledges. This canon reveals multiple ways for scientific knowledge to wander off:

“Under the ecology of knowledges, granting credibility to non-scientific knowledge does not imply discrediting scientific knowledge. What it does imply is using it in a counter-hegemonic way. This consists, on the one hand, in exploring alternative scientific practices made visible through plural epistemologies of scientific practices and, on the other, in promoting interdependence between scientific and non-scientific knowledges” (Santos, 2012, pp.57-58)

Revisiting the experiential roots of my practice can challenge the idea that rigorous investigations only start once formally registered at an institution. Although I write these words as a PhD student at the end of four years of full-time study, it needs to be emphasised that this chapter deliberately goes back to the experiential and intuitive knowledge that can be located before my entry into the academic sphere as a PhD student. This is a deliberate “focus on silenced knowledges or knowledges that are produced as non-existent. They are so considered because they are not created according to acceptable, or even intelligible, methodologies,” (Santos & Meneses, 2020, xix). There is a small vagabond ecology of my itinerant knowledges which I seek to interweave with Santos’ attention to the wider ecology of knowledges necessary for a pluralising of scientific frames of reference. There was a pre-PhD time and it should not be forgotten. I also know that reproducing this ecology within the vertical framework of an individual’s doctoral training route deeply conflicts with the collective nature of these years: “The ecologies of knowledges are collective cognitive constructions led by the principles of horizontality (different knowledges recognize the differences between themselves in a non-hierarchical way) and reciprocity (differently incomplete knowledges strengthen themselves by developing relations of complementarity among one another)” (Santos, 2018, p. 78). Vagabond educating has always been a story of multiple co-authors.

2.2.1 Autobiographical writing through vehicles: who is driving?

Subjectivity and the role of singular voice

The small vagabond ecology of knowledges shared here carries the risk of a monopoly of interpretation. The question arises how the reader can be sure about the validity of my assertions originating from my subjective view and personal experience as well as a very specific educational practice that I had been largely responsible for. Having initiated and coordinated the professional processes that I revisit here equips me with an experiential attachment that could easily slip towards ownership of ‘truths’. A continuous full-time commitment means that I hold large parts of the project’s narrative capital, much more emotionally attached to the ideas behind the project than a ‘neutral’ observer could be. This ‘monopoly’ makes my own engagement, convictions and passion the central hub of this chapter, creating a heavy reliance on my own biased voice. Two dangers emerge. The singular

of this voice can become overly self-absorbed and navel-gazing, or it can be applied for an instrumental purpose. This leads to another set of fundamental questions: How can I safeguard against the flipping from the institutional de-legitimisation of invisible knowledges as argued by Santos (2011) to a self-centred ‘vagabond auto-validation’, engineering a static architecture of my ‘truths’?

Transnational contours and context

When I refer to the ‘hut initiative’, I mean an *ecosystem* built up over time around the use of mobile shepherd’s huts. In simplified chronological order, one can distinguish two phases. Phase A, the early years of the Welcome Hut project, the freelance initiatives (2010 – 2015)

- first in Germany (called ‘Geschichtenstube’, literal translation from German: ‘Life Story Shed’)
- then in Portugal (called ‘Cabana dos Sonhos’, translatable as ‘Hut of Daydreams’),
- then in France (called ‘La Cabane Itinérante’, literal translation from French: ‘The Itinerant Hut’),

Phase B, a collective infrastructure emerging under the association name La Rêv’othèque (a play on words designating an institution for dreaming that could be translated as ‘Library of Daydreaming’) in Burgundy, France in spring 2015 and the charity ‘The Welcome Hut SCIO’ created in pre-Brexit Scotland in November 2019 after a preparatory phase that was triggered by the positive feedback at the Pluralistic Counselling conference in Dundee in March 2018. The vagabond ecology of knowledges therefore cannot be a single-authored tale.

Vehicles as homes: transporting belonging

The following text draws on my autobiographical experience of learning to facilitate encounters through the gradual emergence of an itinerant educational infrastructure. My intention is to expand person-centred accounts of autobiographical writing by introducing my existential vehicles. However, so much more could be undertaken to transgress “developmental and teleological frameworks” (Bastian, 2011, p. 165), linear accounts in which existential progression to more and more advanced stages of personal growth are achieved. The hut initiative does not offer one directionality. It has remained small in scale but extended widely in its reach as a trans-local, cross-sector and interdependent practice: “Instead of searching for grand alternative models or strategies, what is needed is the investigation of alternative representations and practices in concrete local settings” (Dyer,

2014, p. 3). Instead of sharing a technical model of the approach of vagabond educating, I want to give testimony to *vehicles* as part of foregrounded living spheres (Breteau, 2022) which have allowed me (and later a group in an associative infrastructure) to create and preserve an adaptive, flowing ecosystem of thought and practice that harbours a movement-based ecology of knowledges while at the same time constantly connecting to new people, vehicles, atmospheres and other elements encountered on the road. It has to be acknowledged that the ecology that I am describing from my own perspective can never be limited to my own account. This is why I see these writings as an initial layer, one body of many to be referenced to account for the multiple angles in the itinerancies of the shepherd's huts. I see these writings and visual elements reproduced here as sketches that should soon be used further and deconstructed again, for example in collaborative collage and zine-making workshops after the PhD.

From pre-doctoral to post-doctoral collaboration: preparing the multi-layered narratives

While these participatory processes of multi-layering the vagabond ecology narrative are not part of this PhD submission, the research training I have been able to receive as a PhD student has prepared this future direction. I attended arts-based seminars with the University of Edinburgh's Binks Hub for arts-based research. In the session with Jean McEwan, I discovered the collaborative potential of zine-making. A zine is a DIY (Do it yourself) magazine or booklet that makes use of collage, cut and paste methods" (McEwan, 2022). Zine-making as a participatory research method invites groups to make use of varied artistic materials to construct knowledge from the bottom-up, as a "process of unskilling and unlearning" (Ahsan, 2022). There are large amounts of materials provided by the workshop facilitator, such as magazines and newspapers to cut words and images. The zine is then composed of various collages and transforms the meanings of the provided materials. I see my own autobiographical writing through vehicles as a textual starting point onto which so many more layers can then be added later on. Here, I imagine a post-PhD shepherd's hut tour between the countries that have seen the practice take shape, inviting those who have been involved in projects in the past to make their own collages of their experiences with the hut. This could be a way to connect pre-doctoral, in-PhD and post-PhD times and knowledges. The textual and academic elements of this chapter can become just one of the many artefacts on the table of the many materials (see figures below). The many people whom I met on vagabond

roads can be reconnected through a shepherd’s hut tour, as most of them are rooted in fixed homes and places rather than in vehicles, situated in various countries. Zine-making helps to produce these multisensory narratives that my limited textual account offers here:

“The same object or practice may be socially constructed to be seen and yet, at a deeper level, it may offer itself to be heard, touched, smelled, or tasted as well. In such cases, a deeper understanding of the object or practice requires the confluence of the various senses. This kind of sensorial depth based on intersensoriality is not compatible with the instrumental rationality of Western modernity, since it puts at stake the linearity, unidirectionality, and unidimensionality of extractivist perception” (Santos, 2018, p. 167)

Enlarging the scope of this narrative beyond the textual could propose insights which celebrate multimodal forms of inquiry to counter a widespread formalised ignorance which Santos (2018) has critiqued as a ‘waste of experience’ of knowledges from social movements, undocumented activism, citizen science and other unaudited spheres of learning.



Figure 7 a/b: Materials at the zine-making workshop with the Binks Hub, Edinburgh

From ownership to portability

It is precisely *because* there is an unequal distribution of control over the project’s story that the subjective dimension of the following chapter needs to be situated and made transparent to the reader: “being explicit about our positions in our work allows those who read our work

to better grasp how we produced the data” (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019, p. 1). As an inevitably biased researcher deeply immersed in the origins of the hut project, there is no way to escape the lasting impact of my own non-academic role on any scientific stance I might take. But this PhD is not intended as a detached study about the Welcome Hut project from the safe lookout of non-immersion. My research design makes very different findings emerge than those that sociological distance would offer. At the same time, this PhD has been funded within the scientific realm, which is not where the shepherd’s huts’ associative and civic infrastructure is permanently housed. By engaging with risks stemming from my power over the shepherd’s hut project’s narratives, the inherent subjectivity of my own account can transcend its own confines if the constraints of the sole authorship of a PhD thesis can subsequently be used to resonate with and spark other narratives and therefore to diversify. By making my lens on the hut visible in the scientific context, this itinerant case study can become open to critique rather than hide in the obscurity of entertaining anecdote, self-reassurance about its uniqueness or narcissist and instrumental (self-)promotion.

Vehicles as professional carriers

Each vehicle introduced in the following autobiographical writing represents a different, embodied part of my vagabond journey. Embodiment happens on wheels. The hut as professional home puts “emphasis on the emotional, imaginative, symbolic, and relational dimensions of home. None of these is reducible to the materiality of a place, but all of them rely on a material basis of sort” (Boccagni, 2022, p. 3). Vehicles suggest portable belongings which open to a sphere of existential struggles that are not always intelligible in logical terms. Inspired by Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1990) conceptual borderlands between space and time, numerous vehicles have enabled the hut initiative to “dislocate sameness and commensurability, rather than provide a stable location for it [...] [to] enable multiple histories, loyalties and modes of acting to exist simultaneously” (Bastian, 2011, p. 164). The vagabond ecology’s vehicles introduced as material and figurative signposts can initially create more confusion than clarity: are they referring to physical vehicles or metaphorical carriers of conceptual ideas? I want to invite the reader to look out for both, not as an either/or question of certainty, but as an acceptance that in this blurred negotiation of the embodied sites and their theoretical re-thematizing lies the richness of silent, hardly intelligible knowledge. When you feel that this continuum does not make sense, you may

wish to read the remainder of this chapter in chunks, in bits, or move on to the next chapter directly and come back at a later stage. The vehicles here are listed in the chronological order of their appearance in my life, but the vehicles' own temporalities are existential. There is no expiry date to have understood their significance for this thesis. In any case, the multiple authorships through future zine-making tours could soon unsettle the chronologies of my autobiographical vehicular account, moving from my MSc (2008) into the PhD (2018).

2.2.2 The caravan: existential mobility and van dweller wisdoms

In 2008, my first post-graduation host, the caravan, became a vehicle that could be moved around in Europe, offering me a cost-effective solution to housing costs. I did not feel meaningfully housed in job entry perspectives and felt more at home in the ever-tentative of camping, locating my professional future into quiet seasonal pitches of caravan parks. Life was affordable and freethinking took place. What I did in these caravan times was to nurture my imagination, interrupted every few weeks with attendance of a lecture, seminar or workshop to stay in touch with the professional world. The Reading Room of a world-leading university (see Memory board) is where I partly wrote up my Master thesis in 2008. The makeshift dwelling in my own caravan off the electricity and water grid on an ecological farm in Portugal as the home base of the un-institutionalised phase of my projects appears in stark contrast. In the photograph of my caravan from a Portuguese eco-farm, my trajectory could be seen as one of a drop-out. There is however a distinguishable movement that connects these two sites representing two different forms of retreat: theoretical shelter within the institution, and later concrete makeshift utopia away from any institutional affiliation. The question is: *where* has the vehicle of the caravan allowed me to drift?

The wisdoms of marginal mobilities help to understand this existential drift. Among 'vandwellers', "many cited 'the housing crisis' as their reason for living in a vehicle. Those escaping this crisis report 'unaffordable' and precarious experiences of rented accommodation" (Craft, 2020, p. 29). I would cite my own personal, subjective and existential housing crisis, with the prospects of adapting to standardised academia or standardised jobs that motivated the move into a caravan. The benchmarking taking place inside the university made me increasingly withdraw. There was no spatial issue of homelessness. The university environment provided many designed safe spaces to study and be inspired, such as the

historic Reading Room. Every year, millions of pounds are invested into novel building designs. There was no physical precarity or austerity of locations. What I lacked was a *meaningful* home. The movement of drifting off-grid relates to a feeling of existential homelessness and the search for finding a safe vehicle to opt out of what I had experienced as the assembly lines of excellence in these university spheres. As a graduate, the search for a professional home is so often mediated through the search for a fitting employer along status lines. Less is known about graduates who do not feel 'at home' in the chase for the first graduate jobs.

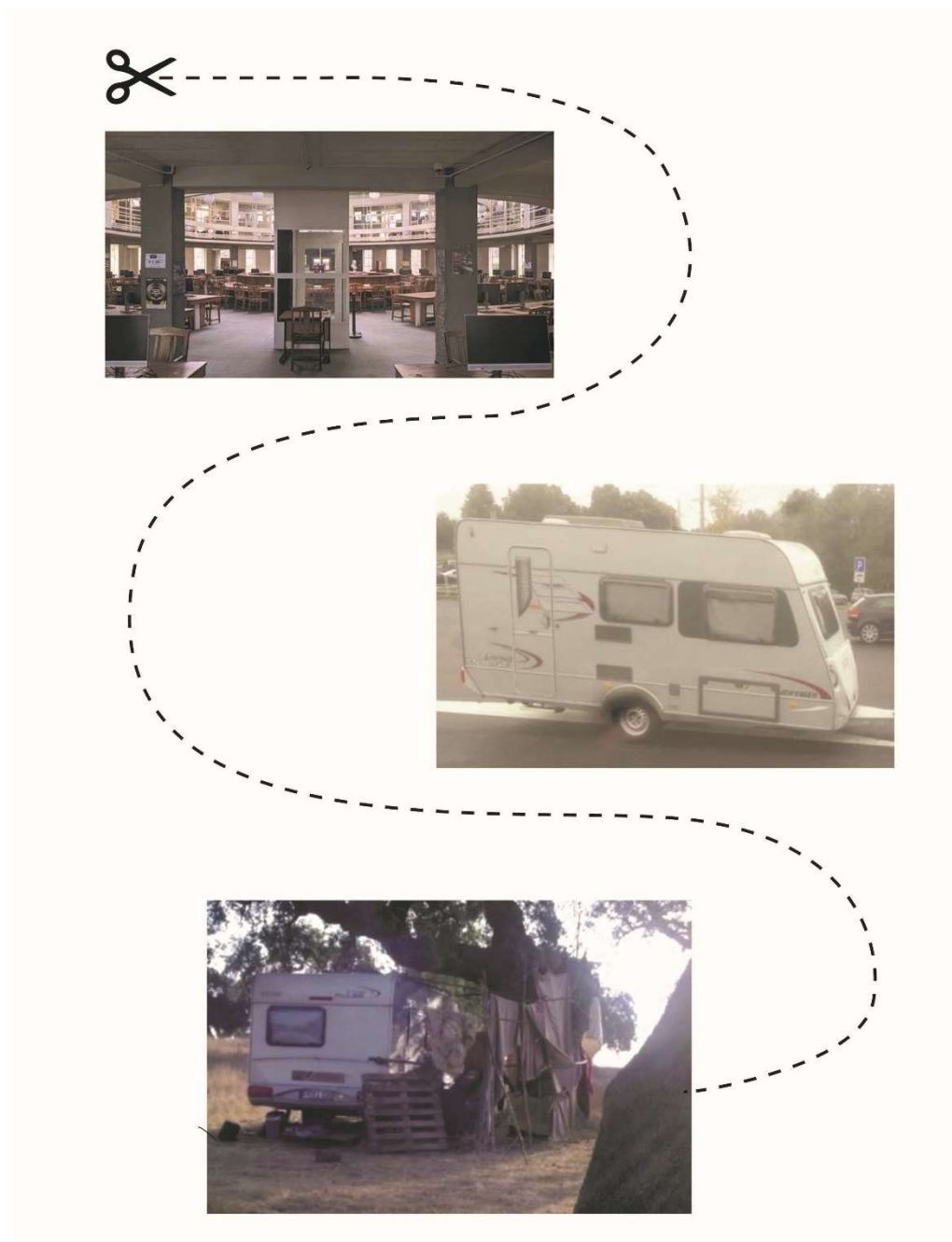
Drifting off the grid after stuckness in the employability void

Meaningful life choices after graduation (Fakunle, 2021) cannot always be packaged into employability schemes: "The test of whether one feels 'at home' or not is no longer a sense of familiarity with place or even the quality of one's relationships with others, but rather is whether one feels that the way one is living is true to one's ultimate sense of purpose in life" (Hayes, 2007, p. 6). Higher Education and the cascade of expectations it generates sometimes "binds people into a sense of feeling pigeonholed into a certain future" (Loewenthal et al., 2019) to "persevere in a particular line of work" (Loewenthal, 2022). Frankl (1990) has referred to this form of alienation as the *existential vacuum* in materially wealthy societies. For many recent European nomads, often from middle-class backgrounds, existential drifting can "become a strategy of survival due to economic problems and feelings of futurelessness with sedentary life in Europe" (Juntunen et al., 2014, p.11). Interrupting my existential homelessness through caravan mobilities allowed me to gradually reduce the feeling of 'stuckness' (Loewenthal, 2022). There was inner mobility by 'waiting' (Hage, 2009) beyond career.

My makeshift home responded to a practical need for concrete voluntary simplicity (Rebouças & Soares, 2021). The reduced economic pressure of living in a caravan allowed me *not* to write a business plan, and instead to nurture an existential compass. I felt the retreat of caravan belonging as deeply political:

"By claiming control over their housing, and effectively reconfiguring property relations, vehicle dwellers have arguably engaged in a form of 'prefigurative politics', creating 'autonomous geographies' whereby alternative social organization is practised 'through a combination of resistance and creation'. In this sense, homes can operate as vehicles of resistance, where 'more humane social relations can be lived and imagined'." (Craft, 2020, p. 326)

This detour through a small vehicle invited me to express ideas that may have been silenced early in a conventional career if asked to move through the standardisations of educational institutions. The initial steps to a vagabond ecology of knowledges were enabled through an imaginary scaffolding to develop meaningful belongings outdoors: “DIY housing practices provide us with the opportunity to carry out productive activity according to our own ideas to directly satisfy our own needs.” (Craft, 2020, p. 331). This DIY inventiveness opens small bubbles of resistance within the uncontrollability of existence in neo-capitalist societies.



Memory board 5: Continuum from university reading room to off-grid caravan

2.2.3 The shepherd's hut: transhumance and the privileges of a solitary journeyman

In 2010, not even two years after moving into the caravan, my seasonal pitches on campsites were joined by another vehicle: the shepherd's hut as my own itinerant educational micro-centre. Shepherd's huts display the contradictions of contemporary 'downsizing' society. The shepherd's hut is nowadays in risk of becoming a vertical status symbol for individualist retreat for those who can afford it. One of the most famous contemporary huts is a former British prime minister's £ 25.000 retreat used to write his own memoirs, illustrating the unequally distributed right to retreat within society. The sumptuous vehicles of 'downsizing big' continue to "lubricate the wheels of the consumer society" (Bauman, 1998, p. 96). The shepherd's hut I acquired could have been a 'high-end shelter' but it had the purpose to go towards people and to invite anyone to take first steps to share personal life dreams. In my encounter with the first shepherd's hut of the project, I first had to unlearn my own consumer behaviour. The act of acquiring the hut was very much a consumer activity, not a radical militant act. Investing this sum was a risk, but a risk taken inside the safety net of, in the worst case, jeopardising an inherited sum coming from a middle-class family background that would always provide further safety nets if desperately needed. The huts I acquired are commercial reproductions, not original, 'authentic' shepherd's huts. Still, preparing the arrival of these wandering venues to invite life stories of those beyond celebrity status created originality: to think of the contemporary quest for authenticity in consumer cultures and to address the societal scarcity of having a 'hut of one's own' through public acts of collective, pop-up storytelling.



Figure 8: The shepherd's hut

Journeying as undocumented craftsmanship

My *transhumance*, the search for new existential pastures, could be considered as a privileged starting point of vagabond mobile educating. But its educational value is not decided as a product, but by the processes that product subsequently generates. The refuge that the shepherd's hut represents is therefore twofold: a civic, public form of education was enabled by a vehicle usually connected to solitary, and nowadays commodified, retreat. Where the caravan initially invited me to drift off the grid to dream of a different society, the companionship of the hut guided me timidly into the professionalising aspects of society. In this early phase of my educational activity (2010 – 2013), I had not yet committed to a clear professional sphere. The installation of the hut was not a structured and regular intervention aimed at building an expanding practice, but an artistic experiment that would move between locations, sectors, languages and cultures. I intended to encounter the diversity of people wandering in the public sphere by a loose, tentative gesture of hospitality interrupted every four to six weeks by my formal counselling training, taking place on weekends in Bavaria. The potential of the hut was explored by invitations to come to parks, festivals, village squares, urban farms, eco-villages, friends' open backyards, in front of restaurants and at youth centres. This patchwork of experiments started in Germany, then moved to France and finally stayed for almost one year in Portugal. The possibility of a 'pop-up civic sanctuary' was tested through 'gigs'. Expenses-only was the initial model for financing. This meant un-bureaucratic installations with individuals or small groups such as local associations I met at cultural events. The hut was officially matriculated as a tourer caravan (leisure vehicle), not as a professional intervention space. The experiment was not illegal as I always received a local permission to install the hut officially at events, but it certainly was not yet formal enough to propose it as a package to be reproduced as regular contributions in the form of a 'service' delivery. At times, I was called names. In a wealthy suburb of Lisbon, the town hall was called to warn about the arrival of a '*mendigo*'. I wondered what the caller thought I was begging for that day. The staff of the social work service in this suburb loved the hut and reassured the major. I had no uniform, no special gown to show my trade. The Late Medieval tradition of moving from town to town to learn new trades and techniques for several years without returning home still exists today among journeymen and journeywomen (Hartmann, 2013). In Germany, "although the *Walz* had been legislated out of existence by the midtwentieth

century, the institutional form of the German wandering years is still alive today” (Glückler & Lenz, 2018, p. 129). My solitary apprenticeship floating with improvised encounters transformed quickly to a small network along the road. I see some parallels to the itinerant craftsmanship housed beyond walls. In my hesitant years of an in-between apprenticeship housed in the wanderings of the first shepherd’s hut, I had found dispersed support. The occasional ‘gigs’ were enough to see a wider potential of this small hut for a professionalisation originating from street-level movement.





Memory board 6: *Transhumance with a shepherd's hut (from 2010)*

2.2.4 The barn for wheels: colportage as wandering professionalism

From 2013, my mobilities found roots through a continuous postal address in Burgundy, France. The third vehicle of the vagabond ecology of knowledges introduced here could be the second mobile shepherd's hut in the project which started being used from 2013 in Burgundy. But instead, I want to introduce a house with a fixed foundation because it became a symbolic third type of vehicle. A postdoctoral researcher who visited the (by now semi-sedentarised) project in 2017 concluded that the house was an *annexe* to the caravan and shepherd's huts. The hut on wheels represents the itinerant 'headquarters' and the house provides a background infrastructure for office, storage and meetings of the association, which was created in 2015. The house functioned as an 'annexe for the many wheels'. The pillars of a movement-oriented philosophy have to be renegotiated with the logistics and basic legal requirements asked by a sedentary institutional system. In the course of the artistic wanderings, I came to see cracks in the long-term vision of working with the shepherd's hut: "the experiences of conversions and DIY are not always good. Many vehicle dwellers are unable to afford to convert a vehicle, and some live in quite run-down caravans, struggling to keep nature's less comfortable elements out" (Craft, 2020, p. 332). In my case, there was a

need to prepare for major maintenance to the experiment's makeshift functioning. The more I saw the benefits for others to enjoy the civic sanctuary of the pop-up hut, the more I also needed a space to rest after days of work that became increasingly intense. For a healthy resonance between arrivals and departures, a house was required in order to transport the itinerant vision inside sedentary society and let both coexist. After a phase of solitary co-migrating with the shepherd's hut vehicle, an old barn in the rural region of Burgundy in France could gradually be renovated with the help of my new neighbours. The permanent location on the square of a village that I had already known as a tourist offered welcome. Combining wheels and place attachment was a necessity for vagabond educating to persist.



Figure 9 a/b: The barn on imaginary wheels for a street peddler infrastructure

On-the-roadness did not become a rigid ideology: “it should be noted that with time the romantic and idealised visions of the mobile life tend to fade and people become more critical of the fact that mobile life includes compromising many comforts, secure routines and repetitive social rhythms of sedentary life” (Juntunen et al., 2014, p. 15). A vagabond learning ‘infrastructure’ and a regional network began to emerge. Itinerancy continued, but on a different scale. The vagabond search shifted from my existential movement in search for meaning towards the professional movement for cross-sector and inter-agency dialogue. The experiment with civic sanctuary now became an itinerant hub as a vagabond docking station.

From drifting to transporting

A professional intervention for dialogical, case-by-case hut projects was developed: “Dialogue does not exist in a political vacuum. It is not a “free space” where you may do what you want. Dialogue takes place inside some kind of program and context” (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 16). The shift from encounter to relations began. A sought-after practice of paid and funded hut

projects, sustained by supportive professionals, was built up. While vagabond living appeared to be a discomfort zone for many of the new professional partners, my own initial discomfort zone was to fit into fixed professional spheres. The shepherd's hut served as a bridge for "promoting inter-knowledge and inter-intelligibility. [...] Instead of polarization or the dogmatism of absolute opposition, so frequent in academic disputes, the epistemologies of the South choose to build bridges between comfort zones and discomfort zones and between the familiar and the alien" (Santos & Meneses, 2020, xviii). Economically, the multi-sited practice model allowed me to acquire sufficient funds to live from such 'professional disruption' for three years (full-time) and thereafter to continue four years in reduced part-time activity. The vagabond hut anchored transformational processes in a purposeful philosophy of unhoused discomfort to "see the unsettling not as a by-product of open-endedness or of the unthought but as a desirable utopian 'end' in itself" (Kraftl, 2007, p. 125).

The stable routine established in the hut practice was the dwelling in relational difference. During the same week, there could be many different locations and settings: a Monday with a school, a Tuesday with a public library, a Wednesday with a community centre, a Friday with a public park and a Saturday with an art festival. In all locations, the aim was to connect those who do not habitually speak and sit together, working across temporalities, languages, professional vocabulary through instances of hospitality and storytelling. Instead of drifting from encounter to encounter as in the experimental phase, the professionalisation established a presence in territories as constant but irregular regional itinerancy.

Peripatetic professionalisation in a territory: colporteur and home circuit

I see parallels here with *colportage*. In francophone historical archives, the rural trader known as *colporteur* (street peddler) did not always have the reputation as a suspicious character. In a stratified, sedentary French society, the longing for the disruption of routines is abundantly symbolised by the accounts narrating the temporary, often unannounced appearance of the 'colporteur des livres' (book peddler). Representations often linked the colporteur to a marginal but noble activity (Vernus, 2002) with a social purpose that animates the otherwise ignored and abandoned countryside of centrist France with a certain magic and mystery (Fontaine, 1993). The vagabond allowed access to resources that made life more colourful. The figure "reached a height of popularity in the mid-19th century before becoming rapidly obsolete with the industrialization of distribution and the emergence of the mass press" (Bird,

2012, p. 98). Colportage is more than commuting, going from A to B: “movement cannot be understood as a route between presupposed origins and destinations” (Nail, 2015, p. 28). This professional travel is about an ecology of relational movement that does not start or end, but constantly evolves with flows for reenchanting routines. The colporteur, a wanderer embedded in a wide-ranging home circuit of visits, a bit of a vagabond and a bit of a trading professional, is neither defined by the one nor the other. The colporteur who trades through movement is not inside a system and not outside: “social flows are poorly understood in terms of inclusion and exclusion [...] a flow is only on its way to something else. One is never completely included or excluded but always inclusively excluded or exclusively included” (Nail, 2015, p. 26). The colporteur knows the inhabitants of a territory from a singular perspective. The colporteur as a *skilled* improviser-facilitator-traveller invites us to approach marginality as a position in-between: “in-betweenness and ambiguity are associated with inventiveness and the possibilities of making something new out of making things uncertain” (Kraftl, 2007, p. 13). The wandering educational colporteur trades in the currency of utopian longing rather than ideological or paradigmatic belonging.





Memory board 7: Colportage in Burgundy region (from 2013 onwards)

2.2.5 The 'tiny house': nomadic micro-living and the burden of performing 'social innovation'

In the phase of large-scale visibility beginning in 2015, the government funding changed the direction of the project narrative. Receiving financial support for a trendy vehicle and its towing car as a 'social innovation' reflects the arrival of the shepherd's hut in the spheres of quantitative accountabilities after a few years of low-scale regional colportage. The next phase to be discussed is the move from the home base, the barn which had enabled the project's philosophy of permanent unsettling (Kraftl, 2007), towards a 'tiny house' that belongs to the symbolic register of sedentary preoccupations. The vagabond project gradually became more settled than initially planned, shifting the vagabond ecology of knowledges from DIY bricolage and subsequent small-scale professionalisation into the direction of institutionalising logics of expansionism.

Tiny House movements and lifestyle commodities

The positive echo within Burgundy region (2013 – 2015) led to the creation of an associative infrastructure, which offered the possibility to host volunteers in a civic service year. It also

opened the door for a publicly funded social innovation award. I had continuously used my private car and my self-funded shepherd's huts to run the regional itineraries. As representative of our new association, I looked at a long-term material base rather than activity-related funding streams for artists and educators. The innovation grant was a way to guarantee a more reliable legal status than freelance invoicing. With the entry into a bigger scale came a different vocabulary. While it would be unimaginable to receive funding from taxpayers' money for a caravan, a trailer or a van, the funding for a *roulotte* as a 'Tiny House' responds to new forms of micro-infrastructure: "large and expensive houses are unsustainable in many ways; socially, economically and environmentally. In contrast, the tiny house movement promotes the philosophy that small is beautiful, small is more sustainable, and smaller is a pathway to greater affordability" (Shearer & Burton, 2019, p. 298). The selection panel was used to applications for buildings and their renovations, but not vehicles. Also the Tiny House as a soon-to-be service is embedded in the desire of home:

"mobile tiny houses originated less from a desire to travel, as in caravanning, than a response to restrictive planning laws [...] Tiny houses arguably are a response of privileged, mostly white, middle class people to housing affordability, economic insecurity and an unwillingness to live in "unattractive trailer parks" because of perceived social stigma (Anson 2014). Tiny houses are seen as more aesthetically desirable and thus popular on social media like Facebook and Instagram. Apparently in direct opposition to the conspicuous consumption of the McMansion and the economic excesses of the late 20th Century, they are still essentially, middle class" (Shearer & Burton, 2019, p. 301).

The challenge of Tiny House living is to get rid of the burdens of sedentarisation, not to reinvent life on the move. Compromises between sedentarising better and preserving the more radical idea of permanent unsettling had to be found.



Figure 10 a/b: The Tiny House as social innovation

Small is beautiful, so let's make it big!

Even as a middle-class trend and phenomenon, wider societal issues can be addressed in the philosophies of Tiny House movements. There is “growing concern over the increasingly ‘obese’ size of detached housing and a growing movement of conscious consumers choosing to downsize for environmental considerations or for simplicity. The choice to live tiny is not just practical but also ethical and emotional” (Brokenshire, 2018, p. 226). Those for whom the traditional housing market is out of reach can dream about more decent living and move towards home ownership (Kilman, 2016). The possible expansion of the hut project as a ‘tiny house innovation’ had very noble intentions. An imagination hub could make a difference. As a public service of collective daydreaming, the prospects of making imagination resources visible and accessible to a wider and wider group of the population was highly appealing.

Analyses of housing alternatives illustrate the problem of scale in the tensions between independence and domestication. Small-scale micro-living, for example, can be a highly inspirational approach to housing crises when discussed on a case-by-case basis. Promoted as a structural solution *per se*, there is a danger to reinforce rather than rescript a dysfunctional system: “rather than a housing crisis solution, micro-living solidifies many of its issues, while simultaneously co-opting and neutralising anti-capitalist housing models. Instead of addressing high housing costs, it normalises reductions in size of living spaces” (Harris & Nowicki, 2020, p. 594). As a resistance coming out of the middle-class, the admiration for tiny living has been critiqued for lacking the drive to profoundly unsettle structural inequalities (Harris, 2019). It has to be asked if an innovative ‘tiny house’ project in the sphere of social innovation will then also move towards a type of ‘compensatory place-making’, to cover up the lacks and failures of public governance and systematically underfunded welfare provisions (Verrier, 2019). A danger exists to ignore the austerity measures of central governments and to help cover up the shift from understaffed and underfinanced social services to even more precariously funded third sector associations: filling the structural gaps by highly visible ‘social innovations’, performing educational provision ‘for less’, therefore distracting from the need of structural reform.

The hut could work as a marketing tool: “compensatory housing cultures can be understood as reductions in standards that are not recognised as such but instead branded, and often experienced, as aspirational” (Harris & Nowicki, 2020, p. 593). Would the small-scale initiative

of the hut be filling the gap left by downsized social services? If small-scale alternatives are boosted while the overall societal infrastructures are pervaded by austerity measures as a shrinking of material worlds, then the micro becomes a quick-fix carriers of hope, but social impact remains symbolic, maybe a mirage: “micro-living is reimagined as desirable by developers and through media and social media discourses” (Harris & Nowicki, 2020, p. 593). In one study about the impact of tiny houses, a respondent said, “the ability of tiny houses to inspire, to empower, and to bring about change is the real impact of tiny houses, not the structure themselves” (Shearer & Burton, 2019, p. 315). The vagabond project as a pop-up infrastructure housed in (too) large scales would have required expansion and rapid growth based on quantitative indicators of success. While we had funding to scale up the material dimension (car and hut), there was no realistic plan yet for funding the *human* resources necessary to maintain a boosted scale. The hut as marketing tool and the slogan of ‘tiny houses for all’ requires redefinitions in each scale: *what for?*

The need for a PhD offering critical distance to reformulate scales and purposes grew in this period. I was continuing to write PhD applications because I witnessed how third sector organisations are expected to do more (innovation) with less (funding), which makes it almost impossible to create long-term perspectives of disruption: “un processus explicitement nouveau ou original peut échouer précisément en raison de son caractère novateur [an explicitly novel and original process can fail precisely because of its novel character]” (Santos, 2011, p. 24). In the paradoxical societal forces of the innovations circuits, the systems in place can push the unprecedented and original into containers of the old script. Between the appearing cracks in the long-term future of a vagabond educational infrastructure (2016) and the start of the PhD (2018) there was an intense struggle between service and pedagogy: the *public service* expectations of scaling up the tiny house product and the *public pedagogy* (Charman & Dixon, 2021) that deliberately uses criticality and disruption to challenge spheres of domestication. The imagination of the hut as radical hospitality could have been ushered into a routinised service unit for pop-up entertainment. The purpose of the constant vagabond risk-taking could not be reduced to the lowest common denominator of scaling up the material base and omitting the philosophy behind. The tiny house vocabulary applied since 2017 reflects an aesthetic turn that is publicly celebrated but also risks to gloss over the original values of the hut, the *cabane* as shelter in simplicity and mindful temporality.

The question of scale for the hut project also raises issues about the extent to which privilege and marginalisation can co-exist and travel side by side. A line is often drawn between desirable and undesired mobilities:

“Living in small wheeled dwellings was historically common in many nations, for example, the Vardo or Gypsy wagon originated in Europe in the 1500s. Mobile or house trucks emerged in the late 1800s, as did the establishment of mobile home (trailer) parks. Unlike the popular tiny houses of today however, people living in these tiny mobile dwellings are not viewed as a “trendy” rebels against consumerism, but often stigmatized and referred to by pejorative terms such as ‘trailer trash’”(Shearer & Burton, 2019, p. 301)

As initiator and coordinator of different stages of the now spotlighted project, I had become a receivable ‘vagabond’ educator. Where would I personally want to stand in relation to this receivability line? At the end of almost a decade of vagabond educating, the project had reached the social status of success, had become an ‘answer’, but had somewhat traded off the constructive discomfort inspired by Paulo Freire’s pedagogy of the question (see 2.3.1). A tiny house is innovative, highly receivable. A caravan trailer would be impossible to install at the next prestigious social innovation conference. In less than a decade, I had known the caravan parks as well as the short-lived funding spotlight, demonstrating the incredible portability of this small idea that spans a wide continuum. So how does this vagabond ecology of knowledges accompanied by vehicles define its societal purpose and show its contributions to education? The tensions between almost inevitable domestication and the need to reconnect to unhoused roots can be a creative force.

[2.3 Wandering crafts for the meaningful: the skills framework of ‘vagabond educating’](#)
Vagabond educating is not about running away. The act of retreat allows to come back. The temporalities of such returns are not decided by the societal norm, but by the ecosystem’s need for regeneration. The moral judgment has to be critically scrutinised: “Why are notions of vagabond(age) typically conflated with the idea of abstaining from responsibilities, familial or otherwise?” (Ray, 2022, p. 1). If vagabond educating neither provides quick-fix solutions for scaling-up nor refuses dialogue, there may be a way to see beyond a historical tension: “The figure of the nomad as the embodiment of freedom and irresponsibility and a challenge to the order of things is thus deeply embedded in European understandings of mobility and stasis. The threatening image of mobile peoples as destroyers of order and progress is as old

as the romantic fantasies” (Engebrigtsen, 2017, p. 44). There are subtle ‘skills’ to vagabond educational activism which are worth mentioning before this thesis enters new policy terrain. Coming to the point of incoherence as a social innovation also leads to the crossroads where vagabond counter-power can be applied. In the zigzag of the wanderer, it is possible to imagine a way out. The non-linear, incalculable mobility of the vagabond between encounter and retreat can be a potentially transformative societal force. Where a derogatory interpretation of the wanderer only looks at the threat of escapism, the vagabond imaginary preserves the possibility for future undomesticated movement. There are competencies and valuable experiences embedded in the vagabond ecology. How would a wanderer look at the three key aspects in contemporary Scottish education’s leading policy framework which will become important in the next chapter: literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing?

2.3.1 The literacy of migrant counter-power: an outsider from within

Where the vagabond has historically been linked to ‘parasitic lifestyles’ representing a burden for wider society (Nail, 2015), vagabond counter-power in educational contexts could rather be an undomesticated strength in an agentic interplay of visibility *and* disappearance. A balancing act between the vagabond vagueness of subversive inventiveness and the very strict temporal logics of high-impact funding can easily fail. Many accounts of burnt-out entrepreneurs or diluted reproductions of potentially transformative initiatives exist. The very fact that people are willing to be exposed to and enter these internal and external ambiguities can be linked to the counterpower Thomas Nail (2015) refers to in greater detail:

“All forms of migrant counterpower are defined by the dominant type of social motion they confront. The nomad is centripetally left out, so the raid bursts in. The barbarian is centrifugally captured and disenfranchised, so the revolt is an escape or return. The rebel vagabond adds a new type of kinetic counterpower. While barbarian slaves could potentially escape the limits of their empires, by the Middle Ages there were fewer and fewer places left to flee “outside” the jurisdiction of some lord or another. Thus, vagabonds increasingly began to directly confront authority from within: rebelling. [...] Instead of conjoining flows into a system of linked rotational motion of tension, vagabonds create continuous oscillations of disjointed flows” (Nail, 2015, p. 147)

The possible resistance of the vagabond does not lie in antagonistic struggles, it is a counterpower within societal systems. Rebellion to rigid infrastructures will come from within. There is a chance to abandon tribal pressure to conform, to be critical more than fit

the dominant idea of productivity. The vagabond is not a detached observer, but an immersed insider habituated to being constantly on the edge of change.

The vagabond's lens allows to perceive regimes of domination from within lived experience, detecting power imbalances that are passively silenced. There are winners and losers in sedentary laws. The vagabond is 'doomed' to the interstitial discomfort, but as a transient practice, vagabond in-betweenness also means to be liberated, being able to hop on and off:

"Vagabondage is a continuous oscillation insofar as it is a wandering movement without origin or final destination. It is not the curvilinear movement toward a center of power, nor a radial movement outward toward a subordinate periphery, nor even spatial movement of multiple linked centers in the tension of land contracts and waged labor. Rather, vagabondage is continually disjoined from [disciplinary] land, [standardised] labor, and [expert] law" (Nail, 2015, p. 147).

The vagabond's literacy is inhabited by the lands of territorial unbelongings, labours a way around society's separations and follows the laws of questioning rather than answering. We can therefore explore the vehicles of vagabond educating as an "architecture of endless questioning" (Grosz in Kraftl, 2007, p. 126). I would argue that an overlooked literacy skill transported by the figure of the vagabond is the capacity to understand the discreet and unspectacular, mediated through *untenanted* educational spheres. The vagabond's literacy of restlessness is a constant return to Freire's pedagogy of the question:

"Unlike the pedagogy of the answer, which reduces learners to mere receptacles for prepackaged knowledge, the pedagogy of the question gives learners the 'language of possibility' to challenge the very constraints which relegate them to mere objects" (Brass & Macedo, 1985, p. 8)

2.3.2 The numeracy of silence in questioning

Silence in contemporary society is not necessarily a cowardly safe space, but a form of intrinsic bravery. In societies governed by the numbers of the measurable, a vagabond's value can be counted in the numeracies of absences and incompleteness. This capacity to dare the silence of figures, or in other words, to dare to be the figure who does not speak, can be considered a precious yet rarely prioritised feature of educational struggles: "silence functions sometimes like speech, and sometimes in ways that are different from speech but nonetheless agential" (Brito Vieira, 2021, p. 290). Silence actually speaks volumes in its own ways. Silence is too often interpreted as passivity: "the equation of silence with absence (of speech, of voice, of political presence) leads to a denial – or at least a neglect – of the agential

qualities of silence, in all their diversity and uniqueness” (Brito Vieira, 2021, p. 290). Even the silencing of knowledges itself is discussed in the most vocal claims. In other words, it might appear that silence needs a ‘noisy advocate’ in order to be heard within dominant frames of reference. Listening to silences appears far from established priorities: “Western culture privileges writing and speech to the detriment of listening. In spite of the fact that a large majority of the population spends as much time in life hearing as it does speaking, schools teach how to speak but not how to listen. At most they may teach how to hear, but not how to listen” (Santos, 2018, p. 176). This ignores the deeper potential of knowledges guarded through silences but unoccupied from antagonising claims.

The transient reform that a vagabond can facilitate from within a system stems from an initially ‘intrinsic’ rebellion, against the odds of heroic visibility and speech: “heroes are thought to be those who speak up, contest the regime and its henchmen, agitate against the authorities and take up arms. To ‘speak up’ or to ‘break the silence’ – are publicly-endorsed ethical imperatives that presuppose dissenting speech to be the only appropriate action” (Mihai, 2021, p. 347). As previously mentioned (2.1.2), the solitary fabric of vagabond belonging does not equate with antisocial individualism but aspires towards a different form of relationality. The “coupling of withdrawal and critique [...] sits un-easily with our prevalent understanding of dissent. While critique is usually associated with collective action, publicness, and speech, withdrawal, on the contrary, is understood as an individual action, as a private and mute gesture” (Wallmeier, 2017, p. 148). Deliberate gestures of muteness provide the numeracy of the inaudible, despite society’s all-encompassing noise.

One of the many countless provisions of the shepherd’s hut in vagabond educating is to hold open a temporary invitation into a safe haven where it is possible to silence the world instead of being silenced by it. The shepherd’s hut is not defined by programmatic claims but takes a discreet societal stance for the right to silence (Gray, 2021). This gesture is therefore not a public speech act but rather a public listening act. Relating the possibility of dialogue to an act of withdrawal might appear contradictory. Situated in mobilities perceived as peripheral, vagabond societal “critique does not take the form of collective, publicly visible speech acts which are directed towards authorities, but rather appears as its opposite - as silent gestures of withdrawal” (Wallmeier, 2017, p. 150). We can try to understand the interplay between ‘reaching out’ and ‘closing in’ that the shepherd’s hut performs in public spaces every day.

2.3.3 The health and wellbeing of unavailability

There is a need to distinguish between temporary retreat and permanent withdrawal. Retreat can be understood as a form of disconnection from democratic societal norms, demonstrated in political studies of German far-right groups (Wallmeier & Filietz, 2019). However, analytical categories need to be developed to distinguish the democratic from the anti-democratic potential of retreat. There is also 'disengagement' as civic re-engagement (Hatzisawidou, 2015; Vannini & Taggart, 2013). Resisting anti-democratic forces in non-cynical terms can also be made possible through absences or phases of unavailability. This preserves a precious interstice: neither domesticated nor permanently running away. The back and forth and interstitial rootlessness between active citizenship and active withdrawal, the surprise brought by vagabond educating cannot be timed according to a reoccurring pattern and obliges a certain pedagogy of discomfort: "Seeing on the terms of the other, where the other is conceived of as an entity that does not depend on the seer, implies requiring that the seer become familiarized with unexpected, often uncomfortable angles and perspectives, and open herself to unpredictable emotions that may put routines and certainties at risk" (Santos, 2018, p. 172). Vagabond educating as constant in-betweenness is a relational risk. Being a vagabond bridge at times becomes an exhausting, undervalued role. This is something Anzaldúa (1990) has pointed out in her writings on the fatigues of engagement, when she metaphorically describes the reaction to this exhaustion as a bridge, drawbridge, sandbar and island: "engaging in bridging work 'may mean a partial loss of self. Being "there" for people all the time, mediating all the time means risking being "walked" on, being "used" ' [...] One therefore sometimes retreats [...] getting a breather from being a perpetual bridge without having to withdraw completely" (Bastian, 2011, pp. 162 – 163). From a scientific perspective, "dismissing withdrawal as escapism relies on an asymmetrical methodology" (Wallmeier, 2017, p. 148). The contribution of the vagabond educator is one of non-antagonistic wandering. Vagabond educating carves out room for questions by disappearance. This preserves the possibility for non-linear, unscheduled, yet intrinsically motivated return.

What appears as unsteady cowardice can be reinterpreted as an educational competency to sneak unsettling acts of un-domestication into fixed frameworks. As a form of non-militant anti-power, a discreet form of activism can become a different form of dissent:

“Dissenting, as an attitude and/or opinion, implies showing and voicing, demonstrating and speaking out against. The image of the dissident as one who speaks back to power sits uncomfortably alongside the idea that the dissident may use silence to avoid exposure, live ambiguously, take shelter from the very power it challenges. Against this background, the meaning of the absence of dissenting speech from s/he from whom it is expected – the dissenter – is quickly taken for granted: connivance, complicity, cowardice – at best, impotence. Heroic action is the trademark of the dissenter, and it must show its intention outwardly, by making itself heard, despite the potential brutal response.” (Mihai in Brito Vieira, 2021, p. 293)

The marginal figure that the vagabond represents is finally not that remote from the power centres. Through disjoined flows, the vagabond is enough of an insider to detect the invisibilities and dysfunctions of the systems that have temporarily hosted the wanderer. But the vagabond stays outsider enough to act quickly through retreat. In other words, the oscillation of the vagabond is soft adaptiveness pursued by *unoccupying* as a way of holding open the possibility to return. The vagabond counter-flow is one of connecting *and* retreating, which escapes ‘divide and conquer’, sedentary, territorial tactics and logics to fragmentise.

Silence and retreat: competences for a late (but not too late) PhD

This journeying between inside and outside of formal spheres allows vagabond educators to present themselves as potential candidates for a policy-related PhD framework. There is the out-of-place-ness of the vagabond utopia as well as the adaptability, around a middle-class centre of marginal mobilities, to speak within institutional systems. Both have certainly contributed to PhD funding. This journey into the ecosystem of the pre-PhD ecology of knowledges stops here, but the competencies from it will continue to flow. One vagabond hut, but not the one funded by the French government, has wandered away from the French locations of the vagabond ecosystem and found its way into Scottish PhD research. Now my role has changed: I am no longer pushed to become a tiny house service delivery start-up promoter, and instead have the institutional backing to critique policy as a PhD student. The doctorate is a rare occasion to re-negotiate values and expectations, informed by immersive practice and by critical distance, in order to find new coherence. The PhD allows to step back from the immediacies of a management role and to make a distinct philosophy available to educational research within high stakes contexts of Scottish policy and outdoor practice. In order to do this, there will now be a chapter which does not start with the hut, but with a gap. The vagabond ecology of knowledges values silence, retreat and subversive inventiveness,

while the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to close a gap by raising attainment in the fields of literacy, numeracy as well as health and wellbeing. The next chapter explores how both worlds can meet.



Figure 11: A hut day hosted at a school by student teachers before lockdowns

A missing link: gap notice

Before my invitation to detour the 'gap trap' of the Scottish Attainment Challenge is introduced, one important gap of my own, a lack in my PhD research, has to be pointed out. The curricular aspects of outdoor learning were meant to be explored in one of my research questions: In what ways do student teachers and MSc TLT graduates make use of the Welcome Hut as a classroom space and integrate spatial literacies in their teaching practice? According to pre-pandemic planning, there would have been a structured, ethnographic part in my thesis in which I would have observed how the shepherd's hut enters schools and is hosted by student teachers. There is a certain flexibility for cross-curricular work and scope for teachers in the Curriculum for Excellence (Christie et al., 2015) which would have allowed to plan such sessions within the student teachers' school placement hours. This would have allowed to investigate the conventional lines of literacy, numeracy as well as health and wellbeing of the Scottish Attainment Challenge directly with children in schools. Ethics approval had already been obtained for school visits during my itinerant research (Appendix 9).

Only one initial visit could take place, which allowed me to think of the set of data I would want to generate when observing student teachers who volunteered to host hut experience days for their pupils. But the three main visits in primary schools which were scheduled as extensive data collection had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. There is therefore no focus on hut school visits in this thesis. The shepherd's hut could have added a valuable lens to whole-school approaches and to integrated indoor / outdoor teaching (Beames et al., 2017). At this stage I would like to thank all those student teachers who had invested a lot of time for the logistics and the planning of their own shepherd's hut lessons. This exploration could not materialise to the extent initially imagined. But the intention of developing such spatial literacies with teachers is still very much alive. Interestingly, some student teachers from that cohort have been in touch with me in 2022 to communicate their plan to bring the hut to their schools. They have not forgotten about this option.

Chapter 3: Roaming through the Scottish Attainment Challenge

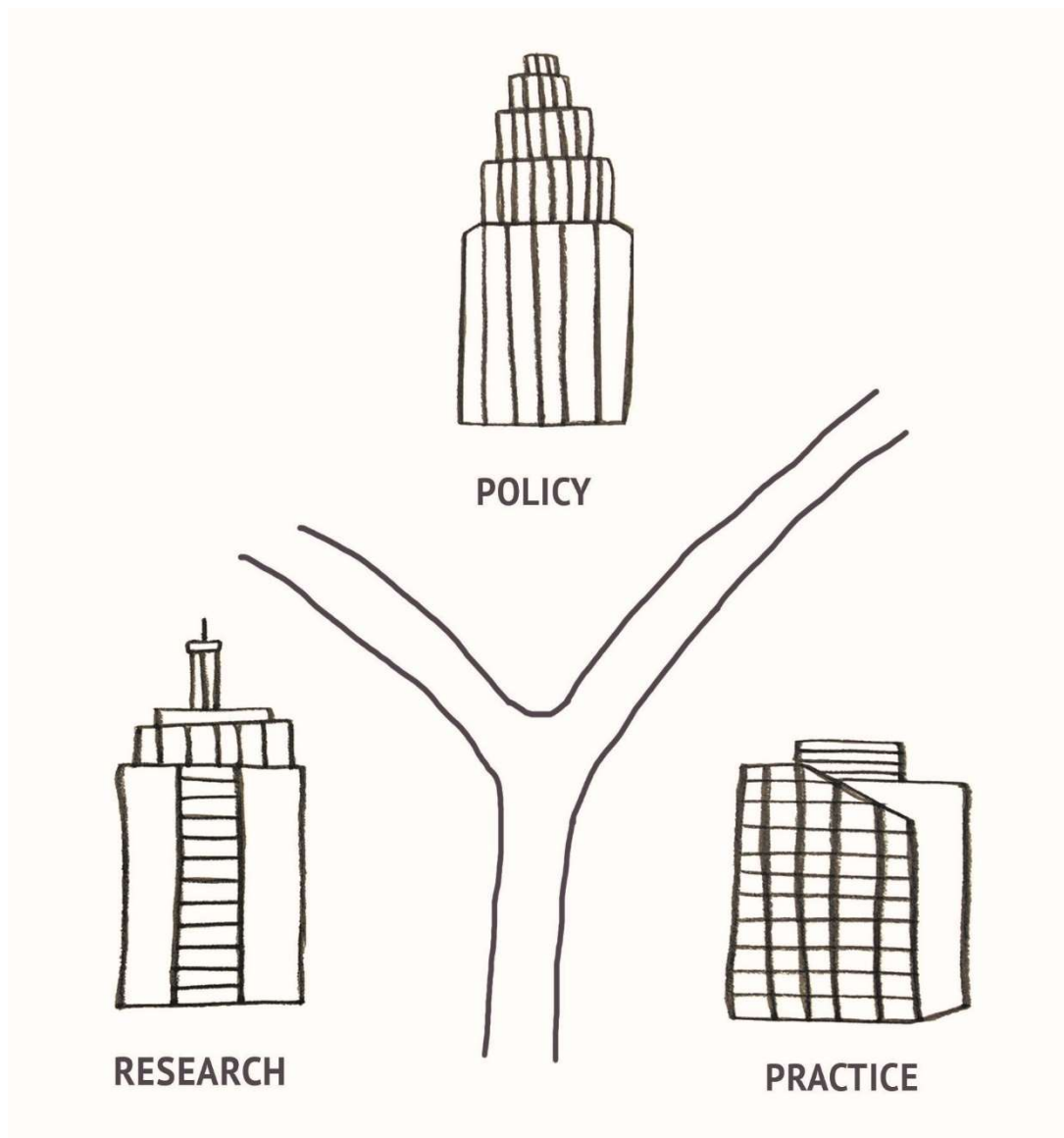


Figure 12: A chapter for the triangle's skyscrapers in a thesis festival of detouring

3.1 What is the Scottish Attainment Challenge? A 'disorientation map'

In this chapter, the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) is discussed from an arts-based angle. I argue that the crisis manifesting in positivist policymaking is not a crisis of schooling only, but reflects a societal crisis. Analysing the poverty *of*, not only the terminologies of poverty *in* the SAC frame, my suggestion is to first look at the dominant ideologies of optimisation and

acceleration in wider society and not to fall into a ‘gap trap’. Neighbourhoods as prioritised postcode areas are identified to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap. SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) narratives become impersonal, anonymously spatialised stories which communities will have to live by (Stibbe, 2015). I introduce the idea of a ‘disorientation map’ to explore the concrete emancipatory possibilities of understanding policy by means of detouring. My research questions are now discussed under this angle of de-optimisation and resonance.

3.1.1 The national framework of the Scottish Attainment Challenge

A high-stakes Scottish policy

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was initiated by the Scottish Government in 2015 to advance equity in the outcomes of formal schooling for every child and reduce the stark discrepancies between highest- and lowest-performing schools. Where educational issues often feature internationally as background priorities behind more urgent matters such as the economy or national security, Scotland’s First Minister put a clear public spotlight on the attainment gap when she announced in 2015 that “improving school attainment is arguably the single most important objective in this programme for Government” (Sturgeon cited in McCluskey, 2017, p. 24). It is crucial to acknowledge that the act of emphasising educational outcomes as major criteria for the evaluation of a government’s performance is rare, even on a global level and brought a raised attention to educational research within Scotland. One could say that this thesis got funded *because* of this ‘boost’ to the educational sphere. Placing education at the very core of national policy has had direct benefits for research and allowed me to decide the direction for this research. I was not selected by the Scottish Government, but by a panel of researchers. This opens the possibility to critique the instrumental direction of educational policies, to pause instead of immediately asking: what works most in best practice and how can we scale it up?

Studies have suggested that the poverty-related attainment gap was not reducing in the Scottish context (Croxford, 2015). The improvement of outcomes connected to the areas ranking as multiply deprived on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) became a national priority. There is evidence for the pervasive effects of poverty on all spheres of life:

“The links between poverty and both health and education remain troubling. People in the poorest fifth of the population are much more likely to experience anxiety or depression than those who are better off. There are very large gaps in education attainment between children living in richer and poorer areas” (JRF, 2017, p. 16)

Policy suggestions have to align to this strategic direction which is to “tackle the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland and improve achievement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for pupils living in areas of high deprivation” (SCDE, 2019), as reflected in numerous projects emerging through Education Scotland, the National Improvement Framework etc. to close these attainment gaps (Greig et al., 2019). The targeting of these gaps is mediated through a primary set of data which

“was generated in a data-driven process of splitting the country into small ‘data zones’ and then ranking these postcode areas through a robust data set of 30 indicators. The purpose of this large-scale exercise was to create an accessible tool for impact in order to target initiatives into high priority areas (SIMD 1-4 classed as highest priority) where improvement of opportunities were most needed” (Scottish Government, 2020).

The Scottish Council of Deans of Education was solicited to elaborate a research agenda to tackle the attainment gap through curricular reform in the field of teacher education.

3.1.2 A collaborative research project

This PhD was embedded in the “SCDE Attainment Challenge Project: Developing pedagogies that work for Pre-Service and Early Career Teachers to reduce the Attainment Gap in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing”. This collaborative research project brought together academic researchers involved in Scottish Initial Teacher Education programmes of all eight Scottish Schools of Education. The investigation into curricular innovation for student teachers was the focus of this research project. The collaborative project aims to resource a conversation across the national sector through four sequential phases of audit, evaluation, resource and reform. I participated in all the in-person meetings (every two months), was asked for several progress reports, created audio-visual contents and artefacts for dissemination in the group’s encounters with the Scottish Government and presented my own research at various occasions, notably three events of the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA). My contributions gave an arts-based twist to the policy topics, such as in my two-day drop-in sessions for the SERA conference 2019 entitled “The poetry of the

Scottish Attainment Challenge as seen from the SERA Edinburgh Fringe: re-scripting SIMD in three acts through experiential encounters in a tiny house conference hut” (Appendix 10).

Health and wellbeing as third key pillar of educational attainment alongside literacy and numeracy became my main angle, with a distinctly existential interpretation of health and wellbeing through exploration of student teacher life worlds. I made this choice after the initial encounters with a cohort of student teachers at Moray House outlined in chapter 1, and after having attended a student-teacher-led conference on health and wellbeing at Moray House, organised by the very first cohort of the new MSc Transformative Learning and Teaching (MSc TLT). The Scottish Government invites openness of definition: “Health and wellbeing isn't a single subject or class, but is organised into six areas: mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing; planning for choices and changes; physical education; physical activity and sport; food and health; substance misuse; relationships, sexual health and parenthood” (Scottish Government, 2021). Meaning can be seen as part of a healthy life.

My own PhD has been housed within a research team of the University of Edinburgh focussing specifically on outdoor education. This distinct thematic angle is explored in great detail in the final report of the group of researchers at my institution, proposing a “relational approach to pedagogical practices, which provides alternative ways of investigating and addressing the attainment gap” (Coyle et al., 2020, p. 11). This repositioning of the Scottish Attainment Challenge aims at “working with student teachers and partnership schools to promote alternative ways of designing and sharing learning” (Coyle et al., 2020, p. 8). This direction of research at Moray House moved away from formal definitions of what happens in schools towards achievement as embeddedness in a wider ecosystem. My own investigations have therefore been inspired by multiple levels of inquiry that range from collaborative feedback across institutions to the particular thematic focus and critical stance towards attainment discourses adopted by my colleagues at Moray House as well as the interests of the supervisory team for my thesis that were not limited to the policy debates around attainment. This multi-layer support allowed to pursue an indirect route towards the attainment gap.

Before my doctoral research, I had received no training in the dominant quantitative approaches to attainment research. While I have extensively worked in and researched about the French areas of multiple deprivation (*quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville*), I had never heard of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) before June 2018. I was

encouraged by my supervisors to welcome my own 'deficits' as expertise of a different kind in my encounter with Scottish educational research, outside of the 'goldfish bowl' that can exclude those deemed not having the 'right' qualification. My own stance towards the Scottish Attainment Challenge reflects the type of expertise I bring with me. Through this PhD, I have not become an expert of SAC, if expertise is understood as a static construct of fixed knowledges and data sets to be acquired, of tools to be applied and facts to be mastered. But I do have expertise to make policy more meaningful. I can offer expertise on how to connect differently to SAC, as a way to raise awareness of wider societal issues which can be forgotten in the clear focus on testing scores. How does one deal with that vertical skyline of expert skyscrapers that are at times blocking the view to other spheres of knowing?

3.1.3 The triangle of skyscrapers and the Moray House Quad

Firstly, I am now sharing a few observations from the wandering way through which I have approached the debate of the Scottish Attainment Challenge within the research-policy-practice triangle. The facilitation of community-based transformational change (Hayward & Hedge, 2005) is a complex process of navigating the many misunderstandings between the spheres of research, policy and practice. Lassnigg (2012) points at the differences in understanding what counts as evidence between these separate 'islands' (see figure 11) of research, policy and practice. In fact, each sphere has its own claims to knowledge. As Davies (2005) suggests: "If you ask policy-makers where they go for their evidence, they will tell you that they go first to their special advisors, then to people who are called experts (in whom I have little faith), then to think-tanks [...] and only then, if they bother, will they turn to academics and research evidence" (p. 1). Research, policy and practitioners have very different frames for knowing what counts as knowledge. In all three spheres, however, this evidence base is organised in hierarchical and vertical ways. An observational and narrative account relates to the contradictions and ambiguities which I had come across as I was coming into the debate as an observer. I started to attend public lectures, debates (at universities such as Strathclyde University and schools such as Dollar Academy) and observed in which ways evidence was legitimised.

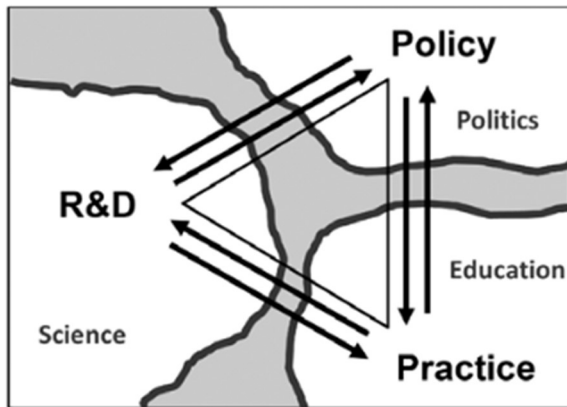


Figure 13: The research-policy-practice triangle (from Lassnigg, 2012)

Indoor decisions and the risk of tokenistic participation

In my wanderings through public talks, conferences, discussions online and offline, I have perceived the attainment debate detached from wider society that failed to mobilise diverse attendees at the events. Bringing in the horizontal ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2018), there is a need to deconstruct the elevated ways how knowledge hierarchies are generated within the triangle. Each skyscraper of the triangle stands on specific land as knowledge territory whereas a relational ecology of knowledges may allow to investigate the in-betweens. It appeared that mainly professionals from the field of education or experts from universities attended events. Both groups have a professional interest to attend but I did not meet many other members of the public who spent their free time with the attainment challenge. Decisions and the debates can be perceived to be taking place inside networks which stay in their own buildings and do not need to reach out. This has been referred to as the ‘Achilles heel’ of a ‘close knit’ policy community (Mowat, 2019) that has historically been critiqued as a distinct ‘leadership class’ (Humes, 1987): “a lack of transparency (often relying on compromises ‘behind closed doors’) and a tendency for an unquestioning stance relating to policy decisions and of the power relations underpinning them” (Mowat, 2019, p. 53). Research suggests that one can at times witness “very little reference to independent research, despite their advocacy of ‘evidence-based’ and ‘research-informed’ practice” (Mowat, 2019, p. 61). The involvement of diverse stakeholders and wide groups of the population is often slowly implemented in policy contexts and even when implemented, there is a risk for tokenistic participation and tick-box diversity (Cowden & Singh, 2007).

Dealing with positivism

This observation links to wider epistemological debates around positivism. The need for measurability in high-stakes action plans often leads to participation being defined rigidly as

“requiring respondents to answer questions in ways that prove that the world is stable and predictable. As a research analyst, assume that the word and the deed are consistent. All of these designs are based on the assumption of common frames of reference. The fact that they are arrived upon in a way which reflects the tacit dominant ideology of a time and place is not considered in the quest for certain knowledge of the world of education. Thus, in its assurance, its refusal to examine the assumptions which guide it, the quest for certainty often obscures more than it uncovers” (Kincheloe, 2012, p. 146)

By acknowledging that contemporary Western societies are deeply enmeshed in austerity and uncertainty, it is questionable if ‘knowledges of certainty’ need to be produced at all costs. There is a risk to instrumentalise the gap and make this obscure, quantified space serve the purpose of a projection screen for all sorts of ambitions. Mastery, or at least the feeling of being in control, matters most in uncertain times (Tauritz, 2019). I read about the ways teachers and parents are struggling with attainment actions imposed by new policies and had this growing sentiment confirmed by headteachers whom I met at attainment events. Standardised attainment testing was considered by teachers to be the reason why pupils felt increasingly insecure. Media reported these insecurities, expressed through “comments such as ‘I’m no good’, ‘I can’t do this’, and ‘Why are you making me do this?’” (Seith, 2018). People seemed to be struggling without an amplified voice and losing meaning about this national effort. Policy expertise has to find its way to the people and look beyond its own indoor comfort zones to generate direct benefits to the wider Scottish population.

Who carries the load?

There were very few, albeit incredibly dedicated, professionals such as attainment advisers at the public and specialised events that I attended who had internalised the attainment objectives and invested their time to motivate others to meet the fixed goals. For them, a more-than-full-time commitment appeared highly meaningful and fulfilling. In this stark contrast, I wondered to what extent attainment could divide rather than unite the educational world into those despairing about and those advancing for this contested notion of attainment. I also asked myself why the biggest load had to be on a few stakeholders (schools, teachers, attainment advisers, for example) and not on society as a whole. Why was the Scottish Attainment Challenge only about *formal* education? Would anyone else than

those already working in education (and paid to address the gap) want to sit through talks about deficit catalogues and statistics? I therefore asked myself who is left out of attainment discourses as they were occurring in Scotland between 2018 and 2019. The ambition here is not to reject the solid body of evidence acquired by expert researchers investigating into the direction of closing the gap, but to enlarge the scope of debates through provocation.

More than the measurable

One way to exemplify that the SAC has to move beyond the measurable sphere of formal schooling (Sosu & Ellis, 2014) is evidenced in the scholarly literature. Professionals testify that in contemporary education, everywhere is now a 'metrics land'. A striking example that raises concerns about social justice and equity in relation to metrics is the way more affluent families can 'top-up' their children's educational chances within formal state school attendance but explicitly in the out-of-class time that is not measured or assessed by the current benchmarking. While data-driven attainment research often brings forward the benefits for addressing the attainment gap on a national comparative scale (SIMD in combination with testing scores), one should see many educational disadvantages that are *not* measured in such schemes.

The purchasing of advantages is moved out of classrooms and even out of the school setting altogether by more affluent families into private spheres of 'opportunity hoarding' (McKnight, 2015):

"This 'purchasing power' can be seen in, for example, provision of access to high quality, leading edge digital technology, the employment of private tutors to give additional support in preparation for the national exams which give access to higher education, purchase of expensive school trips which bring a range of tangible and intangible benefits, or by ensuring participation in after-school and extra-curricular activities which can enhance confidence and skills, but which may require expensive equipment or time not always available to children living in poor families" (McCluskey, 2017, pp. 27-28)

Addressing attainment then requires a rethinking about the kind of attention that educational research wants to give to what goes on before and after school as well as what goes on in more flexible outdoor components of national curricula. It is necessary to acknowledge a competitive system where the after-school purchasing of educational goodies, extras and advantages, the "ability and willingness of middle-class parents to pay for this educational

safety net” (McCluskey, 2017, p. 28) can falsify the robustness of data for closure of the poverty-related attainment gap. Does the *societal* issue of attainment disappear at the doorstep of the school as soon as the school bells ring to end the day? Or could this moment that releases learners into the informal no man’s land/ ‘*no metrics land*’ then be an invitation to let go of certainties? My detouring approach teases out a different side of education away from the formal imperative of monitoring?

3.1.4 The poverty in the SAC and the poverty of the SAC: Would schools have to do it alone? While educational research talks a lot about the poverty *in SIMD* areas, my research draws attention to the poverty *of SIMD*; the poverty of SIMD as a discourse and as the major frame of reference for policy which is complicit in quantifying learning ecologies (Mowat, 2018), simplifying complex life worlds, prescribing standardised treatment instead of enacting attuned care for diverse experience: “there is little consideration given to the complexity or lived experience of marginalisation or to the other forms that it takes – intersectionality is not recognised to any significant extent” (Mowat, 2019, p. 55). The focus on formal schooling in the SAC is at odds with research that suggests that schools alone cannot address the complexities of the poverty-related discrepancies in achievement (Bangs et al., 2011). Issues of social justice need to span the whole field of society to have lasting structural impact. Angles that only integrate formal sites of learning for measurable accuracy, from schools to universities to government agencies ignore and neglect the important contributions that the wider community and extra-curricular learning environments can have on the literacy, numeracy as well as health and wellbeing of children. This argument of Glaze (2015) is repeated by Mowat:

“Recognising that schools, on their own, cannot make a difference to the nature and impact of deprivation, they must look outwards and work collaboratively with external agencies and community groups to foster social justice, developing more holistic approaches to local problems [...] education is more than academic content. There are certain attitudes, values, dispositions and behaviours that we should also nurture and develop. Education has to be holistic in its content and approach, addressing hearts as well as minds” (Mowat, 2019, pp. 63-64)

The responsibility is with schools to start conversations which in turn ought to engage parents and the wider community. It needs to be questioned if teachers and other in-school staff are trained or adequately supported to fulfil this task. It is also questionable from where they will take the time to do so. And who gets the blame when things don’t work out?

Improvements in literacy, numeracy as well as health and wellbeing are formulated according to a certain measurable norm. The norm carries the risk of over-identifying those who have fallen behind with their deficits. It needs to be questioned how those who cannot match up with an imposed standard can enter a debate without being relegated for their alleged lacks or delays: “assimilation always implies coming into the game after it has already begun, after the rules and standards have already been set” (Young, 1990, p.164). There seemed to be a certain blame game going on, in a logic of repair as if education was the task of engineers. My aim was to find a different game to play.

And what if the gap was a trap?

If ‘closing the gap’ becomes the one missing link, then the action plan for this one singled-out category (of attainment) diverts attention from more profound structural concerns. The identity of marginalised groups and their rights rather than deficit-related needs are historically less targeted objectives in Scottish educational systems (Riddell, 2016). In a static needs-based vision, everything seems in its place, and the identified troublemaker is to be found in contexts of multiple deprivation, essentialised in a poverty label, contained by circumstance and only liberated through specifically created success metrics and measurement tools. The issue with immobilising paternalism can be clearly pointed out: “The “problem” being located with “the other,” with elites left questioning what is it about “the other” that needs to be the focus of pedagogic (and bureaucratic) intervention to move them from being “less marginalized” to “more mainstream” “(Gale et al., 2017, p. 346). The gap could be a *trap* diverting attention from whole-systems thinking and fixating the ‘needy’ as projection screens for spectacular, yet deeply paternalistic interventionism. Who would want to fall into such a ‘gap trap’?

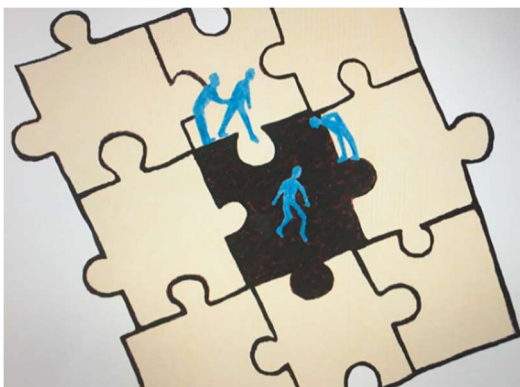


Figure 14: And what if the gap was a trap?

3.1.5 Accountability tigers and 'gap traps'

Global policy borrowing and the Scottish context

Logics of spectacular interventionism can be found in most global policy schemes, leading to a necessary discussion of the problem of uncritical policy borrowing across nations and continents. A country's own policy experts can forget to see the unique strengths of their own country by abiding too narrowly with global schemes for comparability. Pressing school systems into standardised schemes means potentially missing out on the singular cases and details at play. My policy critique is then not exclusively related to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. One could even argue that Scotland is less affected by global policy dominance. It is widely acknowledged that Scotland has often rejected globalising pressures for standardisation (Hayward, 2018). It is argued in the literature that global pressures for ranking and standardisation are historically less prominent in Scotland than, for example, in England where OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) as an institution has become synonym with a definition of accountability as pervasive audit culture: "Although different local authorities in Scotland have different approaches to accountability, accountability is most commonly intended to support the growth of teachers rather than to control them as is evident in other parts of the UK" (Hayward, 2018, p. 41). There is no monopoly on benchmarking in Scottish Initial Teacher Education policy. Scotland, in this regard ideologically closer to Finland than to the immediate neighbour, has distinguished itself through an increasing focus on teacher agency, autonomy and collaboration, preserving attention on teacher support rather than teacher scores: "the model where such confidence is shown in teachers and teacher educators as collaborative professionals is relatively rare in a world where accountability all too often has a much harder edge (Cochran-Smith et al. 2016). It has to be guarded with care" (Hayward, 2018, p. 47).

The taming of the accountability tiger

However, "whilst Scottish education tries to hold onto its democratic principles and values, it is not immune to the pressures that beset education systems globally" (Mowat, 2019, p. 54). Forces of top-down globalisation and pressures to perform to a 'global' standard are increasingly present in Scotland as well, as partnership and collaborative frames are constantly threatened through the rise of performance indicators as top-down prescriptions.

Through the commodification acting onto national educational landscapes through international policy borrowing, the widespread feeling of teachers to increasingly adopt teaching-to-the-test can also be observed in Scotland, raising crucial questions about the focus in attainment discourses:

“Those who share the commitment of many Governments to national standardised assessment must be mindful that although such testing might bring about some desired improvements, it cannot explain whether this is because teachers feel under pressure ‘to teach to the test’ or because the quality of the teaching is so enriching and exciting that the students take such tests in their stride. It is important that a concentration on ‘outputs’, that is, attainment levels, does not distract from concentration on the sources and mechanisms at issue, that is, the inequality in ‘inputs’” (McCluskey, 2017, p. 28)

In a United Kingdom with devolved powers, the policy framework differs considerably between the neighbours Scotland and England. Yet, Scotland’s policy does not exist in a bubble, but in a wider, transnational environment that risks to simplify issues of social justice into ‘poverty safaris’ (McGarvey, 2019), importing an almost voyeuristic gaze into lived experience of multiple deprivations. As terms around poverty and social justice are instrumentally used to create adherence to a very specific way of understanding and controlling them (through quantifiable data), deeper social critique is necessary to uncover the vacuous ways in which narratives of urgency (Facer & Sriprakash, 2021) can often be used. The ideological density of the contested, multiply occupied territories of the Scottish Attainment Challenge increases the urgency for an action plan that suggests rapid implementation. It provides less time for disruption and imagination.

By zooming out from the gap, this rigid yet obscure construct heralded as the missing link for a more equitable Scottish education, we might reintegrate holistic, transformative perspectives. We might ask tricky questions, not to boycott the efforts, but to reinfuse necessary complexity:

“Are standardized test score improvements valid indicators of student progress? What segments of the student population improved their test scores? The worst students? The average students? The best students? [...] We begin to see in this context that critical constructivist modes of teacher research valuing complexity possess a value that positivist research lacks – the capacity to ask sophisticated questions of meaning.” (Kincheloe, 2012, pp. 151 -152).

Attainment in an age of complexity implies looking at the existential meaning of poverty, so-called existential barriers alongside “a need to move on from talk of raising aspirations, to think more deeply about cultural, historical and social barriers to achievement” (McCluskey, 2017, p. 33).

It has been said that it “will take more than commitment to values to keep the accountability tiger tamed” (Hayward, 2018, p. 48). The image of a potentially docile tiger of accountability that can be domesticated into exclusively positive effects for national education comes as a ‘package’ with the downside – a constantly present and lurking tiger that can decide to quit for an undomesticated role: ready to run off into making own laws through the ‘unregulated overregulation’ of global accountability. At this point, accountability regimes can spin out of control. It can be observed that the tiger of accountability is tempted through the Scottish Attainment Challenge’s narrow quantitative data to unleash its audit instincts onto the national educational sphere. This is where a critique of optimisation can provide a narrative of caution and care for a holistic critique of the pressure to close the gap(s).

3.2 Towards de-optimisation: the courage not to catch up with the rest

I will now discuss the consequences of the apparent breathlessness of global ideologies of optimisation which have direct and indirect repercussions onto the way the Scottish Attainment Challenge has been framed in the national debate outlined above. Standardised definitions of learner attainment have direct influence on the local contexts of schools and can also mainstream the routes through which student teachers are expected to be trained for their future jobs and future SAC allies. I will weave recent research on concerns about ITE and (student) teacher workloads into this sociological angle to show the necessity to look closer at tacit optimisation ideologies when there is an attempt to reform ITE curricula. I introduce the conceptual angle of de-optimisation which obliges us to confront learning in times of ubiquitous measurements in terms of wider societal forces. It is not the individual, ‘problematic’ student who can’t sit still. Instead, it is society as a whole which no longer seems capable to pause and rest. Developed in a German sociological context, this lens raises awareness of the gradual erosion of safe, unconditional, uninvaded spaces for *being* more than *doing* in contemporary society:

“Whenever and wherever we stop to take a break, we lose ground against a highly dynamic environment, with which we are always in competition. There are

no longer any niches or plateaus that allow us even to pause, let alone say “that’s enough.” (Rosa, 2020, p. 10)

This discussion seeks to outline some of the reasons that make it necessary to step out of a hegemonic definition of quantifiable attainment.

These layers of analysis involve a logic of optimisation as a common thread. The drivers of this optimisation can then be further distinguished by adopting the conceptual frame suggested by sociologist Ulrich Bröckling: “A typology of optimisation methods includes – at least – three types of regimes. All of these have different historical areas of application and cycles; they do not replace each other but rather coexist and overlap” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 24). These three regimes, 1) optimisation as perfection, 2) optimisation as an increase and 3) optimisation as competition, will be positioned as the prevailing mechanisms that make the accountability tiger uncontrollable and unpredictable. In a first attempt to rescript the Scottish Attainment Challenge towards *meaningful* attainment, this framework at a macro-level does not offer responses, but it provides a justification for then wandering further away from the logics of measurement in order to explore at the micro-level with student teachers’ potential resonances beyond the binaries of optimisation and de-optimisation, acceleration and slow scholarship. What this sociological disorientation through de-optimisation provides is a detour to be surprised by the multiplicities of temporal experience, away from the linear logics of policy worlds which have forgotten the capacity to wander and/or rest.

3.2.1 Optimisation as *perfection*: detours instead of gear-wheel pressures

The grand narrative perpetuated in policy discourses corresponds to logics and aspirations of *perfect* interventionism. Supreme-superior national goals can be perceived as detached from reality: “The first regime is optimization as perfection: the benchmark here is an ideal that is pursued even though it can never be fully achieved” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 24). A closer look at the complexities of closing the so-called ‘attainment gap’ reveals the impossibility of meeting many of the fixed and constantly repeated and ritualised benchmarks. This national task driven by global metrics for perfected efficiency helps to keep macro-level stakeholders busy running behind targets that they predictably will fail to reach. Similar to other grand mediatised narrative claims, for example of eradicating poverty (as opposed to exploring the structures that sustain it) or abolishing unemployment (as opposed to re-envisioning whole

system societal attitudes towards decent work), one could ask what the closing of the gap is measuring.

This vision of optimising at the largest possible scale sets the world in motion, the gear-wheels continue turning incessantly, but feeding into multiple revolving doors that repeat the same mechanism over and over again without advancing. The discourse is trapped in a perfectionist mirage. This grand goal ultimately betrays the human nature of fragility and imperfection and suffocates the emancipatory potential of 'failure'. Unattainable attainment is the impossible, yet inevitable effort that always edges on disaster, as there is "a constant threat of a relapse back into imperfection and decay" (Bröckling, 2018, p. 24). This all-encompassing vision for society fails to integrate divergent voices: those who are rejecting their pre-assigned spot in the gear-wheel mechanics. While "chances of children 'escaping high-poverty settings' are slim (Chapman et al. 2016)" (Mowat, 2019, p. 50), the closing of the gap drives testing interventions further and further in the obsession to become more and more robust.

Research question 'Perfection': How can this PhD contribute to the re-scripting of the Scottish Attainment Challenge as a cross-sector, transdisciplinary and deeply existential societal challenge rather than a technical procedure where the solution is reduced to a 'teaching to the test' agenda?

The research question corresponding to this regime, optimisation as perfection, is explored by means of the detours suggested all the way through this thesis and pointed out on the festival map. The festival stroll is a way to engage with the reader away from the policy skyscrapers. It is argued that a different kind of Scottish Attainment Challenge emerges outside of the gear-wheels, on vagabond campsite and in the student teachers' intrinsic sea of possibilities. The shepherd's hut conference fringe also invites to take a step out.

From stimulus-response to the indirectness of detouring

I perceive the SAC policy narrative as processes that are connected and intertwined through pressure. This system is far from being static and can then be applauded as constantly doing something about poverty. Yet, while in non-stop hyperactivity and accountability mode, this model equally reflects a very inflexible vision in which individual parts are obliged to turn in circles in order to advance the main mission. In such a model the dominant questions improve the performance to keep rotating, they are asked without a pause for breathing. How can the

individual gears move synchronously into this direction? The gear therefore stands for co-construction based on an already established overall direction and agenda (Cowden & Singh, 2017). A mechanistic vision of educational change has been widely critiqued as a form of ‘teaching to the test’, particularly from children’s rights perspectives (Dutro & Selland, 2012). As the dominant educational narrative on global, national as well as increasingly local scales, there is no space to question, to deviate or to halt. Unified gears keep moving into a ‘right’ direction of direct causal force, stimulus-response.

And it is precisely in the refusal of direct causal force that the need for a non-instrumental understanding of literacy in the policy context of the Scottish Attainment Challenge can be highlighted. The drive towards testing scores measured in the classroom may prevent teachers from more profound and meaningful engagement with their students. It can be argued that the direct and instrumental tackling of identified gaps in literacy, numeracy or competencies in health and wellbeing is not even desirable. Gaining an insightful perspective may require to step back:

“to really understand literacy, you must not stare at literacy head on. You must see reading and writing as but pieces of larger practices that are wholes that cannot be decomposed without loss. It is an irony that the best way to study literacy is not to stare too intently at it, to foreground something else, namely [social] practices in contexts” (Gee, 2014, p. 60)

Which wider implications does the acted direction of the gear have? At what costs for the wider ecosystem are we moving into the ‘right’ direction? There are questions pushed to the background: “What is really meant by a ‘gap’? Are gaps always about poverty? What about the system gaps? Who is affected by the gap and why? How? Can the gap be measured? If a gap is measurable, what are we really measuring?” (Greig et al., 2018, p. 6). There are casualties in a pressure-driven attainment plan and their agendas, benchmarks and temporalities. Moving from deficit to empowerment, the invitation to detours allows to embrace blind spots, incompetence and the meaning of imperfection (Biesta, 2021). In other words, SAC is rescripted towards *meaningful* engagement and opens a space for possibility and social justice, not simply self-realisation and mere fulfilment for individuals. Viktor E. Frankl defined success as a side-effect, as a by-product that cannot be forced upon life: “for success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the

unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself" (1985, p. 16). If we think of nothing else than closing a gap, filling this vacuum at all cost, we do not necessarily encounter attainment: "the more you try to force it, the less you succeed" (Rosa, 2020, p. 3). Filling the gap with hyperactivity does not automatically imply fulfilling the societal task with meaning. The fixation onto the gap might defy its purpose: instead of making the gap disappear by focusing so much on it, education becomes dependent on the very existence of the gap as frame of reference.



Figure 15: SAC optimisation movements through the gear-wheel mechanism

3.2.2 Optimisation as increase: relearning to miss out

The macro-narrative of (unattainable) attainment benchmarks drives the gear-wheel mechanics forward and therefore feeds directly into the second regime in the optimisation system. The obsession with testing gives rise to ever expanding, *infinite* ways to classify, audit and assess, and therefore to invade existential and affective spheres: criticism about this model leads to yet another "quest to find even more extensive ways to measure a wide range of indicators (for example, creativity) [...] rather than standing back objectively and questioning its approach and the impact it exerts on the system" (Mowat, 2019, p. 55). Optimisation towards national perfection requires measurable outcomes which can be achieved by increasing activity, as ill-defined and blurry as this action might still be:

“The benchmark for optimization as an increase is quantitative, making it ultimately possible to render everything as quantifiable, for there are indicators that can measure the level of quality at the same time. The optimum itself cannot be specified here, but the direction in which we seek it certainly is. Its vector is orientated towards infinity” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 24).

This excess through hyperactivity has to be distributed in small dosage, creating an infinite amount of robustly coordinated, fragmented rather than holistic tasks to meet the set targets. An over-reliance on comparing performances and measuring categories and figures through more and more accountability schemes (Lingard et al., 2016, Forde and Torrance, 2017) can be observed on a global scale, although “[p]overty is complex and multi-faceted and the means of measuring it and its impact are heavily debated” (Mowat, 2019, p. 49). The rhetoric around the gap suggests mastery and control within a collaboration of all stakeholders that is portrayed as united and harmonic for the sake of Scottish education. In reality however, those who have to execute optimisation as an increase never feel that they have reached the optimum, as they are trapped in the infinite circuit of never-ending multitasking. The feeling that things are coming together or that good is good enough cannot be permitted. This state of perpetual imperfection, the paradox of the compartmentalisation towards infinity administers catching up as the default state, although one is never really sure what to catch up with. In this logic, there *need* to be areas of multiple deprivation that are defined by lack so to increase activity through infinite microscopic solution loops. Without deficit, the whole futility of quantitative increase may be exposed. Compulsive detail allows the absurdity of optimisation to survive and even exponentially thrive. There is an external infinity of lacks to be mastered, but never the intrinsic embracing of ‘enough’.

Closing and unclosing the gap as binge-attaining

Dissecting knowledges and reassembling them solely based on their performance in relation to certain metrics does not lead to ecosystems of action towards overarching, qualitatively explored and participation-led goals. Instead of fostering ecologies, the regime of optimisation by increase disconnects from relations, improvisation and surprise. The accounts of my vagabond ecology of knowledges introduced in chapter 2 are incomplete and fragmented in their evidence base, but at all times existentially interwoven. The increase logic of optimisation, however, requires action plans to be constantly improved, enhanced, tested and evidenced. This system does not address the hunger in areas of multiple deprivation, but

the thirst for accountability: “The motto is: practice, practice and practice yet again. Contrary to the programmes of perfection, those of increase foresee a policy of detail: to increase performance, a task is first split into individual elements, then each item is rationalized in itself in terms of use and profit, and in the end the optimized elements are put together again.” (Bröckling, 2018, pp. 24-25).

The lack of holistic, systems-level solutions points at an issue of overcrowded evidence-based research in certain areas, giving rise to all sorts of knowledge silos that do not offer dialogue with each other. Few research projects transcend their own area of expertise because of the imminent expectation to produce robust and unquestionable data: “Pressure to raise standards of attainment on tests scores is at odds with the evidence for ‘closing the gap’, pointing to wider social factors such as parental participation” (Coyle et al., 2020, p. 16). Instead of exploring more risky encounters with the wider ecosystem of educational stakeholders beyond institutions, leadership directives perpetuate a narrow definition of attainment that obfuscates more hidden forms of learning, as theorised in the ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2012). Not an ecology emerges, but atomised tasks. The solitary attainment worker is constantly watched for keeping ‘on track’. There is an urgent need to keep on going in the same old way over and over again – but faster and more rigidly audited than the last time around. The revolving door now spins very fast. The person whose work performance is measured by the accountability of atomised activity is torn in the ambiguity of infinite scales: while one can always still do more to help close the gap, this lifting of limitations on workloads, to-do-lists and new results-driven programmes comes with a catch. Experience becomes the annexe of a report, not the core. Research into the lived experience of poverty and deprivation cannot be compressed into the reductionist symbolism of a gap (Mowat & McLeod, 2019). Existential layers of poverty-related policy cannot be measured like attainment scores. They have to be witnessed, not tested; storied, not standardised.

The ‘gap trap’ seduces because it allows to indulge in discourses on educational attainment from a fixed referent that further sedentarises structural poverties and uproots those individuals and communities most affected by the immobility of policy imaginations. One can be comfortably seated in the discourses of a gap which rewards reproducible sameness. Giroux has analysed similar processes:

“Giroux (2013) argues that more insidious than a failure to imagine is the active construction of a “disimagination machine” where “the politics of disimagination refers to images, and . . . institutions, discourses, and other modes of representation that undermine the capacity of individuals to bear witness to a different and critical sense of remembering, agency, ethics, and collective resistance”(263). The disimagination machine, for Giroux, “is both a set of cultural apparatuses extending from schools . . . and a public pedagogy that functions primarily to undermine the ability of individuals to think critically [and to] imagine the unimaginable” (263).” (Burke & DeLeon, 2015, p. 5).

Instead of actually closing ‘the gap’, the closing-the-gap-industry is increasingly given the rare expert status. There may be a dependence on experts, and the dependence of experts on the existing gap. The metrics make it almost impossible to enter in profound contact with the people *behind* labels of areas of multiple deprivation. Dis-imagination becomes a dogma: “Schooling issues, such as assessment, subject matter, hours of attendance, textbooks, and the knowledge being transmitted, are wrongly accepted as dogma. Such a limited vision makes it almost impossible to have a vision of schooling without meeting such conditions.” (Paraskeva, 2016, p. 195). New advice provides new activity and is repeated until the next big policy directive comes along. Instead of creating an encounter in contexts of poverty, many interventions are driven by a new dependence, the fear of not controlling poverty enough: this “game of escalation is perpetuated not by a lust for more, but by the fear of having less and less” (Rosa, 2020, p. 10). Fear blocks imagination.

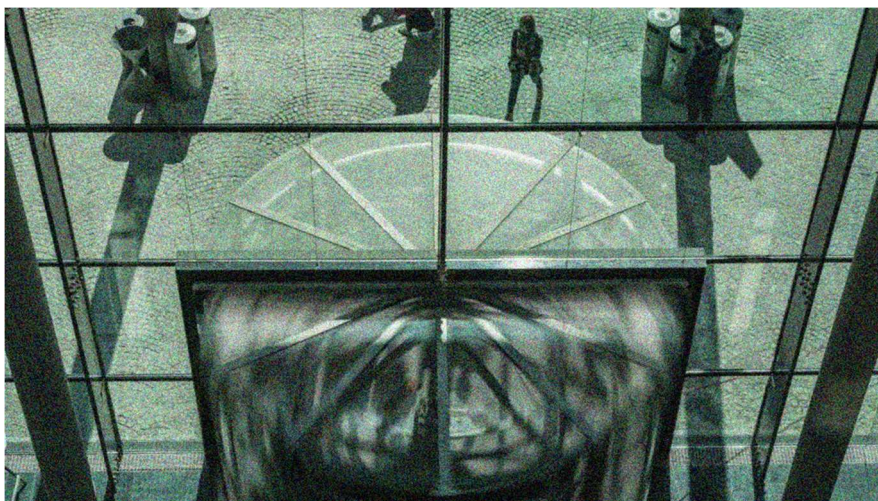


Figure 16: SAC optimisation movement through the revolving door

Gaps in data-driven science are so disturbing that they require new expertise to be explained to the ‘lay’ population as novel SIMD hierarchies emerge: “the different types of testing and assessment – local, national and international – have led to an explosion in the evidence

available to decision-makers at all levels, putting a premium on the capacity to understand what they mean” (OECD, 2015, p. 98). There are new experts *on* poverty while others are immobilised *in* poverty. The nation learns to sit with data, more than with people. The attainment gaps are highly functional in keeping everyone busy, but instead of being closer with those most affected by multiple forms of deprivation, the top-down impetus is understood as constantly doing something for the so-called ‘hard-to-reach’. There is little time to sit down and ask for a deeper sense of directionality. Attainment is a mirror of the anxieties of the present, not a path to anticipatory hope. The research question which seeks to disrupt the infinity of compartmentalised activities in education debates relates to the spaces to breathe as they were explored by using the Welcome Hut as a pop-up encounter space, initially planned as a field work taking place with schools (see gap notice before chapter 3), but reframed due to pandemic-related cancellations. The conference fringe (discussed at the very end of the thesis) replaces infinity with relational stillness:

Research question ‘increase’: How did the public pedagogy conference fringe tour reveal affective academic hospitality as a way for educational stakeholders to meet for different forms of debate?

3.2.3 Optimisation as competition: the need for safe space

Optimisation can also be fuelled by the fears and anxieties of competition. The engineering of the self towards a resilient teacher identity is pressed ahead by the logic of competition. When competing in precarious labour markets, the uniqueness of the individual which society could benefit from is not the central selling point. As a time-pressured frame of constant comparison, individualist self-optimisation as reaction to an aggressive societal expectation is fuelled by the fear to miss out, to fall behind and to fail. Competition inevitably frames the journeys into professions as a way to keep on top:

“In this regime, optimization means the will to stand out from the competition. Since the competitor never sleeps, no one is allowed to [...] Optimization in terms of competition therefore functions in cybernetic terms: it presents feedback loops and technologies of (self-)monitoring, which aim to enable continuous adjustments themselves in the quest to attain ever-changing target values” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 25)

This regime of optimisation as constant competition is challenged by my research question applying the methodological frame of existential care. Life worlds of student teachers as well

as their negotiations of meaning as a facet of health and wellbeing are explored through a research methodology which foregrounds the incomparability of singular teacher becomings emerging from a space for non-judgmental *being*, not more and more *doing*.

Research question ‘competition’: How do student teachers navigate between their own ideas, hopes and dreams for meaningful teaching and the professional reality and routine of their placement?

Teachers as part of the caring/helping professions, wanting to make a difference in children’s lives, are in a prominent place to be in constant competition with themselves, their idealised high aspirations and the limitations of the real world. There is always more which one could do for the children or for the improvement of the school culture. Teacher accountability expects individuals inside systems to provide results and take on responsibilities at scales that have to be considered as social, personal and intersectional challenges. What is required is a more horizontal form of “systems leadership, characterised by meaningful collaboration and partnership from ‘within – to between – and beyond’ schools (as suggested by Chapman), imbued with moral purpose” (Mowat, 2018, p. 48) in which both poverty and attainment are embedded in fluid, changing communities. Carrying systemic weights individually has been identified as a major issue of concern in the Western contexts of schooling that compartmentalises certain types of knowledge into their systems and individualises learning. Teachers in cultures of learning as incessant acquisition are driven into perpetual reform of their being:

“The realization that it might not be enough creates the pull towards permanent excess. Since the demands have no limits, individuals always fail to meet them. Entrepreneurial interpellation combines a promise with a threat, encouragement with discouragement and a declaration of freedom with an irrefutable conviction. If its allure is the idea that each and every one forge their own happiness, it simultaneously asserts that everyone is responsible for their own unhappiness.” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 33)

Being considered a less resilient teacher than others is internalised as the own shortcoming. In the dominant tendencies of the current educational system, there is no curriculum of being: “one is only ever an enterprising self *à venir* – always in the mode of becoming, never of being.” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 34). If the Scottish Attainment Challenge fails to meet the metrics expected, then the blame game starts. The teacher is trained to internalise the blame and to do better (or drop out) In the face of optimisation as competition, failure - or even just

exhaustion - is a taboo. Governments and those in power externalise the profound structural dysfunctions and project responsibility onto those with low levels of power, such as solitarily struggling teachers.

The third regime of optimisation operates on the individual level to push for a mindset where best intentions are no longer good enough because of the perceived evaluation: “One may make progress in optimization as perfection or increase, but under competitive conditions even the best must fear the next ranking” (Bröckling, 2018, p. 25). Teachers may carry an internal and external ranking as they see the tiresome path for job security in precarious conditions. Some get accustomed and internalise expectations. Adequacy for the job is then not negotiated through the disruption of the performance paradigm, but through the loyal adherence to it: “If you feel worn down by the mental health needs of your students, if you feel despair, if you stay up late working on lesson plans because there is not enough time during the day, the current narrative is that you are somehow inadequate for the job [...] A teacher must do a lot of self-care to bear witness to the structurally designed failures of our most needy students” (Benson, 2017, pp. 39 -40). Structural shortcomings need to be addressed through new narratives that will hold institutions to account to allow a radical rethinking of power imbalances in the self-optimisation logics of contemporary debates on teacher mental health.

Teacher health and wellbeing efforts that are embedded in Western institutional logics of optimisation as competition have to look at individuals as well as systemic change: “Wright and Pascoe (2015) suggest that the field’s Westernised and individualistic approach overlooks the situated and relational dimension of wellbeing. They suggest that genuine wellbeing is a ‘process’ which ‘moves beyond the individual’ to recognise the social contexts within which they are situated” (Brady & Wilson, 2021, p. 47). My research methodology is set up as existential *peer care*, with a profession’s allowance to its professionals to be *imperfect* practitioners: “social relations cannot readily be assessed in terms of (heightened) efficiency. Body and soul or education and care, psychic growth and coping processes can hardly be optimised in an instrumental sense without incurring major harm” (King et al., 2019, p. 3). The move from competition to cooperation is a signal for change. As claimed by de Verteuil and Golubchikov (2016), resilience would be much better suited as a relational rather than individualistic metaphor *for* change, not *against* it.

The rhetoric of tackling (mental) health can paradoxically lead to pressures to constantly outperform oneself and neglect the interconnectivity with a wider ecosystem beyond on-the-job rewards. Different research projects point at the so-called 'hyper-performative cultures' (where the teacher has to respond to perpetual expectations of performance) to negative emotional states linked to anxiety or stress (Perryman, 2007; Skerritt, 2019). Self-care from an existential and structural perspective is not a framework to build heroes. Integrity and authenticity then become more than abstract values on the list of values that teachers need to demonstrate. "While learning as acquisition is about getting more and more, learning as responding is about showing who you are and where you stand" (Biesta, 2006, p. 27). Initial Teacher Education can be an intrinsically meaningful anchor or a competitive race. It could be about learning where you stand or showing how you can run.

3.3 From policy critique to student teachers

One can clearly see limitations in the optimisation critique of policy discourses. The optimisation framework is a macro-level simplification that risks glossing over the many agentic spaces which can be enabled, also by the funding allocated to policy reforms such as the SAC where individuals fill systemic scales with their new visions and meaning:

"the translation of macro imperatives into micro orientations [...] is far too abstract. No one aspires outright to improve the gross domestic product, let alone to accelerate the speed of social life or social innovation per se. Subjects instead strive to improve their individual lots and lives. Thus, the question of how exactly and concretely systemic requirements and individual aspirations are matched or 'harmonised' is still open" (Rosa et al., 2018, p. 37)

In the analytical battle between optimisation (theorised as a mode of aggression) and de-optimisation (theorised as a reaction to this aggression), there is little nuance allowed. Still, arguing for a sphere of de-optimisation dislocates the construction of my own arguments from a vocabulary that I do not adhere to (the narrow definitions of attainment and the technical language of formal schooling) into the peripheries of the research-policy-practice triangle. While my observations of a self-perpetuating 'gap trap' are not argued with the same 'robust' data sets as most of positivist attainment literatures, my aim to elaborate on the detouring of attainment discourses does not primarily lie in accumulating more data. I rather seek to broaden the scope of knowledge that can be considered as relevant in order to imagine meaningful ITE policy reform for a use of intrinsically meaningful outdoor literacies.

3.3.1 The context of the MSc TLT

For this field work, I was working with the second-year cohort of an innovative, ambitious programme, described as “Scotland’s first two-year ITE programme; an ITE programme which would uniquely qualify graduates to teach across the primary/secondary transition, and which would be underpinned by an explicit social justice/transformational pedagogy” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 639). This PhD is not focused on the evaluation of this Masters programme, but the context and choice of affiliation for my research with a specific programme still matters for several reasons. As I entered the Moray House School of Education in October 2018, the second cohort had just started their journey on the MSc Transformative Learning and Teaching (MSc TLT). 11 months on, in September 2019, I had the privilege to ‘inaugurate’ their second year through my proposed optional workshop which also initiated my field work. Timing mattered.

Temporal context

The first distinction to make in comparison with other ITE routes is temporal. As the student teachers pointed out to me in September 2019, they came back to university after a first year on the programme, while those having chosen a PGDE diploma course had no second year on campus. They went directly into a probationer year. This felt strange to the second year students on the MSc, but this fact also made my own work with them possible. The MSc TLT represents a slower route into teaching, less time-compressed than other qualifications. It would have been a struggle in itself for my PhD planning to find a time slot in the PGDE curriculum to meet and explain my de-optimised approach. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that time itself on this programme was continuously contested like in any other curricular models. The MSc has been crucial in opening up different temporalities of ITE, but its novelty and spotlight also led to re-occupying these temporalities through ever-changing staff-led activities. This was best expressed in the words of the student teachers taking part in my study: ‘No, that’s when we have the hut!’, was once voiced as a vocal resistance to an unexpected and previously unannounced occupation of the shepherd’s hut timeslot by another programme activity. Even in a 2-year programme, a free time slot reserved for the hut sessions had to be defended against the persistent increase of activities in university schedules. What I tried to propose to some extent was a ‘non-activity’, a hut time.

Diversifying ITE narratives

A further aspect that needs to be pointed out is the distinct capacity of this MSc to recruit non-linear profiles into teaching. The programme has a history of going actively against the policy stream of “quick-fix proposals to a temporary workforce problem, rather than a set of routes coalescing around a shared understanding of the purpose of teacher education” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 640). Valuing sinuous roads into teaching, the MSc TLT provides a very different vision, one of open doors for lived and reflected experience, based on values rather than rigid roads of tick-box admission prerequisites. The programme seeks to support the emergence of activist teachers, but it can also be considered as an activist programme in the sense of wanting to shift ITE against the odds of the dominant narrative. The notion of ‘placement’ is also different from generalised practice, not a modular logic but interwoven throughout: “the MSc TLT has students learning in school contexts for two days per week throughout the programme, with some block periods too” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 642). The aim of this intensely immersive model is to spend more time to allow the placement experience to be a key component for experiential learning to inform the degree trajectory:

“this approach to SBL [Site-based Learning] explicitly rejects previously entrenched hierarchies of knowledge, instead combining teacher, student teacher, university and community knowledge in a much more democratic way” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 643)

However, my research is not situated inside schools or in the creation of lesson plans for schools. My research is concerned with intrinsic sparks of resonance.

3.3.2 Resonance

I was interested to find out more about introspective ways of knowing, something easily forgotten in the focus on classroom practices in ITE. Inward-looking in general is at the centre of possibilities for resonance and aliveness in being: “Resonating with another person, or even with a landscape, a melody, or an idea, means being “inwardly” reached, touched, or moved by them [...] The person or thing from whom or from which we experience such a call appears to us to be not just of instrumental value, but “intrinsically” important” (Rosa, 2020, p. 32). Other landscapes than those of policy help to create instances for resonance with the poetry of daily life. The desire to re-story policy narratives is shared by many in the field: “we are in danger of suppressing the human stories of policy” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 651). By rejecting regimes of efficiency, this research goes specifically into errant exploration and unharvested detours where attainment tests cannot go; leaving the classroom to redefine the wealth of

opportunities for learning that can exist in and beyond an area of highly measured multiple deprivation. This means I situate my work with student teachers in a sphere of the uncontrollable: “because we, as late modern human beings, aim to make the world controllable at every level – individual, cultural, institutional, and structural – we invariably encounter the world [...] as a series of objects that we have to know, attain, conquer, master, or exploit. And precisely because of this, “life,” the experience of feeling alive and of truly encountering the world – that which makes *resonance* possible – always seems to elude us” (Rosa, 2020, p. 4). Something new may come from unknowing this control.

Micro-resistances

No individual is only determined by an overarching optimisation apparatus. I am therefore not primarily concerned with finding more empirical evidence for the loud sociological optimisation claims I have previously applied. I am not interested in conceptually elaborating more on these hegemonic forces of optimisation by perfection, by increase and by competition. Using these terms has helped to break open the rigid debate into a de-optimised zone for detours and to descend from the skyscrapers. There is a lot of agency that student teachers can explore, nurture and maintain despite the dominant cultures of optimisation. The question is how. Concrete methodologies for de-optimisation are much more rarely discussed than the grand policy discourses and the grand critical counter-narratives. In what way can intrinsic cartographies provide different stories from the clear road maps into attainment success? Caring for the new means moving on from the de-optimisation informed by critical theory, but not to firmly occupy a functionalist, allegedly ‘better’ response. A post-critical stance entails

“creating a space of thought that enables practice to happen anew. This means (re)establishing our relation to our words, opening them to question, and giving philosophical attention to these devalued aspects of our forms of life, and thus – in line with a principled normativity – to defend these events as autotelic, not functionalised, but simply worth caring for”. (Hodgson et al., 2018, p. 17)

In order to avoid the policy-versus-critique dualism, a safe space is now offered to student teachers where they can completely forget about attainment. This detour is at all times connected to these deeper questions which lie behind the functionalist frame. They are invited to map their inner cartographies for imperfect fragments, decreased pressures and uncompetitive peer care.

3.3.3 Alternative cartographies: from expansion to stillness

This research is not primarily concerned with power, or with teacher agency as a theoretical construct that assesses the capacities of teachers to journey externally, in classrooms and institutional spheres. A different road map for ITE reform is suggested. This intrinsic journeying still requires maps for navigation, but in what ways do my imagined existential disorientation maps differ from the practices of cartography as orientation? The cartographic literacy expected for engaging with the Scottish Attainment Challenge reminds me of Borges' short parable "Museum, on Exactitude of Science", in which the critique of empiricism is highlighted by the failure to obtain the perfect scientific map:

"In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless..." (Borges cited in Vrbančić, 2012, p. 1)

The SIMD maps have colour-coded postcode areas through a set of data. These rankings are part of the cartographer's register to create exactitudes. But if we engage too much with the Western positivist *deficit* map, then we only talk about the *deficit* focus which has already been identified as a *deficit* for research angles; and by looking at *deficit* and then critiquing the *deficit* of the *deficit* map, we are only surrounded by *deficit*; everything becomes *deficitary* and binds the imagination; there is no more escape from *deficit*, in one form or the other. The revolving door of *deficit* can be replaced by other navigation 'tools'.

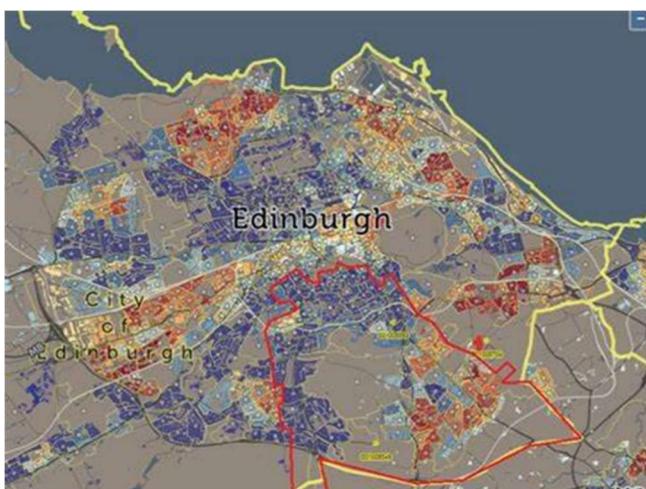


Figure 17: The SIMD map of multiple deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020)

Let us explore how the languages of introspective mapping can rescript the stories fixated on poverty behind the label of SIMD. A different cartographic language may account for the many small ‘challenges’ as resources silenced within the one overarching national ‘Challenge’ towards attainment. Contemporary cartography has to engage in a work of retrieval: Western “maps were stripped of spiritual space [...] cartographers were involved in the production of abstract and functional systems based on mathematically rigorous depiction” (Vrbančić, 2012, p. 2). Maps in the West could for a long time be identified as the communicative tools of authority and hierarchy. With the extensions of power also comes the ideology of territorialism, expansionism and control: “whoever had the map, in other words the immediate vision of an immense territory, could capture in one look the full extension of their territories and colonies, and was assured of having complete control over those, and thus over the communities that inhabited these areas” (Rekacewicz, 2022, p. 211). Counter-hegemonic practices have distanced themselves from Western cartography and move back into indigenous imaginaries to “challenge dominant cartographic imaginations and methods that exclude all non-European modes of knowledge and representation” (Halder & Michel, 2018, p. 16). We can see counter-maps emerging from positivist ruins.

My research methodology to come will not build on ideas of expansive ‘infrastructures’: “power always manifests itself in the expansion of one’s own share of the world, often at the expense of others” (Rosa, 2020, p. 18). Mapping intrinsic journeying in one’s own ecosystem is about meaning-making, not new territorial claims. The colonial cartography wants to own these lands on which its explorations build: “the development of infrastructure, made far-away lands penetrable, more easily and more quickly accessible, while political and administrative structures allowed European expansionists to exploit economic resources and to manipulate social processes, often violently” (Rosa, 2020, p. 16). In a planet of scarce resources, exponential growth of activity reflects destructive market forces of commodification and extraction. Intrinsic worlds can also become penetrable by roads, but here, these roads are detours of wonder and witnessing, not data highways for drilling into other people’s intimate spheres. The aim in the chapters to come will be the *preservation* of those intangible and timid resources for ‘acknowledging differently’ what student teacher life worlds could be. I will *not* be drilling for more and more data. The difference lies in the way

that I invite student teachers to relocate their attention away from the contested territories of schools to their inner worlds as a form of introspective existential care.

From a cartographer's dream to dreamers' cartographies

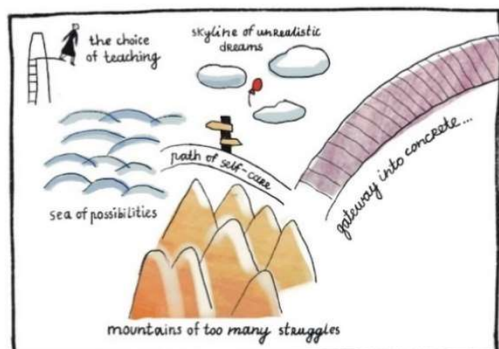
The one move I now ask the reader to make for this research with student teachers is a very significant shift. It challenges the designing of certainties through interview techniques, focus groups and surveys, the drilling for robust data through trialled and tested methodological infrastructure. In the ways many dominant and approved research tools are applied, the language in which a researcher writes and the map on which one roams still refers to the text of exact science, responds to these territories. It is necessary to trouble the assumption that capturing data and then extracting knowledge automatically means ethically holding the narrative of the researched. It may mean holding evidence for anything the dominant referential frame for measurable findings wants to hear. There may be a sense of control, but a deeper resonance may escape without the researcher even noticing. The researcher who is writing towards the script of exact science may not even know what possibility slipped out of that encounter. The absence of something hidden, invisible and scientifically unhoused may not matter, will not get noticed as a lack. The question that I will now ask throughout the second part of my PhD research attempts to refer to another language: "Methodologically, how as researchers can we make that move into the text of the other?" (Jazeel, 2019, p. 9).

The text that I am trying to move to is the text of dreamers. I came to see the student teachers of my study first and foremost as those dreamers who opt for a precarious profession saturated with self-sacrifice, but who nevertheless opted for that profession for some reason. The text that my research ought to move to is the one of personal idealism and professional dreams. What I am interested to find out is the way singular cartographies position intrinsic sparks. Or will the student teachers only draw their routines? My research participants will be invited to take detours into the wildlife corridors of their own intrinsic ecologies under threat of workloads which have proven to become unsustainable for so many who later quit their chosen profession. In a focus on the small, fragile personal stories, not tangible performance indicators for lesson plans, participants can consolidate their inner values. The significant move towards a free-roaming understanding of initial teacher education means that in my field work, I will mute the cartographer's dream (and sometimes obsession) with measurable outcomes to make way for the rarely witnessed *dreamers' cartographies*.

Interlude: Resting with a poster

An arts-based methodology for existential care in ITE: student teachers' mapping of their journeys into *meaningful* teaching

Context: invitation for monthly, extracurricular meetings to a whole cohort of student teachers (MSc TLT), 12 participants signed up for 4 thematic sessions in small groups (length: around 120 minutes each)



Fluid thematic sessions: sea of possibilities, path of self-care, skyline of unrealistic dreams...



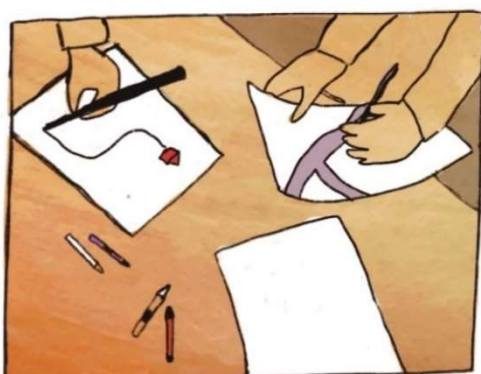
Meeting in the shepherd's hut: a safe space on campus where in- and outdoors connect.



The first 30 minutes - being instead of doing: arriving in the wood fire temporality...



next 30 minutes - a pedagogy of the question: an affinity space with reflexivity prompts...



next 30 minutes - silent, introspective mapping: subjective cartographies of own meaning-making...



final 30 minutes - sharing and peer feedback: collective witnessing of mapping creations.

Christian H Hanser, c.hanser@ed.ac.uk, Moray House School of Education and Sport
PhD research funded by Scottish Attainment Challenge Research Project 2018-2021, illustrator Tanya Kuznetsova



Figure 18: Conference Poster (Illustrations by Tanya Kuznetsova)

Chapter 4: An arts-based methodology for the crafts of existential care

A cohort of student teachers is invited to enter a shepherd's hut on a regular basis. All they are asked to do is to take time off in an unusual location. They sit down and welcome storytelling and wonder to make sense of their busy lives between university and school placements. As the wood fire crackles, relational stillness helps to explore paths towards self-care, identify the mountains of too many struggles, breathe, rant, laugh and dream. The researcher's role is to sit and witness discreetly, not to give constant input or to capture the moment. As a modest step to the undoing of scientific mastery, improvisation now cultivates trust that the philosophical, material and temporal fabric of the hut may allow singular narrations to emerge. Nothing tangible appears to occur, but a lot is happening on the intrinsic roads of those who take seat. The use of subjective mapping encourages playful life story arts. Student teachers imaginatively spatialise their own trajectories. The shepherd's hut as a host holds open a temporary 'safe space' for existential time and helps to draw the contours of introspective peer care.



Figure 19: A chapter to discover 'student teachers as dreamers' cartographies

4.1 Research question and case study research

The second part of this PhD now focuses on the trajectories of student teachers on their journeys into meaningful teaching. In the next three chapters I therefore provide the framework through which I have investigated my research question moving away from optimisation and competition to an idea of existential care:

“How do student teachers navigate between their own ideas, hopes and dreams for meaningful teaching and the professional reality and routine of their placement institution?”

What is the necessary methodological move from the cartographer’s dream (of exactitude) to the dreamer’s cartography (of possibility)?

The chosen framework can be situated in qualitative arts-based research. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of student teachers’ negotiations of meaning, I use case study as my major approach to research and evaluation: “Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution or system in a “real-life” context” (Simons, 2009, p. 21). I look at the case study of facilitating sessions of ‘existential care’ with student teachers. These were optional arts-based activities. Chapter 4 allows to understand the processes of the field work by introducing subjective and existential mapping inside the affinity space of the shepherd’s hut. After the discussion of the overall case study process, I evidence, situate and interpret the singularities emerging in the process through two “case profiles” (Simons, 2020, p. 681) of artistic artefacts created by my research participants. Chapter 5 therefore provides an interpretive description (Thorne, 2020) of specific mapping portfolios, which connect the expression of singularity in student teacher journeys as existential and experiential becomings to the applied field of teacher education. The mapping profiles of these two student teachers evidence the emancipatory potential that can be generated through existential care. The ethics of visual research are discussed in detail. The in-betweens of arts-based research create challenging positionalities for validity claims and public impact. The need of protection of intimate narratives is highlighted. Chapter 6 therefore situates the overall findings in the wider issues of reporting, societal usefulness and curricular reform. I follow the encouragement of Simons (2020) to assess my contributions to knowledge according to creative chances that a PhD as training route for risky, experimental research entails: “to facilitate use in policymaking and practice [and] to think more imaginatively about design” (p. 676).

Case study research

Case study research (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Merriam, 1988) is a flexible framework which allows to combine and mix a range of creative methods and research paradigms (Greene, 2007), particularly through the use of the arts (Simons, 2020) in order to gain a rich and multi-layered understanding of a unique case. Case study research therefore provides an adaptive scaffolding for zooming into the singular approach of sitting together and being with student teachers around a wood fire stove. My research design allows to observe the unprecedented use of a shepherd's hut as a methodological vehicle for the inner exploration of student teachers' life worlds, while at the same time gaining insights about the concrete existential processes of meaning-making for possible recommendations within wider Initial Teacher Education (ITE) curricular reform. My perspective falls within the fluid in-betweens of a constructivist, interpretivist framework. I am curious about the intrinsic processes of meaning-making and interpretations in the social, professional as well as contemplative lived realities of my research participants. I also investigate how novel, meaningful curricular spaces are constructed and/or co-constructed through the extra-curricular and optional space and time that I proposed as a form of *existential care*.

4.2 Affinity space and existential care

It is the use of the shepherd's hut as a site of inquiry which connects all parts of this doctoral thesis. This use is not fixed and static, and the role of this hut space varies significantly from one to the other chapter. The way the research question above is answered demonstrates similarities but also differences with the vagabond approach adopted in previous chapters. In section 1.3.3., I have outlined my daily practice of existential care. In this chapter, existential care as an applied space and stance for listening will now also form part of a research methodology. This implies a commitment to providing a frame in which intrinsic meaning-making can become more tangible. This is discussed in detail in section 4.2.2. Inspired by Winnicott, the hut can be theorised as a "holding environment" (Honig, 2015, p. 627). Situated in high-exposure environments, "pedagogical publics as holding environments [...] bring adults and young people together in spaces where existential questions can be asked, loss and grief transformed, and visions of a more sustainable future thought out without having all the answers [...] and offer a structure in which we can all be 'existentially held' in troubling times" (Bergdahl & Langmann, 2022, p. 8). Such holding environments are then both

public and private, invitations for (introvert) conviviality as well as safe spaces to seek refuge. The philosophy of in-betweens becomes tangible through the hut space.

4.2.1 The role of the shepherd's hut

The relationship and link between the shepherd's hut itineraries so far and its relevance to the teaching profession may not be evident at first sight. This second part of the thesis now situates the focus on invisible curricular spaces of emotion and existential meaning-making. Developing a research design through spaces of *being* is highly unusual within the field of Initial Teacher Education that is known for its prioritising of *doing* (Nilsson et al., 2015). In my field work, student teachers meet up in the shepherd's hut as an 'affinity space' (see 4.2.4) to share stories informally, to dream about their profession as a peer group, and to create intrinsic cartographies of their individual journeys into teaching. It will be argued that the cultivation of unconditional and non-judgmental spaces as existential care is mediated by the hut. The shepherd's hut becomes a methodological foundation of this caring approach.

After the previous restlessness of vagabond educating, the thesis has now reached the relational stillness of the shepherd's hut. In this part, the hut provides a regular, scheduled session in the same location rather than itinerancy and spontaneous pop-up encounter. There is no geographically aimless wandering, instead directionality in service of the prospects of wandering in intrinsic spheres. In some ways, the methodological approach still stays 'vagabond' as it is concerned with roaming in personal wildlife corridors, these intrinsic spheres which generally remain intangible, incomplete and untranslatable to the external lens. It moves towards *crafts* of existential care: crafting the narratives of the singular. The hut now hosts fixed, formalised groups. For the research with student teachers, the hut is no longer primarily identified as a classroom for vagabond educating, but instead as a *safe and nested learning space* used for reflexivity as a form of extracurricular sanctuary.

The overall case study is not about the effectiveness of the shepherd's hut as this would bind the whole research endeavour to a future reliance on shepherd's huts in educational settings. If the need of shepherd's huts for Scottish education was the insight from this research, it would be an evaluative design, but the case study looks at complexity beyond the materiality of this specific vehicle. Instead, the extracurricular sanctuary of the shepherd's hut is the element to investigate the 'immaterial' that existential care can reveal. Other components of the case study are introduced, involving mapping and temporal reflexivity. While the case

study is not about the shepherd's hut as a classroom, it is important to highlight the role of the outdoor learning space to 'set the scene' of this unprecedented methodology for existential care. The mapping processes facilitated in the shepherd's hut with student teachers are not 'neutral', space-blind activities that could just be rapidly initiated in any other setting, in any kind of seminar room. For existential care to be researched, the hut was vital to "envision emotions not only as being conscious and representable, but also as being locatable within both bodies and the spatial contexts in which they are felt" (Caquard & Griffin, 2018, p. 14). In other words, the activity of mapping existential journeys required a special, protective atmosphere.

4.2.2 Perceiving ITE through existential time

Working directly with the context of ITE implies that I took steps into the field of teacher education by bringing the hut on the campus of a School of Education. And, by doing so, I could allow my participants to take a step out of the narrowly timed and often standardised chronologies of teacher education. The micro-vehicle was becoming a carrier of temporal dissensus (Berg, 2018). The disruptive synergy between the Moray House Quad and the temporarily installed hut therefore forms an integral part of this field work: within the formal and regulated environment of a university campus, a different type of venue was installed over an extended period of time, with occasional absences for conferences and other journeys. What was revealing about the hut during this on-campus research was the constant renegotiation of timescales and public pedagogies as informal and open learning. My hut sessions were placed at timetabling margins as liminal extra-curricularity but were also centrally visible at all times on the busy campus zone.

The shepherd's hut was 'scheduled' differently as an intriguing retreat venue which escaped the need for room bookings and linear management of space/time. The public practice of installing a mobile shepherd's hut on a central campus meant coming and going, playing with the temporalities of departures, returns, and unavailabilities in a vagabond way. The affective choreography of stillness (Conradson, 2013) was noticed and then sparked more and more encounters, with student teachers, staff, and those who had signed up for the Centre for Open Learning's adult education classes next door. Such flows and pop-up encounters could equally have been stopped through linear timetabling, but instead it set a precedent for a logic of unmetabling, administered entirely outdoors. The hut became a fluid, moving *unit of*

analysis, a mooring for my research which was embedded in a civic, public vision of time. My field work for Initial Teacher Education was therefore framed from the start through a civic dimension, which makes a crucial difference for facilitating temporal reflexivity with student teachers as a shared questioning beyond scheduling and efficiency: “how we can secure a democratic accommodating of multiplicities of times” (Valkenburg, 2022, p. 449).



Figure 20 a/b: The shepherd's hut installed as a public shelter within Moray House

Time in my proposed sessions of peer care was conceptualised as ‘existential time’. This understanding can be found in the indirect approach to educational interactions theorised by Sæverot (2013; 2022) as ‘indirect pedagogy’ which stresses the importance of holding open a space in which other temporalities form part of a horizon of possibility but do not steer the pedagogical encounter into frameworks of outcome and predictability:

“to create a room where the student is given the opportunity, notably on a voluntary basis, to take the leap into the existential sphere. [...] there is no guarantee that such a form of subjectification will happen, but as long as the door is kept open there is such an opportunity, after which existential time can occur (without end).” (Sæverot, 2013, p. 20)

Reflexivity about caring temporalities was grounded in an idea of existential time as *unoccupied* by a distinct ideology mainly in order to make room for the singular expression of the student teachers: “above all of avoiding that the time and space in which the question of meaning arises be filled (occupied or closed). It is a matter of giving a chance to the disquietude that keeps the mind alert and so also attentiveness to the world.” (Masschelein, 1998, p. 382). I did not seek to develop a module to transmit effective “slow pedagogies”

although this literature certainly enriched my own design. Emphasising the 'slow' (Carlsen & Clark, 2022) would already have approved a specific ideology in response to the accelerations of society. The cosiness of the shepherd's hut was actually intended as a pedagogy of temporal *discomforts*, as a subtle form of unsettling. The cosiness allows to perceive the discrepancy between usual compressed time and this paused and suspended hut time and to then explore further what variety could potentially be noticed in between. The sitting around a wood fire stove can be understood as a tranquil way of perceiving a dominant temporal order, but only as a springboard for further temporal learning without a specific agenda to achieve 'slow': "no demands to neither produce nor achieve. The 'being in doing' is enough in itself, and means revived energy" (Nilsson et al., 2015, p. 56). I therefore invited research participants to wander off into own existential perception of journeying with time, in the hope that this freedom may reveal something "more fundamental than mere acceleration or deceleration" (Valkenburg, 2022, p. 448) as dominant binaries somewhat perpetuating the idea that teachers only have a choice between 'burn out' and 'drop out' over the course of a career.

One can question the prevailing assumption that teacher education has to prepare pre-service teachers how to function in "clock time" (Franch & Souza, 2015) in order to nurture aptitude for the later job. What would be learned from questioning the taken-for-granted benefits of "tidy chronological time" (Shelton & Melchior, 2020, p. 54) which teachers encounter in their school environments? In developing my research methodology of existential care, I constantly asked myself how I could connect to the life worlds of student teachers through their temporal perceptions, their own intrinsic perceptions of 'time poverty' (Szollos, 2009) and find out how they negotiated the externally scheduled temporal regimes of schools in their introspective spatio-temporal meaning-making. For this I had developed a fluid thematic map to guide sessions with my research participants. The arts-based sessions which followed the initial 'hut experience day' (introduced in 1.2) played with the historical binary of time for *doing* and time for *being*. Student teachers could sign up for the hut session as an 'activity', but one for *existential becoming* by reducing as much as possible the standardised structuring of the pedagogical encounter around content delivery, aims and objectives. Wonder is a license to play. This step aside follows Freire's idea of the game: "we are normally more submerged than emerged with our daily lives. It should be possible to get

a distance on these facts; and in this way life would be a game” (Brass & Macedo, 1985, p. 10). My own input was therefore reduced to a minimum in order to engage in informal, unrecorded, unscripted storytelling as peer care. Surprise, daydreaming and improvisation were explicitly allowed: “Enjoy not having made any plans. To have the freedom of doing precisely what feels right at that moment, or deciding not to do anything at all.” (Nilsson et al., 2015, p. 56). A map I had conceptualised based on my observations of what was missing in discussions during my first observational year in the Scottish Council of Deans of Education collaborative research project was presented to my potential research participants as a fluid road map into our four thematic sessions (for the invitation letter before this session, see appendix 6). I collected “foreshadowed issues” (Simons, 2020, p. 686) around ITE on an existential level and was helped by a professional illustrator to display them as a set of overlapping landscapes, an invitation to explore in a phenomenological curiosity. The map below portrays these thematic sessions as floating, overlapping and interconnected existential landscapes of exploratory questioning rather than clearly separated content units.

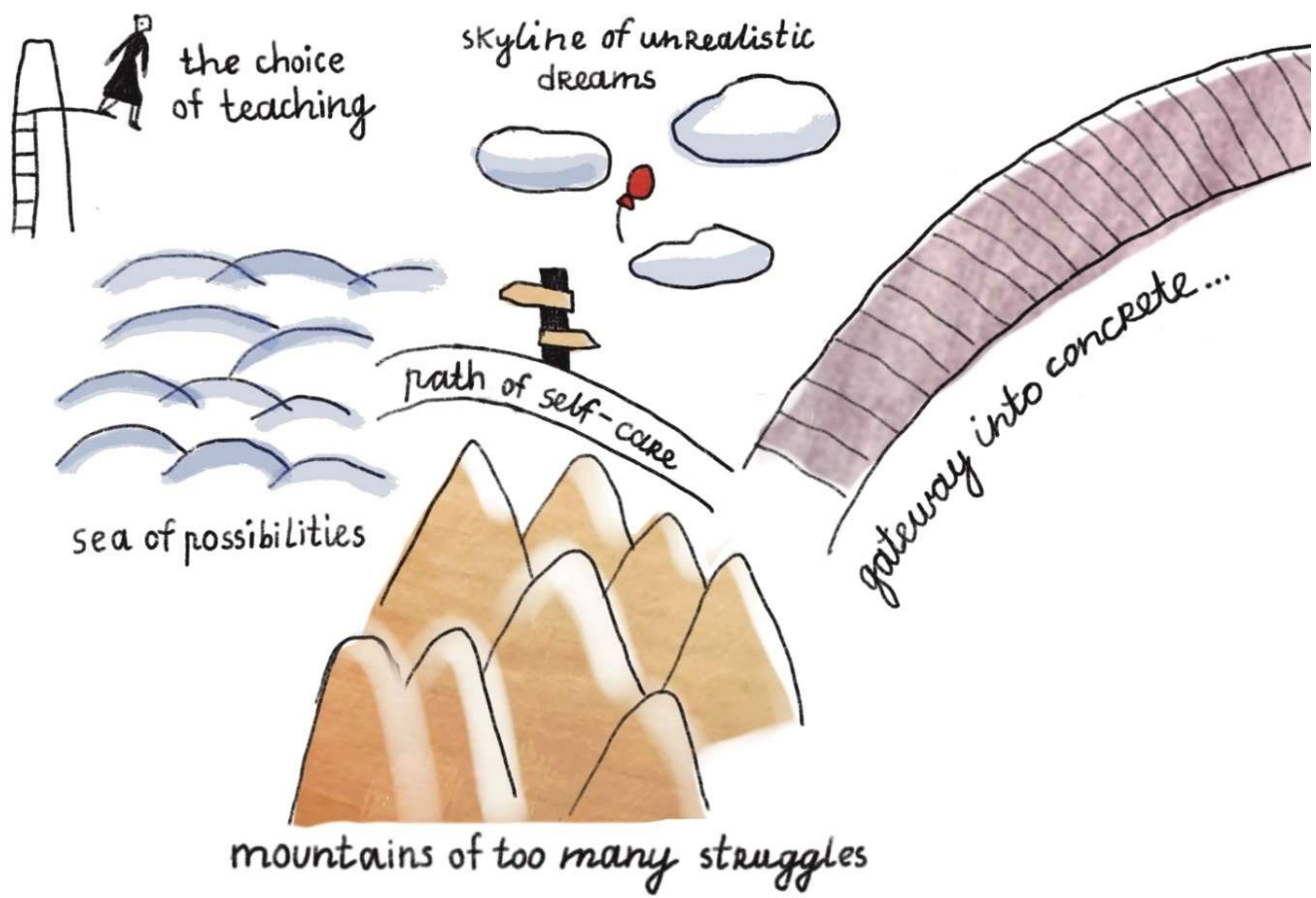


Figure 21: My proposed road map for hut sessions (illustrations: Tanya Kuznetsova)

A different kind of scheduling with existential care: between curriculum and social life

To introduce another angle to comprehend this indirect approach to building trust, I want to point at the communication that developed throughout the research process, especially in the back and forth of finding suitable dates for the different mapping sessions in the midst of the more and more intense MSc schedule in December. The scheduling was not organised by the University’s programme secretary, but by my own e-mail reminders. I was trying to make myself less visible to allow the student teachers’ own space for becoming in between the formal activities for credit and the social life of peer groups in this cohort. One student’s e-mail shows how my proposed hut sessions were becoming part of student teachers’ own social lives. She writes: “Hi, I actually have a flat viewing on Friday so would prefer to do next week. I’d do Tues or wed but Tues will have to be after 11 if possible? I’d still be up for lunch after...always up for lunch haha. Cheers”. Student teachers used the e-mail exchange for a mapping session to equally organise their social activities at the same time. I was neither

excluded nor invited, which meant that I could therefore witness how the research participants made this mapping activity an intermediary, an interstitial environment between formal scheduling and peer socialising. It happened frequently that research participants rescheduled for the hut sessions and saw them as intertwined, fluidly connected with their wider life worlds and social sphere.

4.2.3 Perceiving ITE through (lack of) contemplative space

The temporal positioning of methodological processes as ‘existential time’ provided a form of safeguarding that the shepherd’s hut as the spatial methodological anchor would not become part of the ITE ‘furniture’. When the hut arrived on the Moray House Quad and created interest from all adjacent institutes, there certainly was a risk for it to be overbooked and therefore reproduce accelerated scheduling to meet all the demands and requests brought forward by my new colleagues from different institutes. My proposed methodology instead maintained a spatio-temporal refuge to investigate the often observed, acute lack of regenerative space prevailing in the teaching professions: “Most teachers do not even have an office, let alone a true studio space and the time to explore and renew their craft” (Higgins, 2011, p. 7). There is a silence around this scarcity, which may well be a silence of suppressed needs (Shapiro, 2010) and I was curious to listen to that silence at the very start of my research participants’ teacher journey. One apparent explanation for the lack of nurturing spaces for teachers themselves can be found in a professional ethos of competition, explored through the angle of optimisation (see 3.2.3) or in a culture of self-sacrifice. The focus on spatio-temporal scarcity in teacher lives is only receiving increased scholarly attention in recent years: “Perhaps the single most crucial shift we might make is to widen our focus from a concern largely with the wellbeing of students and take an equal interest in the wellbeing of the hard-pressed staff who work with them. Student wellbeing is not going to be cultivated by burnt out and cynical staff, overwhelmed by pressures from having to deliver the instrumental curriculum” (Weare, 2022, X). I hoped to create an alternative to dominant trainings that prepare individual teachers to better manage workloads.

The attention on incessant activity and impact does not easily allow the time and space to critically reflect on the set-up of learning or to develop awareness for regenerative spaces and learning atmospheres.

“Despite the rhetoric of personalisation, fitting-for-purpose means that academics and students need to be moulded to fit standardised practices such as ratio of staff, work allocation formulas for marking, and built environment specifications (based on optimum benchmark bodies to fit furniture, etc.)” (Campbell, 2020).

Teachers are not usually supported in their agency to reshape the pre-established furniture of their schools, including the embodied ‘furnitures’ of functional efficiency. They are expected to fit into an existing built environment that reflects very narrow ideas of performance. One may have to ask what kind of external rooms and different temporalities should be invited in. For teachers, policy reforms are often experienced as additional expectations and pressures (Lasky, 2009) loaded onto a long “laundry list of expectations” (Webb, 2009, p. 125) to be enacted as tick-box tasks in their classrooms. This research offered the possibility to make use of an alternative ITE site and hence allowed to introduce a different kind of ‘furniture range’ to an invited group of student teachers. That space can therefore be characterised as a temporary sanctuary delivered onto campus. For making the shepherd’s hut relevant to the teaching profession, I started imagining how ‘safe spaces’ - settings that allow to step out of professional immediacies to experience unconditional being, listening and care - could be used to find out more about student teachers’ intrinsic struggles. The feedback from the student teachers after bringing this unusual learning environment at an early stage into one of their on-campus MSc teaching days (see chapter 1) also confirmed that there was a lack of these kind of divergent, disruptive spaces in the teaching profession. Nurture sessions exist for children, but there is far less discussion about nurture spaces for teachers themselves to cultivate meaning-making, a concern which is not compatible with schedules and therefore often sacrificed because of full to-do-lists of daily routines.

4.2.4 Asking research questions by means of an affinity space

The possibility to use the unprecedented methodological space of the shepherd’s hut in the context of ITE allowed me to approach student teachers differently. Instead of researching teacher identities in advance, it was essential for the focus of this PhD to embrace incompleteness (from a vagabond understanding of disciplinary knowledge), outsidership (from my spatial understanding of formal educational spheres) and personal existential introspection (as something different from teacher training but also different from supervision or therapy) as valuable contributions to ITE. I assume that many trained teachers, and teacher educators who then become researchers, may immediately see student teachers

through the professional lens, maybe even refer to them as a community of practice from the outset. Methodologically driven, I was not immediately inclined to advance the body of literature on teacher identity, teacher agency etc. I did not perceive the participants for my study in the first place through the construct of teacher identity. Spelling this out does not have to be seen as a thematic irrelevance, but can lead to a lens for understanding student teacher journeys that is rare to find. The contribution to new knowledge about student teachers from this doctoral thesis paradoxically starts by accepting that, in this inquiry, my participants are not first and foremost categorised by their future professional identity, but instead connected through a space for wider existential caring. My methodology has a very different departure point from the majority of studies emerging from within Initial Teacher Education. I apply James Gee's concept of the 'affinity space' (2004; 2014) to carve out this distinctive feature of my ITE research: the possibility "that (at least sometimes) we start with "spaces" and not groups" (Gee, 2004, p. 71).

Accepting that the departure points for answering my research question are situated in a fluid methodological space does not mean that researching through the angle of a specific community of practice (Wenger, 2009), for example in the context of my ITE programme one of activist student teachers as sketched out by Kennedy (2018), is impossible. What I am arguing, however, is that there may be more interesting and novel openings to frame this research before we settle prematurely on the term 'activist teacher identity' which responds to the need for clear-cut categories in the promotion of novel programmes and the classification of a future ITE work force. In order to investigate student teacher life worlds, it may be helpful to rest on "the idea of a space in which people interact, rather than on membership in a community" (Gee, 2004, p. 70). The notion of community is problematic and often contradictory. While there is a desire to assign community and belonging with its warm, harbouring connotations (Brent, 2004), there are also divisions created by deciding who is in and who is out (Shaw, 2008). Reducing the role of community and of professional affiliation can be helpful to imagine classrooms beyond walls, and teachers beyond teaching duties. To get to know student teachers and their own intrinsically perceived belonging, we have to critically question the constant practices of grouping cohorts together as if they were homogenous workforces. The often artificially created narratives around belonging may be

ambiguous and frame professional trajectories in a way that speaks to the overarching need of linear order for the efficiency of working life:

“The idea of “community” can carry connotations of “belongingness” and close-knit personal ties among people which do not necessarily always fit classrooms, workplaces, or other sites where the notion of a community of practice has been used. [...] If we start with the notion of a “community” we can’t go any further until we have defined who is in and who is not, since otherwise we can’t identify the community. Yet it is often issues of participation, membership, and boundaries that are problematic in the first place” (Gee, 2004, pp. 70- 71)

In my approach, the notion of holding open a re-humanising space is more important than team-building activities or a detailed definition of teacher characteristics and standards. Not prescribing agenda, imposing outcome or delimiting a territory is what makes room for affinities. However, it is rather unusual to perceive educational institutions through the lens of affinity. For James Gee, it is “instructive to compare affinity spaces to the sorts of spaces that are typical in schools, which usually do not have the features of affinity spaces” (2004, p. 75). The shepherd’s hut seen as an affinity space then moves away from an understanding of gathered student teachers as clearly defined communities of practice with strategic learning outcomes defining the session protocol. The approach instead provides a spatial anchor from which existential perspectives of student teacher trajectories can arise. I did not label the group for my field work, I tried to *unlabel* the research participants through the creation of an immersive and affective atmosphere which inspires existential affinities in order to preserve the possibility for singularity to arise. As Gee (2004) argues, “If we start by talking about spaces rather than “communities,” we can then go on and ask to what extent the people interacting within a space, or some subgroup of them, do or do not actually form a community” (p. 71). I would therefore describe the atmosphere in which this part of my research has taken place as an affective environment for *existential care*, grounded in the experimental idea of temporal reflexivity and non-judgmental affinity spaces.

It is also necessary here to clearly indicate my own bias with which I enter the field of Initial Teacher Education. I have tried to step back from this critical position but am well aware that the way I have approached student teachers is not a neutral stance. There is no point in hiding the fact that the space of the shepherd’s hut had been there first in this research, not the affiliation to a discipline or to a specific field. My research did not aim to occupy:

“Inhabitant knowledge is the knowledge that we build up as we go along. It is part of our way of being in the world, and to acknowledge as much signals a willingness to surrender spurious mastery of a field. Occupant knowledge, on the other hand, is associated with a form of dominion: it comes with mastery of a particular territory. For example, if I say ‘I am a social scientist’, the implication is that I have mastered a particular field, or have a thorough grounding in a particular discipline. I have marked out (or ‘mapped out’) my territory, and I know roughly where it begins and where it ends” (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009, p. 272)

PhD research with my shepherd’s hut could also have taken place in any other institute of the Moray House School of Education and Sport, with community educators, with outdoor educators, with literacy activists etc., or with social workers or counsellors from other Schools on their way into their own profession. As I had always worked across the territories of disciplines and professional titles, my research did not need to speak to one specific community of practice. In my application for a funded PhD, my intention had been primarily to work with the shepherd’s hut and not a predefined participant category. The direct link with the Scottish Attainment Challenge and teacher education was established through the advertised PhD position. Funding finally decided that my approach which had developed around the shepherd’s hut and not around a specific professional code could now be applied to the context of ITE. I made it fit. This transparency around the choice of ITE as the framing of the second part of this PhD is necessary in order to then constructively move on from what could be seen as a ‘deception’ to those expecting me to ‘occupy’ ITE and mark my territory.

Research ethics as encounter beyond labels

At the same time, I never intended to make student teachers the *décor* and backdrop of a purely methodological study. Situating my study inside ITE, with a focus on methodology, allowed a very unique angle to investigate the outsides of ITE research. Researchers firmly established in ITE sometimes struggle with this, as an example suggests:

“Although the aim was to include many aspects of a teacher's life, it is clear that we have not succeeded to do so. [...] We have made large efforts during the interviews to include the private domain, but somehow the conversations always came back to work. One explanation for this might be that most interviews took place at the school, and the common element among the focus group participants was work. However, future research should aim at including the private domain to a larger extent, since from the individual teacher's perspective, work and private life are interrelated and both constitute his/her everyday life.” (Nilsson et al., 2015, p. 59)

Stepping back from the major terms of ITE expertise may be helpful here to close a gap, the one of a methodological incapacity to make room for the person behind the dominant, sometimes all-occupying professional roles, identities, masks and self-defences. If academic research really wanted participants to connect with themselves and with each other beyond their working lives, then this requires a distinct spatial and temporal framing of my methodology. In my view, reaching teachers as whole persons demands a revision of methodological certainties and this is what I have tried to do by answering the research question firstly through an affinity space for existential time and secondly through playful mapping. Getting permission to enter student teachers' holistic life worlds is not about pressing some 'privacy' buttons at the end of an extractivist, results-driven interview process. I could not offer an insider space. But I could offer a methodological space to allow student teachers to step *aside* in a field which asks to have internalised the teaching standards in the record time of a postgraduate degree. Meeting half-way would not invite student teachers to build escape routes from teaching, but to nurture the plurality of existential perspectives rather than a mono-cultural work identity. My methodological stepping-out space is a temporary detour to nurture aspirations and dreams at the early stage of a teaching career.

Neither an ethnographic study nor an ethnography of the hut

It is important to understand that the use of the hut is more than just a technique. The use of the hut was my methodological grounding as it has grown over 10 years in many educational settings. While full-time researchers would receive in such a duration a lot of formal training in established methodological affiliations, for example become ethnographers, my own training as a full-time facilitator of vagabond educating can also be understood as expertise for qualitative inquiry. Operating with the hut clarifies the foundations for my own research stance. Using the shepherd's hut is not about adding an innovative tool into the fast-paced coming and going of more or less developed methods innovations: an "ever more fragmented range of research methods training for students where the week-by-week shift between approaches engenders a disjointed view of becoming the researcher" (Mannay, 2015, p. 95). In my case, the unusual researcher stance embodied by a vehicle is held together by years of informal, prefigurative methodological training from the field which does not fit into one box. My research has elements of participant observation but does not sit within an overarching ethnographic approach. My methodology is not ethnographic if the understanding of

ethnography is limited to the everyday of research participants. Student teachers are not observed in their familiar settings such as the classroom or the degree activities. It is precisely by installing the shepherd's hut that they leave their routines to reflect from a different angle. The case study design is anchored in the wider methodological reasoning of the hut. In that sense, the thesis can be found roaming between an ethnography of the hut (as my own daily routine) and the guided tours into intrinsic landscapes that student teachers later provide.

4.2.5 A shared endeavour: arts-based mapping

My aim was to use arts-based, drawing-based mapping alongside the oral storytelling taking place in the hut. In order to investigate student teachers' own *becomings*, my intention was to combine the hut with an arts-based research activity: "what people have an affinity with (or for) in an affinity space is not first and foremost the other people using the space, but the endeavor or interest around which the space is organized" (Gee, 2004, p. 77). The hospitality of the shepherd's hut as a pluralistic site (see also 1.3) allowed to invite other elements to form a "family of eclectic research tools" (Mannay, 2015, p. 97), a 'family of methods' (Lincoln, 2012). Here, my research is situated in "qualitative methods to be conceptualized as a continuum anchored by art and science, with vast middle spaces that embody infinite possibilities for blending artistic, expository, and social scientific ways of analysis and representation" (Ellingson, 2011, p. 595). With a highly experimental methodology carrying the constant risk of 'missing out' on data, I decided that it would be necessary to build up a double-layer and be more reassuring to have a clearer idea about both an endeavour *and* an interest affinity around which my space could be organised in order to attract the student teachers' attention over several months. It was necessary to define the 'endeavour' that would make their interest for the affinity space of the shepherd's hut appealing enough to sign up for these optional hut sessions over a longer period of time. Developing this methodology meant embracing a high level of uncertainty on my side: for how long would student teachers want to visit the loose, optional and floating affinity space in times when their work load of the MSc would be constantly increasing and the in-hut affinities be competing with all other out-of-hut affinities and duties?

Providing an affinity space for artistic bricolage

Claude Lévi-Strauss famously formulated the distinction between bricoleur and engineer (1966), which was later developed into a methodological stance in qualitative inquiry

(Kincheloe, 2012) and is constantly rediscovered for the educational field, also recently for Scottish teacher education (Campbell, 2019). The aim is to open new spaces of singular, value-informed rather than outcomes-driven expressions in formal learning: “the bricoleur is associated with the freedom of broadly conceived outcomes that meet a clear purpose, unspecified methodologies and playfulness, personalised design and service to internalised moral and ethical imperatives. The bricoleur is aesthetically driven; an artist or artisan, innovative and resourceful, intrinsically motivated to make best use of available resources and guided by personal experience and his/her own perceptiveness.” (Campbell, 2019, pp. 33-34). Campbell argues that methodological spaces for the classroom should stay open, as this “lack of specificity should offer further scope for teachers to follow their interests, share their practices, learn from colleagues and continue the process of professional bricolage on an ongoing basis throughout their careers” (2019, p. 36). The lack of teachers’ freedom to sculpture their own creativity frustrates individuals at different career stages.

Mapping as bricolage

Concretely, this meant that participants were invited to craft their subjective cartographies after discussing their own ‘path of self-care’, voicing their ‘too-many-struggles’ and relating what many described as a prevailing culture of self-sacrifice to the individually formulated need of boundaries. Sessions lasted between 90 and 120 minutes, involving collective story time as existential care, silent time to reflect and to draw their intrinsic cartographies. In the end of each session, there was an opportunity to share elements of these maps with others. The session design was about wandering as craft (Vannini & Vannini, 2020) and pedagogical bricolage (Campbell, 2019) and therefore floated as decelerated attentiveness to the situation emerging in the wood fire seminar room. Artistic prompts were brought into this situation, but the activity primarily offered the space for student teachers to talk and create intuitively. The embodied nature of these sessions has been drawn up as a research poster reproduced in the interlude before the start of this chapter. The research poster outlines what happened in the 90–120-minute sessions. In the end of the mapping activity, student teachers had the chance to explain to the others what their crafted maps meant to them: “by handing over creativity (the contents of the research) and its interpretation (an explanation of the contents) to the research participant, the participant is empowered [...] the contents are more culturally exact and explicit, using emotional as well as cognitive ways of knowing” (Huss &

Cwikel, 2005, p. 45). I never intended to meticulously analyse their stories but provide the most inspiring framework possible in order for them to share their own inner treasures.

Mapping techniques

Mapping in my approach never pretended to reflect a cartographic exactitude, a trained geographer's portfolio of cartography knowledge. Human geography has already moved away from such objectivised accounts, for example in the sub-field of 'Subjektive Kartographie', predominantly discussed in the German disciplinary context (Daum & Hasse, 2011). My invitation was to experiment with mapping as the amateur cartography of intuitive bricolage. In order to make this optional activity as meaningful as possible, my way of introducing these sessions was full of sensory stimuli and artefacts, suggesting horizontal accessibility for intentional amateur map-making, not requiring any particular skills-set: "Being radical or critical – or even experimental – does not necessarily mean that we must create new forms, new compositions, and new design. That aspect is without a doubt an essential component of the radical approach. However, we can also be radical through our 'cartographic intention'" (Rekacewicz, 2022, p. 220). I was aware of arts-based approaches' connotations with embarrassment and discomfort for those who are not confident at first sight to use artistic materials (Johnson et al., 2012). In my invitation, there was no need for drawing skills. The aim was to render contours of existence more visible, not to depict completeness as aesthetic proficiency. The *arts* of arts-based research were not integrated for the sake of visual perfectionism, but to craft an externalised expression to one's own intrinsic situation in ITE.

The choice of materials and processes has significant influence for the kind of knowledge generated: "the incorporation of craft materials and practices into research settings has social and cultural dimensions, and is productive of non-linguistic forms of knowledge that may not be effectively captured by more conventional and, arguably, patriarchal forms of research" (Harrison & Ogden, 2021, p. 174). In the overlap between oral storytelling, introspective sketches and beyond-text reflection, I could observe the complementarity of drawings and storytelling. Opening up the activity to the plurality of mapping styles and inspirations provided a way of making existential mapping an act of possible emancipatory expression.



Figure 22 a/b: The introductory mapping session with artefacts

The care for and protection of intrinsic landscapes of student teachers needed to be reflected in my holistic methodological design. When entering the intrinsic landscapes of student teachers, research is obliged to reflect on such acts of hospitality and generosity “to make room for the subjective truth of the Other. This cannot be done directly; it must happen indirectly [...] [it is] far less predictable with regard to its results. It may not even lead to any educative process at all” (Sæverot, 2013, p. 74). A requirement for entering these worlds ethically is to reduce the pressure for results and, as a researcher, *not* to hold all the keys of these processes.

The distinction between maps and mapping

Although the student teachers shared their own narratives accompanying the maps at the end of each session, I did not systematically document their stories by recording voice. I focused on facilitating a process of existential peer care (on mapping), not primarily on the results themselves (on maps). I only captured fragments in my written field notes in the first sessions, only shifted my focus to writing down verbatim quotes in the final sessions (see Appendix 8 for an example of a more substantial transcript). Some maps are now reproduced alongside the methodological preparations of each session. For reasons of scope, not all these maps are discussed in detail, they rather provide a helpful visualisation of the variety of artefacts coming out of the same peer activity. This allows to have an idea of the kind of artefactual crafting that took place through my proposed sessions. The following series of empirical mapping artefacts are given as illustrations of the process with an initial level of interpretation and are not considered as ‘data’ that I will treat further through deeper

thematic analysis. They respond to a basic data analysis understood as data preparation, data exploration, and data reduction (Mills, 2018). They visualise and make concrete what can come out of the mapping to provide a preliminary analysis of the *processes of mapping* as distinct from the idea of *maps* as outcomes in the traditional understanding of research data. The subsequent chapter 5 will then provide a closer look at two student teachers' mapping portfolios, providing a deeper level of interpretation, contextualising the individual student's ecology in the applied fields of teacher education. A more detailed discussions of Ethics negotiations during Covid-19 will follow in chapter 6.

The methodological risk of relational care meant there was a possibility to be left in the end without clear empirical data. Even the storytelling became a research process of undoing scientific mastery. I could have built a safety net through the common practice of recording and transcribing. Why did I preserve an unaudited sphere through the choice of not recording any conversation in the hut? There is a range of empirical elements that my bricolage potentially, tentatively collects. There are story fragments (soundbites) from my unsystematic note-taking where I tried to be fully attentive to the discussions around the wood fire stove. Re-loading wood into the stove, for example, interrupted note-taking as required by each situation. I relied on the hope that maps may be created by the student teachers themselves. In my indirect approach – to provide an affinity space rather than productivity space - I had to trust that mapping would become intrinsically meaningful to participants. Experimenting with non-extractivist attentiveness and waiting can look to the reader like an unstructured approach, a bit like playing 'scratch card lottery' where I would not know in advance with what kind of empirical evidence I would end up. These limitations in 'capturing' are however deliberate omissions of the standardised tools for accumulating direct evidence. This methodology stayed in the vague zone of waiting for intrinsic scenarios to emerge that only the participants themselves would holistically perceive. What if we gradually reached a threshold where scientific robustness defined in terms of researcher-centred mastery could be undone to make space for something else? There is an immaterial value in simply witnessing inner riches whose surface the researcher can respectfully scratch, but whose depth cannot be 'drilled' out by the conventional tools of science.



Figure 23: The 'scratch card' methodological risk of trying to witness the 'intangible'

4.3 The research process

4.3.1 Ethics approval

Ethics approval procedure

My Ethical Approval procedure required the creation of a participant information sheet as well as consent form which were developed in line with specific Moray House School of Education and Sport guidance (see Appendix 4/5). The distribution of the participant information sheet and informed consent were organised at the start of the first mapping session. On this form, ground rules were established: *"You are free to decide the amount of personal experience you want to share with the group. These discussions are not recorded through audio, but Christian Hanser as the group discussion facilitator keeps a researcher diary to make notes of the discussion topics that emerge in these workshop sessions"*. The study's benefits were explained: *"help to understand the lived experience of student teachers in an ITE programme and you can significantly contribute to innovative approaches to curriculum reform"*.

Questions of ownership

This embracing of incompleteness in my observational notes meant that the research data would primarily consist of photographs or scans of the maps as artistic artefacts provided at the end of each session. While these artistic artefacts were created by the research participants during the sessions, the 'data capture' only took place after the reflective process, once they had left the shepherd's hut. I did not keep the original materials, only kept an electronic copy. The participants clearly retained ownership of the created artistic artefacts and I asked at each session again if they still felt comfortable with my documentation of their personal maps. My further analytical work with the maps was not based on the original materials but on the 'copied' version with highly varying quality of the photographs and scans. This positioned me primarily as the witness of artistic mapping *processes*, knowing that I may not see how the original works may be modified and the final maps created by research participants in their own homes after the shepherd's hut sessions. I was the co-curator of a methodological vehicle for *mapping processes*, not the sole curator for an exhibition of maps as art works. Processes may not consolidate an artefactual empirical layer.

Considerations about analysis and interpretation of data

In my chosen approach, the "formal analysis and theory development do not occur until after the data collection is near complete" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 73). Because the end of field work coincided with Covid-19 and a shifting context for my research, the difficulty of data interpretation will be discussed at length in chapter 6. During the activities, my interpretation was intuitive and informal, a form of "progressive focusing" (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976) as spotting of emerging themes. After a session, I isolated myself from the screens and ocularcentric realities of researcher life (Spencer, 2010) to witness the printed-out art works in an outdoor location away from my own work desk. I never attempted to code, to make schematic study, but rather appreciated the whole: "Eyeballers reject the more structured approaches to analysis that break down the data into small units and, from the perspective of the eyeballers, destroy the wholeness and some of the meaningfulness of the data" (Willis et al., 2007, p. 298). The arts-based approach was informed by a holistic stance: "leave the data intact and to emphasize that meaning must be derived for a contextual reading of the data rather than the extraction of data segments for detailed analysis" (Willis et al., 2007, p. 297). The case study approach allows to work towards the uniqueness rather than comparison. Witnessing as a posture allowed to suspend judgment both during the collective

peer process and the individual interpretive framework (Lu & Yuen, 2012; Learmouth, 1994). This research sits with the arts of hospitality for welcoming the unknown to unsettle learned routines of data gathering: “social and educational researchers find themselves as players in a larger historical context where human beings have searched for certainty in an attempt to regain a lost security. The instrumental rationality [...] reflects this tendency, as positivistic researchers have searched for a method (a means) which is never-changing, an anchor in a stormy sea of ambiguity” (Kincheloe, 2012, p. 141). I wanted to discreetly enter the stormy sea of ambiguity alongside my research participants, not to undo these shaky waves.

Anonymity

My rationale for anonymising data was based on a participatory understanding of arts-based processes. Focusing on singularity in case study research brings its own ethical challenges with it: “singular settings where people are identifiable [...] It may also be difficult to portray some of the contextual detail that would enhance understanding for readers because it would raise the risk of identifiability of individuals” (Simons, 2020, p. 691). I decided not to collect descriptive information on the student teachers (age, nationality etc.). Due to the small sample of 12 research participants in an easily identifiable cohort of 27 student teachers, working with these categories would not have allowed sufficient anonymity. As explained above, my approach of proposing an affinity space also does not put the focus on such categories.

Selection of my sample: how were research participants selected and excluded?

I offered the mapping workshop to all students of this cohort (see invitation in Appendix 6). It was not up to me to select a sample from the cohort. I had to plan with the possibility that no one wanted to take part, but I also had to anticipate the possibility that all 27 student teachers would want to work in these small groups of maximum eight participants. Ultimately, the selection was not undertaken by myself, but by the availability and willingness of student teachers to take part. 12 participants finally signed the consent form and signed up for continuous engagement in my research. All 12 participants joined the first two sessions or, if absent, caught up with the material covered. In the first group, the timetabling of the third session did not allow 2 participants to join. Timing and timetabling was a particular issue

in that period (end of January and beginning of February) before an intensive 5-week period of site-based learning, as the timetable of the course became more and more dense.

Timelines: when and for how long were data collected?

After the introduction in September, the first mapping group had the first session in October, followed by a second session in November and met again in January 2020. The second group started in the end of October, met again in mid-November 2019 and had the third session in February. It was planned to let both groups meet together, around the hut, on the 2nd of April 2020. Due to the pandemic, the final in-person meeting was reimagined as two virtual meeting slots on MS Teams for feedback about integrating the maps into the portfolio as part of formal assessment for the degree. These took place on 16/04/2020 and on 17/04/2020.

4.3.2 Session 1 as an example of playing with metaphors through storytelling and mapping

The questions reproduced in the text box below were existential prompts hidden in small boxes that were placed on the table in the shepherd's hut (see also poster p. 116). They could be discovered by the student teachers in the initial phase of arriving in the hut for the session, but there was no pressure to have opened all the boxes. Some of the questions were discussed in both groups, but depending on the individual curiosity and collective affinities, some questions remained silently in their box for the whole session. This was the second stage in my approach to introducing "foreshadowed issues" (Simons, 2020, p. 686). Here, direct questions are presented in indirect ways, allowing for the phenomenological exploration to be guided by the student teachers themselves in order to make these questions meaningful rather than indiscreet and intrusive. This element which usually lasted up to 30 minutes was a warm-up for the peer group to ask and answer existential questions to each other, not about reporting back to me. I did not hold the keys for outcomes of this process, but I facilitated an inspiring frame in which existential time could occur. Students did not talk to me directly.

What inspired you to become a teacher? Was it another person, maybe a book or your own life experience? Which teaching values attracted you?

How would you describe the decision/ turning point to go into teaching? Was it like jumping into cold water, like sitting down in an oasis of inspiration, building a bridge into a new world...?

If you could draw the milestones on your teaching journey so far, in what kind of landscape are they situated? A valley of opportunity, a mountain of struggle, a sea of waves... Which panorama do you see?

If the destination of your teacher journey was 'meaningful teaching', what kind of signposts can help you stay on track?

Example question discussed by both groups:

Which one was the best reaction you got from family, friends or neighbourhoods when you told them that you would become a teacher? How was this reaction different from others?

As this first session was intended as a warm-up, questions allowed students to get into the habit of sharing personal anecdotes but also to develop awareness of their own background and re-assess the own family attitudes to teaching from the distance of the hut. The question about the feedback from family and friends builds awareness that the choice of teaching can be accompanied with strong value judgments in the peer group or family background. Teaching is not a 'neutral' choice and provokes strong reactions. The question was included to become aware of the unique understandings that each student teacher brings into the upcoming process, based on a phenomenological understanding of intentionality and connection to choices in the past.

I had prepared a set of found images to be used for photo-elicitation to generate meaning through metaphor (Richard & Lahman, 2015). This material was simply lying on the table of the shepherd's hut as an indirect prompt. After the participants had picked a visual, they could comment on their choices. How did you enter the world of teaching? By accident, as a hitchhiker or maybe focused? Was the own choice a fast-track auto route paved by a family tradition? Was it a detour into meaningful work after other career experiences? Metaphorically, what inner image comes up? Did you jump, swim, walk into the profession? Was it a straight line or a crooked, winding road? Far from an analytical session for career coaching or comparing each other's trajectory, participants were invited to witness each other's diversity without judging each other: "Teacher candidates need to do the introspective work of *noticing* their own beliefs, skills, attitudes, values, and habits" (Warren, 2018, p. 177). Student teachers were given the space to reflect where they came from, which story brought them into the professional field and with what fixed or naïve idea they entered the ITE journey. Where would participants situate the starting point of their journey and what values and ideals did they bring with them? Still as a part of the 1st session, participants could explore the trajectory from the choice of teaching to the world of possibility opening up to them because of this professional choice. The emerging belonging to the 'teaching tribe' is therefore firstly framed positively, as a *sea of possibilities*. What hopes and dreams do I bring

with me at the start of my teacher journey? This enthusiasm would then be directly connected in the second session with the challenges of the teaching profession.



Figure 24 a/b: the setting for questions and storytelling in the shepherd's hut

Exercise for silent mapping:

In the second half of the first session, several questions related to the cartographic language of subjective mapping were introduced to the student teachers:

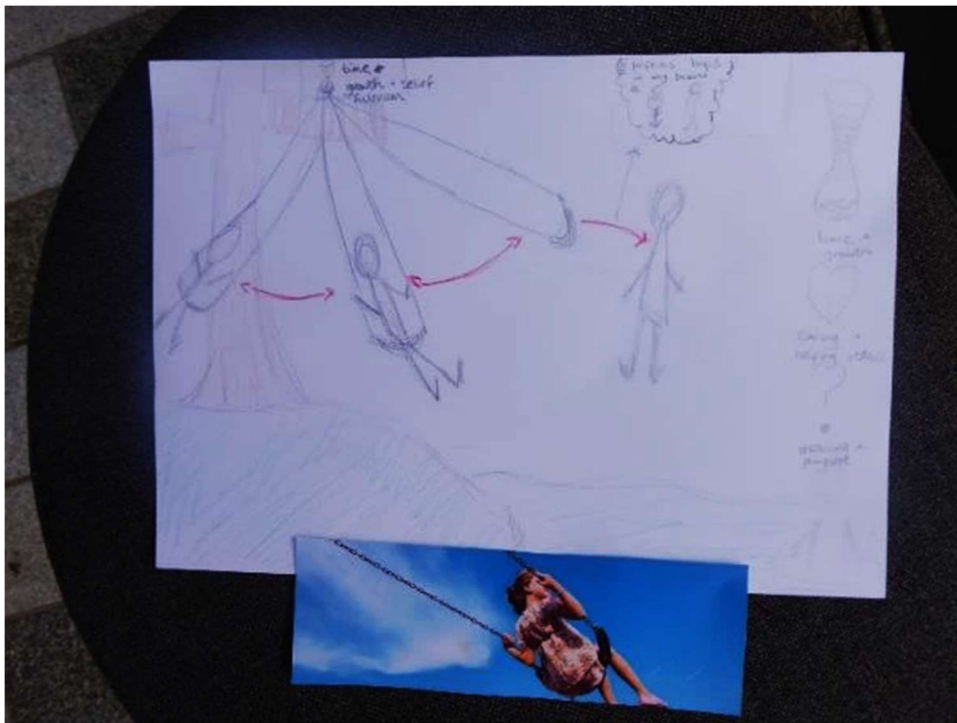
Who usually gets to decide how maps are drawn? What would happen if you are your own career's cartographer and get to zoom into a territory, draw up borders, define the scale and write the legend of your own professional trajectory's map?

If you had to start drawing your own personal geography as a TLT teacher, would you start with drawing the placement school, the classroom, your personal work desk or the Moray House campus? In which space related to your professional practice do you currently feel most at home?

I then invited participants to map their journey into teaching and the sea of possibilities. As this was the first mapping session, many participants were hesitant, did not immediately start to draw. But as there was no pressure for results, inner images began to find their way from imagination onto the blank page within the 30 minutes of silent mapping.

Example from the group: the swing into teaching

Artefact 1 shows an example from session one. Mary (participant of group 1, name anonymised) picked the photograph of a swing from my prepared elicitation material. Mary, inspired by the visual of the swing, then described her existential movement into the profession as “back and forth, never fully going to one direction”. Sitting around the wood fire stove with seven of her MSc peers, she questioned what brought her to do the jump (see drawing below). Caring and wanting to help other people was the meaning and purpose that she saw in front of her as the swing moved back and forth. She talked about an “invisible pushing” which maintained the swing’s motion (time, growth, belief) until she was ready for the impetus that would lead to the jump from the back-and-forth indecisiveness into the chosen qualifying route into teaching.



Artefact 1: The choice of teaching as the motion of a swing (Mary, group 1)

Playfulness with metaphoric language:

This creative artefact – like every single artistic expression of the research - deserves deeper analysis and scrutiny. However, the maps for now are fragments, snapshots of a methodological process. As one meditates on the existential movement expressed by Mary, the metaphor of the swing can also apply to the continuity of a teacher trajectory. When I shared this metaphor in a PhD supervision, each of us resonated, but differently, with the idea of an existential swing. A diversity of interpretations from different standpoints was triggered.

What kind of motion will replace the pre-career swing in the pre-service ITE route, and ultimately in the lifelong routines of qualified teaching? Could an existential swing be maintained across a whole career, as an oscillating path of self-care? In this warming up session for a series of creative mapping workshops, it was not my intention to gain in-depth insights into each participant's chosen metaphors. For gaining such insights, I would have adopted an interview technique after the mapping. I rather provided a training ground to start using metaphorical language as narrative for meaning-making (Denborough, 2012), to externalise the own intrinsic existential perception and come into the practice of sharing personal metaphors and cartographic sketches with peers. Metaphors can be used as actual teacher education pedagogy (Lynch & Fischer-Ari, 2017) to deepen the understanding of teacher identities (Bullough, 1991). The playing with metaphor also inspired the existential card game that I propose for public use of student teachers' artefacts in chapter 6.

4.3.3 Session 2 as an example of a shared affinity for ranting as emancipatory process

The second session explored the path of self-care broadly located between the mountains of too many struggles and the skyline of unrealistic dreams. This path of self-care is the central element of my proposed student teacher map. Self-care is not understood as an individual's externally imposed need to take care of oneself for maintaining a healthy workforce. The meaning of self-care in this map is understood as deeply introspective. Self-care is not about taking the self out of the world through a consumerist bubble, but asks deeper questions about the self in the world within a protected space. It is argued that the inner confrontation with the need for self-care allows to prepare the transformative change for society and is directly connected to the political stance of the student teacher. Student teachers were invited to discuss a famous quote by Audrey Lorde: "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." (Lorde, 2017, p. 130) to see the relationship between the care for others and the care for self.

This session gave the opportunity to the student teachers to map out spaces and roads which could provide an unconditional environment, a safe space sheltered from evaluation (Ball, 2007). This session was about experiencing unconditional personal worth as a form of contemplative teacher renewal (Palmer, 1998). For doing so, participants were invited to traverse in their imagination the 'mountains of too many struggles', therefore thematising the societal role of the teacher in all its ambiguity. Would the student teachers already feel

that their energies as individual teachers are limited? How would they map the intrinsic borders to the often-internalised tacit expectations that teachers ought to save the world, or at the very least close the attainment gaps? They also confronted the skyline of unrealistic dreams. They negotiated how their own vision of teaching to make a societal difference collided with the realities from the field. How would student teachers take care of their dreams in a system that is not necessarily known for preserving idealism? How does the own safe space connect to the sea of possibilities? This negotiation between idealism and realism as a way to explore identity is considered particularly relevant for identity crises in the context of a politically informed framework for socially just teaching: “The important process of developing an identity as a teacher, intersecting with beliefs, emotions, and values, is ongoing and spreads throughout one’s professional career [...] teacher education and teacher professional programs need to provide intentional, structured opportunities for pre-service and inservice teachers to explore their identities” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 185).

The path of self-care is rarely a central element for teacher identity. Yet, by making such often overlooked angles central to a mapping session, one could develop an unconditional positive regard for *being* who one is, rather than *doing* what one is externally expected to do.

Does your own path to self-care start with your own safe space and makes its way to our society’s issues or does it start with the challenges of our world and makes its way to some safe haven?

How can the act of taking good care of your own wellbeing and energy become a meaningful act in a largely individualistic world?

Who has the right to self-care? Do you need to reach a certain career level before you can make more space for this type of care?

What are your own safe spaces in the schools you teach in? The classroom, the staff room, the park, the commuting journey back home? Should schools provide safe spaces for staff or is this each person’s own responsibility?

Is taking care of yourself a selfish thing to do? How important is the skill to say NO in your profession?

Exercise for silent mapping

Map your path of self-care: how do we journey towards/ from self-care?

Some participants expressed the difficulty to draw the path of self-care. One solution was to then map the ‘safe space’ rather than the path. The participants reflected on feeling

overwhelmed in their placements because of lacking a safe space and because of struggling to perceive a visible culture of self-care inside the school, combined with a lack of colleagues' appreciation of life beyond school. The own safe space could be drowned by so many things to do in the school placement. Because student teachers do not have their own classroom yet, the safe anchor is missing.

Example from the group: after-school ranting

One example of what can be revealed through research processes guided by affinity is the need for ranting as a valid expression necessary for emancipatory journeys into teaching. Pre-service teachers on placements “often feel disillusioned by the contrast between their idealized images and the realities of the profession” (Goldstein, 2005, p. 7). This conflict is largely played out internally, without environments where these inner struggles can be externalised, discussed and moulded into something else. Participants in both small groups expressed the need for ‘ranting’ after a day of placement. In one group, those student teachers working at the same placement school shared their emerging habit of a ‘train rant’, allowing for their frustrations to be spoken out loudly during their commuter journey, mostly about the way work realities at school were so different from their previous imaginations. In another group, David (name anonymised) expressed this lack of space by actually drawing the rant on the way home after a constant day ‘on air’ with the children (see artefact 2).



Artefact 2: Commuter rant after a day of ‘on air classroom spotlight’ (David, group 2)

David said: “When I am on air, it feels like performing to an audience. I am a different person in the car than on air. You bottle it all in. You vent, you moan. There is a muscular tension you

carry with you". With a duty to be on air struggling to build a bridge between these two 'different persons', there is an urgent need to let off steam. Without curricular time to rant, student teachers need to take their expressions into the out-of-school spaces: the commuter journeys and private lives. Frustrations are usually made invisible as student teachers take their challenges with them from work into home. The temporal exigence of linear ITE curricular designs impedes the imagination of a professional or professionalising space in which the on-air-ness of teaching can be absorbed and digested and where the immediate rant can be moulded into something else. Not creating a space and time to rant in a curriculum becomes a missed opportunity. For the majority of emerging teachers, the existential struggles on the placement journey will go straight into hiding or addressed to the family circle who may not be able to advise about professional becomings like the peer group could. The indoor logics of schools for immediacy and performativity push emotionally loaded spaces into the margins of the weekly timetabling, but their need resurfaced when the fluid second mapping session pointed at ranting as thematic priority.

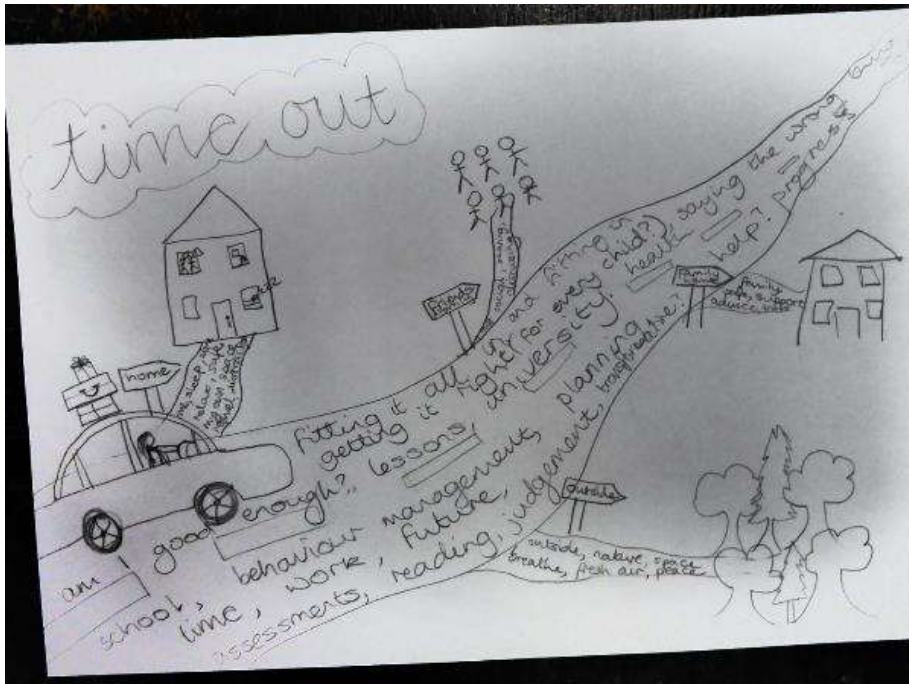
My proposed methodology for a meaning-oriented affinity space appeared to be relevant for the tensed reality lived by student teachers on their placements. This research is therefore about making the 'commuter rant' of student teachers (also an existential commuter journey from idealism to realities and back) more visible for research, policy and practice. It needs to be kept in mind that not every student teacher has the chance to rant with their peers, and not every student teacher may wish to rant. The very valid and emancipatory processes that ranting can enable are much more than emotive complaining. While the student teacher 'mapped' their experience of ranting during the sessions with the shepherd's hut, the meetings about the path of self-care in the hut were far from a continuous ranting exercise. Opening the reflective space of the shepherd's hut made something beyond ranting emerge: from technical-individual 'learning-to-cope skills' towards introspective but also collective 'allowance-to-thrive spaces' for self-care. This conception of self-care as existential negotiation should be seen as a commitment to the preservation and continuity of meaning in challenging professional contexts, rather than supporting student teacher withdrawal into an individualistic bubble of wellness or resilience. Again, the methodological act here was a gesture of hospitality by opening a space for student teachers to follow their own intrinsic

guidance rather than external prescriptions for an assigned role to play or duty to perform on air. Ranting could be seen as an agentic reclaiming of the own existential script:

“when individuals allow their identity to be constructed solely by the meanings that others offer, individuals become observers (rather than authors) of their lives. When educational researchers, teacher educators, and policymakers fall victim to the objective tendency, they risk reducing teachers into ghosts who can recite knowledge and mimic practices but who feel fragmented and fraudulent. When individuals realize that the meaning in their life was assigned to them and that they were merely playing a role in a script written by someone else, individuals may experience an existential crisis” (Zimmerman, 2019, p. 16)

Second example from the group: connecting being and doing

Another example from session 2, also applying the metaphor of journeying on the road with a car, further emphasises the difficulty to combine the *space for being* (the site where student teachers would anchor self-care on their map) with the *route of doing* expected on the qualifying route into teaching. Laura (name anonymised, group 1) decided to illustrate exactly this difficulty to draw the link between self-care and teaching. While some participants mapped a space of self-care, real or imagined, off the map of schooling, far from the school trajectory, a crucial reflection is also where this space of time out, of inner renewal, will be connected *onto* the ITE trajectory. In the illustrative example of Laura, the road is full of questions, duties and doubts. The road is occupied, it is not a free-roaming journey, but a road plastered by ‘getting it right for every child’, behaviour management, judgment, and the worry of ‘saying the wrong thing’. The safe space of self-care is not to be found on the main road, but only in the side lanes. While this participant’s map visualises the links between the main road of ITE and the detours for self-care, other participants had difficulties mapping them on the same sheet of paper. The path of self-care was described as a labyrinth with the difficulty of getting through to its core, or as a bubble to let the outside world bounce off. Can there actually be a link between the safe space and the ITE route? Or are student teacher journeys laid out in a way that they are asked to oppose duty for others and duty for self, risking forgetting about their self-care sanctuary while on the road into teaching? In chapter 5, this question of dissolving the antagonism in caring (either for others or for self) will be further discussed through a closer look at Soraya’s overall mapping portfolio.



Artefact 3: the road of ITE preoccupations and the time-out side lanes (Laura, group 1)

4.3.4 Session 3 as an example of locating the teacher’s craft of listening and seeing

The third thematic session explored the ‘gateway into concrete utopia’ (and transformative teaching) after finding ways to see through the ‘mountain of too many struggles’. This session moves from the awareness of the own life world needs to the awareness of the pupils’ life worlds and perceiving them beyond labels. By making the path of self-care a rite of passage towards the gateway into transformation, it is asked how these landscapes of introspective care and care for the world that surrounds us can be connected. It is only after having cultivated this heightened awareness of the contested self-care territories, for example between the professional ethos’ *to-do-list* roads and the resting sanctuary for *being*, that the mapping sessions now move on to the social justice angle advertised in the MSc TLT programme. An activist and a contemplative path are understood side by side, as two elements of the “transformational component in teacher education, above and beyond teacher education’s tendency to restrict its transformational agenda to the cause of social justice” (Keck, 2020, p. 410). Transformation is then also understood as learning “to know aspects of ourselves previously unrecognized” (Whitcomb et al., 2008, p. 5).

Where do participants see signposts for societal change in their placement or what have they learned from previous experience with children? How could they perceive a promising horizon of transformation in the face of injustice, poverty and multiple forms of discrimination?

Who are you doing this MSc TLT for? For your placement school, for the national educational system, the university, the children, the community, or particularly for yourself? Where do you situate these stakeholders on your own TLT map?

How can the theories from the university be more meaningfully connected with the realities of the classroom? What gets lost in translation?

Map the gateway that would allow you to facilitate meaningful learning! What kind of supportive institutional and personal landscape would this springboard into cooperation be embedded in? What in there helps to bridge the gaps?

Is it a realistic idea to think that a cohort of activist teachers can shift the national context of the teaching profession? What factors would allow this ambition to become a real and concrete utopia?

Exercise for silent mapping:

Imagine what potentials are hidden behind the label SIMD. Map an imaginary life world of those you are trying to reach through your teaching. What could be the centre of these people's lives? Where is the school on this map? How important is the classroom? What are the sites of struggle and the sites of empowerment? Most importantly, where on the map do you situate an entrance to this world based on trust?

As a way of introducing this challenging mapping exercise, participants were invited to look at maps drawn by children from my collection of map art books. Some maps can be clearly identified as adult-centric while others show perspectives taken by children. The idea of making a difference in other people's lives is investigated by looking through the categorical fog of labels of poverty, and zoom out of unhelpful labels which divide and separate. This exercise is about perspective-taking beyond the stigmas. Perspective-taking requires the capacity to "spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others in everyday life" (Davis, 1994, p. 57), as well as acknowledge cultural resources of others in their life worlds rather than run a deficit-filter based on social category. As claimed in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, "teacher candidates need empathy to better understand students, families, and communities, especially if they are preparing to teach in racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse school settings" (Warren, 2018, p. 169). This mapping session is then not about developing empathy with multiply deprived areas as classified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, but about looking into a pupil's life world away from the instrumental goal to lift testing scores. Warren (2018) highlights how the cultivation of empathy can lead to deeper knowing of young persons, their families and their communities. Adding to the focus of a pupil's own neighbourhood, this session also encourages to imagine affinity as a

lens going out from the child. After having practised to sketch out maps of personal existential meaning in the first two sessions, the participants are invited to image what an intrinsic landscapes of a child could look like. This is about getting into the skin of a child labelled as an SIMD 1-4 area child, imagining the life world positively. This imagination exercise is about opening new perspectives and views to be conscious that it may be possible to narrate something else than policy poverty scripts. Mapping literacies of unlabelling also means acknowledging that “bureaucratic language and the practices it is associated with can become particularly “toxic literacies” for the poor and disadvantaged” (Gee, 2014, p. 96).

This exercise of the third mapping session presupposes an entry point from the imagined other and is the most difficult for participants to start with. The educational “field’s dominant tendency is to choose the empirical child over the dream, the child the adult can know and control. But in so doing, education has reduced the child to a trope of developmental stages, cognitive needs, multiple intelligence, and behavioral objectives. And these wishes defend against a primary anxiety of adults: what if the dream of learning is other to the structures of education?” (Britzman, 2003, p. 54). This unsettling is a way to develop narrative tools for visions of empathy and to teach based on the other’s perspective. But this learning passes through the realisation of how little we concretely know. This is about the epistemic humility of accepting to unlearn about the other: “The empirical child engenders the *empirical teacher*, just as a shifting of focus toward the question child would engender a question teacher” (Keck, 2020, p. 411).

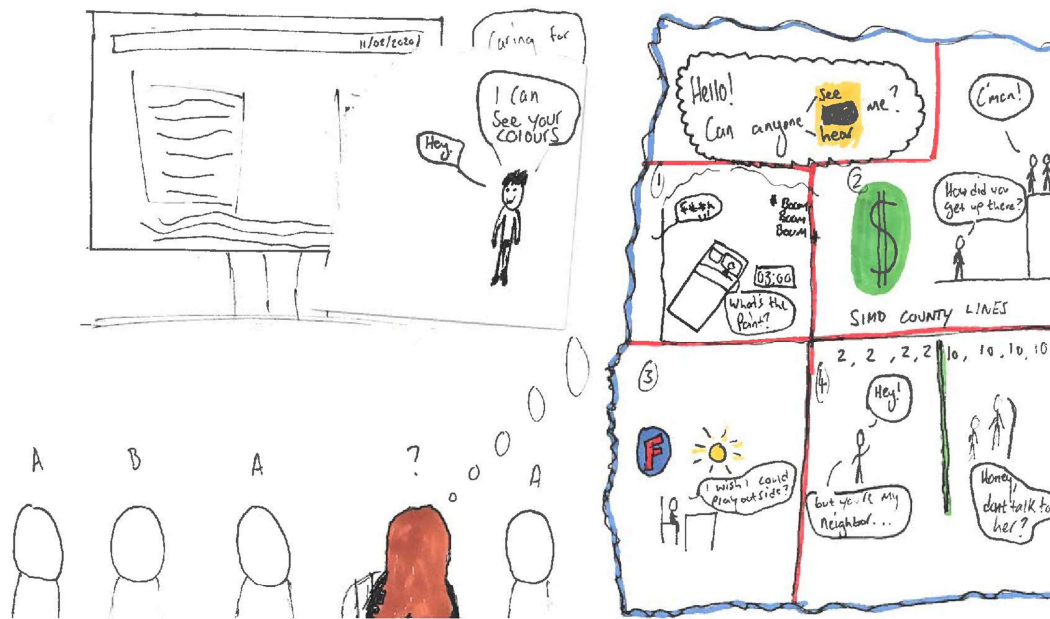
Example from the group: I can see your colours

David (name anonymised, Group 2) draws a scenario in two acts. In the first act, he stands in front of the class ‘caring for everyone’. He refers to the difficulty to deal with all children in a class in standardised models that are blind to individual differences: “I get the sense of people categorised by grades, status, socially”. My character is not looking at the classroom. The child silently thinks what is in the bubble: “Can anyone see, hear me?” Different scenarios are defining that person: “The parents have arguments at home. There is stuff that the teacher can’t see. Next to their home, live music is played. The child can’t sleep. The elevator is broken and you have to go up the stairs. Being labelled as a failure. There is a picket fence, because the SIMD lines are drawn. Twos and Tens, you are labelled”.

In the second part of this scenario, only one thing changes. David has added a little paper with two more speech bubbles, which make a big difference: 'I can see your colours' and 'Hey' as a way to make contact with that child who silently asks if anyone can see and hear her. The teacher comes in differently, adding colour to them. The teacher can look in the right direction, directly at the child who was not seen. It is at this moment when the child feels seen that the life world in its many facets can unfold. This life world goes beyond the narrative of SIMD as the imagined, cartoon-style realities of the child explain in further detail. This scenario highlights the challenge to see the colourful life worlds of the individual child, to connect to the hidden, at times intangible singular circumstances of children. The vision of David is to explore the facets and colours of the singular child, as he is frustrated with the grey simplifications which aim at finding the common denominator for classroom management.



S.I.M.D ME



Artefact 4a/b: I can see your colours (David, group 2)

In session 3, participants began to critique the educational system, their programme's adult-centric choice of literature and the SIMD-driven policies of the Scottish Attainment Challenge as certainly *not* child-centred. One student teacher says: "Almost all in the course is adult thinking. About the world of the child, we are putting our assumptions in it. The perspective of the child is missing!"

Another participant related her map to a dyslexic person who would become defined by a so-called 'dysfunction'. As it is common practice to make assumptions in the educational system, often with the deficit scanner of the optimisation regimes of western education based on alleged lacks of pupils, the exercise is about embracing the discomfort of missing crucial knowledge. Can we accept the lack of knowing how those teachers are meant to push towards attainment? This is also an exercise of mapping incompleteness and imperfection in teaching.

Second example from the group: the ears for listening

A major obstacle for the initial hesitation in this exercise had been about finding an 'anchor' in the 'map of assumptions' about the other, building the cartographic bridge from which to connect to that enigmatic life world. Where is the key to perceiving another person's life worlds? Clara (name anonymised, group 2) situated this entry point as an ear on the map:

“Some of the things I wanted to express just can’t be expressed through the map. I was thinking of somebody in particular but it doesn’t have to be. There is the school, sun, rain. The school is quite big in there. The ear symbolises listening to children, trying to relate like this, enjoying their company, a happy face. There is a heart and a blanket. In classroom it is hard down the line. I want to be warm with the people, value means heart in this map, value for people to themselves, be warm to them. The bike. Different subjects, learning whatever. Family and friends are a massive part. The bubbles are the possibilities. Then there are the barriers you think you can’t cross but you can knock on the door. Dark stuff is creeping in, dark on purpose and the light intersect, there are some things you have to content with. Still, most people have a lot of possibilities.”

It is observed by the other participants in the group that this map has integrated both the positive and the negative. The map reflects the participant’s view of children having a lot of possibilities, despite many challenges, and the commitment to not write people off. Moulding a better environment for the child as a teacher’s craft is then less about talking and about the perfect design of lesson plans. Putting the ear as the opening into pupils’ life worlds reflects a stance of listening to move from the perceived distance towards sharpening the sight for potentials and possibilities.



Artefact 5: Bubbles of possibilities and the ear for listening (Clara, group 2)

As one participant said during the 30 minutes of mapping: “sometimes there is something but it is not tangible”. Reaching out to the intangible, yet resisting the urge to completely fill it, is part of existential care. The maps of the third session are destined to stay intangible, as making them neat and clear would cement the assumptions of standardised practices that one does not need first person accounts of possibilities within deprivation areas that the writings of Ladson-Billings (1995) have challenged. In this exercise, one can hold the discomfort of the vagueness of maps until the child brings their own tangible first person narrative into emerging teacher identity: “Without a mechanism for understanding culture from first-person perspectives of diverse students and families, teachers are left to reproduce and center norms of whiteness and other hegemonic cultural ways of being reinforced during their teacher preparation” (Warren, 2018, p. 172). Mapping pupil life worlds then led to the frustration of realising how little the lesson plans and ITE technicities allow to perceive the holistic child and the surrounding cultural and social resources. How can we then make space for the becoming of others (Rossiter, 2011) in our own becoming as teachers?

What the emerging cohort of activist teachers is aware of is the possibility to “acquire first-person knowledge of the young people and families they will serve in whatever school and community setting they enter post-graduation” (Warren, 2018, p. 170). While the on-campus hut sessions could not provide such concrete encounter and dialogue, the proposed imaginary home visit of this third mapping exercise can further consolidate the awareness of the need for ways of relating, for example through real world home visits as suggested by Warren (2018):

“After spending several hours sitting with families in the places where the proportion of power and authority is in the family’s favor, teacher candidates are very likely to have a different, or much better informed, viewpoint of family values, students’ lived realities, and the sociocultural context where students are receiving substantial racial socialization. Subsequently, such an activity will very likely change the way teacher candidates see their work, and thusly, potentially change the way they *do* their work” (p. 175)

In the site-based learning placements in communities, student teachers felt they were situated right in the middle of the contradictions of a perceived disconnect between university and the school’s own community: “You give your feedback from a different world”. Participant accounts expressed how close the gateway for transformative change and idealism is situated to the skyline of unrealistic dreams: “You can’t make changes. You are in

such a different world in the school community. The university assessor doesn't know anything about this school. [...] Drop in, parachute into a school with idealism".

4.3.5 Final session as feedback for the formal portfolio

Eventually, the global pandemic had made the planning of the final session impossible. When it became clear that the final mapping session would not be possible as an in-person activity, I asked for a meeting with the MSc programme director to plan a session that would be meaningful to the students in the new circumstances. I had received continued support for my research activities by the programme director and did not want to leave this part to my own ideas any more. The programme director was the one in most direct contact with the student teachers who was able to give me hints about what my research participants may need at this stage to round it up, not what my own PhD research still needed to find out about them. The purpose of organising these Teams sessions was no longer for me to conclude my research and 'bring it all together', but very modestly to finish on a positive note the series of mapping workshops with my research participants.

This represents a change of my own expectations which was induced by Covid-19. I was stepping back from what I wanted to get out of the final meeting with student teachers for my own research (Willis et al., 2007) and therefore from a focus and reliance on the physical shepherd's hut towards the research participants' reality of final pre-graduation assessment. This underlines how this chapter's field work process was not only about investigating the potential of the hut, but about using the hut to elicit wider insights about the students on their ITE journey. Elaborating an improvised way to conclude the mapping series with the student teachers in "post-normal times" (Tauritz, 2012) of unpredictability then took virtual directions. I had to develop "fluid ways that allow us to pursue strategies, processes, and theories most appropriate for the research task at hand" (Trent & Cho, 2020, p. 967). The flexibility of case study research (Simons, 2020) in the context of unforeseen circumstances allowed to modify the design.

From the shepherd's hut to MS Teams

The programme director highlighted the significance of offering a final meet-up in this new Covid-19 context. Because of the pandemic, the existential dimension of meaning-making on the journey into teaching was now appearing in a new light. My aim was then to connect the

last session to the portfolios which had to be submitted by students as a way to meet the standards for provisional registration with GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland). This form of formal assessment (portfolio and viva) is also discussed in detail in an article about the MSc TLT's vision which helps to contextualise the later use of the mapping artefacts by student teachers. Here it says that in the portfolio of evidence, it is necessary to link to experience or literature, with the capacity to explain the professional values and personal commitment. The

“ultimate assessment of professional competence is done through a professional viva, prior to which students submit a portfolio of evidence which they believe supports their claim to having met the General Teaching Council for Scotland’s (GTCS) ‘Standard for Provisional Registration’ [...] Part of the transformative and activist agenda, however, is to simultaneously understand the need to comply with the Standard in a holistic way in order to be able to operate within the system, whilst also seeing beyond it. [...] This entails going beyond the binary interpretation of standards as being either developmental tools or being associated with accountability” (Kennedy et al., 2020, p. 30)

In what ways would the created maps then fit the professional standards? I prepared material for my research participants to reflect on how to include their artefacts. This link to be made between intrinsic mapping and external standards was a chance to go beyond technical skills.

Scotland has championed a distinct value base in the standards for teachers. The non-linear meaning-making of mapping could be related to several elements of GTCS professional standards: “All Professional Standards for teachers in Scotland are based on values of social justice, integrity, trust and respect and professional commitment demonstrated through practitioner enquiry” (Hayward, 2018, p. 42). Integrity, for example, is further specified as ‘honesty, courage, wisdom, openness, challenge assumptions and practices, transformative change, connection between personal and professional attitudes’ (GTCS, 2022).

While I had initially communicated into the ‘unknown’, not receiving any replies from my participants, I then decided to schedule two Teams meetings and prepared material to think of the mapping artefacts as appendix in the final assessment of the degree programme. On the scheduled day, more student teachers showed up than expected, making the two sessions lively and animated after the weeks of constant pandemic adaptation. I therefore started the two virtual sessions with the following questions: How should the panel enter your map? Where to fit the maps in the GTCS portfolio? How to reference the standards? The sharing

between student teachers themselves as peer care rather than talking to me as the researcher was possible again. I facilitated a space where student teachers could interact between each other in the hut spirit but without the hut. There were four participants in the first and three participants in the second session. One participant decided to join both feedback slots. While some had very concrete ideas about their maps, others simply wanted to listen in and were still hesitant to include their maps in their final portfolio. The importance of peer feedback on the mapping was highlighted. Two participants joined spontaneously. A participant in one of the Teams sessions who joined the session spontaneously, undecided but interested in including map works, demonstrated that there was temporal scarcity but also the chance to just zoom in and keep nurturing the mapping virtually. The participant wrote directly to me after the meeting on 17/04/2020: "With regards to my maps, I still am not 100% certain I will include one, but I have written about how the process of taking your mapping workshops has caused me to reflect, particularly on my reasons for teaching, looking at when you asked us to map our decision into teaching prior to the course, and how, one year on, my reasons had shifted". She also added: "The reason I might not include my actual maps is that I am finding it hard to get clear enough pictures of them to include in my viva and have it look profession[al], and I don't have access to a scanner at the moment." These were exceptional lockdown times, but the student teacher was still motivated to integrate her maps.

I later received feedback from the new programme director of the MSc that in the eight portfolio vivas that she had personally attended, five of them had portfolios where maps were included. The maps were visible and noticed throughout the viva sessions. I did not have access to the other participants' final composition of the portfolio and outputs to the professional panel. But by making the mapping sessions useful to the assessment, the extra-curricular activity now turned out to make its way back into the formal ITE route. This also underlines a politics of recognition for the intrinsic mapping work which had been entirely optional. Four participants also sent me their final maps as well as a written commentary how they had included them in their formal GTCS portfolio by e-mail.

Two of these communicated portfolios are now reproduced here, without discussing all of the mapping outputs of these two individual students. I only focus on the maps that they decided to formally submit within their GTCS portfolio. Rather than analysing the contents, I want to situate these two case profiles within a brief conceptualisation of cartographic literacy. In

chapter 5, two other case profiles will be discussed in greater detail as intrinsic *ecologies*. What is striking in the two examples shared right now is firstly the fact that both participants keep on mapping outside of the initially scheduled hut sessions. Creating maps becomes a meaningful language which is not tied to my input, to a timetable or to a location. The portfolios of both carry an intrinsic, deeply personal spark to go beyond the textual of their written evidence of meeting GTCS standards. This connects back to the strength of an affinity space for sharing a passion which in this case was the willingness to map the world in one's own (and to varying degrees existential or theoretical) terms: "What unites every fellow traveler in these spaces is a passion for a given endeavor. People in any part of the space do not need to have a passion. They can have a stronger or weaker interest, but they must respect passion because it is the passion and the people with the passion that are the attractors to the space" (Gee, 2020, p. 234). The physical affinity space was no longer accessible in the pandemic but the mapping still continued. Intrinsic spark were spatialised.

4.4 Cartographic literacy and aesthetic agency in two final portfolio maps

4.4.1 Paula's final GTCS mapping portfolio

Paula (name anonymised) takes part in all sessions and is a very active participant. She sends me a first portfolio map (see artefact 6 below) for the feedback session on Teams on 09/04/2020, inspired by my proposal for the mapping exercise to link the sessions through roads (appendix 7). She provides a written rationale for her cartography in this e-mail:

"I've attached a copy of the last mapping exercise. Trying to envisage a pedagogy inspired by my own safe space. I hope the image is clear enough. Everything is encapsured by inclusion Highway. But inclusion Highway comes with a warning of no tokenistic gestures, and off of inclusion Highway there are lots of important squares, such as change habitus Square, which is inspired by Bourdieu, and is my hope to try and make school less value laden with the values of the middle classes. I also have squares such as EAL is valued, square where there's hope for a more inclusive curriculum in terms of languages that we use day to day in the classroom, and LGBTQ curriculum Square, where there's the want for a more representative curriculum, that is less hetero normative in its make - up. All good roads lead to Growth Park and my map starts in Empathy Wood, and there's a little flag of what's meant to be Freire, as he purported this idea of love and empathy in schooling and I think that's so important and it needs to be the starting point of and pedagogy that wants to make a difference. The wood is also place, because I

think caring about where you are can have huge implications for everything! And also it's outside, because we should be outside more!

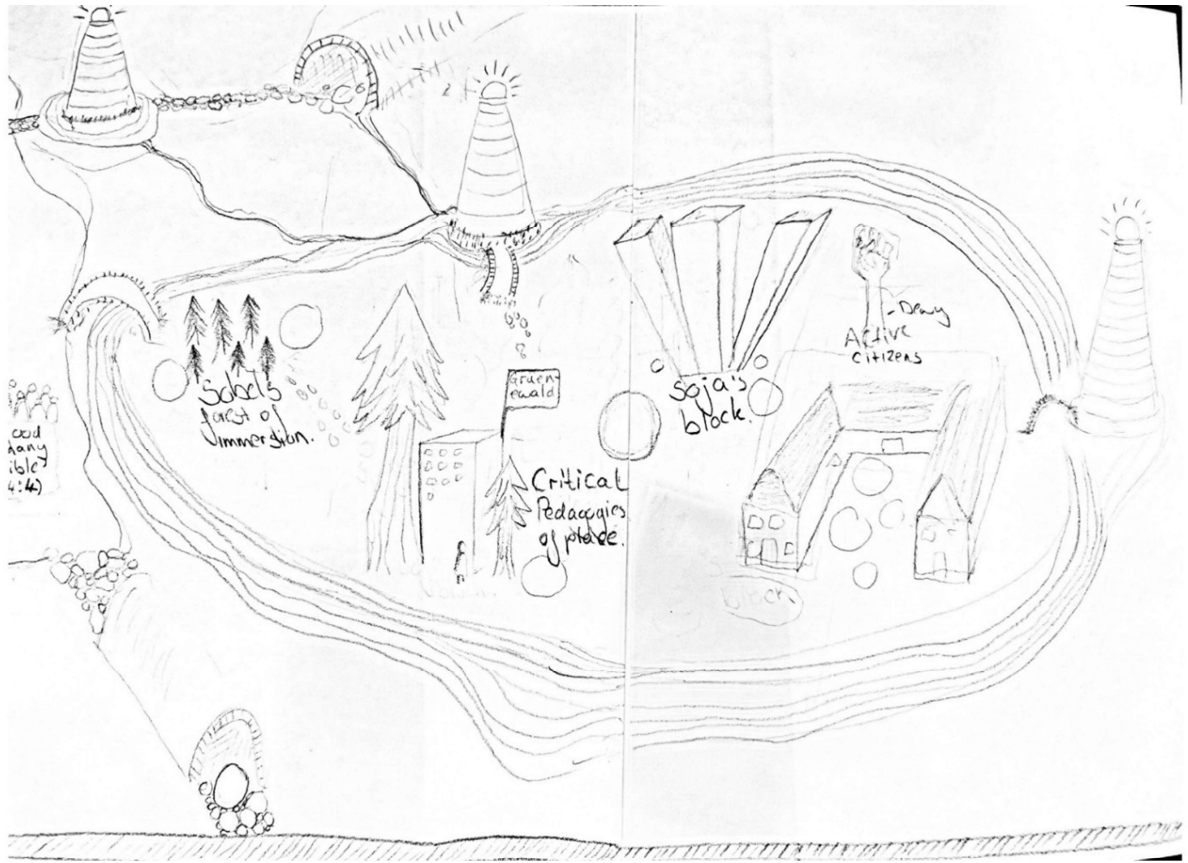
But at the bottom, off of assessment avenue, there's a few dead ends and things we don't want! I hope that makes kind of sense. I think I might add some extra details so if I do I'll send over an updated picture. I've also been thinking of making. Amap [sic: a map] that shows my evolution and thought on critic pedagogies for social justice and how they've changed over the last 2 years for my portfolio!"

In the map, key theorists such as Freire (empathy wood) and Bourdieu (habitus square) are integrated into Paula's imagined streets. Besides the originality and playfulness of dealing with the concepts from MSc readings, she has found a way to let values interact with each other in their own way. In the feedback session, she says that mapping has become important for her because it encompasses place to situate the transformative, activist vision. On her 'brick-by-brick road to criticality' she gradually builds in the spatial metaphors of her future teaching stance. Shortly after the Teams feedback session, she sends me another map and it appears that she keeps on mapping. The maps allow a continuous flow that is intriguing to follow. Like in the previous map, the notion of safe space re-emerges through Freire's cottage:

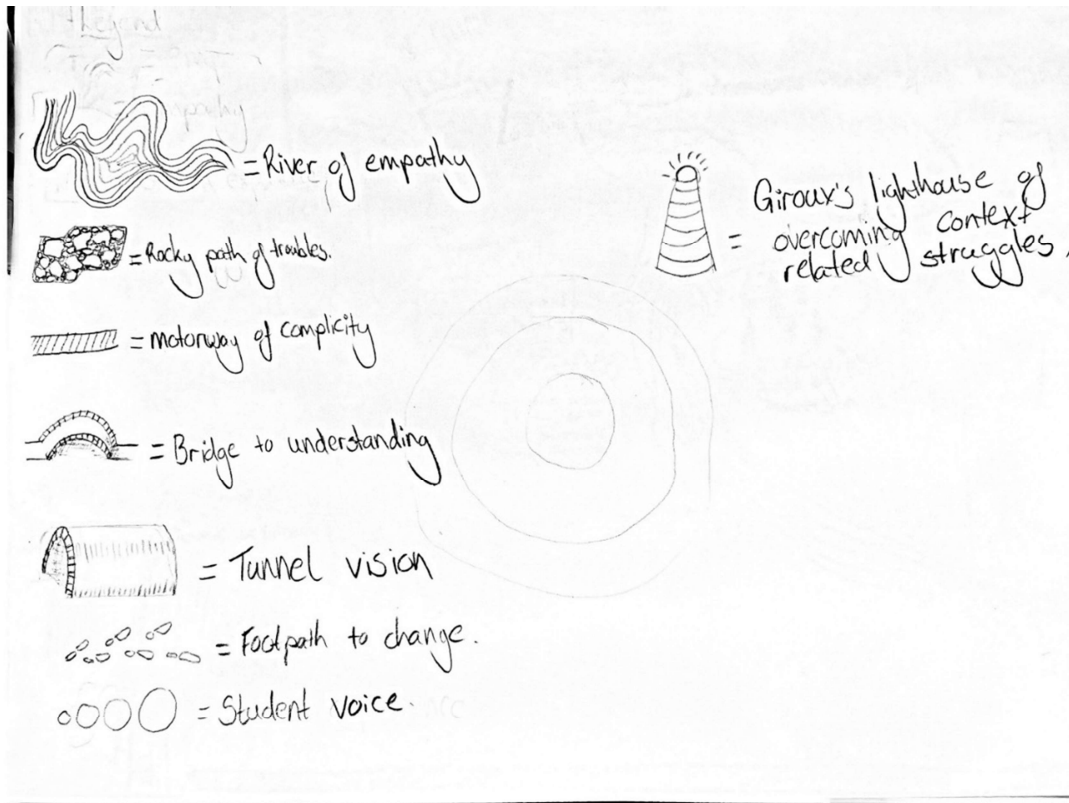
Paula writes on 17/04/2020, now introducing a new map (see artefacts 7a, 7b and 7c below):

"I'm just adding in the scan of my newest maps, I had to capture the map in 2 parts as its too big and then included a key also. The map is in reference to how my thinking has changed with regards to immersing learners in social justice issues. We start in the pit of despair (already thinking that's not right-we should start from Freire's cottage, which could be transformed into a cottage within empathy wood?) and we go through some critic practices influenced by Hilary Janks and David Wray. What we want to get to is the lighthouse that helps us overcome our struggles. That's hard to do through these approaches alone. In y2 I crossed the bridge of understanding into a place influenced by Gruenewald and Sobel to further situate learners within their contexts to enact change, the river of empathy surrounds this-(although maybe the river should change to a wood?) and its much easier to reach the lighthouse."

She also provides the key as a navigational tool to let the reader enter her flows (below) with further spatial metaphors such as the 'river of empathy' and the 'tunnel vision'. Paula's final maps bring together her theoretical understandings through her own spatialisation of society. Through the written explanations in her e-mail, she personalises the conceptual framing of her cartography. The maps are not mind maps of abstract concepts, but personal value systems now embedded in her own experience of journeying with the literature.



Artefact 7b: portfolio map 2 right side (Paula, group 1)



Artefact 7c: portfolio map 2 key (Paula, group 1)

4.4.2 Nina's final GTCS mapping portfolio

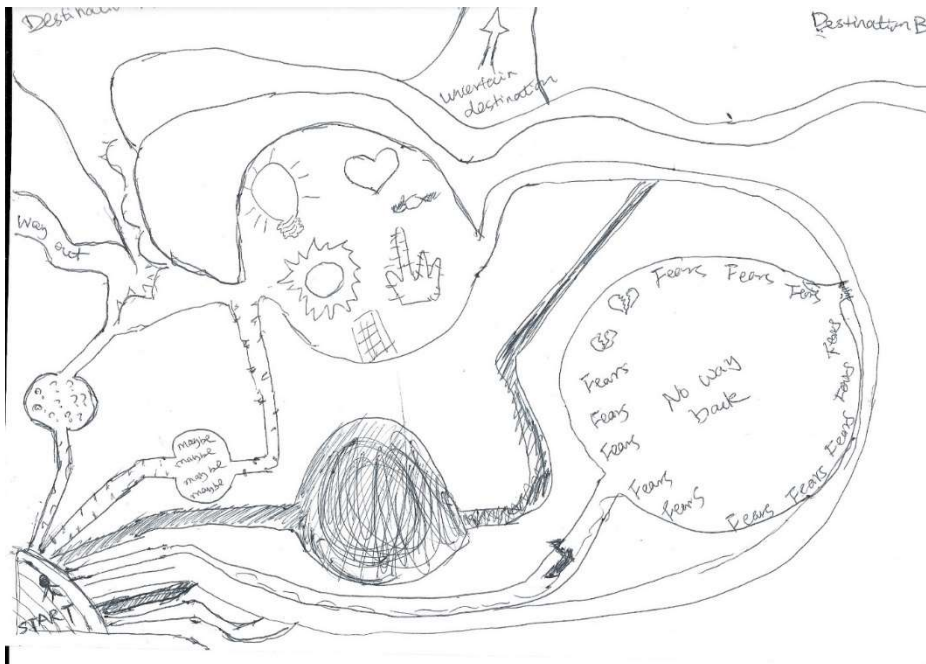
Nina (name anonymised) has also been a very active participant, part of the second small group. Just before the final feedback session on Teams she sends me an early version of what is reproduced here as artefact 11 (below) with her thoughts:

"I would like to send you a map/picture of my theoretical system in Education after my two years' study, and I am planning to use it in the appendix of my Portfolio to demonstrate what kind of teacher I am at the moment. I'd appreciate you can offer some feedback from your perspective towards this picture? My concern at the moment is that this more looks like mixing all my interesting theories into one picture but did not show the relational connection among them...[Programme staff 1] suggested using spiderweb to show my understanding of all these theories and [Programme staff 2] has suggested using a golden thread to demonstrate the relationships. I am thinking to make it more visual and fun to look at, but how to show the exact logical relationship among them in the picture?"

I see the intriguing mind map and encourage Nina to connect the logical and the existential and to think of the maps not only as mental maps but also as ways to express the personal journeys between the many theories. At the Teams meeting, Nina points out the key message that she wants to convey through the inclusion of her maps: "how you come to be that person? Starting from the start of the programme". She says that she finds power from the theories, how the human body is linked between heart and brain. She refers to bell hooks and her link between theory and healing. She sees transformative learning situated in the brain, and there are two rooms in the heart: they are all linked with logical relationship. For her, the map in the appendix ought to be about transformation as self-transformation. After the session, she writes to me:

"I have indeed had some new/updated maps in the attachment for you, and I have used the three maps with a beginning, safe heaven and endpoint in the main body of the PF to talk about my growth at different places. I will then use the mindmap (human body and brain map) at the appendix to show my theoretical understanding."

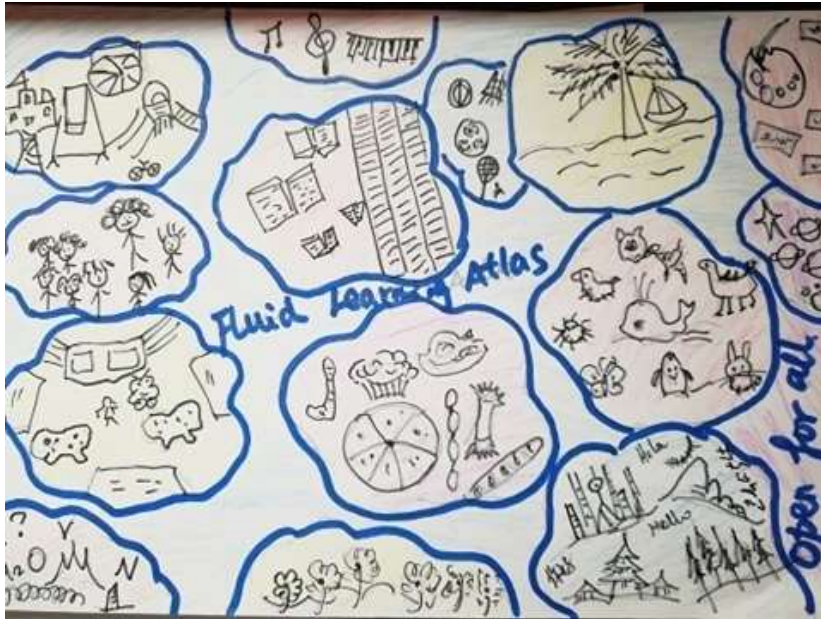
Nina therefore submits a whole collection of mapping artefacts. The artefacts reproduced below reflect this order and their exact titles given by Nina are reproduced in the captions.



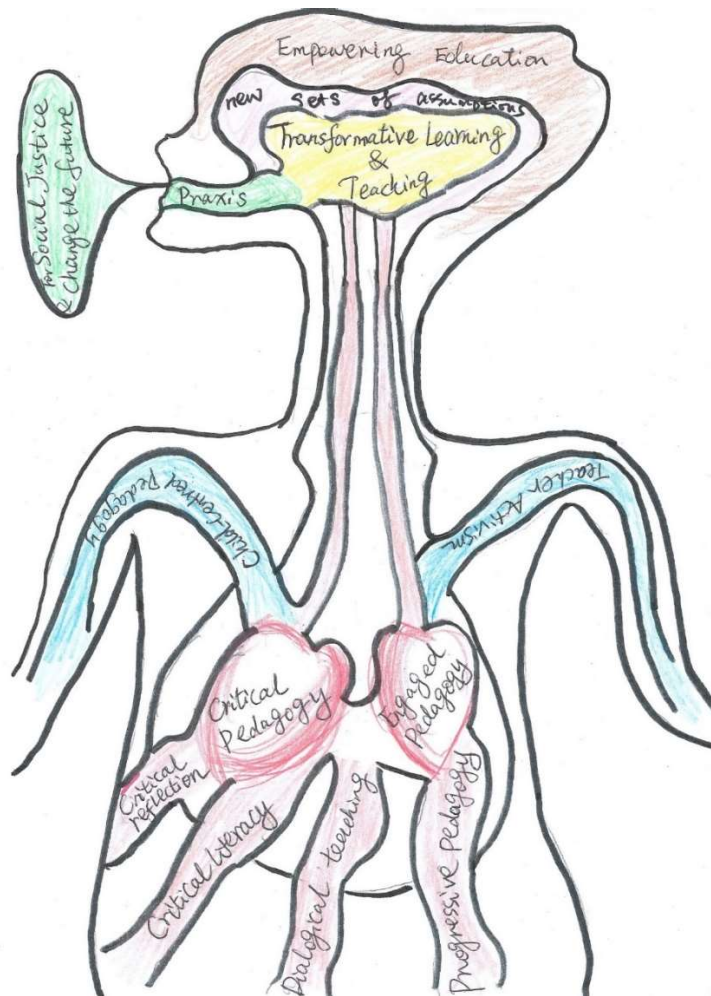
Artefact 8: Final portfolio A 'Starting point' (Nina, group 2)



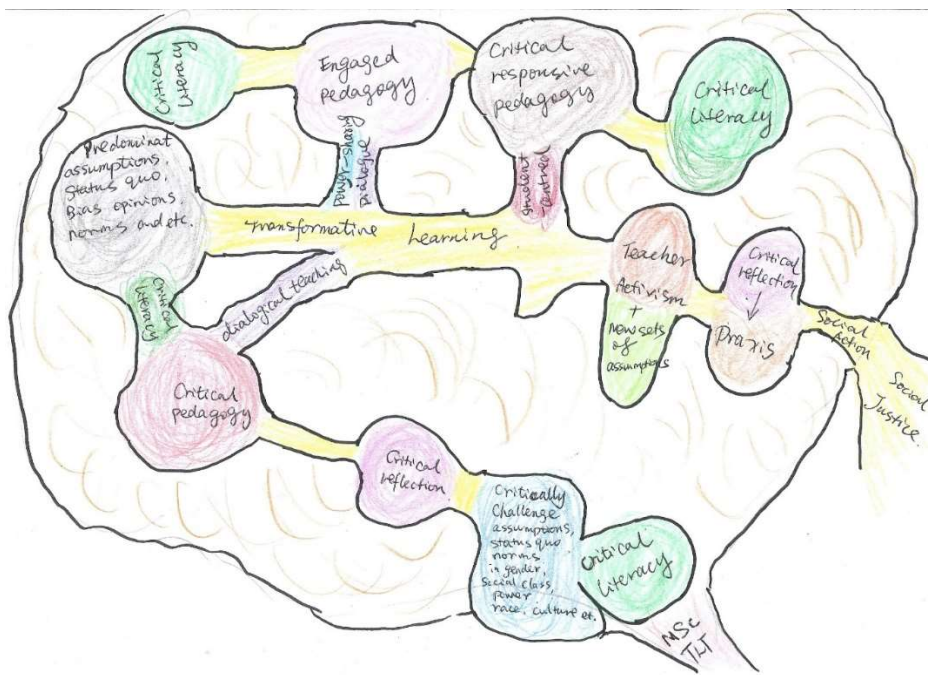
Artefact 9: Final portfolio B 'My safe haven the theory' (Nina, group 2)



Artefact 10: Final portfolio C End point 'Fluid learning atlas open for all' (Nina, group 2)



Artefact 11: Appendix 1 'My teacher identity: the theories in me' (Nina, group 2)



Artefact 12: Appendix 2 'Theory map in my mind' (Nina, group 2)

4.4.3 Cartographic literacy

I have shared these two portfolios which are strongly informed by the theoretical framework provided in the MSc programme as an illustration of cartographic literacy as well as aesthetic agency. Mapping inner theoretical perceptions can be an artistic expression to roam differently than in linear course assignments. Paula says what she thinks the world needs as she sketches out a map informed by critical theories and personal value systems. Her map is shaped by the awareness of power relations that are socially, culturally and historically constituted. Paula combines these observations into a map of her own, with her own way of making links. Different from essay writing, she situates her readings through spatial metaphors. She stays in a flow of mapping, one of personal, intrinsic motivation to speak from inside out. The growth during the journey into meaningful teaching is at the centre of Nina's portfolio. After my suggestions, Nina's portfolio combines the focus on theory with her existential journey. She does not stay with the logical depiction of a mental map, but mixes personal with theoretical terms. She links theoretical forms of meaning-making to her own narrative. Theory is not abstract but a *safe haven* for Nina's own life world. I look back at my sessions notes from the second mapping session and find what she said about her path of self-care: "I am looking out of the window, escaping from the troubles. There is a peaceful world outside, but I am not involved. I can nap under the sunshine like a cat. It is cut off period, it is 'me time'. It is about being in and looking out. It is not about complete isolation. You can

decide if you go there”. In another session she had mentioned: “without theory I wouldn’t be able to invent”. Confidence then comes from the deeper spheres of linking theory with a spatially situated sense of self. Theory represents this state of being safe inside. This possibility is largely absent in the placement schools while student teachers do not have their own classroom yet. Theory for Nina is a sanctuary from which to decide which battles to take on. She has named the second map of her portfolio ‘my safe haven the theory’. Theory and existential finding of the own place are therefore part of the same negotiations of becoming.

I also find my notes from the third session of group B in which Nina described her fluid clouds in detail: “It is a fluid landscape of clouds. Floating. Human knowledge. Heritage , technology, science, people, music, art. There are no boundaries, it is flow. The children can jump on one cloud when they want to. A lot of freedom. There is no SIMD, no deprivation. Not based on economy or family. They are floating on the same level, the clouds change their position by the choice of the learners. The children can fly among the clouds. There are no ladders, no helping necessary [by adults]”. Her educational vision manifests in a distinct understanding of space as fluid, not bounded. The narrative invites the panel into the imaginative worlds as a profoundly spatial teaching scenario. The unusual and original idea of a classroom as floating is crucial to imagine the teacher she has become, it is not simply illustrative.

From blank page to cartographic intention

Creating an intrinsic map from scratch gives student teachers the possibility to reprioritise what matters on the journey into meaningful teaching. This is “an opportunity to democratize the techniques and practices of the creation of maps beyond the figure of the artist, activist or specialist” (Mesquita, 2018, p. 30). Almost everyone can create maps with very few resources, the most important resource is time to reflect. The confrontation with the blank page forces participants to wait for the inspiration of the first sketch. It is the blank page which allows for own cartographic intention rather than pre-established designs to guide the process:

“a map or a visual representation is much more than a simple image and should be considered as an almost “designed narrative”. [...] In fact, behind each of these visualizations lies an intention, (a “cartographic intention”) that could possibly be the base – the departure point – for a debate, future research, or analysis. Eventually, the key, the legend, and the careful choice of terminology and wording used becomes fully part of this subjective apparatus and reinforces the highly

subjective nature of visual representation of data and information. We must remember again that nothing that is written in a map is a coincidence or oversight” (Rekacewicz, 2022, p. 229)

This sense of self is located in teachers’ own perceptions of transformation through theory in their own experienced woods, squares, lanes and bodily metaphors. These theorised life worlds are not just abstract terminology territory. The student teachers themselves hold the keys to their maps but learn how to reveal them to an external audience. Asking them about their own maps in their viva can provide dialogical access points into their deeper inner riches.

Assessment in one’s own terms

The way the mapping artefacts indirectly made their way into the assessment as part of the student teachers’ final portfolios also provides a novel way to explore existential cartographic language to disrupt the often-repetitive reflection exercises of ITE which, according to one of Biesta’s marking experience (2019), can fail to engage their authors in a form of existential reflexivity:

“particularly when such essays were submitted as coursework for marking, I had the impression that students were often writing in socially desirable ways, that is, writing what they thought was expected from them, rather than writing about what they really had encountered. The essays often felt a little too smooth and a little too predictable” (Biesta, 2019, p. 118).

Giving room for the cartographic language of student teachers and learning to witness their singularity is a way to steer away from assessment to tick the boxes of standardisation. As “teacher educators and school leaders may need to constantly “invent” new ways of involving preservice and inservice teachers in professional development experiences” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2014, p. 185), it may be worth exploring in what ways cartographic literacy could be integrated more substantially into formal programmes. These two portfolios demonstrate a cartographic confidence and agency grounded in subjective mapping. The affordances of cartographic literacy are to rewrite on one’s own terms. Writing through cartographic literacy to meet the standards of the professional body goes well beyond the textual, but it is also not just an aesthetic agency. The narrative that the two student teachers give to their maps is not instrumental to fit assessment criteria: “managerial ‘tick the box’ approach to addressing the Standards renders them ineffective” (Lambert & Gray, 2020, p. 501). The existential and intrinsically spatialised mapping appears to make assessment more meaningful. While

cartographic metaphors have been applied in linguistics and language studies to express the “notion that language offers a “map” of existence, allowing people to chart and navigate their world” (Lomas, 2018, p. 480), the mapping methodology also looks at ‘navigating’ from the other side. Could it be possible that subjective mapping offers a language of existence as well? As narratives are constructed beyond text-based referencing as intrinsic cartographic vocabulary, “the visual image itself represents an ambiguous, polysemic and multimodal form of data, which offers alternative surface interpretations” (Mannay, 2015, p. 66). The reformulations taking place in the student teachers’ homes during the pandemic, away from campus and from the shepherd’s hut, suggest that mapping as existential care could become a way to speak in its own right, as a personal language of inner perception within ITE curricula.

Back to the research question

The student teacher maps used in chapter 4 illustrated the chronology of the process of mapping as a peer activity of existential care. The focus was on the understanding of the socially constructed interactions and feedback. What value could a single mapping artefact have to help answer the research question about student teachers’ journeys towards meaningful teaching? The maps introduced so far provide rich vignettes of the methodological possibilities and aesthetic confidence through cartographic literacy: a “snapshot of the ever evolving performance of self, encapsulated for a brief moment on the page” (Galman, 2009, p. 204). But they offer limited insights to understand the journeys into meaningful teaching as trajectories over a longer period of time. They are still pictures during this journey. My interpretations here are therefore limited to short observations and soundbite notes stemming from the discussions in the shepherd’s hut and the possibility to work creatively with the metaphors conveyed by these art works. The mapping artefacts as exemplary visualisations of the process can appear as fragmented due to the absence of a wider web of personal maps into which they could now be embedded.

For the next chapter, I have been able to return to two participants of my study and ask them for their consent about an extended interpretation of their art works. These two case study profiles help to answer the research question I had asked by means of the empirically documented mapping trajectories: how do student teachers negotiate their journey towards meaningful teaching?

Chapter 5: Discussion of two student teachers' negotiations of their ITE journeys into meaningful teaching

I will now reproduce the entirety of two mapping trajectories, composed of all the maps that were at any time sent to me by two student teachers, Soraya and Gloria. My focus here is the holistic meaning-making and the witnessing of a wider intrapersonal ecosystem. By sharing the full anonymised data sets firstly in a descriptive way (5.1., 5.3.) I would like to allow “the viewers to holistically analyse and interpret for themselves” (Trent & Cho, 2020, p. 962) a comprehensive range of artefacts created by individual students from the first session up to the point where they submitted their maps as part of the MSc portfolio for GTCS professional registration. This artistic display does not initially involve a deliberate interpretive voice, still it is already influenced through my own choices of chronological representation.

Interpretative description (Thorne, 2020) then helps to situate my observations in the applied fields of teacher education to varying extents (5.2. and 5.3. and 5.5.). I seek to relate existential care as a practical and practicable contribution to the applied field of Initial Teacher Education. Thorne (2020) has highlighted the need to situate one’s study: “The disciplinary lens that comes along with the credential inevitably and fundamentally paints the colors and defines the contours that a qualitative researcher will see in the field, no matter how compelling the theoretical invitation to imagine that field as something else” (Thorne, 2020, p. 148). My research therefore has to speak to teacher education, although my expertise is not based in ITE. This does not have to result in rigidity. Inherent to interpretive description is “a philosophical positioning that visits the world of theorizing without taking citizenship” (Thorne, 2020, p. 150). What can we learn from the case study profiles for wider action and use of existential care as crafts of becoming? The maps introduced now are not facts for generalisable claims but evocative guides for further curricular and extracurricular action. A “philosophical stance underlying an interpretive descriptive analytical process steers researchers away from the presumption that they are discovering “truths” and toward processes that will more effectively illuminate possibilities for thought and action” (Thorne, 2020, p. 157). The map itself is no absolute truth, but it can be inspiration for ITE reform.

It has to be emphasised that my iterative arts-based research design was built on the premise of several interwoven sessions which allowed the research participants considerable space to

re-interpret their own artistic creations and sculpture them into ‘final’ maps. As my research was constructed as indirect pedagogy, it allowed the specific case study profile of Soraya to be very close to a phenomenological interpretive framework: “A phenomenological study of identity allows for open-ended questions that allow that participant to present, through the construction of a narrative, for example, what identity means to them and how it functions in their lives” (Spencer et al., 2020, p. 126). But it is important to stress that such phenomenological insights only emerged if the participant decided to make identity an important feature of their map. From my side, there was no pressure to use the term identity. This is why chapter 5 does not rely only on my own interpretive authority and my own categorisations. What emerged was a coherent narrative based on the participants’ own iterative process of re-interpretation of their intrinsic cartographies. I call them ‘final maps’ or ‘portfolio maps’ within the thesis, although the acts of meaning-making through mapping may well have continued beyond the scope of my study and hopefully accompany my research participants on their further teacher journeys and becomings.

5.1 The case study profile of Soraya’s mapping journey

The first full portfolio of maps that will be discussed is the one of Soraya (name anonymised). The findings here are connected to the methodological process outlined in chapter 4 by combining the empirical evidence of her mapping artefacts to my field notes and transcripts from all sessions, a Twitter vignette as well as ongoing e-mail communication throughout the field work.

5.4.1 Recruitment route:

Soraya joins the research as one of the first seven student teachers participating in my Welcome Week recruitment meeting. As she later communicates to me (mid-April 2020), she only came along to see but was not sure at all if she really wanted to join an ‘arty’ activity before the actual meeting: “To think that I initially hesitated to participate at all because I thought this was a creative/arty exercise that I did not feel I had the skills for. But I was hooked after the first session when you had all the different mapping books and styles, which really helped form some presentational ideas. What is great is that not only has the mapping been personally useful to me, it will be a part of my portfolio, and no doubt something I refer back to often as I start my probation year and beyond.” Soraya is intrigued by the diversity of

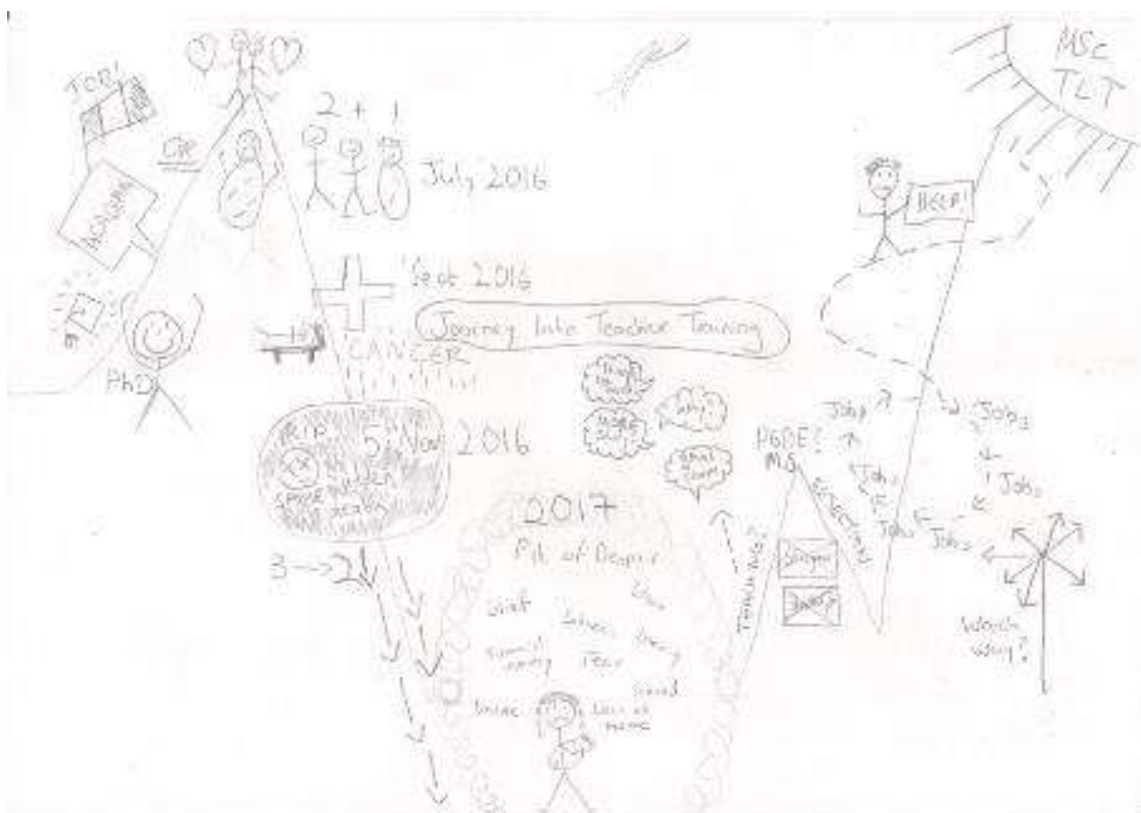
cartographic designs offered that day which prompts her to commit time to the subsequent sessions.

5.4.2 Map 1: 'journey into the MSc TLT'

At the start of the first meeting (session 1: the choice of teaching), Soraya picks the photograph of the hitchhiker from the pool of photo-elicitation techniques as well as the signpost at a crossroad (see artefact 12). She explains to the group that she was sure about changing career, already for quite some time before entering the teaching programme. She remembers the moment when she was walking through an urban financial district where people were sitting in their offices. At this moment, she was imagining the classroom as a much more versatile space, nurturing her desire to engage in some form of teaching rather than being stuck in an office.

The first crafted map picks up the symbol of the signpost at a crossroad. The signpost is placed in the period of her life where she has decided to quit work in the skyscrapers of banking and law firms. The signpost symbolises the many professional routes she could potentially take from now, but there is also confusion within this multitude of choices: Higher Education, Further Education, research, the third sector, Primary or Secondary teaching etc., all have a different direction on the dense signpost. The idea of home features as well, but with a question mark. Soraya positions herself on this map like the hitchhiker from the photograph, she is on a road holding a sign. Soraya's application for the PGDE (postgraduate diploma in education) route only gets her onto the waiting list of two different institutions before she discovers the 2-year route into the teaching profession of the MSc TLT: "wanting to do teaching, not knowing how, purely by accident". When she opts for the MSc TLT programme, she maps out distinct values around this programme: social justice, sustainability, digital literacy and a global perspective. The values advertised by the programme have "hit home". The sea of possibilities features as a horizon in the distance.

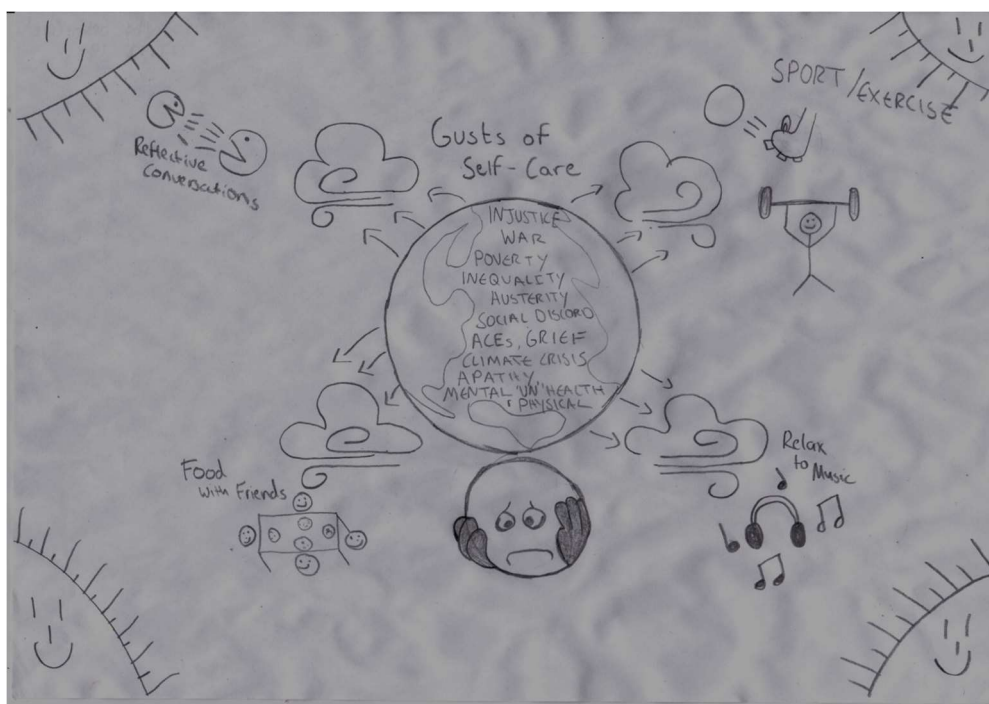
Teacher Education programme. This map is similar to the first drawing, but it reveals more personal aspects and existential details from her life. The waystations she decides to make visible here are deeper existential topics, starting from the cheerfulness of graduation (at doctoral level), moving to a peak of togetherness in her relationship, the foundation of family abruptly sliding downwards because of serious illness and the sudden death of her spouse in a very short time frame (from September to November of the same year). For the subsequent year, she depicts a 'pit of despair' with emotions of grief, loss, sadness, loneliness, fear and the loss of home. Asking 'why?' about her personal struggles and wondering about pursuing more study, she is ready to climb the mountain of PGDE MS, only to find her application waiting in the queue, leading to the turning cycle of jobs. She says she needs to make a new choice about the way to move forward in order not to find herself rotating in one job circle to the other. In this detailed personal trajectory into teaching, Soraya also reveals what is written on the sign that she holds as a hitchhiker that was left blank in her first map (artefact 13): 'Help!'. The next station on this road will then be the rays of sunshine coming from the MSc TLT.



Artefact 14: more detailed journey into Teacher Training (Soraya, group 1)

5.4.4 Map 3: 'the gusts of self-care'

The other map Soraya shares with me before the start of session 3 (artefact 15) leaves the aesthetic register of a chronological, signposted life story road and instead puts the globe at the centre of the map. Inside the globe, one can find words about societal as well as emotions and health-related concerns: injustice, war, poverty, inequality, austerity, social discord, ACEs, grief, climate crisis, apathy, mental physical 'un'health. Gusts of self-care are drawn right next to this globe. Soraya points out that 'there is relief through the winds of self-care, but there is not yet change'. These gusts providing temporary relief are: reflective conversations, food with friends, relaxing to music and sport/exercise.



Artefact 15: Gusts of self-care (Soraya, group 1)

5.4.5 Map 4: 'lifeworld window and YMCA'

The next map, this time again crafted in the group session 3 (gateway into transformative teaching), thematises the complex children's life worlds beyond what is visible in schools. This depiction (artefact 16 a/b) is informed by Soraya's own life experience and encounters in communities. While she says that she initially struggled to generalise about an unknown life world in this mapping exercise, she then attempts to subvert by possible labelling based on things she does know. Based on imagining a child she had the chance to get to know a bit better, one can see different imaginary rooms on display in the window of a house, imagining not only the child at school but how life might be like after school and at the weekends. On

the weekend, the child could receive no help in caring for the mother who is not well, portrayed by the child giving the mother a glass of water. With the help of relatives, the child may be able to be more of a child during weekdays, playing like others at school. On the bottom-left, the love and passion in the kitchen is depicted, with the young person developing a sense of responsibility, looking after the siblings on the weekends. The bottom-right part of the window shows the garden with the whole family, the SIMD 100, a fictional score Soraya has invented to subvert the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation which has been critiqued in the group discussion preceding the mapping as being deficit-focused and not capable of measuring happiness. Soraya captures the coming together of different people from the community with smiles.



Artefact 16 a/b: The window to a child's life world (Soraya, group 1)

Asked about the 'key' to a child's life world, Soraya sees this entrance door to the pupil in the community and illustrates this by referring to a sketch on the back of her life world window map. Here, she draws out the intersecting life through her own observation of a child whose YMCA (community space) experience matters. Soraya perceives community as the possibility of joy for a happy child. The child goes to school, but also goes to the YMCA, where a different connection between the student teacher and the child can be made. Teacher and child meet at school, but there is a parallel location in the community.

5.4.6 Communication directly after the pandemic-related cancellations of the final session
 Soraya writes and reacts to the exercises (see Appendix 7) sent to the students after the pandemic-related cancellation of the final in-person session. She confirms her intention to

join through MS Teams and that others from group 1 also want to continue despite the prevailing circumstances.

Shortly after, I see a tweet by Soraya in which my own account is tagged (April 7th 2020): “It’s not The Hut, but the sun is out and the birds are tweeting! Values and Utopia!” accompanied with a picture of a garden table and different handouts from our previous mapping sessions. Taking the hut experience into the own garden is a surprising transfer of existential care activities I did not expect in times when everyone is locked up and busy coming to terms with the new situation. While it is no longer possible for the groups to meet in the hut on the university campus, there is the agentic expression of taking something from the hut into the own home and therefore build continuity across the pandemic divide. This active digital contact, here a public sharing through Twitter, reflects a time of profoundly changing communication patterns. Soraya tweets after weeks of disrupted communication habits (figure 25) and hereby shows that a continuation of mapping has been possible for her.

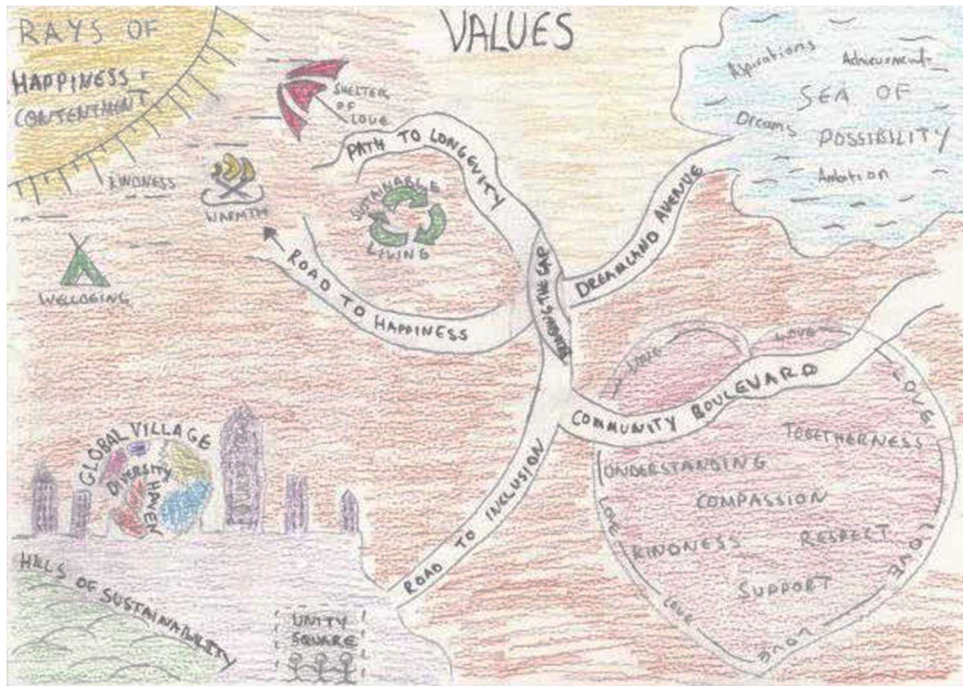


Figure 25: Tweet Values and Utopia

5.4.7 Map 5: ‘values roads’

Soraya sends her next map in advance of the feedback session happening on MS Teams. In stark contrast to the worried face next to the globe from her third map (artefact 15), she now shares a very bright, positive landscape. The streets are inspired by the street map example of my proposed creative exercise (Appendix 7) which I had sent to all participants in order for them to reflect on the links between the three thematic sessions. The ‘rays of happiness and contentment’ shine on a values landscape symbolised by wellbeing, kindness, warmth and a shelter of love. The ‘road to happiness’ and the ‘path of longevity’ are connected to ‘dreamland avenue’ leading into the sea of possibility. A pond allows to be ‘bridging the gap’

towards the 'road to inclusion' providing access to 'unity square', the 'global village', 'diversity avenue' and the 'hills of sustainability'. The 'community boulevard' is surrounded by a heart-shaped zone of love, wrapping up values such as understanding, togetherness, compassion, kindness, respect and support.



Artefact 17: Values roads (Soraya, group 1)

5.4.8 Feedback session on Teams:

In the discussions with three other student teachers who join the first Teams meeting, we collectively reflect on the importance of talking to an audience. This means keeping in mind the portfolio panel who decides if the candidate meets the standards set out by GTCS. Soraya shares her interrogation with the three other student teachers at the first Teams session: 'how do you stay true to your own values?' She is motivated to link her mapping to the standards section on Integrity, as for her the mapping had been particularly helpful for figuring out her own values. She reflects further how her perception of her trajectory has shifted. While she mentioned in the first session that her journey into teacher training had been accidental (picking the hitchhiker photograph to illustrate this), she is now aware that many things were already there before the start of the MSc TLT. Her arrival in a teacher education route was not completely accidental. Pointing out the 'choice of teaching' session, Soraya is remembering and relating the start of the mapping exercise with where she is now as a student teacher. She reflects what the purpose of the different maps has been and comes

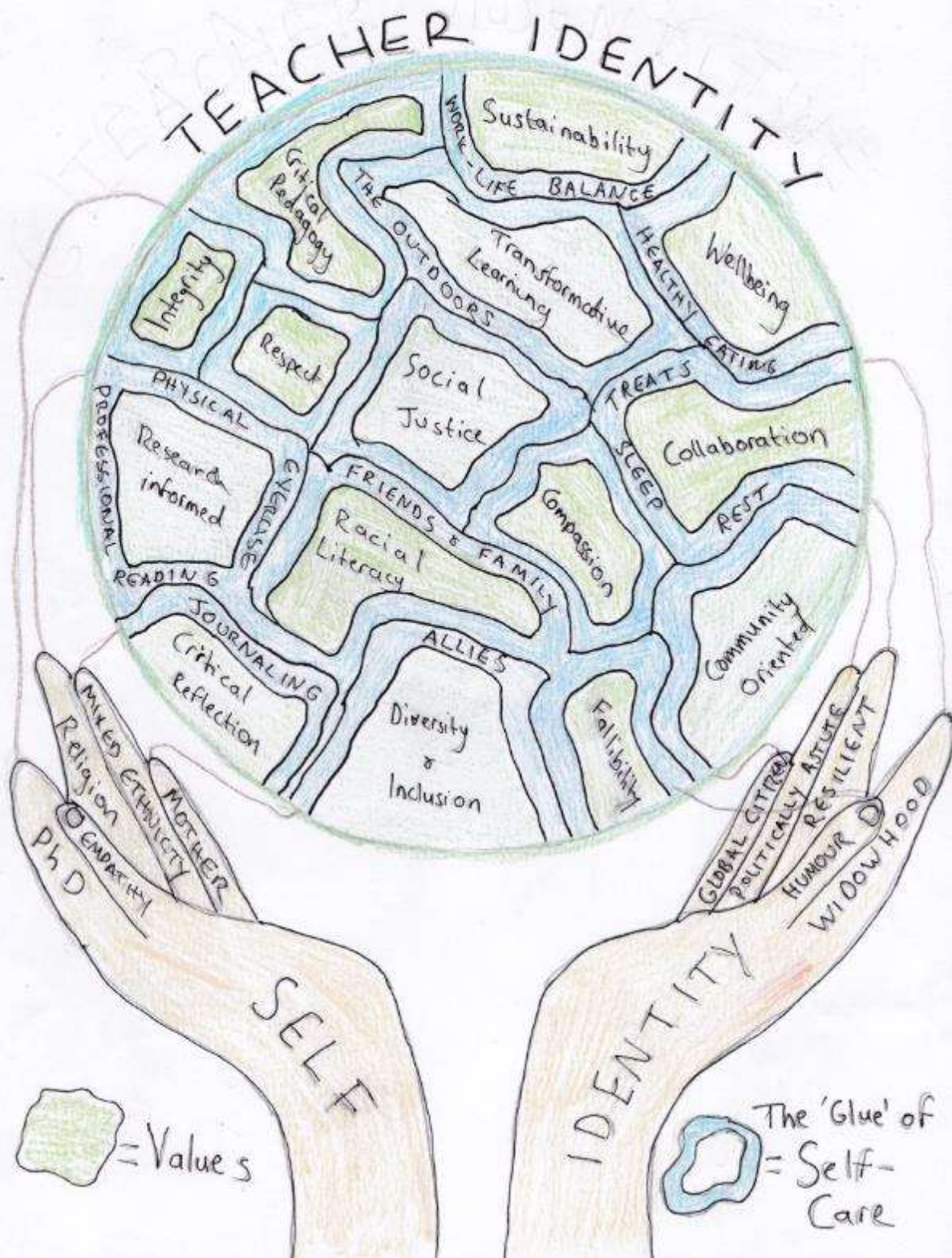
to the conclusion that not all maps are equally meaningful for a Professional Standards assessment panel. She looks back at her first maps, sees how the process of reflecting had been very personal and decides that she does not want to talk about this in her viva. Remembering the readings from Brookfield, what she wants to highlight now is how to stay true to avoid the loss of passion and enthusiasm. She mentions the centrality of finding more of her values, of her allies. She points out that self-care is the glue in all of this. She observes that sometimes self-care means doing something extra, not less but more. In a final feedback round with the group, she adds how the ITE programme recognises this importance of self-care, sustainability and retention.

5.4.9 Map 6: 'the glue of self-care'

Coming as a very positive surprise, it turns out that Soraya does further mapping work on her own immediately after the reflective session on Teams. As she later writes by e-mail, she got inspired by the online group feedback and discussions: "Following today's session I've now put together the map that I would like to include in my portfolio (attached). It is referenced in the section on Integrity in the standards, and then I will place it in the appendix. I really found the chat today helpful for deciding what aspect of this mapping journey would be best to include and how, so thank you for facilitating that. Best wishes".

The title of this final map is "My journey to discovery – how self-care may inculcate my values". Teacher identity is portrayed through a globe. This map also provides a legend to better understand the inside of the globe, distinguishing through colour coding the values and the 'glue' of self-care which is holding together this globe composed of small lands of values. The values are integrity, respect, critical pedagogy, sustainability, transformative learning, wellbeing, social justice (at the centre), collaboration, compassion, community oriented, fallibility, racial literacy, diversity & inclusion, critical reflection, research informed. The glue is named as: the outdoors, work-life balance, healthy eating, 'treats, sleep, rest', friends & family, allies, journaling, physical exercise, professional reading. The globe is held by two hands and connected by fine cords from the finger tips. These hands represent self identity, distinguished from teacher identity situated in the globe. The ten fingers of self identity are: PhD, empathy, religion, mixed ethnicity, mother, global citizen, politically astute, resilient, humour, widowhood. 'Teacher Identity' is written at the top of the globe, once in clear writing, but also in the background.

My journey to discovery - how self-care may inculcate my values.



Artefact 18: 'My journey to discovery – how self-care may inculcate my values' (Soraya)

I write back enthusiastically after receiving this additional map in which the themes from the previous maps are coming out in a whole new way and spatial arrangement. Receiving yet another map goes well beyond any of my expectations of what the activity initially intended and speaks of a strong intrinsic engagement by Soraya for making her inner landscapes available for others to engage with. She decides to attend the second Teams meeting as well, where she again provides very engaged and constructive feedback to her two other peers who attend.

I receive further e-mail communications from Soraya, keeping me informed about her viva and assessment. Soraya shares the following account after the viva:

“The panel did not explicitly ask about the map, but their first question was ‘What kind of teacher are you?’ and I referred them to my map as I answered. We were all asked more or less the same opening question. I saw that as the opportunity to mention it.”

In May, further feedback from the portfolio submission is shared. Her assessment panel had been composed of a lecturer from the MSc TLT and a representative for the standards of GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland):

“Hope this finds you well. I received the wonderful news today that I achieved a grade of 100 for my viva and portfolio. Among the comments was this, which was very much in tune with what you said after I drew my final map:

“Of particular note was the way that you not only accounted for your competence against each element of the SPR, but that you were able to go beyond its structural confines, presenting an account of yourself as a teacher which matched, but went well beyond the standard itself. You were able to provide both an atomised and a holistic account of your identity and your professional progress.”

I’m so inspired by this outcome, and just wanted you to see that the Hut sessions had such a beneficial impact on my development as a teacher. I wish you all the best with your research and look forward to following the Hut’s travels from afar!”

More than two years later

In October 2022, I contact Soraya by e-mail with an invitation to pick her own pseudonym and the possibility for a participant-led anonymisation of the personal artefacts. The process of participatory naming is considered important for a more nuanced representation within the strict processes of anonymisation that arts-based research implies (Allen & Wiles, 2016). Indeed, she suggests her own pseudonym ‘Soraya’ while I had previously worked with a

provisional pseudonym 'Isobel'. The choice of a pseudonym is no neutral choice. This name change (which takes a few seconds in a word file) makes a big difference. But it also brings back the discussion of identifiable characteristics of a small student cohort. I had written to Soraya about any possible issues of misrepresentation and the risk to be identifiable if the maps were reproduced without hiding some parts of her personal trajectory and offered her to make her less identifiable. She responds:

"I thoroughly enjoyed reading about your study, it was really interesting to bear witness to the other side of my experience - your perspective and how you have interpreted it for research purposes. I really have no problem with you including my contributions in the way that you have, even if it's possible that I could be identified. My story isn't a secret to those who know me."

This participant choice to accept a degree of risk in being identified reflects a move in arts-based, visual research away from standardised responses to anonymisation towards a case-by-case exploration (Back, 2004) involving the research participants. Soraya does not have an issue with the act of being seen and feels closer to the 'politics of recognition' (Sweetman, 2009) in a holistic sense rather than omitting parts of her biography. Anonymity in Soraya's case is not a strict either...or. It had taken me a long time to get back to her, more than two years after the last contact. But I first had to be clear for myself what I was asking from her. Many approaches to re-contacting research participants exist, from functional 'member checking' to meeting participants again in person. The late but very positive e-mail exchange allows me now to "present visual data and text in its entirety with consent based on the premise that data will not be anonymised [at 100% as a risk remains]" (Mannay, 2015, p. 113). While 'full' anonymity may be an illusion (and denying this can be a risk as well), the relational discussion around visibility with the research participant can sometimes become an advantage (Sweetman & Hensser, 2010). I also shared plans for dissemination of the mapping findings in creative ways (outlined as a card game design in chapter 6) and Soraya was motivated to be involved. As chapter 6 will tell, reaching this stage was however a long process involving paralysis and insecurity about relational ways to make sense of data.

5.2 Situating Soraya's maps in existential-experiential becomings

Soraya's mapping profile is exemplary of the power of artistic artefacts as visualisations of intrinsic treasures which "enable us to learn about ourselves, each other, and the world through encountering the unique lens of a person's (or a group's) passionate rendering of a

reality into a moving, aesthetic expression of meaning” (Ellingson, 2013, p. 599). My case study concerns the integration of existential care as a process into the provision of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland. I propose to look at the socially embedded act of existential care through the lens of Soraya’s intrinsic ecosystem because it allows to see what can emerge if existential expressions are allowed to take shape through an iterative process. Personal meaning-making is then witnessed as a series of fragments but also as wholeness. After witnessing the singularity of Soraya’s navigations of a meaningful journey, I decided not to apply a conventional framework of coding to the further interpretation of her existential becomings as a student teacher. This would imply that her maps can be compartmentalised into units of analysis, while I would rather suggest to appreciate the maps as holistic works of art. The meanings that Soraya has been able to give to her trajectory through the artefacts can instead be connected to the challenges of teacher education. Soraya says that her maps were influenced by very helpful feedback, she takes on board a diversity of inputs. Her maps do not evolve in a bubble or vacuum, yet one can witness an inner coherence that is unique to her own life world: “if we are able to capture and report the uniqueness, the essence of the case, in all its particularity and present it in a way we can all recognize, we will discover something of universal significance” (Simons, 2020, p. 696). Interpretive description makes the deep existential perspective meaningful for the applied sciences, situating this unique mapping profile in wider concerns for teacher education from an existential lens.

5.2.1 The importance of identity beyond teacher identity

The participant decided to explore identity further. Identity then becomes a holistic theme, it is about much more than teacher identity. And this is what can be witnessed in Soraya’s cartographic depiction of her identity. What stands out in Soraya’s maps is the importance of the personal, of her self-identity. Self-identity holds the teacher identity. This can be witnessed through a trajectory which increasingly focuses on the role of self-care. Although Soraya has missed the session in which self-care is discussed within the group, the participant invests more and more time to explore this often overlooked (Higgins, 2011) facet of ITE pre-service teacher journeys. To link self-care, values and teacher identity in the same map (on the same existential territory) is not an easy task. They may generally be mapped as separate ‘units’, but Soraya is concerned with making them relate more holistically. The location of self-care is constantly a focus of attention as it is renegotiated and repositioned across most sessions. In my field work diary I wrote down my initial reaction after seeing her third map

(artefact 15). I perceived the globe as the central part of the whole map. While the sun is shining from all four corners, the centrality of worries about the world distracts from the many gusts of self-care. The face below the globe, holding hands in what I perceive as a posture of worry, stood out more than the sport or the music. The gusts of self-care appear as a reaction and response to the overwhelming uncertainties the world is facing. In that sense, existential care is the right frame for such worries to come out. It has been pointed out that climate anxieties are invitations for a posture of existential listening, although they are increasingly voiced in *clinical* frameworks of therapy sessions by individuals (Budziszewska & Jonsson, 2021). The worried face may be coping through gusts of self-care. But Soraya's mapping trajectory does not stay with coping. She is not negotiating her journey as reactive to external issues, but as intrinsically active identity (re-)construction.

The centrality of the heaviness of the world, where self-care is trying to become part of the ecosystem as gusts but does not yet represent change, is then counterbalanced in her fifth map (artefact 17), a bright, positive, idealised world of teaching as values roads. This intermediary step is a hopeful landscape. However, all the worries have gone. They were so central in the previous self-care session map but now there is no more trace of the more challenging aspects that were provoking the gusts of self-care. In the final map (artefact 18), the globe is back, but the narrative is very different. The work of integration that Soraya achieves through her mapping journeys becomes visible by comparing the globe in artefact 15 with the globe in artefact 18. In the final map, the globe is again central, but this is not 'the world' as a dominant, overwhelming construct, but it is her world as a continent of values. And this is the world that is not full of worries but blossoming with agentic values as well as wider societal challenges. The societal emergencies that an activist teacher will inevitably perceive can be integrated and connected.

This diversity of angles illustrates how self-care is in movement to find its place on the map that will become an intuitive belief ecology for the negotiation of meaning. The journeys in Soraya's journey of becoming can be conceptualised as the integration of self-care into her professional belief ecology (Strike & Posner, 1992). We can understand becoming as a trajectory and evolution, as the inner admittance of new beliefs into the own ecosystem:

“Once “admitted” into the belief ecology, the new beliefs exist in a mutually dependent relationship with earlier beliefs, intact but also always joining and

being shaped by and reshaping prior beliefs. The metaphor of the belief ecology helps clarify what may appear to be contradictory subsets of belief. Specific beliefs a teacher holds about his or her practice may appear contradictory until they are examined in the context of the larger belief systems under which they are subsumed and with which they are congruent (Pajares, 1996)” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2014, p. 175)

Soraya finds a way how to give self-care the central role she envisions in the final map (*after* the feedback session). This allows to see the recomposing between self-identity and teacher identity in a way where her sense of self is not overruled by (the potentially instrumental and efficiency-driven) models of teacher identity. In the final map of Soraya, we can find ‘the glue of self-care’ which holds together her teacher identity, and we see the hands of self and identity connecting both dimensions through the ten fingertips. Self-care has become a congruent fabric, an organic material to shape the whole ecosystem. There is no antagonism between personal self and professional self. Both can co-exist.

5.2.2 Holding self-care as a way of mapping away from the profession’s internalised tension
Soraya’s negotiations of meaning by finding the role she wants to give to self-care in her own ecology are particularly relevant to reframe the debate around teacher retention: “the ‘recruit – burnout – replace’ model (Allen & Sims 2018, 20) must be replaced with a ‘educate – mentor – nurture’ model” (Gordon, 2020, p. 672). Soraya demonstrates an imaginative way to deal with potential value conflicts and ambivalences that pervade the literature on health and wellbeing of teachers who are often positioned and portrayed as a resilient workforce in systems of unsustainable workloads. As previously pointed out, Soraya does not nurture *coping* strategies on her own maps. She nurtures *care*. Dualistic accounts between duty for others and duty for self are not perpetuated here. The ethics of care (Noddings, 2013) is applied for pupils, but not as a mirror for the self. One ought to pick a side to keep on existing:

“having a work/life balance was viewed as not being a good teacher [...] Jude: I feel like there is never a work/life balance. I feel like life as a performing arts teacher just merges. My life becomes my work. Ross: Certainly, during productions, I’m sure this is the case for everyone, I feel like I never leave [work]. Troublingly, both Jude and Ross conflate ‘life’ with ‘work’ and perceive this as a defining aspect of a ‘performing arts teacher’ identity” (Lambert & Gray, 2020, p. 510).

It appears that such tensions are easily internalised, but their roots are in the ambiguities of the (helping) professions with respective cultures of overwork that posit resilience as beneficial for an imagined common good at the expense of life beyond work: “As teachers,

we are not often encouraged to display imperfection; we pride ourselves on exuding characteristics that are more its antitheses: strength, capability, and authority. In doing so, however, we create two mutually exclusive identities: one as human and the other as teacher. This dichotomy can create tremendous tension – both inside and among us” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 619). In these accounts, it appears that resilience is the external grip onto intrinsic ecosystems in order for things not to fall apart. One can discover how Soraya has focused on something very different for her world: self-care is a type of glue, it holds values together. Maybe then if we create occasions that allow student teachers’ imaginations of self-care to stretch beyond resilience, potentially things do not have to get to a systems shut-down (for self-protection) and/or (silent) quitting.

Soraya has dissolved the unhelpful dualism between competing duties of care (for self or for the other). By allowing her ecology to be guided by ‘selves’ (of self identity and of self-care), she is the opposite of ‘selfish’ by sharing with her viva panel and my research a way forward to connect these elements which are usually distinguished as mutually exclusive antagonisms. There is generosity in sharing her maps. Singularity is deeply relational and has the power to shift the attention from self-centredness, hence overcoming “egotism by responding, which is the way of standing out as an independent and singular individual” (Sæverot, 2013, p. 68). There is ample research evidence of an internal conflict regarding this dichotomy, some of it dating back decades: “What happened to my creativity? What happened to my professional integrity? [...] I don’t know what else I can do, having wanted to teach all my life, but I feel I am being forced out, forced to choose between a life and teaching [end of quote] The struggles are often internalized and set the care of the self against the duty to others” (Ball, 2003, p. 216). The concept of identity is a site of struggle. But identity as a path to meaning can also be a site of healing. Struggling through dualisms can lead to fragmented selves, unsure how to behave in the face of inner tensions and in many cases leading to compensatory tactics. Intrinsic mapping, with the possibility to rewrite binaries from the inside, is then not about compensation.

One can ask if this coexistence of self-care and the caring for others is actually a reality in the contemporary curricula for ITE, or if the onus is on individual student teachers to go the extra length of integrative work for a balance between self and others in times of rising workloads. Curricula in ITE should not only help to anticipate the technicity of the lesson plan but could

also be about the ability to confront the pressure and tension that is internalised as separation rather than relational challenge. This curricular gap is well documented in the work of Rosemary Sutton (2007), from which it appears to be a tacit task in a teacher's job to be regulating, domesticating, banning negative expressions or domesticating emotions that are considered inappropriate to the professional sense of self. The persistent belief that "no place" is allocated to certain emotional expressiveness in school cultures (Liljestrom et al., 2007) leads to masking towards students and colleagues (Hargreaves, 2001): "Teachers begin to feel that they must choose between two identities – the competent professional or the caring pal" (Shapiro, 2010, p. 618).

Activist teacher identities and the pressure to transform

The fact that Soraya as a future graduate of an 'activist teacher education programme' focuses on self-care stresses the importance for inner coherence in a world of ambiguous external demands. Soraya's degree was embedded in wider pressures to promote change and innovation, but not necessarily providing the conditions for transformation to take hold: "university-based teacher education feeling increasingly squeezed and under pressure to perform an increasingly wide-ranging set of duties, with increasingly fewer resources" (Kennedy, 2018, p. 646). Normative frames have to be negotiated with the care for singular student teachers who do not necessarily want to enter these logics. What is then an activist teacher?

"Activist teachers are those who have a well-informed commitment to social justice, and to challenging racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist and other structural injustices and inequalities through their teaching. Activist teachers seek to progress their own learning in ways that will enable them to teach *all* children, seeing the education process as something that should be collaborative, transparent and relevant to the community in which learners live" (Kennedy, 2018, p. 641)

An ethically ambivalent tension is pointed out in philosophical critiques of the transformative turn. How can activism training be truly emancipatory against cultures of burn-out/sacrifice and challenge the ideology of instrumentalised human capital? Existential care can allow activist student teachers to distinguish between instrumental transformative ideology and intrinsically paced transformative pedagogy:

“Given the brief time-period teachers and students have with each other, teachers hoping to effect a transformation in students cannot wait around for them to happen upon a transformative discontinuity of their own accord. If they are to attain their goal, they must create the conditions for it to occur now. The ‘transformation’ of transformative education is therefore not only momentous, irreversible and discontinuous, but also rapid” (Yacek, 2020, pp. 260 – 261).

In cultures of intense commitment, there is a constant risk to look outside into the world and forget about own needs. Activist ITE therefore requires safeguarding elements against the logic of optimisation of society. What is needed alongside narratives of change as impact performativity is an ethics of care as self-care. There needs to be a counterbalance of being in order to preserve the impressive promises of transformative education (English, 2013).

5.2.3 Relegated curricular spaces of a shared humanity

There are connections to be made between Soraya’s individual navigating and the strong evidence from other research participants about the importance of speaking out authentically. Other student teachers from the small group sessions, if given a space and time to express their struggles on the way to a meaningful, genuine teaching career, are also frequently torn between self and others. They are reluctantly entering the school cultures because they see this new home rightly as a threat to their self-identity. They may find refuge in their subject area or extracurricular self-help, but the very strongly perceived threat to sacrifice oneself for others will stay part of their daily struggles.

If, however, we accept to see and confront this existential threat together with student teachers, then change may be possible, as Soraya’s mapping has demonstrated. Soraya’s choice to follow up on the role of self-care in her journey demonstrates that one can map back from the threat of potentially dysfunctional school work cultures through an intrinsic ecosystem. An intrinsic work can provide ways that foreground shared humanity to *be* as well as to act as caring allies alongside the systemic changes that are necessary to move to wider teacher agency rather than make superficial adjustments:

“We were allowing an ideal of what teachers should be -cheerful, self-sacrificing, and vice-less- to dominate our interactions. [...] The model teacher has figured it all out: struggles, if they ever existed, are in the past. In our striving toward this ideal, we tend to disregard or even hide our own complexities and imperfections; in essence, we de-humanize ourselves” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 618)

Instead of increasingly taking in the toxicity of dysfunctional ecosystems of schools induced by precarity and systemically expected overwork (Heffernan & Mills, 2022), it may be more meaningful for student teachers to engage in deeper existential confrontations, and to create their own healthier ecosystems by mapping the relationships between the self and the teacher identity. However, the dynamic and interpersonal spaces where such a negotiation of meaning could be sustained collectively and for a broader re-humanising of working lives are often relegated in curricular priorities. The urgency of action in this regard is also expressed in my postdoctoral SAC policy brief in the form of an *after*-school bus for teachers.

Mapping has allowed Soraya to express a fuller range of emotions, visions and existential challenges, ultimately depicting how to navigate and relate these spheres in a way that an ecology can then hold it all together. Soraya's teacher identity is held with the hands of the self-identity and connected through the fingertips of who Soraya is. Often, identity is defined the other way around. Self-identity is usually acknowledged in the shadow of the all-decisive constructions of teacher identity. It can be merely tolerated and seen as an add-on or, if too intimate and tied to 'divergent' identities, even becomes a taboo. Clearly, "interrelationships unavoidably exist between the professional and personal identities of teachers" (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2014, p. 177) but this connection is rarely explored by providing the space for personal identity to direct or shape teacher identity. Reciprocity between personal identity and teacher identity is rarer than direct competition between the two, manifesting at times through the slow fading-out into the silent quitting through pragmatism and instructional routines: "I began to sense that the longer I was a teacher, the less I might feel like a full human being. My professional identity was eclipsing my humanity" (Shapiro, 2010, p. 616).

Darker layers, deeper conversations, brighter futures?

My multi-temporal design, a kind of "'slow science' (Rivoal & Salazar 2013) of visual research can engender unsettling stories and facilitate a level of emotional access to participants' social worlds" (Mannay, 2015, p. 123). Such revelations are situated in existential care, not the high-speed of a curriculum which overlooks and ignores, or the untrained professional's fear to set in motion psychological distress by simply listening in times when student mental health has become a serious issue of university *managements*. Soraya does not 'manage' her mental health, she narrates her journey, confronting in the course of her recent life serious illness, bereavement in her family and the loss of a sense of home. This is integrated on an *existential*

level, there is no imminent danger of a 'therapeutic turn' flooding ITE with uncontrollable emotions. Mapping out the 'pit of despair' does not have to be a taboo but can be reintegrated as a waystation for her journey into teacher training. ITE is then about meaning-making and negotiating the place of the personal in the professional trajectory. While not every person in the group of student teachers would share certain life events (and in the case of Soraya, she shares some maps with me but not in the peer group), her life trajectory brings something in view that is generally missing in ITE research: "If we want to grow as teachers – we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives – risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract" (Palmer, 1998, p. 12). Shapiro refers to normal conversations in the staff lounge as "interacting on a very limited basis. We had restricted the scope of our conversation to topics that were safe and shallow" (Shapiro, 2010, p. 616). The exact opposite has happened in the sessions of existential care in the 'safe space' of the shepherd's hut.

5.2.4 Dwelling in authenticity/vulnerability: what makes us human?

Soraya's example can inspire others to break the routines of 'safe and shallow' as what she had to experience is now an integral part of those hands that hold her teacher identity. When Soraya maps 'Help!' (artefact 14) as an entrance point into her teaching career, she is also embracing vulnerability as part of her professional trajectory. Nussbaum (2003) refers to vulnerability as the capacity to be "admitting what we do not know and cannot control" (Shapiro, 2010, p. 619). Soraya comes into the creative mapping processes as the human first. But she is not a 'vulnerable subject for an academic study'. Vulnerabilities are rarely expressed in the professionalism of teaching and at first one may be hesitant to open room for the uncomfortable and unsettling. Soraya's deep engagement brings this topic up as a facet of existential care. Her story allows us all to connect through a shared humanity as she decides to name difficult periods of life. Some topics such as loss are omnipresent in society, and at the same time they are being persistently ignored (Affifi & Christie, 2019) whereas they could be seen as deeply relational.

There are few other spaces in ITE to express the multiple facets of human experience on an existential dimension. Other schemes to accompany student teachers often stress the psychological side as individual resilience targets. Is it desirable to confront student teachers directly with the very existence of transitions and life events that make us more vulnerable?

In the shepherd's hut sessions, the student teachers demanded by themselves to go into more discomfiting direction, suggesting that "university and schools are not aware of these darker layers, how difficult it is for students" (David in group 2, session 2). Allowing such themes to take hold in peer processes of meaning-making helpfully demystifies internalised ideals of standardised 'good teacher' identities (Tuytens & Devos, 2010). Having these other conversations implies creating a safe frame, so that within that novel frame teachers get the opportunity to feel human. A form of scheduled peer care in combination with silent reflective times could signal to the profession that "interaction among teachers can be more fully developed to cultivate professional growth – not just as educators, but as complex, multi-faceted human beings" (Shapiro, 2010, p. 616).

One observation from the safe space of existential care is the need for trust that student teachers, when given a space and time and encouragement to go beyond the safe and shallow actually do manage to navigate in such unusual, rocky yet meaningful terrains. What has come out of existential care as an invitation is the possibility of not having to suppress deeper layers of existence, but at the same time making wise choices. Through feedback sessions, Soraya takes decisions for *selective* sharing, not adding all of her maps to her assessment portfolio. There can be a fear that cohorts of student teachers would come to the teachers' lounge and expose their intimate life right after a session of existential care. Oversharing the own struggles outside of the safe spaces could indeed trigger defence mechanisms of others, which can lead to a spiral of isolation, in the staff room or beyond (Keck, 2020). Student teachers can judge which maps are suitable for which audience. As Soraya gains better understanding of how to link self-care and values, how the place of self-care is renegotiated, she decides not to present the first maps to the panel. The fact of having gone through specific difficult times informs but does not define her maps. But the fact of having mapped these trajectories has undoubtedly helped her to remember that self-care in itself, not as an add-on, needs a central spot on her map: "One of the most significant ways that people make sense of themselves is to show themselves to themselves" (Ryan & Webster, 2019, p. 75). She is coming into the teaching profession with the hitchhiker's 'help' sign as something to be embraced, but also moving further once it is acknowledged. Mapping the intrinsic to the outside is a chance for dialogue with self and with others. In this non-directive, safe atmosphere provided by existential care, the student teacher is given the space and time to

find their own way to embrace those themes and facets of life that are relegated in curricular priorities but which can become foundations for intrinsically sustainable routes into teaching. A form of (extra-)curricular sanctuary for the more discomforting aspects of life can dissolve what could have been two mutually exclusive identities of “infallible teacher and fallible human” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 619).

Soraya’s singular contribution is then highly relational, which can cascade into further collective reflexivity beyond individualism and ego-driven narratives. The free choice of Soraya to thematise beyond the professionalising mask gives weight to the idea of existential affinity spaces layered on the ITE trajectories. Vulnerability, but also anger, non-belonging and helplessness are possible emotional affinity space subthemes to be explored in the peer group stories and in the introspective mapping, but require the reduction of group think and the desire to please: “the development of a certain kind of group, away from those in which the overriding pressure is to conform, to belong, to fit in ... towards one in which the overriding motivation is to connect, to share, to challenge and to create a new sense of collective belonging” (Moore, 2018, p. 144). The range of identities ‘on offer’ and to be internalised can then be enlarged and enriched as an honest diversity and genuine welcome of identities, including politically disruptive ones, can only enrich the teaching profession (Zembylas, 2019). There can be an underlying fear in teacher education to lose control of the tightly scheduled process of mainstreaming into the ‘right’ track of professionalising. And anxiously, it is asked if individuals could really handle a detour, to wander off into untenanted territory. Proposing the intangible of existential care as a frame for a case study has taken this risk. Participants of existential care can lead their own processes of inquiry as they are the real expert and knowledgeable guides into the intrinsic landscapes of their own singularities. It allows to ask a different question within the highly regulated structures of optimising student teacher journeys: “Are these subjects made more vulnerable than they might ordinarily be in their daily lives as a result of their participation in this research?” (Iphofen, 2009, p. 108). To translate this reasoning to the inclusion of existential care in ITE trajectories I would add: Does the creation of spaces for wider aspects of the shared humanity of student teachers make them more vulnerable than if ITE ignores the darker layers that are continuously made invisible?

5.2.5 How to assess singularity?

In the portfolio of Soraya we meet up with dreamy, utopian and idealist maps, with existential gravitas of life events. Having these varieties which are not invited into formal routes of teaching allows to integrate the polyphony of existence into a map for professional standards ready to challenge the very idea of 'assessment' as the response to a norm. Soraya's mapped-out trajectory allows to perceive the more-than-professional life spheres, but also brings us back to the sphere of teaching standards. Soraya does not need to adopt a standardised idea of teacher identity to pass her viva. She does not take a fixed template of a 'model teacher' to then simply add on some personal aspects. From the start, she embraces the integration of personal, intimate aspects of her life on her maps. In her feedback from the assessment panel, an emphasis for the score of 100/100 is "the way that you not only accounted for your competence against each element of the SPR, but that you were able to go beyond its structural confines, presenting an account of yourself as a teacher which matched, but went well beyond the standard itself." While this evaluation concerns primarily her writings and the maps were used in addition to written text, this is an illustration of the extent to which the created mapping methodology can accompany student teachers through an agentic space for cartographic imagination. The reflective space provided by existential mapping enabled the student teacher to respond to the opening question 'what kind of teacher are you?' of her assessment panel through a clear artefact. It is a methodology which in this case confirms singularity, but it does not create it. The proposed activities are artistic reflections of what participants hold in them, mere triggers for the student teacher's own commitment to un-dig deeper treasures. A wider existential vision manifests by revealing inner riches.

The overall portfolio of Soraya is a diverse mix of mapping which allows her to use the cartographic language of standards and beyond standards, to "be at both shores at once" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79), which means she can navigate her internal landscape but she can also make a statement that will be externally understood without trading off her intrinsic expression. She is capable of mapping in relation to the dominant language, but she has a vocabulary of her own. The mapping activities have rendered an intrinsic ecosystem accessible and visualised it for self and others. The mapping blends into a wider 'excellence' *hors competition* – without need for competition or comparison which is what singularity as relational rather than antagonistic or atomistic (Delory-Momberger, 2009) stands for conceptually. This opens novel routes to consider ways out of the retention crisis. Witnessing

and situating Soraya's mapping in teacher education is then about finding ways for cultivating empowering angles that allow to transcend standardisation without the need to reject the teaching profession or neglect a sense of self. The journey into meaningful teaching as negotiations of meaning through self-care mapping narrate the unnegotiability of integrity.

5.3 The case study profile of Gloria: making connections

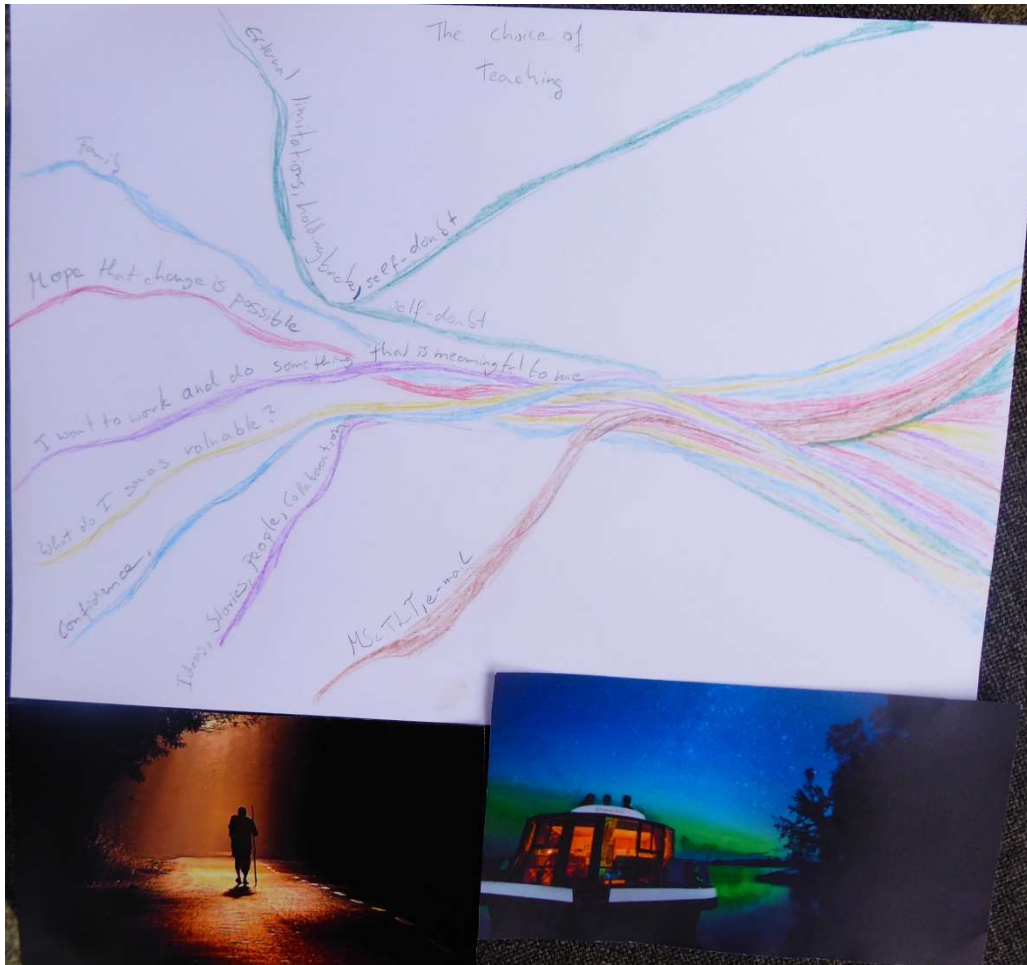
5.6.1 Situating the mapping process and overall portfolio of Gloria's crafted maps:

Gloria's case study allows us to gain insight into another full range of maps, as she also communicates the full range of maps with me and tells me which map she is likely going to submit for the assessment portfolio. The recruitment for the study also takes place for group 1. Gloria (name anonymised), like Soraya, joins the mapping introduction during the Welcome Week. She is interested from the start in mapping and indicates to me that she has an active interest in all things geographical.

5.6.2 Map 1: 'a stream where things come together'

During the photo elicitation exercise of the first session (the choice of teaching, see 4.3.2.), Gloria selects a photograph depicting a pilgrim's journey and another one of the houseboat from my selection of images. In the discussion with her peers, she is stressing the importance of the path and of the water. In her first map, she visualises how lots of different things are coming together in a stream. She had thought about becoming a teacher before. There are still doubts, and while she mentions that her father is a teacher, what matters for herself is the hope that changes are possible through this profession. She needs her professional choice to be meaningful and is happy about an e-mail she had received which made her aware of the MSc TLT.

On the map (artefact 19), following the movement of the streaming from left to right, the colourful single strands weave into a thicker, brighter stream. The single strands are named as follows (from top to bottom): External limitations, holding back, self-doubt; Family; Hope that change is possible; I want to work and do something that is meaningful to me; What do I see as valuable?; Confidence; Ideas, Stories, people, collaboration; MSc TLT, e-mail.



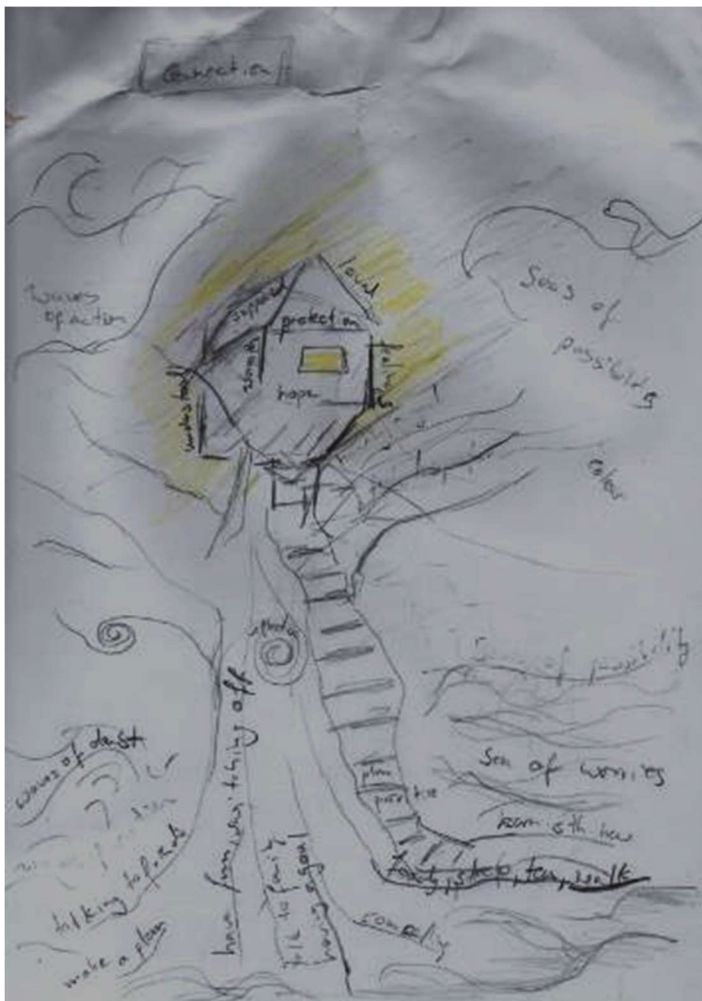
Artefact 19: A stream where things are coming together (Gloria, group 1)

5.6.3 Map 2: 'treehouse'

When I ask the participants of the second session (path of self-care) to describe their map in just one word, Gloria selects the word 'connection'. She quickly points out that there is much more than one thing, that her map is not just about one stable thing. In contrast to the many colours used in the first map, in this drawing of greyscales only one place is depicted in a colour, a warm, discreet yellow (artefact 20). This place is a tree house, a shelter that is glowing. Gloria refers to her chosen picture from the first session, the boat on the canal: "The treehouse also symbolises this glowing, this *being*".

She highlights the importance of *being* over action. In her self-care map, a similar imagery to the initial stream from map 1 can be found again in the bottom part of the new drawing. Layered around the trunk of the tree, a lot is going on. There are the 'waves of doubt', 'talking to friends', 'make a plan', 'have fun', 'switching off', 'talk to family', 'having a goal', 'coun[s]elling'. Close to the first few steps of the ladder to the tree house, one can read 'food, sleep, tea, walk', 'learn something new' and the 'sea of worries'. While 'plan' and 'prioritise'

are written on some initial steps of the ladder, this ladder remains relatively unwritten by words. Gloria explains that down, one can see the action. This action supports the self-care. Precisely, “it gets you to *being*”, to tea, walking, friends and switching off. She observes: “I am not sure what gets me there. I didn’t do the path, but the place”. Gloria focused on mapping the place of self-care and remarks that she would need more time for the path to get there. Words surround the tree house: understood, supported, warmth, protection, hope, feelings, loved. ‘Waves of action’ and the ‘sea of possibilities’ are close to the elevated treehouse, in the background. A spiral/ circle saying ‘reflection’ is situated mid-way right next to the ladder. A spiral/ circle saying ‘reflection’ is situated mid-way right next to the ladder.

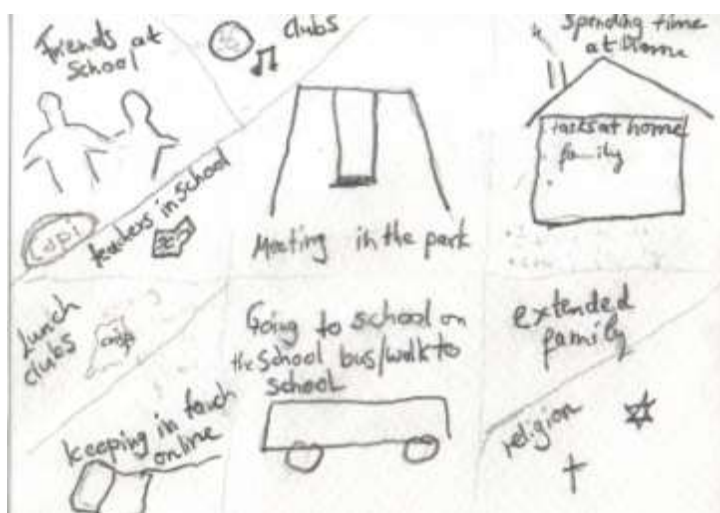


Artefact 20: The tree house of self-care (Gloria, group 1)

5.6.4 Map 3: ‘the multi-layered window’

Gloria’s map created at the third session (artefact 21) focusing on pupils’ imagined life world depicts a window with six layers. She explains that she started thinking about different children and about what might shape their world. While a teacher has a window to the child,

it depends also on how this window is shaped. There are friends at school, clubs, teachers in school and meeting in the park. Next to the swing which symbolises meeting in the park, there is the house for spending time at home and tasks at home in the family. Gloria also makes aware of the extended family and the role religion can play in the pupils' life worlds, for example in relation to religious celebrations like Christmas. Other life world layers are 'lunch clubs', 'keeping in touch online' and 'going to school on the school bus / when walking to school'. In Gloria's window to the child's life world, the contours of the window frame are only very discretely drawn, allowing the connection rather than separation between the depicted areas. On her map, there is an overlap between the six window parts and the thematic layers Gloria has developed. After Gloria has presented her map, the group shares how difficult it is to react when coming across a diagnosis of a child: "Every time, there is a different scenario, it does not always work the same".



Artefact 21: The multi-layered window (Gloria, group 1)

5.6.5 Map 4: 'the final map'

During the lockdown, Gloria signals availability for the Teams feedback session and joins one of the two scheduled time slot. During the session she holds her prepared final map into the camera for others to see. With a deep and extremely rich map illustrating the aesthetics of complexity, she then listens to feedback from the group about where the entry point of her map for an external audience could be. One is not sure where to start in this captivating landscape which is intriguing into absolutely all directions. She sends her map afterwards to me with a wish for feedback (artefact 22).



Artefact 22: The final map after Teams meeting in small (Gloria, group 1)

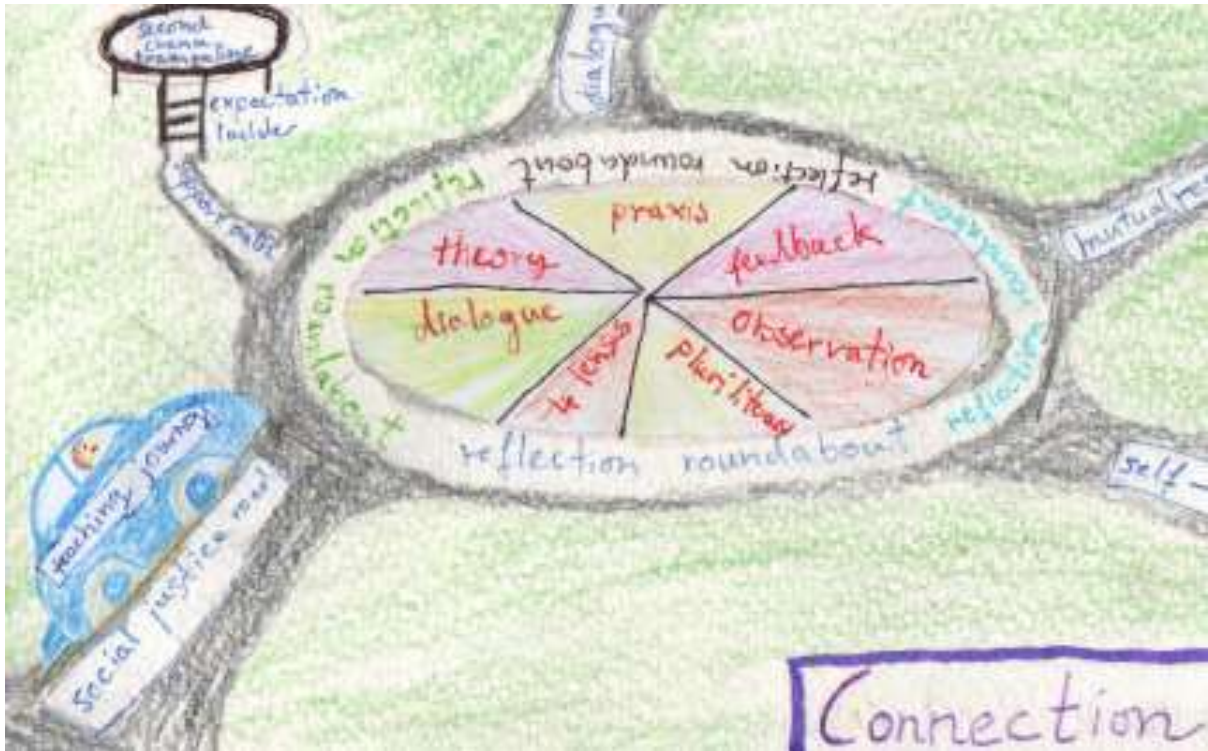
I give her written feedback outlined below connected to the group discussion and her own wish to make the reflection roundabout the entry point:

“If the entry point for the journey should still be at the reflection roundabout, you can think of one more very visible element to situate the roundabout as the starting point. For example: what is inside the round zone of roundabout? This area is currently coloured in just the same blue of all the other environments. A traffic sign, another symbol which shows the movement?”

On the same day, she sends me the map to be included in the portfolio with the final modifications concerning an area around her ‘reflection roundabout’ (zoom-in and full-scale maps reproduced below as artefact 23).

5.6.6 Map 5: The overall map starting at the reflection roundabout

Gloria adds a vehicle which becomes the entry point of the overall journey that she invites the map reader to take with her. My description of the final map of Gloria after feedback (artefact 24) therefore starts at the blue car. Gloria is the driver of this ‘teaching journey vehicle’ situated on the social justice road at the bottom left of the map which is directly connected to a roundabout.



Artefact 23: Zoom-in from artefact 24 (reflection roundabout) (Gloria, group 1)

A dynamic circle is now highlighted in the reworked final drawing as a central element of the map. Its name, the 'reflection roundabout' is repeated several times and in multiple colours on its roads. The reflection roundabout consists in its middle of different connected sections: dialogue, theory, praxis, feedback, observation, pluriliteracy, 4 lenses.

One possible exit from the reflection roundabout is the support path which leads to the 'expectation ladder' and then onto the 'second chance trampoline'. Another exit, the 'dialogue wynd', leads to a big house, 'a child's life world'. Here, the door features teachers, school bus, clubs and academia. Several windows depict the multilayered life world already drawn in the third session: family in and out of school, tasks at home, out of school activities, religion, online: social media etc., parents/ carers, siblings, extended family. If one continues on the dialogue wynd alongside the house, there is a parking space, the 'attentive listening parking'. One car is parked here. Behind is the view to a clear blue sky with clouds carrying the words purpose, dreams, hopes, aspirations and ideas.

Another exit from the reflection roundabout takes the car onto the mutual respect avenue. The view to the continuation of this road is hidden by foregrounded trees of the 'sustainability forest', to which one seems to also have access from the self-knowledge path, the final exit

of the reflection roundabout. On this self-knowledge path from the reflection roundabout to the harbour of possibilities, one finds a ladder which leads to a treehouse in the high-rising trees of the sustainability forest. Each step of this ladder has been given a signpost/designation. Starting from the first step, these are: read/watch; counselling; prioritise; food, sleep, tea, walk; learn something new; having fun; talk to someone; having a goal; plan. The ladder leads into the 'treehouse of self-care', where one can be supported, loved, valued, protected, understood, active.

Stepping back down from the tree house onto the ground, the 'self-knowledge path' connects to the harbour of possibilities where three boats are at harbour: theory, SBL [Site-based learning], people. The sea is named 'MSc TLT'.

The streams mapped during the first session about the choice of teaching now flow into this sea from the bottom-right. The streams are named in very similar ways to the first session: 'I want to do something that is meaningful to me'; 'What do I value?'; 'Family, ideas, people'; 'Hope that change is possible'; 'MSc TLT e-mail'; 'Self-doubt'. The word "connection" is central like in the second map, written on the bottom of the map.

5.4 Witnessing Gloria's dynamic ecosystem: a flow of connections

5.4.1 Process-oriented journeying

Gloria's case study profile reflects a distinct holistic way of navigating ITE as iterative and integrating. The streams are woven into an ecology. This dynamic process also comes across in the online feedback of other student teachers when they see her final map. The feedback given to her: "what your environment distilled: you have created your own environment, a metaphor to stand on all that. The reflection roundabout shows how you are process oriented. Everything you do, you are reflecting on it, and it leads to bigger concepts". Gloria herself gives the following feedback to the mapping process "I really enjoyed it. For the own beliefs. When you read all theories, you kind of forget about beliefs, putting yourself in there". The dynamic map of Gloria is about mobility and switching roles for changes of power differentials. The spatialisation of systems and power is based on the own environment created by the student, not on a prefabricated template. It is striking how many ways to read this map are possible. One can enter from different points and therefore enter the flows of ecosystem in non-linear ways.

Multiple entry points

It is possible to start the journey of this map from the *chronological-existential entry point* and witness the becomings of Gloria from the choice of teaching. In that case, we can observe that self-doubt, still a central element in the first session, now appears as a fringe element of Gloria's own ecology and has been outstripped by wider existential flows and threads. It is important that self-doubt still features here, but it features marginally compared with the other spheres she has let onto her ecology. Self-doubt will not stand out. It may have been flowing further in this journey of becoming, allocated a different spot after Gloria has embraced the uncertainty of the path that leads to her place of self-care.

Another entry point can be the *heights*. If we enter Gloria's map from the heights of the self-care treehouse, we discover a solid ladder in which the steps have been named. Whereas Gloria does not know in session 1 how to get to that glowing space of being, she has now mapped out a route. Getting there is a process. Connection is overcoming disconnection. When she says that she does not know how to get to the tree house (artefact 20), this is illustration of the neglected path in many teacher journeys, symbolising the dualistic disconnect between being and doing. In the holistic (artefact 22), one can however see again

a work of integration, not of dualisms. Gloria does not oppose but wants to see the rotating action of the reflection roundabout harbouring the possibility of taking an exit for being, of 'glowing in stillness' on this journey. In the final map, the road to the tree house is clear. The ladder is now central, the steps to take are named. It is also a shifting of priorities, of what kind of ladder to nurture. In stark contrast to the visibility of the tree house, the expectation ladder on the other side of the map has been given a reduced height and certainly no elevated vision. It is the agency of Gloria to shift the priorities on her own landscape and shrink one ladder while accentuating the ladder which leads to self-care, developing each step to take to reach these heights. It is this imaginary and artistic form of "teacher agency [that] can have a potent impact on teacher becomings" (Lambert & Gray, 2020, p. 511). Gloria illustrates through her mapping the intrinsic agency to resituate and have other priorities than the pre-existing ladders or templates for 'what works' in education. The possibility that mapping affords is to decide the own scale for her ecosystem, and within that scale to recompose priorities and own beliefs. In some ways, Gloria spatialises an intrinsic, process- and values-driven curriculum of constant relational praxis.

Another entry point, the one she seems to have chosen for her *viva*, is the *reflection roundabout*. Gloria invites us into a highly dynamic road map that is fuelled by concepts, driven by reflection and invites to jump in, drive around and experience this world as organic, alive, rather than a painting that is beautiful to look at but ultimately disconnected. Gloria's journey is praxis as the fusion of action and reflection which makes this landscape an evolving ecosystem. Becoming for Gloria is at all times a relational connection and any imbalances of her ecosystem appear to be redirected to the constant rotation of the reflection roundabout.

A special entry point comes from the *child perspective* which reveals a lot about the capacity for hospitality of Gloria's ecosystem. While this intrinsic sketching looks inwards, it maps the stance of welcome towards the unknown outside onto these introspective spheres. She has fully integrated the unsettling exercise of imagining the unknown pupil's life world into her own ecosystem. More than that, she has developed further the initially sketched-out windows to perceive difference, and in what she has integrated she not only looks through a window, but she has built a house for the otherness of the other in her own ecology (Rossiter, 2011). The built environments on this map are not the school or the playground, but the house of the intangible, not-yet-visible life worlds and her own tree house. Gloria has

integrated uncertainty into her inner landscapes of ITE, but not as a threat to be contained but as making room for the uncertainty of destigmatised encounter with children. In this sense, she shifts perspective from the adult-centric functioning of policy or school discourses to genuine dialogue. The existential movement of the reflection roundabout rotation does not lead to routines but allows to establish dialogue as genuine room for the other, accommodating the child in these challenging educational environments.

5.4.2 A literacy of connections

Connection is the word which features as the title given by the student teacher to the final map. This connection is present in every area of this map, as all individual thematic sessions are connected and held together in this one active landscape which appears truly inhabited, as a living organism. This student teacher has managed to compose threads that are entangled, leading to deeper and deeper existential, conceptual, interpersonal and practical understandings. This reflects an integrative attempt. Mapping was about crafting and recomposing the dynamic roads into teaching, not as a modular activity dispensed through static units of knowledge. This ecosystem is strongly guided by thematic activities as laid out in my initial ITE map which finally blend into a whole. Gloria opts for motion rather than fixed truths. She is answering for herself how the questions from these sessions and thematic landscapes can connect: “Reflective teachers do not seek solutions [...] Rather they pursue connections and relationships between solutions so that his/her practical theory might grow” (Ryan & Webster, 2019, p. 75). Compartmentalised understanding of teaching units as disconnected knowledge can be replaced by agentic redesign emerging from inner images.

Gloria already redesigns a holistic framework of her becoming by integrating the multiple perspectives from the themes explored. She is reinventing by building a new house, a new door to knock on, and relocating the routines, deciding through her agency of imagination in what ways components of teacher becoming ought to feature and blend into the whole. Based on an initial blank page, she has been accompanied to rescript and add her own singular emphasis of intuitive knowledge of self and the world surrounding her: a literacy of connection rather than separation. Her chosen metaphors can function as intrinsically meaningful self-fulfilling prophecies (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) for her future trajectory, as an existential compass to keep the inner balance of seeking connection in teaching realities that may be closer to fragmentation: “In positioning self and others through images and language,

teachers create identities and shape the worlds they hope to inhabit (Gee, 2001)” (Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017, p. 110). Gloria’s map does not evidence the fragmentation of teacher education which is observed elsewhere (Hargreaves, 2001), but the generative movement which constantly fuels more exploratory processes.

There is a flow to be witnessed in this map, an existential, conceptual flow. Mapping here becomes a *process* for the ever-evolving intuitive geographies of inner riches, roads that student teachers as travellers inscribe with meaning: “The manyness of experiencing, including the Outside and the Inside differences, are all folded, refolded, and unfolded and new becomings emerge” (Gorodetsky & Barak, 2016, p. 87). Gloria’s creativity of relocating her becomings on a deeply engaging inner map leads to imaginings which follow her own clearly spatialised understanding, thereby leaving territories of external guidance.

5.4.3 Multiple plotlines

Gloria is not mapping the classroom and the lesson plans, but she explores in her blue car other, highly meaningful lanes. She is mapping herself as driver into the existential becoming: “Unpacking the positioning within a metaphor uncovers what the metaphor reveals about the plotline a teacher attempts to live” (Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017, p. 110). As stressed by Zembylas and Chubbuck (2014), what matters are interactions, not fixations. The chosen ecosystem does not make metaphorical reference to the school compound. This dynamic process beyond institutional walls is displayed here, the mapping of roads as connection resolves the dilemma she encountered about mapping a place of self-care but not knowing the path to it. In the fluidity, it is now possible to draw “the formerly unmapped and unmappable, charting fragile and subjective aspects [...] instead of deploying conventional scales, grids and streets. Creative mapping is no longer restricted to what can be seen” (Mulvenna & Perkins, 2021, p. 104) and therefore opens up an unprecedented methodological space for attention to the introspective, the imagined and the incomplete as *bridges to becoming*. By allowing to reimagine missing links rather than revert prematurely to a prefabricated road map into teaching, a wider connectedness beyond school buildings can potentially surface. Gloria has mapped spheres of human ecologies to “rehabilitate the emotion within the map, putting human beings back in the centre of the map, giving them the main role once more, and preventing humans from vanishing under facts, statistics and context” (Rekacewicz, 2022, p. 230). The humans are not connected to the next test score

audit, but the humans in this map are connected to the roundabouts of social interactions, to the sky, to the sea, to the diversity of dwelling places. The human in this ecology is also aware of a tree house to return to.

In this portrayal of a multidirectional human ecology rather than one human's linear life progression, Gloria's ecosystem embeds teacher journeying in interdependences beyond the hero narrative (Goldstein, 2005) often applied by educators:

"The introduction of the hero's journey [...] is useful when it provides them with a new option in storying their lives and thereby opens up new possibilities for being and acting in the world. However, it becomes problematic to the extent that its use becomes dogmatic, dominant, and reduces the range of plotlines available for people to use in giving meaning to their experiences and to their lives" (Willis, 2011, p.98)

Gloria generates novel plotlines which can stretch the imaginary beyond individualising narratives of resilient teachers, a transition from the external ITE maps to the emergence of intrinsic *carnets de route*. Her case study profile demonstrates that mapping could be used by student teachers "to think and 'author' themselves differently, to ask not only how emotion discourses and performances have cut them off from their desires but also how these have installed alternative desires and habits..." (Zembylas, 2003, p. 119). Gloria maps a polyphony of layers back into ITE, she has shared an imaginative posture through generative movement.

5.5 Crafts of becoming: curricular hospitality for existential care

5.5.1 Becomings

Mapping has turned out to be a tangible approach into the intangibility of intrinsic cartographies. The case study profiles do not follow a systematic rationale for comparability and cross-analysis. There is something 'slippery' in this reliance on inner dialogues, and this is what I was looking for. My vagabond approach to unlearning scientific mastery deliberately wandered towards a "level of instability, not stability" (O'Brien & Penna, 1999, p. 106) where concepts themselves have to stay tentative and instable. Going back to the maps of student teachers, re-witnessing their singularities helped to realise that I do not need to uncover everything about these maps, as the usefulness of these highly personal maps was demonstrated elsewhere, in the vivas for the GTCS standards that I did not attend. What does this mean for the analysis of my 'data'? McFarlane, in his response to Jazeel's article on incomparable geographies (2019), calls to imagine methodological possibilities that do not fix

a frame in advance and wait for surprises to emerge both in insightful and uncontrollably messy ways:

“Should, for example, a concept be understood as an explanatory frame that can be rigorously applied to some empirical moments and not others? Or might a concept be—and this is what I think Tariq [Jazeel] opens up—undisciplined, open, hesitant, even unsure of itself? This is not to say that this second relation between concept and world means sacrificing rigour” (McFarlane, 2019, p.31)”

What do these two comprehensive portfolios of mapping artefacts then reveal for an application of existential care as *differently* rigorous? Does the chosen methodology provide robust findings about student teachers’ negotiations of a meaningful journey into teaching?

Let us call what emerges *existential-experiential becomings* which will transcend the persistent binary of doing/being, to be more than performance of professional identity. While this dichotomy remains so prominent in the debate around work-life balance perpetuated for the sake of functionalist teacher retention, this research highlighted that both dimensions can gradually be integrated into the same landscape. Both Soraya and Gloria mapped visions of becoming a teacher. Recent research suggests that a narrow sense of identity is not helpful or even desirable. Lambert and Gray (2020) opt for a shift in focus towards teacher becomings and the pluralism of identities, rather than settling on fixed assertions: “These terms account for multiplicity and can be seen as a process, whereas ‘identity’ can be construed as fixed” (2020, p. 507). This represents “a move away from a ‘narrow, technical, and fixed goal-oriented framework’ of understanding beginning teachers ‘towards reconceptualizing the development of becoming a new teacher as a process’” (Long et al., 2012, p. 22). Care for student teachers’ becomings is about supporting ongoing processes more than providing analytical closures.

No need for fixed findings?

The slippery nature of becomings does not have to be a problem or barrier to overcome, but can also be a way to accept that deeper, more subtle conversations about emotions (Zembylas, 2003) do not need a categorical frame of mastery. Subjectivity as a fluid process of becoming (Braidotti, 2013) can firstly be acknowledged as such. Not surprisingly, my vagabond approach to research shifts from fixed identities to fluid becomings. Vagabonding “is the symbol for a way of life which does not latch on to the familiar, which sees the familiar

only as an occasion to leave false homes again, which is not in search of “identity,” that *idée fixe*.” (Bird, 2012, p. 65). Here, my research meets the Deleuzian tradition and the nomadic tribes. There is rich literature on becomings to connect to. Clarke and McPhie (2016) suggest to perceive the *paths* of teacher becomings where others want to see fixed locatedness. Findings are then not universal claims but particularised fragments of cartographic intention which can lead into personal, intrinsic ecologies of meaning-making: “a rich portrayal of insights and understandings interpreted in the particular context” (Simons, 2020, p. 696).

The overall research with 12 participants reveals many more sketches and fragments of these paths of becoming. They do not provide data to extract for a blueprint on meaningful journeys into teaching, they are roadside scribbles towards the *crafts* of existential care:

“So on the one hand we have craftsmanship and inhabitant knowledge, and on the other apprenticeship and occupant knowledge. The craftsman works with a sketch, the apprentice or journeyman with a blueprint. The sketch is to inhabitant knowledge what the blueprint is to occupant knowledge.” (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009, p. 272)

I argue that the transfer of these crafts for existential care to wider teacher education design has to be prepared cautiously in order not to generalise from the singular case. It is necessary to “studiously avoid the kinds of assumptive leaps that are too often seen in published qualitative research reports that, on the basis of one small study, public policy or legislative changes may be warranted” (Thorne, 2020, p. 159). What lessons can then be learned for curriculum design from small-scale observations which are not rigid claims to be scaled up?

5.5.2 What stays when the hut is gone? Making space for existential care

I was interested in ways how care and vulnerability can be moulded into curricular instances, not as rigid ITE designs, but as playful and meaningful detours. Reio (2005) already outlined the reasons why emotions are rarely considered the central aspect of a research design: “emotion tends to be overlooked in most educational research: it is notoriously amorphous, and difficult to ‘pin down.’ Researchers looking to isolate, categorize, and analyze discrete phenomena may find that this complexity represents a barrier to their work” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 619). No matter if such a relegation is explained through the systemic negation of the biographies of teachers (Goodson, 2007), the reluctance to unleash the emotionality of teaching (Korthagen, 2010), or a wider glass ceiling of institutional cultures in the works of Palmer (2018) on teacher renewal, we can anticipate “university education’s hostility to the

big existential questions and to what really troubles us as humans” (Keck, 2020, p. 413). In such a scenario, “[p]erhaps it is understandable that many of our ‘best and brightest’ abandon teaching before they feel secure with their new identities” (Lambert & Gray, 2020, p. 519). What is the room that this approach can invest in the curriculum once the shepherd’s hut is gone and existential care is left to the existing furniture range of modular ITE?

Productivity and existential care

A challenge is to negotiate legitimacy in terms of a functionalist language of curricular approval. Even if the idea of existential care became a priority for curriculum design (which is certainly not the case for now), there would be attempts to render the intrinsic fit for purpose. But no student teacher should be forced to perform, or worse, be assessed on existential ‘skills’, a contradiction in itself (Priestley et al., 2022). Talking about life difficulties had been a freely chosen affinity for Soraya in the fluid but safe affinity space of the shepherd’s hut. Affinity holds promise here, as one can decide how much sharing beyond the approved curricular contents feels comfortable. In that sense, the affinity space explored here can be a promising intermediary space between the train rant (see 4.3.3.) and the silent quitting. However, if existential care was misunderstood by university or CPD systems and prescribed as compulsory self-disclosure, then the whole activity would lead to problematic consequences (Keck, 2020). Curricular integration of existential care as a prescribed and prescheduled space for ‘evaluated vulnerabilities’ needs to be rightly resisted in order not to slip into the performative dimensions of standardised assessment. It cannot be guaranteed that the ‘unproductive’ indirect detour facilitated during my thesis will automatically lead back into the formal assessment scheme as real evidence of usefulness and competencies. What leaves the results in the mapping workshops so unpredictable, intriguing and bulky is that the instrumental ‘gain’ of using maps in formal GTCS assessment after a regular ‘detour’ of existential care cannot be guaranteed: “there is no method, no seven- or nine-step guide that can guarantee that we will be able to resonate” (Rosa, 2020, p. 36).

The evidenced processes of existential care show that narratives of failure, fragility, fear, frustration can all be part of the journey. Realistically, ITE curricula do not venture out into these fragile spaces, as formal education wants to undo fragility rather than embrace it. There is a need to claim curricular space differently because of the overwhelming evidence that “the work of interiority is too inexact, complex, and costly within an educational paradigm

dominated by economies of time and scale, and demanding the immediate transference of teacher learning to the classroom setting” (Keck, 2020, p. 417). Ideas of contemplative teacher renewal (Palmer, 2018) have previously been introduced to curricula from the preservice career stage. Prestigious projects are often announced, but their funding is rarely sustained when the innovative spark moves to other announcements. According to Keck (2020), the intrinsic is rarely sustained inside compulsory curricula. The idea of “curricular hospitality” (Ruitenberg, 2015, p. 37) can now be explored to widen this scope.

Ecologies for healing, not interventions for palliation

Existential care at its best is not just about small retreat when time allows. In its nurturing of inner ecologies it is larger than therapy because it centers on inner riches, not on external loads. As Willis (2009) points out: “Leaving the ordinary places where one dwells in order to spend a small amount of time in a place deemed to be therapeutic is more likely to result in palliation than healing. Palliating painful emotions may pose a danger to individuals, places and societies if it defuses an urgent need for healing.” (p. 87). In order to provide a framework for deeper existential attention, this care for the meaningful needs to be nurtured over time, not palliate quick needs for urgent, emergency rest to restore the capacity to cope. Existential care as an optional pop-up scheme risks to dilute the strong potential for deeper intrinsic work that the two case study profiles have revealed. If it only existed as a separate module of existential care, teachers and teacher educators would still not necessarily know how to embed it into the core subject areas. Tutors need support in understanding how to reframe their subject existentially. Interiority is an unusual curricular content. Existential care needs to be housed in a format in which the intrinsic expressions can to a certain degree be protected from linear standardisations and instrumental extractivism, but also raise the confidence of teachers to reframe and reimagine their own subject areas and embed the notions explored through existential care into their teaching. Existential care therefore asks to be embedded in a form of *curricular sanctuary* which remains adaptive.

In contemporary educational measurements, curricular sanctuary ought to be both a ‘safe space’ for individual learners and student teachers. It also ought to be a ‘troubling space’ to challenge the expansionist logics of curricular territorialisation which lead in the worst case to epistemic erasures of singular existential forms of meaning-making. Giving up control over a field, as Lugosi (2016) describes, brings the in-between into play as fertile ground for a

hospitable curricular design, involving listening. Occupied by a certain tunnel vision to package the technicalities of validated knowledge, the formal curriculum can react through suspicion towards the bulky intangibility of existential care: “Truly exposing the curriculum to students means both risking the familiarity of the home that the curriculum has offered and becoming a host for the first time” (Ruitenbergh, 2015, p. 37). The very act of allowing the known curriculum to be unsettled by the unknown other allows novel, unoccupied flows of learning together around a commitment to affective hospitalities. What is necessary is to create instances for a stance to be cultivated and curated into new curricular shapes:

“we cannot know who or what may arrive into our classrooms, our staff rooms, our curricula; the only questions we can therefore ask are: Does what I am about to do leave a possibility for my assumptions about knowledge and teaching and learning to be upset by a new arrival?” (Ruitenbergh, 2015, p. 30)

The crafts to facilitate a framework for becomings require multiple welcomes.

5.5.3 Modalities of curricular sanctuary: an inter-professional scale for existential care?

I argue that in order to let further intrinsic ecologies emerge in curricular shapes, what is needed is not so much a new technique, but instances for a relational, reciprocal stance within ITE which invites interiority. This cannot only exist in compartmentalised modules. Our own internal construction of identity and the dispositions we cultivate throughout life could also be embedded into different core courses and subject areas, so that notions of sanctuary and care can shape the teaching and learning process. Integrating sanctuary in curricular reform needs to concern more than formal curricula. Curricular hospitality provides a hopeful conceptual frame for gaining deeper understandings of what needs to happen to let existential care enter formal teaching routes as a possibility (but not guarantee) of profound healing around the taboo of retention. This may not be a position that a whole institution or department will share, but some individuals within courses and programmes who want to give further attention to ‘intangible’ spheres of affect, emotion and existential shelter: “How does affective hospitality become part of pedagogical practices?” (Zembylas, 2020, p. 47).

As an extracurricular add-on, only those with more time will opt for existential care. For concerns of equity and parity of experience, every student teacher should get the chance to map out their own ecologies. What has been experimented in my thesis was conceived as relational peer care, not existential coaching available to those who can easily opt in,

therefore perpetuating intersecting issues of (temporal) privileges (Valkenburg, 2022). Continuous Professional Development for teacher educators, embedded in long-term schemes of the profession, then also forms part of the imaginary of existential care futures.

My suggestion is now to network with those who are experts on curricular design, but not specifically in ITE. The question of scale comes back when thinking about hospitality. In what shape should my bulky findings actually circulate if I perceive the curriculum as de-territorialised flux? Often, great ideas get lost in translation and by the time the academic findings are taken up by policy, the same researchers have disappeared into other prestigious projects (quite understandably because funding has run out). Above, I have mentioned some of the barriers to the integration of existential care into curricula. Where I see existential care in the next, postdoctoral stage is not so much in large-scale national curricular reform than in continued negotiation with institutions for welcoming the unnegotiable: wandering away from, rather than back to instrumental measurement. The impact of existential care then does not show in numbers, but in the capacity to build a playful follow-up for continued wandering inside professional paths.

Finding homes for existential care

As one next practical step, I see the processes of existential care to be offered as trans-disciplinary, cross-professional Continuous Professional Development or credit-bearing courses: being housed within institutional communication channels as a formal rather than informal option. It will be interesting to offer such courses in a pluralistic stance of inter-professions (Pecukonis, 2020) in order to avoid the challenge of low registration rates and slow take-up in the initial years of such novel initiatives. A module of existential care limited to ITE would likely sit at the isolated margins of institutes of teacher education. But as an experiential module open to different professions, students registered in different programmes and allowed to pick an elective could be connected through the often-overlooked existential focus, while claiming a space for their distinct professional field to be recognised. I therefore situate the possibilities of existential care in a pluralistic framework which are explicitly applied beyond narrow definitions of professional practice: “Pluralistic values and methods are relevant for all counsellors, psychotherapists, counselling psychologists and other practitioners (e.g. GPs, nurses, teachers, social workers)” (Palmer, 2015). Integrating a pluralistic stance at the margins of ITE but in the interconnected struggles

of various professions leads away from a “profession-centrism” (Smith et al., 2021, p. 11). Speaking from my networks at the University of Edinburgh, such a cross-cutting, university-wide module could attract students from (outdoor) education, social work, political sciences with focus on activism, the arts and counselling, HE teaching diplomas, to name a few. Existential care would also fit into a new *ecological* approach to student support adopted by the University of Edinburgh, where specially trained student and wellbeing advisors have been recruited at a large scale (UoE, 2022). The marginal spots of disciplinary interstices could actually become hubs for connecting individuals through existential care. Additionally, a module for nurturing intrinsic landscapes through existential care can also be housed as CPD.

A transdisciplinary, inter-professional and cross-institutional scheme could adapt to the inevitable fluctuations in institutional welcome. Depending on the person in charge of institutes and ITE programmes, a module for existential care can only be expected to be supported for short periods of time, and even then to varying degrees and with fluctuations in internal support. Undomesticated from linear and instrumental timetabling, the unconditional stance of welcome towards existential care within the regulatory framework may well be claimed through rotation. Building a scheme that is autonomous from one single institution’s ITE priorities but interdependent and reliant on negotiations across universities for moving towards credit-bearing validity (as an optional course) can allow to create a slowly manifesting visibility and network which steadily tests the long-term sustainability of the experiment. A curriculum for existential care that depends on institutional welcome will have to find creative ways of maintaining its own ecology of institutional support across barriers. In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence’s focus on wellbeing helps to rotate interprofessionally from within. The real world sustaining of the idea of existential care as curricular sanctuary appears promising *across* fields and institutions, as an interstice. The experiment to wander further in between then provokes new instances of hospitality.

Covid-19 Interruption: from vagabond to vagrant PhD

When I visit the Quad in August 2020, I stand in front of closed gates. It is the moment I become an involuntary errant to my vagabond PhD. Edinburgh in August is a ghost town and I am locked-up outdoors, enfermé dehors. It is as if these welcoming gates now separate me from the meaning of this PhD. I know that what I need in these uncertain, exhausting times is an anchor, not an infinite road. I say goodbye, silently, to this inaccessible Quad.

There are so many doubts about the possibility to come back to live in Scotland, to walk back into that space. Campus sites, offices, university courtyards have opened again all over Germany and I feel a way forward there. But there is no communication from Edinburgh University about an expected reopening of the Moray House. The library here is locked and all staff are expected to work from home. Home office is a blessing to some, but what if your academic home is not primarily felt through formal university registration, online School meetings, electronic affiliation, but through the embodied welcome of an informal square? Not only is Edinburgh a ghost town in August, my university has reduced access to its physical space ... and so I drift away, deprived of the anchoring spot that made me flourish for so long.

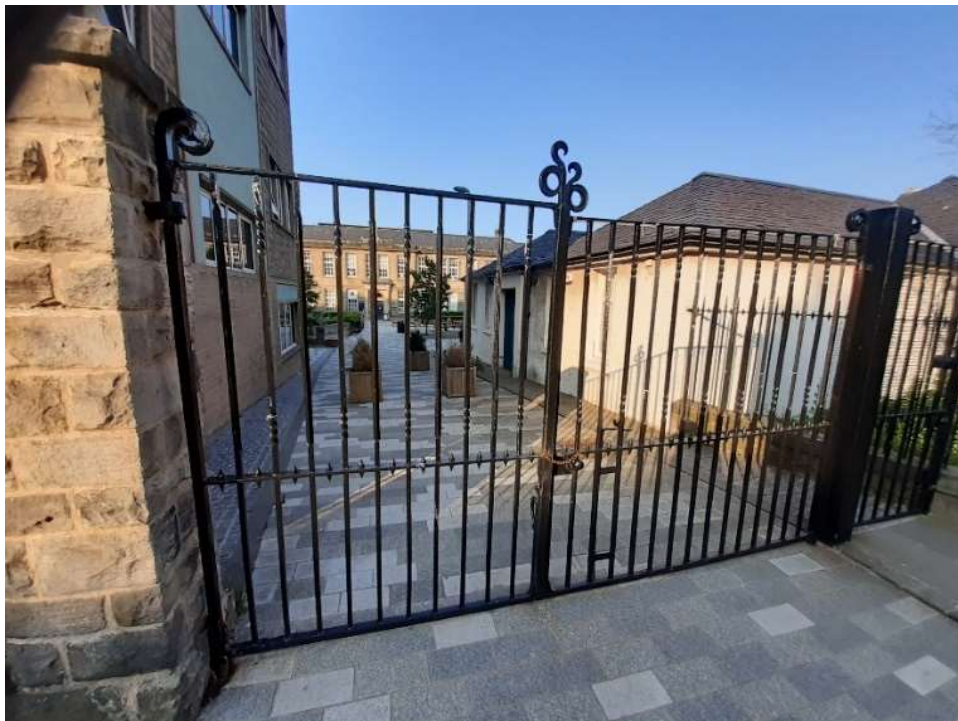


Figure 26: The pandemic Quad in August 2020

Chapter 6: Evaluating wanderings: validity, accountability, impact

6.1. Making sense of 'bulky' findings during a pandemic

How can the singular detours of a vagabond PhD be evaluated when periods of paralysis and drifting disturb the final product? The difficulties encountered due to Covid-19 have led me to findings as openings rather than closures. They carry further post-doctoral directions, but they come out of the uncontrollability of this PhD. The findings that I have outlined here are in fact not new diagrams, but intentions. Sennett characterised the craftsman in positive terms, inspiring new ways for scientific creation beyond purification: "Getting things in perfect shape can mean removing the traces, erasing the evidence, of a work in progress. Once this evidence is eliminated, the object appears pristine. Perfection of this cleaned-up sort is a static condition; the object does not hint at the narrative of its making" (2008, p. 258). In a Covid-19 PhD, the findings are to a large extent improvisation crafts for the future. They are less ambitious than my own pre-pandemic visions when I thought that this small PhD could already spark direct ITE curricular reform. Big impact was certainly also the hope of my funders. The fact that I have toned down the volume of my claims have to be situated in a specific context. Staying modest, shifting from incompleteness to an anticipatory stance does not have to be a disappointment at all. But this more discreet ambition that I am suggesting here needs to be situated and explained.

6.1.1 Endings as beginnings and the pandemic's aftershock

There was a significant disparity between the way I had initially imagined the process of data analysis and interpretation as a holistic whole (before, during and after the arts-based sessions) and what frame I then ultimately improvised for the Covid-19 pandemic realities. The first one would have been a voluntary improvisation within my own frame of competence and within my own relational research paradigm, whereas the period that actually followed became an involuntary improvisation interrupting my arts-based designs for academic inquiry. I make these difficulties transparent in order to show layers of Covid-19 disruptions that may not have been immediate and may be indirect but which slowly took away something fundamental in the itinerant research I had designed: shifting from a constant Moray House flow to a persistent state of paralysis. From the outset, I had placed my hopes for the field work in high methodological risk with the shepherd's hut. My field work process turned out to be very engaging, this risk had paid off because I was able to witness intrinsic

cartographies which appeared through indirectness. However, I had not expected that I would soon have to make sense of this 'data' alone, without relational flows.

Challenging the idea of relational data as 'safe'

Some fellow PhD students said to me in the first Covid-19 summer of 2020 that I should just be relieved as my data was safely stored and captured, while others could not even get to the point of starting their field work. However, I would caution against the assumption that my field work process could be considered a 'success' just by the mere existence of store-away data which was now in safe lockers. My understanding of research processes had from the outset, and at all times, been embedded in *relational* forms of inquiry. I did not see data as immobile and a-temporal but constantly embedded in interactive processes and dynamically interwoven in the open environment that I had facilitated in the shepherd's hut. My insights from the field were not meant to be safe, but in flux. What happens when that flux is suddenly no longer available? What most people I talked to were feeding back to be was that things could have gone far worse for my research. While this is true to the extent that I was now not in the position of "desperately seeking data" (Pirrie & Macleod, 2010, p. 374), something other PhD students now had to do virtually, it still does not mean that my research as a holistic stance of relational inquiry would continue to be both ethical and offer original insights in its interrupted and suspended form. Visual methods have their own limitations (Packard, 2008; Wall et al., 2012) and the generation of visual data is only the starting point for navigating the 'moral maze of image ethics' (Prosser, 2000).

The on-campus lockers were the location where some of my field notes from the pre-Covid period were stored. I only gained access to these on-campus lockers again in January 2021. A lot had happened in the months in between and my own life was not the same any more. Returning to static notes triggered the nostalgia for the ongoing flows of my pre-pandemic research. I told myself the tale that not having flows would be better for concentration and focus in writing up, but I would argue differently now. I regret that I did not keep communication with research participants during the pandemic after the first few very resilient months in which coping with Covid-19 appeared to work out. The indirect repercussions as a slowly growing pandemic-related aftershock to the vagabond's own ecosystem led to a suspension of my relational *modus operandi*. The series of lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic inevitably affected the in-betweenness of vagabond research, which

is thriving in movement and which loses part of the own ecosystem's balance when halted. I therefore situate the period of paralysis in my doctoral journey as crucial to understanding the limitations of a vagabond methodology. The pandemic complicated the emergence of an ethical dilemma for my research, but the lifting of lockdowns and the return to a post-lockdown Scotland and to a Moray House of renewed in-person encounters provided me with a way forward again later on. While there are modest findings and claims, they are written up in the regained joy of meeting people again in and around the Quad. Creating the final structure of this thesis became again a more-than-virtual task.

6.1.2 Analytical paralysis: suspension of relational flows

I now share an analytical paralysis that lasted for several months when I tried to ethically return to my data. At one stage of the PhD, there were health-related reasons for me to leave. There would have been no ethical dilemma if I had decided to leave my PhD after an interruption of studies. The student teachers would have understood. Their feedback showed that the field work process had been very meaningful to them. They had not wasted their time and had highlighted to me the many useful aspects of coming regularly to the hut. I had tried to make the best of my data during the pandemic suspension. But when I had decided to return to an unfunded fourth year of full-time study (2022) for writing up the PhD undistracted by other work commitments, I now also had an ethical dilemma to solve. The pandemic imposed solitary interpretations of others' visual narratives which were only partly compatible with participatory and relational ethics of representation. Qualitative approaches "share an ethical obligation to make public their claims" (Altheide & Johnson, 2011, p. 584) for wider dissemination and public impact. Rich material was generated in my field work with student teachers. It was important to bring more to the table than the raw, uninterpreted stories, but it felt troubling and problematic to become story analyst where I had intended to be mainly a story-carer:

"In the former case, how a story makes sense is strictly a scientific/analytic question; in the latter case, it's an ethical and relational one. In the former instance, the researcher wants to go beyond the story, to think about it and use it for the sake of advancing sociology, psychology, or communication theory; in the latter instance, storytelling is a means of being with others, of thinking with their stories in order to understand and care for them" (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 16)

It was not only my responsibility to hold and re-tell these stories, but also to ask: in what ways will this be ethical? A mix of external pandemic-related circumstances and personal life choices made it impossible to pursue the initial idea of analysing my data *together* with the participants. I announced in chapter 2 that one of the competencies in vagabond educating is to return after retreat and unavailability. Returning then becomes more than the tick-box exercise for completion of a degree. It became a deeper engagement with the purpose of research as ethical practice, with the hope that my suspended ecosystem could one day be restored towards renewed relational co-construction of knowledges. I will therefore outline the process of returning into meaningful engagement with the student teachers' artistic artefacts. This may feel like stepping backwards in the thesis as I have chosen to situate this after chapter 5's discussion of two case study profiles. Why go back into ethical troubles and therefore disturb a forward-looking flow? Going back is a move into a more transparent, less progress-obsessed direction for the reader, away from common practice where "accounts of the difficulties in conducting research are generally suppressed in sanitised reports of research findings that carry strong implications of empiricism" (Pirrie & Macleod, 2010, p. 368). Pirrie and Macleod (2010) go on to emphasise the role that the methodological 'failures' can play: "mishaps and disruptions were more than transient inconveniences to be systematically underplayed in any account of our findings: rather, they were the mechanisms that elicited a reflexive (rather than a mere reflex) response" (p. 370). Instead of hiding missteps, in this chapter I come to terms with the fact that my PhD research had temporarily lost its way, that wandering during a pandemic can be vagrancy as potentially unethical space.

Saying farewell to the ideal scenario

Engaging in arts-based research for me means to provide a framework within which the researcher waits for the research participant to identify the meaning. Working with visual artefacts is an opportunity for "giving voice rather than simply voicing over" (Mannay, 2015, p. 73). In the pre-pandemic's ideal scenario, I would have been going back to the student teachers to hold their narrations safely within the existing frame of trustful relations I had established with my participants. I had applied the orientations suggested by Richardson (2015) to strive towards research reciprocity as safe performative spaces rather than reductionist understandings of informed consent as a formal signing of participant sheets. I had already imagined from the outset of my progression board that some student teachers

may be given the opportunity to work further with their arts-based artefacts to create a short film, known from the approach of Digital Storytelling (Dunford & Jenkins, 2017). Such processes had been facilitated by me in adult education projects in the past. In such designs, the iterative interpretation of artistic creation goes through phases of playful artistic encounters that can be meaningful to research participants. Considering the fact that four student teachers did indeed keep on mapping despite the ongoing pandemic, there were reasonable chances (before Covid-19) that I would have been successful in recruiting some participants from both small groups again for shorter optional activities in their probation year. This could have meant organising one or two further sessions with student teachers in their post-degree year for recording audios that explain the trajectory across different maps and combine them into short and simple personal films to let their journeys into meaningful teaching come to live both in image and sound.

In my initially designed idea about research findings, the construction of a narrative therefore passes through the interpretations of the original creator, not my own desk-based analytical rationale. This can be referred back to auteur theory (Rose, 2001). Auteur theory „requires on a practical level to ask research participants to explain these images that they have created to both ‘show’ and ‘narrate’ their experiences and lives” (Mannay, 2015, p. 64). Banks and Zeitlyn (2015) have argued for this return to participants to ensure the validity of visual evidence as a combination of artefact and narrative: “if the research is interested in the ways in which people assign meanings to pictures, the study of images alone, as data whose meaning is intrinsic, is a mistaken method” (Mannay, 2015, p. 64). Any form of data, visual or textual, is potentially open to misreading and needs clarification. I had been concerned with the ways I could accurately represent the meanings of these maps. A need for highly congruent representational ethics is further underlined by arguments that anonymity and confidentiality can rarely be guaranteed in visual research (Sweetman, 2009), turning the practice of informed consent into a continuous dialogue with research participants (Cox et al., 2014). While visual methods were considered highly time-consuming in pre-pandemic times, the pandemic context made them even more complex to adopt ethically. A Western understanding of unilateral data flows postulates mastery as key to researcher success. I discovered the reciprocity that data asks for: “data cannot be seen as an inert and indifferent mass waiting to be in/formed and calibrated by our analytical acumen or our coding systems.

[...] Rather, we are obliged to acknowledge that data have their ways of making themselves intelligible to us” (MacLure, 2013, p. 660)

6.1.3 Questions of representation

The end of field work at the very start of the pandemic (April 2020) had simply been a moment of intense relief to have been able to complete one big part of my field work, concluded through improvised MS Teams sessions. But in these challenging circumstances there was no further action taken from my side to prolong the artistic process. These disrupted times were uncertain, stressful and socially distanced for everyone. In whose interest would it have been to continue arts-based research? In such a situation it was necessary to accept the many “difficulties of applying creative techniques in terms of encroaching on the time of participants” (Mannay, 2015, p. 86). The research participants’ lives would have moved on while Covid-19 was here to stay. The maps from 2020 would now be different maps in 2021 and what would be the benefit for the student teachers to return to my old data if they had their own new challenges in a new chapter of the journey, the probation year. Therefore, “it is important to recognise that participants have their own lives, where participating in research is often an additional burden on their commitments” (Mannay, 2015, p. 88). I was now left with the data, but no longer with the encounter. A prolonged paralysis took seat.

I looked at my loose transcripts (see Appendix 8 as a more detailed example than most other field notes) from the storytelling that had taken place inside the hut and it was clear that this type of documentation was never intended to accurately represent the meaning that the creators had given to their artefacts. I could use some verbatim quotes but in other parts of the transcripts, there were no exact words to be referred to. These transcripts as part of my wider stance of taking methodological risks were no ‘robust evidence’ (Wiles et al., 2011), simply loose notes of the ongoing, continuous, iterative conversations which were suddenly stopped. I felt an impasse around issues of visibility, representation and the interrupted flow of relational possibilities for informed consent. My documentation of the student teachers’ own oral narratives, judged in absence of relational artistic conclusions, have to be seen as weak and incomplete, hungry translations of impossibility and untranslatability (Nagar, 2018). In all the interventions and sessions that had taken place during my field work, I frequently left the hut during ongoing discussions. I had been a guest in such discussions, but not to catch the one all-revealing soundbite, rather to be attentive to the ways narratives flow

independently from my own presence within this distinct 'safe space'. While taking notes but not recording, I celebrated the act of missing out on some conversations. 'Failure to capture is the success to trust in the participants' own capacity to journey with their stories', I had written idealistically into my researcher diary. And in my two case study profiles, this is certainly true. But a wider study of cross-examination between different parts of data is considered good standard and was suggested by my supervisors.

I had fragments but could not find the way to a consistent whole. For this, I would have needed the voice of the authors themselves. It would have been possible to reject analysis altogether if I had sufficiently documented the genuine story as it was told by the student teacher through maps and their own voice:

"Denzin (1997) opposes the inclination to turn a story told into a story analysed because, in effect, the meaning of the story is sacrificed at the altar of methodological rigor. Then we lose what makes a story a story: "They (the analysts) only hear and read the story from within a set of predetermined structural categories. They do not hear the story as it was told" (Denzin, 1997, p.249)" (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 17)

The new context meant to say farewell to my preferred participatory and relational scenario, as I did not keep the narrative flow during the pandemic years. In Denzin's approach, there would be more attention placed on the representation of story by the participants through constant exchange. The fear of misrepresenting became stronger, I became less and less confident to deal with my data. Other PhD students encounter similar difficulties. Sanchez-Rodilla Espeso (2021) resolved this issue in her PhD research as she had settled from the outset on a clearly defined onto-epistemology. Would it be ethical for me to switch from relational approaches to analytical extraction simply because of the pandemic times? Is it ethical to transform an invitation that was intended to explore stories experientially into the duties of a 'data analysis', just because a pandemic has not allowed me to move forward with the storytellers themselves? I was working with emotions, an intimate sphere that requires a careful, nuanced approach to claim findings. It then comes as no surprise that emotions and existential insights are not a quick fix to be scaled up into something bigger. Don't these inner maps deserve a different approach? The vagabond approach with vagrant periods posed an ethical dilemma. My "epistemological frustration that comes from perceived representational failure" (Law & Singleton, 2000, p. 11) was now in full bloom, over-interpreting the inability "to move from a consideration of the particular towards one of the general" (Pirrie &

Macleod, 2010, p. 376) as a failure to meet the standards of rigorous analytical work. From my experience, it emerges that liberation from such an impasse would not have come through more and more solitary analytical effort.

6.1.4 Relational ethics and timelines of dissemination

In May 2021, just a few months after having started working with the student teacher maps again, I had to give an online talk about my research for the funding scheme of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Research Group that was going to be recorded and later put online as an open access video. I had volunteered to do so in the enthusiasm of having managed to submit my interim report in June 2020, which had been a real achievement in the circumstances of no longer having my university work desk. In 2021, my small achievement of the first pandemic spring was a thing of the past and there was a certain expectation (but not obligation) to present my progress and reveal some of my data (student teacher maps) for this event that was also a showcase of impact and success of the wider Scottish Attainment Challenge Research Project to a wider audience.

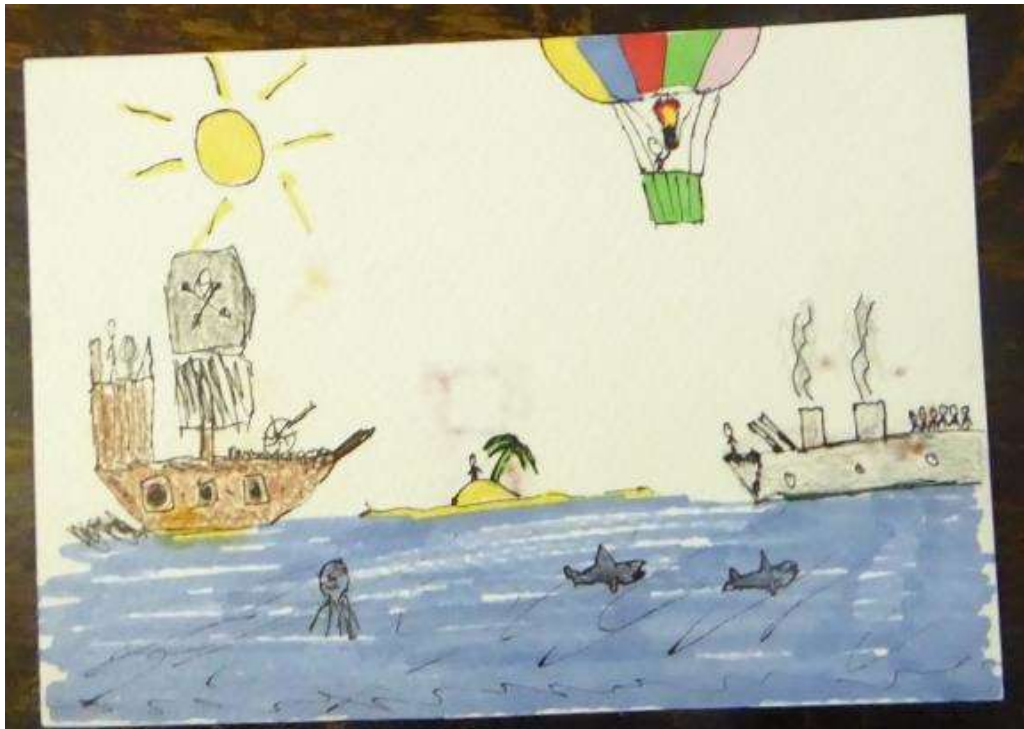
Publications stay visible and available in digital forms beyond the lifetime of a study in ways that research participants may have been unaware of: “methods which serve to capture personal images, artefacts, art work, video footage and visual stories will fix the participants within these creations for time immemorial [...] Researchers can rethink informed consent as ongoing and negotiated rather than fixed, but it is not possible to undo or take back images once they enter the public realm” (Mannay, 2015, p. 113). My awareness of this and the difficulty to find a way out of the representational dilemma increased by own insecurity. As I had not sufficiently thought about the ambiguous use of maps in a public dissemination scenario (Lomax & Fink, 2010), I decided not to share the student teachers’ maps at this stage. Ethics help to protect research participants and in this case, I felt that the artefacts that had come out of sessions inside a ‘safe space’ were not yet ready for wide dissemination. As I had engaged in collecting potentially sensitive, personal maps, it was therefore my own responsibility to hold back at that point. Often, “all-or-nothing idealistic terms” (Mannay, 2015, p. 115) suggest that publicly funded work has to be made available as instantly as possible to a wider audience (Wickham & Vincent, 2013). Yet, publicly funded research rarely enters the ethically slippery spheres of existential care. This was a singular case of researching the intrinsic in a funding scheme focused on gaps measured by testing scores.

My choice at this stage was informed by the “contradictions about the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge and whether participatory projects should simply be concerned with ‘giving voice’ or if they need to consider how these voices will be received and who will listen” (Mannay, 2015, p. 114). My ethical framework for dissemination had to be reconceptualised. The final mapping session with participants where consent and dissemination would have been collectively imagined never took place. I had all informed consent sheets and was *formally* on the safe side, but consent perceived as a relational dialogue (Fink & Lomax, 2012) takes into consideration an afterlife of personal images: “the ways in which even though participants may want their images and accounts to be shared at the point of the research, in the following years and decades they may not want to be forever associated with a particular representation in future ‘audiencing’” (Mannay, 2015, p. 116). When I contacted student teachers again in spring 2021 (a few months after having gained access to my notes stored away on the inaccessible Moray House campus), I realised that all their e-mail addresses had been deactivated after graduation. This was something I had not been thinking of in the stress of the first phase of the pandemic. I wondered if I should now simply accept that there are circumstances beyond my control that lead to situations in which ethically sound representations and narrations are not always available (Lomax, 2012). But acceptance of a non-relational analytical work would shift the interpretive authority back to the individual researcher, paradoxically reverting into a power dynamic that relational, arts-based and participatory research paradigms seek to actively challenge (Leavy, 2020).

6.1.5 Slippery fragments: the artefact of the student teacher island

To show the slippery nature of findings from the deliberately unrecorded, unaudited mapping processes and the possibilities of incomplete ‘data’, I now share the artefact of the ‘student teacher island’. I will demonstrate how a single metaphor can open a vast space for another type of claims to knowledge. A shift to primarily transformational approaches can allow a different way of dealing with slippery, bulky, somewhat incomplete fragments of what may well be student teachers’ invisible ecologies of becoming. This can extend the boundaries of existing research, and challenge the perceived borders around research practices. In the negotiations between representational ethics and the wish to share findings publicly, it becomes apparent that research processes do not have to strive towards completion as ‘state of the art’ categorisation, cross-analysis and dissemination. The journeying through questions of ethics, validity and impact now allows to “produce knowledge in different shapes –

transdisciplinary, artistic, popular shapes” (Leavy, 2020, p. 1184). This is about an understanding of *meaningful* research as anticipatory futures: “How can knowledge be reconceptualised, not so much as something new but a recognition of the ways of knowing from which the new can arise?” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 41).



Artefact 25: The student teacher island and the battleships (David, group 2)

This scenario (artefact 25) was created by David (name anonymised) in the second session (path of self-care). David’s own words (as reconstructed from my incomplete field notes which I gathered on that day) allow to enter his scenario:

There is sunshine, but also sharks under the water.

First you just see the island.

Others would just see my island and say: all is grand. [assumed: friends family around]

But if you zoom out, you see a wider picture.

Torn between the lines, pulling me into different directions... Neither talk to each other enough, to look after the guy in the middle...

Escaping from it all. Staying behind, others are going off. [hot air balloon]

And you feel isolated and trapped...

University and schools are not aware of these darker layers, how difficult it is for students.

I now invite the reader to take a few moments and feel the own reaction to this intrinsic scenario. Do you feel that the student teacher needs to be taken off that island?

I reproduce below how I have conceptually responded to the scenario in my role as story analyst, disconnected from the possibility of participatory interpretations with my research participants during the pandemic. The student teacher island is a striking example of the “aesthetic power of the work” (Chilton & Leavy, 2020, p. 608) of introspective meaning-making. The struggles around identity can be highlighted here like in the longer case study profiles from the previous chapter. But here it is specifically the *non-home in ITE* which is spelled out in a capturing metaphor. The cartographic fragment of the student teacher island between battleships unsettles the assumption that what matters most is to create home in ITE. Conceptually working towards the recognition of non-home, something relatively absent in teacher education research, can offer novel insights. Here, non-belonging is no longer assumed to be only a temporary, maybe rebellious, trainee-in-learning phase on the unquestionably ‘right’ path to professional belonging and solidified teacher identity. It could rather be that some student teachers on their journey of negotiating meaningful teaching engage in forms of ‘reluctant [professional] homemaking’ (Gronseth & Thorshaugh, 2022) which can be an agentic and permanent stance rather than a transitory challenge.

Not even bothering to enter communications with teacher educators can be a very mature choice of acknowledging that the own conditions for meaningful belonging are currently not met. Boccagni and Miranda Nieto ask:

“What is the opposite of home? Is it necessarily something ‘negative’ ? [...] Not attaching a sense of home to a dwelling place or set of relationships is not merely a consequence of poor housing conditions. It may also involve an active choice – at least at some point of the life course, in certain household conditions” (2022, p. 515)

The household of ITE is in a deep, systemic housing crisis. While witnessing the student teacher island, I imagined how debates of teacher retention could be more substantially unsettled from the outside, from a perceived *non-home* that explicitly invites student teachers to reject the externally provided professionalising track of battleship mentalities (presumably of heroic self-sacrifice for one or another side of institutional metrics front lines). There is no urgency to get the student teacher off his island. The student teacher does not want to be brought onto any of the institutional battleships. Therefore, neither ITE as a battle,

nor schooling as a battle are desirable destinations. He simply asks to be acknowledged *while on this island*.

When student teachers reject their teacher identity as their primary dwelling place, we need to offer a non-judgmental space for further understandings of what else provides them anchors and meaning. This is where intrinsic mapping fills a gap, revealing inventive islands. These can be islands of intrinsic ecological survival under the constant threat of emotional isolation ('they don't see the darker layers'), denial or extinction (in the daily aggressions of life contained to battleship routines). The metaphor triggers provocative reflections about non-belonging and alienation from the teacher profession as a *valid existential choice* rather than deficit state which needs immediate fixing by professional bodies. The mapping sessions allowed to express the ambiguous and contradictory home of ITE and led to a more nuanced understanding of the existential-experiential becomings of student teachers. Debates of teacher retention can be perceived from the outside, from a perceived *non-home* that explicitly invites student teachers to reject the externally provided path into battlefield professions. Such intrinsic mapping with student teachers reveals existential scenarios and questions which can help to reimagine what belonging actually means in the context of teacher education: "non-home is also a category of analysis, as it illuminates the emergence of a relationship with place that is more nuanced, and possibly unsettling, than simply not-feeling-at-home in place itself" (Boccagni & Miranda Nieto, 2022, p. 527). The student teacher island situates the encounter beyond a functionalist agenda but within the tension and discrepancy between narratives of 'ITE as desired home' (for all) and 'ITE as de facto non-home' (under certain conditions). There would be a difference in one's analytical approach, depending if the student teacher island is considered as a dysfunctional location blocking the 'right' path of homing into teaching or as an existential, agentic choices of non-home.

From 'either right or wrong' to 'both conceptual and playful'

I could continue here to unearth my own understandings of this metaphor. But very useful feedback from one of my supervisors who had not been present in the intensity of that mapping session and who read my own words cautioned me: what if this drawing was just about playing around? Did I just get carried away, based on only one tangible artefact? While I would say that non-belonging had been a strong expression in other student teachers' oral and unrecorded storytelling contributions, I cannot evidence these student teachers'

expressions now and therefore have to be careful with what I claim as empirically grounded. Did I overlook the playfulness and just project my own wish for evidence about this angle into David's drawing, over-emphasising my own outsider perspective and position of *not* belonging to any Initial Teacher Education tribes? Still, this drawing resonated so strongly with my research intuitions about the non-home that it wasn't only about over-interpretation but also about resonance. This small story fragment made so much sense to me and visualised a feeling that I had read about and heard from others in the hut. Who is then right: the one who sees the non-home or the one who sees playfulness? Which interpretation is accurate? A methodology of undoing scientific mastery offers vagueness as interpretive atmosphere that does not take a fixed seat. My claims around the analytical lens of non-home ought not to sacrifice the overall playfulness of the shepherd's hut's sessions. The student teacher island is then only one fragment, a vagabond trace generously offered to me from wanderings in ITE.

I have looked for ways in which it may be possible to maintain my claim to look more deeply at non-belonging in discussions with student teachers, but without imposing it as a validated fact in a way that this wandering thesis could not 'robustly', 'systematically' and 'rigorously' assume. Weighing up my research's incompleteness after the pandemic suspension with an idea of usefulness of research shifted the underlying issue of validity (of incomplete and non-systematic transcriptions) into a transformational research paradigm. I see a lot of potential in the student teachers' artefacts as evocative and generative rather than explanatory: "What are the aims of the study? Providing an "accurate" account of studied phenomena? Empowering participants to take action for themselves and others? The determination of this purpose will, in turn, inform researchers' analysis and interpretation of the data" (Trent & Cho, 2020, p. 977).

Making public without fixed claims to knowledge

I now lay out how it is possible to make tentative, blurred and loosely held fragments of findings useful for a wider public without the need of 'impact archery' (Mahon & Henry, 2022) for linear claims to knowledge. I hereby make use of the diversity of questions that the mapping artefacts provide for wider publics. The "conventional practice of packaging research findings for dissemination, on the page or in person, is to tidy up and abstract what may have been messy research processes, smoothing over false starts, delays and challenges, giving an

impression of linearity reaching a conclusion” (Carruthers Thomas, 2020, p. 9). Instead of disseminating the student teachers’ artefacts as truths and evidence to be extracted, I would like to embed the mapped scenarios into an interactive frame. While the lives of the participating student teachers will have moved on, I believe that the student teachers’ maps do not have an expiry date. But it requires creativity to think of a different format in order to create meaningful impact, without the timeframes of immediacy that my own funding scheme required for (very traditional, high-stakes) dissemination.

Alternative presentation (in the form of a card game) can help to transcend the representational limits of the textual account of my research. The playful mood of the mapping sessions of existential care cannot be conveyed through the ‘linguistic armour’ (Lerum, 2001) accumulated in treatment of data through the academic pen. A lot that had been happening in the hut was about the sensory crafts of oral storytelling that cannot be translated onto paper (Abram, 1997). A card game design asks different questions: “the complexity of representing philosophical theories within a game designed for a general audience [...] is ‘generative’ focusing more on the process rather than the outcome” (Akmal & Coulton, 2019, p. 15). To return to my example: when shifting from the analytical-representational deadlock discussed above into a transformational and heuristic dissemination strategy, it does not matter who is ultimately right about the captivating spatial metaphor of the student teacher island. What matters is the process of playing with that metaphor. A multiplicity of meanings is crafted because a public sharing of metaphors which are deliberately ‘under-interpreted’ can cascade into further existential questioning.

6.1.6 Playful disseminations: a transformative turn with my data

Acknowledging the meaning of fragments in the in-betweens, the question of accountability and validity is no longer solely situated in representational protocol: “in transformational approaches, validity is not so much something that can be achieved solely by employing certain techniques. [...] In this sense, it is the ameliorative aspects of the research that achieve (or do not achieve) its validity. Validity is determined by the resultant actions prompted by the research endeavour” (Trent & Cho, 2020, pp. 976 – 977). The valorisation of inner treasures then requires immersive shapes for further circulation. New artistic expressions are increasingly referred to as part of the research process, not just a public engagement add-on.

This is about rethinking “dissemination as a fluid space in which a research enquiry continues to be under construction, rather than a formal conclusion of a research endeavour” (Carruthers Thomas, 2020, p. 7). The focus is no longer on the *output* through knowledge dissemination, but on the potential *input* when improvisation means further circulation. Collage is put forward in many research analyses as a way to communicate research findings in an evocative way (Butler-Kisber, 2010) and to advocate for social justice (Yuen, 2016). Collage, as a heuristic analytic approach, is problem-focused (Plakoyiannaki & Stavraki, 2018) and can transform tensions into playful problem-solving. Recent research in critical cartography (Dammann & Michel, 2022; Bauer & Nöthen, 2022) suggests not to ‘fetichise’ the artefacts created through participatory mapping research. The map does not represent the reality, but gives scope for multiple realities. What matters for the arts-based research process is not to take the artefacts at face value (because they are not even automatically taken at face value in the inner belief system of their artist-creator), but to focus instead on the interrogative dimension. In what ways do these scenarios, sometimes presented as fragments and sometimes as intrinsic ecologies, interrogate the wider field of ITE *becoming*? This is about “mediating vigorous research through a creative format to increase impact yet engender some level of protection” (Mannay, 2015, p. 118) of the original art works. There is a need for safety because the artefacts reveal the spheres of sense of self and identities where ‘borders’ to the outside world need to be negotiated in advance. But there is a possibility to reach a wider public when it is ethically possible to imagine fluid shapes of dissemination.

By playing through cards, the scenarios created by student teachers will be in movement, they will become something else. Because they are embedded in the frame of playfulness, this is not an imposition or the decontextualised occupancy of intrinsic life worlds. Like in collage works, the individual contribution makes way for something wider, multiply interwoven, but the singular individual component is still there. The players can decide for themselves if they stay in the original creator’s story or make it resonate with their own intrinsic scenario, they have to sense the level of introspection and resonance that feels right to them. Between serious and playful, not the research participant or the researcher decides what a scenario should become, but the ones within ITE (or indeed the wider helping professions) who will play: “the outcome of this process is an integrated form of knowledge that is larger than the

sum of the parts that went into creating it” (Leavy, 2020, p. 1185). These players become co-cartographers, co-dreamers, co-voyageurs and co-bricoleurs.

As an anticipatory frame (Facer & Sriprakash, 2021; Facer, 2022), there is a focus on the interplay between the stability of a singular mapping scenario and the fluidity of the yet unknown ways how the card game will unfold as an interactive, constantly rearranged collage: “scenes [are] being made-and-remade. Many visual methods lack this level of fluidity as they become fixed once collage pieces are glued, the camera is clicked or ink comes into contact with paper” (Mannay, 2015, p. 71). In the existential card game, there is a fixed set of scenario cards, but they are embedded in the ‘rules’ of playful unknowing to let scenes donated by student teachers resonate further and reinterpret their meaning for the own professional situation. The flexibility of “constructions and re-constructions” (Mannay, 2015, p. 71) conveys the plasticity of mapping for existential care on different layers. Figure 27 below shows one source for this idea. I have often used the French card game “*Valeur(s) ajoutée(s)*” to reflect on values informally. The cards were illustrated by children through a participatory design approach.



Figure 27: Value-based existential card game, France (SouriezVousMangez, 2020)

Clear ownership and fluid interplays

Singular fragments produced by research participants for existential care then compose the card game as a form of playful, interactive collage to be made. Questions of ownership in the future design of the card game then bring me back to a relational process, but not the highly time-consuming version of conventional analysis where I would oblige participants to read lengthy interpretations of their artefacts. The student teacher who has mapped a scenario stays the creator of the own art work, invited to donate openly or anonymously one of their scenarios for further circulation through the card game, as well as adding a few sentences of their own explanatory narrative. Anonymity and representation would be discussed with every individual map creator, but in a way that can be concise, concrete and turned towards a public practice rather than insider scientific validation. Hence, “there needs to be an upfront and continuous questioning of the ‘so what’ or utility of our work. Does our work make a difference, and if so for whom, and how and why?” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 150). What I suggest here is a more meaningful use than if I expected teachers to return to their maps simply for my own concerns for routinised and highly impersonal ‘member checking’. The card game can be a move back to research reciprocity (Richardson, 2015), accepting that the momentum for more authentic co-design had lapsed during the pandemic period of my PhD. I can also see possibilities for cyclical rather than linear means of participatory co-creation, for example by involving future participants of existential care (in different institutions and degree programmes) in creating additional card game scenario sets.

Democratising play and wonder as part of ITE

An existential card game as an ever-evolving collage of constant questioning becomes accessible to those who are in ITE routes with little time allocated for reflexivity. It can become a democratising tool for translating the emancipatory possibilities of existential care. Not all ITE programmes will support an elective module for self-care. The Scottish Attainment Challenge’s key concern of health and wellbeing can then also be integrated into ITE from the existentially informed student teacher perspective by developing the card game as a flexible tool kit. A card game about the journeys into meaningful teaching can be played everywhere, in a module or in free time, as part of the train rant among peers from school placement, in an ITE classroom, as part of Continuous Professional Development reflections. The layers of

meaning which have emerged through this doctoral research can then become visible beyond the confines of the school's buildings.

This format for which I will seek an initial public engagement and impact funding can be a response to a question that I have increasingly asked myself as I am approaching the post-doctoral crossroads where I will have to find new directions for research as crafts for the meaningful: "How could we expand epistemological foundations through collaborations between artists, researchers, and practitioners? How could the arts be employed to further cultivate an ontological and epistemological space where imagination, aesthetics, and emotions are integral to intellectual movements in research and health care?" (Lapum et al., 2012, p. 112). My findings were inevitably bulky, not fitting into any one paradigmatic slot. The sustained confrontation with such an instability (rather than glossing over it) required many pages of struggling through questions of representational ethics, validity, accountability and impact. But I have also tried to hold open room for imagination: "we need to resist the temptation to clean up, to get things into perfect shape, to remove all traces of a work in progress. Such an approach entails relinquishing power, surrendering mastery of the material. However, this may be necessary in order to access deeper levels of interpretation" (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009, p. 279). The existence of precious, unclassified cartographic fragments such as the student teacher island is an invitation to keep on playing.

6.2: What stays central when the hut is gone? Vehicular scholarship

6.2.1 Methodological risks as a work in progress

Where do the flows of this thesis lead? I would like to highlight the methodological risk of conceiving of this thesis through a vehicle. I endeavoured to stretch the uncontrollability of experimental methodology to a maximum, having passed many "uncertainty thresholds" (Tauritz, 2012, p. 304). I would argue here, that the PhD is the one place where one can test, and truly risk to leave empty-handed from several months' work, because it is a training route open to learning from mistakes. What may be gained is much larger than the avoidance of the future negative event of the 'no data from fieldwork' disaster. But I have also encountered the academic world as workplaces largely "intolerant of uncertainty [which] will consider it unacceptable that a future negative event may occur" (Grenier et al., 2005, p. 596). And still, this PhD has become possible as a pursuit of wandering within institutional systems based on

ranking metric. When, if not in the PhD can there be a training ground to challenge the linearity of outcomes? The unforeseeable methodology “of the sketch – that is, not quite knowing what you are about when you begin” (Sennett, 2008, p. 262) is a rather isolated case in research timelines.

Methodologically, I have tried “de-learning mastery in a place of work (academia) that is all about mastery” (Pillow, 2019, p. 120). Inquiry as fragile art, not as robust data collection, involves a risk as it is permeated by limitations of what is commonly referred to as channels of scientific validity. The instantaneity of research under ‘methodological instrumentalism (Mills & Ratcliffe, 2012) stipulates commercial time frames for impact as quick as possible. But my privileged position of a funded PhD has allowed to get myself into troubled waters, into the stormy sea of ambiguity of not having any interview data, not having any focus group, no surveys and no data triangulation. There is an upside in resisting. My work relied on the spontaneity of relatively unscripted encounters, not formalising and artificially infusing credibility to manage risks through the backdoor:

“Often the encounter is addressed through post-encounter interviews or surveys. Here much is asked of those being interviewed or surveyed. They may not even have recognised the learning that occurred for them. Learning is not always readily known and even when recognised may occur at a time distant to the encounter [...] Arts-based research provides opportunities for other ways of accessing knowledge. We were seeking that which is available when researching at the edge of what is observable” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 68).

Having preserved risk and the possibility of failure as generative of new knowledge is therefore an achievement that cannot be taken for granted in the audited UK PhD timelines.

Academia wants and at the same time “narrows the opportunities to engender ‘the unpredictable, the tangential and the creative’ “(Mannay, 2015, p. 87). The doctoral training route was driven by the curiosity to be surprised by whatever will happen when nothing is forced: “In your thesis you may well have scope to experiment [...] In other contexts – I am thinking here of policy makers and commissioners – it may be more challenging and you may wonder if they will accept these alternative modes of communication. Maybe not, in some cases” (Simons, 2020, p. 699). Allowing for “*things not going as planned*” (Herberg & Torgersen, 2021, p. 10) has allowed me to reframe a philosophical stance as concrete methodological positioning: “No one can expect that the event which brings something new

into the world will happen at a certain point in time, as when one is waiting for a train due to arrive at 17.00. If the otherness of the Other comes, then it comes like a thief in the night – as a complete surprise (Levinas, 2009)” (Sæverot, 2013, p.74). The educative agent of the shepherd’s hut takes over from the impatient researcher. Curating vehicles always involves a risk as there is no guarantee. This has become a methodology of slow surprises to be preserved because slow surprises and wonder are worth exploring for their own sake.

6.3.2 Circulating further

While the shepherd’s hut used in this thesis will certainly remain ambassador to the potentials of researching through a methodological vehicle, there is so much that can be imagined when the hut is gone. There is no reliance on this specific shepherd’s hut or shepherd’s huts in general to continue in a direction that this thesis points towards. Other vehicles may carry further this attention to intrinsic sparks. But what I do argue is that the use of the shepherd’s hut exemplifies a way how, in specific contexts, vehicles can host ecologies of knowledges which offer unprecedented ways to investigate. Curating vehicles can enlarge the traditional horizon of research designs focused on mobilities:

“Much ethnography in mobilities has been located at sites of passage, transfer points, where populations and things are temporarily contained and arranged within stations, waiting rooms, baggage systems ... By contrast, a mobile ethnography involves travelling with people and things, participating in their continual shift through time, place and relations with others.” (Watts & Urry, 2008, p. 867)

The novelty in using the shepherd’s hut consisted in swapping roles: the more-than-observational stance of the researcher allows to introduce a movement-based affective atmosphere. Research which introduces vehicles can play around with an imaginable double or triple fluidity. The researcher and research participants *as well as* the methodological vehicle as the site of knowledge generation could *all* be conceptualised as simultaneously on the move. This triple-mobility may allow a way of researching the *wildlife corridors* of research participants within policy frameworks which can be perceived immobilised by testing scores.

6.2.3 Vehicles-in-residence

Some people give names to their own cars because they have discovered their ‘personalities’. What if vehicles were carriers of a scholarly transposed ecological, interconnected perception of the world? In the region where my colportage with the shepherd’s hut had taken residence

since 2015, the local network of the *Foyers Ruraux* (FRGS Clunisois, 2022) has recently developed a bus. The bus has a name. *Marguerite* travels across the villages and connects people, services and many artistic proposals. This was inspired by the travelling grocery stores of rural France. In 2012, the artist Jean Bojko and his theatre collective created a bus to deliver cultural nutrition, making tours between villages with surprise artists in itinerant residence. But the vehicle of this *camion d'alimentation culturelle* also appeared to have an artist personality, it became a 'vehicle-in-residence', just like there are human artists-in-residence. The same idea has been recreated in other regions of France, without the need of its initial creator to be present to guarantee a certain success. This same theatre collective, T  ATR'  PROUV  TE (2022) has moved on in 2022 to invent yet another mobile intervention space: a mobile caravan for donations of time in an accelerated society (see below). What vehicles currently represent for mobile artists and civic educational itinerancy could also be explored for arts-based research. What connects these initiatives is a form of care that goes beyond logistics. There is an ambition for long-term curation, but not expansionism and scaling up of itinerant products or service productions. These vehicles with real names have low egos despite their eccentric personalities.

The experiment with existential care can spark further transportations. In temporally disruptive futures for ITE, I imagine vehicles-in-residence to connect with in-house educators and artists-in-residence to keep open the possibility of existential time. Student teachers shared their frustrations about the expectations from colleagues. Research participants criticised that "people [are] telling you what to do with your free time". One mentor said to them: "this is what the career is like, you won't get an outside life", with the unspoken advice to get on with it. Another student teacher shared: "I felt so closed inside the school, not knowing what the weather is, what the day looks like". Student teachers agreed that one should have a life besides teaching: "You leave at 3:30 and switch off, let them [colleagues] talk, they can gossip". Classroom sacrifice appears deeply entrenched in the training route to teaching. What is missing for the after-school is a non-judgmental space to unlearn the duty to others in the after-hours. Let us just for a second imagine the logistics of challenging this.

The After-School Bus

An 'after-school bus' as my imagined vehicle for research beyond the hut works both metaphorically as an exercise for the imagination, as well as through concrete application.

There is a clear need for retreat and out-of-school time and space to regenerate, to renew, to reinvent, to stay, and to stay healthy. If there is no space for these needs inside the schools, why can't there be a *vehicle* for these needs to transport the professionals outside? Across the world, there are 'after-school childcare facilities'. How could it concretely look like to build up the logistics of an experimental 'after-school student teacher existential care facility'? Lingering with the idea of an after-school bus reserved for student teachers cultivates the imaginary for further temporally disruptive research in which the researcher steps back even more from controlling processes. What I mean by this is that we cannot know in advance how student teachers would invest the logistics of their after-school. But what we could do as researchers for anticipatory futures of peer existential care in Initial Teacher Education is to look at concrete ways to open another unoccupied framework in which student teachers may dwell.

Making sure that the logistics of the after-school bus are sorted out is a role that the researcher can pursue. The role is then essentially to open a frame by building a logistical environment which is attractive enough to help transcend the established temporalities of linear school time. That bus may not have the affective stillness of the hut's wood fire stove, but it may have participatory, cohort-led 'campervan vibes' in a car-sharing scheme for school-to-school rotation. Once the bus materially exists and becomes available to cohorts of student teachers, the researcher invites cohorts to negotiate their own timetabling, a new methodological 'work-in-progress' to nurture the non-linear wildlife corridors of their intrinsic ecologies rather than externally imposed duty to perform. Providing this kind of temporal vehicle-in-residence nurtures alternative imaginations to spend the after-school time. It may not need much to start letting this after-school bus circulate as soon as the school bells ring.

Not every student teacher has friends at home who understand the challenges of the teaching profession. Not every student teacher mentally disconnects from the job when physically exiting the school compound. The existential questioning remains. A mobile venue potentially fills a gap. What if the need for ranting and dreaming was given a vehicle to be shared rather than silenced? I invite the reader to imagine the symbolic dimension of an arrival of that bus, when a student teacher on placement is picked up by peers from the same cohort to leave 'right on time' at 3:30. It may be a sunny day for an autonomously scheduled existential hike. There may be the inner fear of rejection, the bewildered gaze from senior colleagues, or just

a general bedazzling curiosity at the school's staff parking. But this fear will fade when the bus heads off into new destinations and student teachers claim back the wildlife corridors of their leisure time. When the right to retreat becomes eroded in unsustainable workloads, this circulation is a *vehicular provocation* to say 'no' to always staying in the school compound, but saying 'yes' to something else - cultivating the explicit permission among peers to a work-free afternoon or evening. And the bus can be a way to research self-care temporalities.

Vehicular scholarship

My methodological risk of letting a thesis be structured by a 'means of transportation' has not prevented but expanded subsequent scientific endeavours. Holding open the multimodality of a single vehicle is not the same as being sheltered by a validated methodological tribe. Curating a vehicle is not only about logistics, but about circulation in relational ways, trusting in the affordances of wider mobile ecologies of knowledges. Vehicular imagination, from my perspective, is enabled through the interplay of small-scale logistics with mobile worlds as existential, philosophical ways of being (exemplified in chapter 2). Vehicles in my understanding are then not limited to tools for prototyping. They merit to be cultivated in their own right. I am not talking about pliable design thinking tools, but about educative agents embedded in relational itinerancy that can hold *refugium* in ecosystems through their bulky singularities. Sites-on-wheels are not just tools, they also enable forms of 'organic vagabondage'. There is a chance to curate participatory and embodied investigative processes through itinerant ecosystems. It is important to methodologically stay on the road.





Memory board 8: Vehicles-in-residence and ideas for vehicular scholarship

- Existential peer care needs a 'safe space' for witnessing more than constant input (see 4.3)

As an indirect approach to teacher education, it was possible to activate intrinsic motivations of participants by leaving them to their own space and time. This proposition was embraced by student teachers in their optional free time. It could also become a circulating form of CPD which offers a framework for inner riches to arise.
- Existential care increases professional confidence, cartographic literacy and agency (see 5.2.2)

When student teachers are encouraged to narrate intrinsic motivations, personalised artefacts can emerge that support their singular paths into the profession. Participants develop agentic existential reflexivity which is also used in their GTCS portfolios.
- Nurturing teacher becomings needs to challenge the temporal dimension of degrees (see 5.5.3)

Recommendations for curricular reform concern timetabling disruption to explore beyond persistent binaries (e.g., care for others vs. care for self, overwork vs. slow)
- The creation of intrinsic and 'slippery' artefacts advances 'in-between' ethics debate (see 6.1.5)

Student teachers' intrinsic maps as geographies of singularity require a fluid repertoire of approaches, methods and epistemologies to negotiate between representational ethics and a wider public utility of non-linearity. The methodological work-in-progress expands the definition of rigour. It deliberately tries to undo scientific mastery.
- Non-home in ITE is a possible angle to unsettle the debate around teacher retention (see 6.1.5)

Ideas of belonging in ITE were deliberately troubled by my vagabond provocation to research, opening up to new questions and not providing fixed answers. Affinities are as significant in educational spheres as communities to preserve intrinsic sparks.
- Methodological vehicles help to open up wildlife corridors in ITE (see 6.2.3)

The 'vagabond' methodological approach indicates that vehicles could be used further as a way of researching the student teachers' own right to roam. A framework such as SAC can be deoptimised by shifting attention from the many teaching-to-the-test models to gestures of hospitality which can be curated through 'vehicles-in-residence'

Chapter 7: Ending by opening

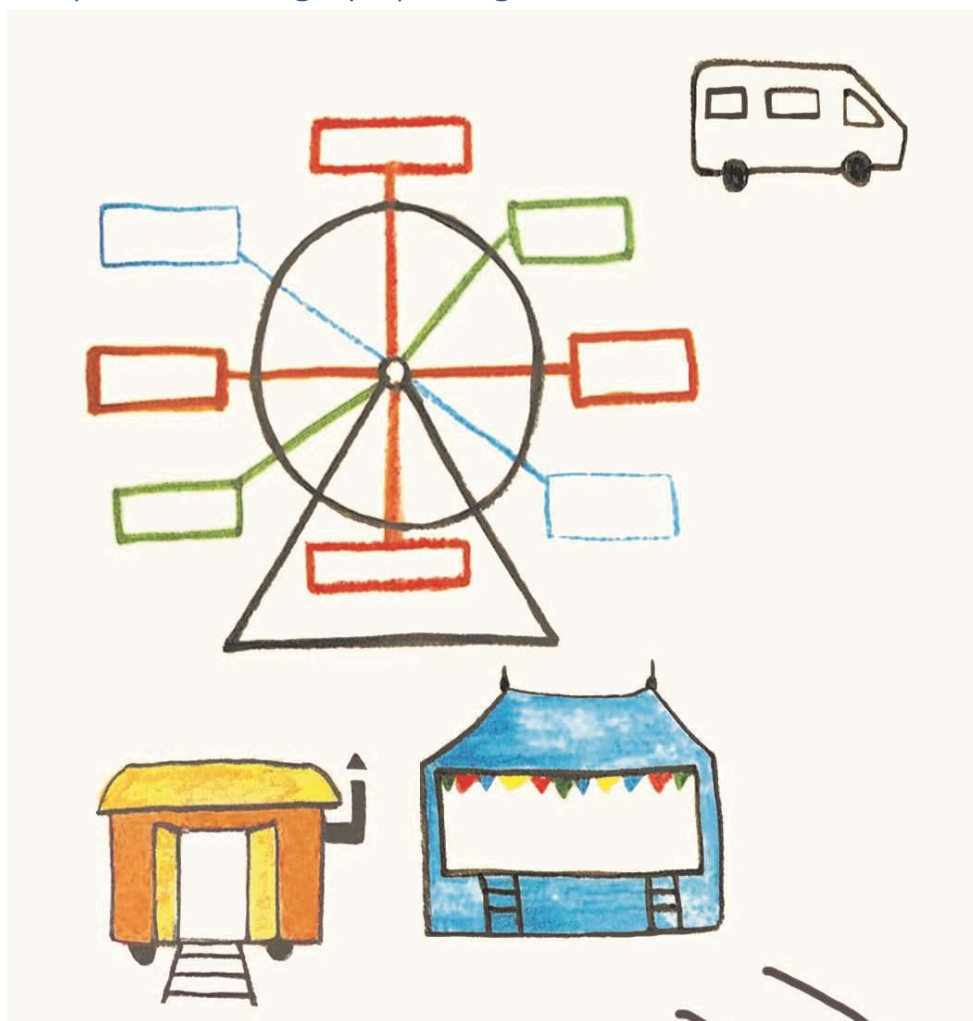


Figure 29: A chapter of endings to open up a wandering fairground of science

The word count now stands at 86.000. The bullet points have sealed this thesis. It is ready to be sent off. Any add-on would be strictly *superfluous*. This wandering thesis has already attempted to rescript failure (prelude), unbelongings (c.2), vulnerability (c.5) and paralysis (c.6). Could a final provocation then be the celebration of the superfluous? My superfluous endings are in fact novel beginnings. Submitting a thesis leads to a new threshold. I see crossroads with a promising horizon. The writings of the conference fringe in this short chapter are no longer essential to produce a word count required by the standards of my intended degree. I write this because there is a real trouble with this last chapter. In order to tell the celebratory aspects of the conference fringe journey which occurred in parallel to the wanderings of the previous six chapters, the use of the academic pen felt deeply dissatisfying to me. I dreamt of ways to share things differently at the end of this written thesis.

7.1 A viva about the hut, in the hut or with the hut?

A scenario emerged which plays with the idea of a PhD viva as a novel departure point to imagine postdoctoral futures. A viva is this type of rare, precious conversation in which examiners are genuinely interested to find out where a thesis stands. The feature of a wandering thesis moored in vehicular scholarship also asks back: and where does the viva stand? In a highly unusual set-up of a thesis whose fabric was a shepherd's hut, my own PhD viva could potentially be housed *within* the actual physical methodological vehicle of the thesis-to-be-examined. The traditional science of detachment would reject such an idea almost immediately. But staying for a while with such an idea situates an examination in different 'bodies of knowledges' which I want to discuss from the perspective of 'journeys into meaningful research'. Because a viva is a formal discussion which is never organised by the one to be examined, the scenario should be understood as an element of (*science*) *fiction* and does not seek to interfere with the institution's own terrain: picking the correct framework for an examination with stipulated rules. Before the reader reaches the conference fringe, I would like to ask for interaction with the imagined situation outlined below. I want to offer the reader two paths to access the endings-beginnings of chapter 7.

Reaching the end-of-PhD horizon

Although PhD supervision meetings never took place inside the shepherd's hut again, there had always been room for a shared, radical imagination. One example: 'What if the viva took place inside the hut?' We had this idea during the pandemic lockdowns when we met on screens, and maybe it was this need to dream ourselves away from the Zoom fatigue which made us nurture visions of that sort. None of us had heard of a viva that had been done inside a shepherd's hut. However, this was not even our idea in the first place. The student teachers had spoken this out first. During the hut experience day in January 2019, they had suggested that the shepherd's hut could represent a reassuring setting for examinations in their own placement schools, for poetry recitals and other potentially humiliating experiences. They thought of pupils who struggled to fit into the institutional protocol. Should such a radical and unprecedented idea be left to be tested in schools or would university have to set a precedence for reinterpreting the physical environment of examinations? While writing up, there was almost no time to think about experiments. Without my finished text, there would be no viva.

But in September 2022, one of my supervisors remembered our plan from mid-PhD times. Soon, we were three to discuss this in concrete terms. While we had not decided on examiners yet, we let our imagination wander again, now almost at the end of the journey and with the examination in close sight. The question here was not about logistics but if a viva in the hut was actually desirable. In October 2022, the hut no longer seemed necessary to make my points. Wouldn't it demonstrate my academic progress to not need that hut anymore? The presence of the shepherd's hut could weaken my real arguments of the thesis, those which could now stand alone on paper. The transcendence of the hut seemed a more promising outcome, to show that my scholarship was not all about the hut. And therefore we decided against this hut viva as a desired scenario. I accepted these arguments, but they did not satisfy me in the internal dialogue between my academic and not-so-academic self. This felt like concluding the right PhD with the right people into the 'wrong' direction. I had indeed learnt to swap the wood fire stove for computer screens and the viva could now reflect this progression. At the end of this thesis, I then came back inside the shepherd's hut and stayed at the wood fire. The crackling wood asked me: do you feel that you have been on the journey into meaningful research? The hut always asks such unsettling questions to those who enter.

In all our supervisory meetings I had been given the space and encouragement to disagree, and years of supervision had enabled me to do so through the academic pen. I was even explicitly encouraged to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of a hut viva in my written conclusions of the thesis. The following pages offer two different reflections about the viva scenario. I ask the reader to pick one lens, and one lens only. Each part gives attention to a different perception of the body in science/ scientific body to be examined. I understand in what ways the idea of transcendence of the shepherd's hut for the sake of strengthening my written arguments could be useful for a future scientific career. But before the usefulness, I would want to reflect what type of science this involves. Therefore, this reflection should not be interpreted as disagreement with my supervisors' incredible guidance towards performance within the benchmarks which matter most in textual science. I am extremely privileged to have been given this continuous support. With the threshold of post-PhD futures coming closer, I sense the strong need to *feel* a different kind of scientific world. This is a form of science which may not exist visibly as a career trajectory but it is an atmosphere which I have encountered during the conference fringe (de-)touring of academic events.

Does the reader want to find out more about a viva

a) which is *about* the hut?

or

b) which is *inside* the hut?

The writings to come try to explain why asking such a question in a ‘superfluous’ part of a lengthy PhD matters. The reader cannot see the clear text and needs to restore the dark font by scrolling over the almost transparent text. One part remains blurred to the reader’s eye. It is always there but one has to take sides. Academia requires to make choices in overwhelming workloads. No matter if the reader decides for a) or for b), the chapter then moves on to a third way, introducing encounters in science c) *with* the hut as an immersive hub through the experiential conference fringe. However, the selected path provides one distinct lens to enter.

a) Cerebral independence

By highlighting the intellectual lens on the viva, there is a chance for greater conceptual depth and a promise for theoretical purification. But alternative bodies of knowledge generation are discussed from afar. In my opinion, ‘non-scientific’ bodies should not be overcome but acknowledged as integral part of the scientific labour: “bodies are our vehicles for being-in-the-world, and represent us to others (Csordas, 1994)” (Leigh & Brown, 2021, p. 81). Could I celebrate the triumph of my improved writings to be intellectually independent from the hut? This success can come at a high cost, responding to a long-standing scientific ideology of absent bodies, which I had at times experienced as a form of sensory poverty and ‘regress’:

“Those who are successful often achieve this at great personal cost (Fryberg and Martinez, 2014). The bodies of knowledge, the *corpus* for students, often reflect this lack of diversity, and privilege of Euro-Western forms of knowledge and research, leaving some bodies, and types of bodies, absent” (Leigh & Brown, 2021, p. 82)

There could be a viva in which *other bodies of knowledges* are allowed to attend, to take part: “empathetic, embodied knowledge rather than a solely cerebral, scholarly understanding” (Leigh & Brown, 2022, p. 64). If this thesis was only about assessing the progression towards my more and more solid textual grasp and grip, then a certain type of body had to be absent in order for the pen to narrate its exclusive ownership claims for that story of doctoral success: “science is interested in the invisible that can be made visible by scientific work, not in the

invisible that science itself generates” (Santos, 2018, p. 172). Validating my training route would celebrate that I had stripped myself off the very thing that had got me inside the doctorate in the first place. Making my way into academia would then finally tell an old story, a rationalist tale. Cognitive independence overcomes relational interdependence (Santos, 2018). Silently, I asked myself where that magical moment of wonder from that scholarship interview in August 2018 had gone. And I realised that it was my responsibility, not the one of the academy, to start to talk about fatigue and the erosion of the sensuous meaning at the end of such an important route. This can allow to explore in dialogue for what reason meaningful journeys can feel so exhausting towards their end. What really seems to matter at the finishing line is academic performance. It is assessed in the a) sphere. If you have made the choice to step closer to relevant metrics, you may now read the account of the conference fringe as intellectual tale more than celebration. You are invited to proceed to 7.2.

b) Embodied shelter

I write my own body (and a more personal layer of the shepherd’s hut) into the examination to come. This is only revealed in choice b), the second lens. It will not be visible to choice a). The writing of lens b) dilutes the power of a type-a) viva. But I feel that systematic overwork as the logic of academia risks to become my postdoctoral norm if I pretend I can keep my body of fatigue eclipsed out: “The lines between work and life become blurred to such an extent that individuals struggle to keep apart the personal, private and the public, and such work, in turn, makes the ‘hyperprofessional’ (Gornall and Salisbury, 2012) go even further” (Brown, 2021, p. 4). The cancellations, the instances of ‘too much’, they have not been part of this thesis narrative. The neurodivergent body at universities constantly sits at the edge of fatigue: “the sensory and thus social environment can often be loud, smelly, bright and chaotic, to an extreme that can be painful” (Farahar & Foster, 2021, p. 198). One has to navigate these edges of belonging, but able-bodied standards are impossible to maintain: “Sensory overwhelm (sensory overload/difficulty regulating sensory input) can lead to meltdown (emotional explosion/ extreme stress reaction); shutdown (emotional implosion/ retreating from the world); and/ or burnout” (Farahar & Foster, 2021, p. 205). In stressful situations, it can help to be in a safe space. But the academic environment also trains people not to need any of this, or to ask for such changes to standards only as reasonable adjustments and exceptional accommodations. The possibility that a differently situated examination can also be a more joyful experience is rarely considered. Joy is not the

vocabulary of science. Reflecting the ontology of the one to be examined counts less than rituals for rational force. What is so wrong with *not* evidencing transcendence of the hut?

There is ongoing fear and worry for disabled academics that they will “suddenly no longer [be] seen as academics or persons, but as their disability or health condition. In this sense, academics themselves are the physical manifestation of internalised ableism within academia” (Brown and Leigh, 2018, p. 988). And indeed, as soon as someone reveals that part of their identity, there are many risks attached. Disclosure rates “suggest that the more ‘scholarly’ academic work is the more likely it is for individuals not to report a disability [...] Disclosure is a cost-benefit analysis between the cost of stigmatisation and discrimination and the benefit of support systems, such as reasonable adjustments” (Brown, 2021, p. 3). As a researcher with an atypical way of thinking, processing and socialising, it may turn out safer to pass for non-disabled, to hide the own needs in order to avoid disbelief and doubts (Ellingson, 2021). But when one’s own performance relies on maintaining this shield, its evasive vagueness also keeps the structural boundaries in place. Writing my neurodivergent ontology into the last chapter is a non-standard choice. One usually learns to comply and package the fatigue of PhD completion individually rather than discuss ableism in academia:

“The better we become at hiding our disabilities completely, or in over-functioning to provide industrious cover to our visible disabilities, the more we reinforce the ableist assumption that disabled scholars do not belong in the academy until or unless we can function without needing accommodations. This strengthens the idea that we also do not really need accommodations, given that at times we have managed to succeed despite their absence. Our resilience, creativity and exhaustion are taken as proof that there is nothing wrong with the status quo instead of evidence of the extraordinary lengths that we go to succeed and prove we can contribute positively to our universities” (Ellingson, 2021, p. 27)

In 2018, when I started my PhD, there were few visible publications about the lived experience of neurodivergence in academia. But something has been changing in recent years, and I am fortunate to have been able to witness changes. It allows to share lens b).

Vagabond vagueness as an unsteady thread of this PhD has allowed me to create a hub for affective academic hospitalities. The conference fringe is in fact also an invitation to resonate beyond the sensory overload of indoor academic conventions. Ableism is omnipresent, but only a problem to those who are least able in the room. The room of ableism is suffocating, which is why it is often better to opt for radical roomlessness, to be institutionally unhoused.

I have developed a challenging but meaningful way of speaking, held open by the vagabond ecology. The affective atmosphere of the hut is then also one of the many emerging relational accounts to narrate

“how disabled people build accessible worlds in and through the unspectacular choreographies of the everyday [...] Activist affordances are performative microacts/-arts through which disabled people enact and bring into being the worlds that are not already available to them, the worlds they need and wish to dwell in” (Dokumacı, 2023, p. 5)

There is something to be explored beyond ableism. It is time to ask in what way I want to be part of a healthier academy in a possible postdoctoral future. What bodies of knowledge should be welcomed here if my neurodivergent ontology is invited into the departure point?

This personal account is only part of choice b). The risk to “write vulnerably” (Behar, 2014, p. 16) is often classified as self-indulgent or as over-sharing, something that should stay in the researcher diary rather than be said out loud. In certain disciplinary fields, there is no positive connotation linked to speaking in weak ways: “Reducing the knowledge claims of those working in this field to a personal or emotional experience (‘frustration’) serves to argue that it does not count as ‘proper’ academic knowledge. Positioning certain forms of knowledge as ‘personal’ rather than ‘academic’ can be seen as a form of boundary-keeping” (Bacevic, 2021, p. 6). However, the ontology of the person who is examined does not have to match the reality of the examiners. What matters is how different ontologies can connect through cross-ontological joy without having to focus on persistent, hidden fatigue. I have found a way to encounter the social worlds of academia as a *shared* way to hide and stay. For me to be able to open my hut is to sustain attendance at events where I would otherwise over the long run just disappear or burn out. I have found a way to dwell in the vagueness of the hospitable academic outdoors. As I am attending, I am simultaneously compelled to hide. The vagabond vehicle is like a second skin, its itinerant vagueness is a shield to allow more authentic rest during events of constant masking. This mobile sanctuary has allowed the generosity of affective academic hospitalities to arise.

You have discovered a lens which offers an often-masked layer of the shepherd’s hut work. You may now proceed to the relational account of the conference fringe, knowing that bodies of fatigue do not only drown theses in self-indulgent writing but can also reveal the behind-the-scenes of trying to build shared joys for the wandering fairground of science to come. And

as we sit together, no matter if it is intellectually about the hut, ontologically in the hut, or even epistemologically with the hut, we will finally meet nowhere near to the middle but surprisingly close.

7.2 Une langue véhiculaire for a wandering fairground of science?

This thesis has constructed arguments through multilingualism. I do not mean multilingual in the sense that my contributions to knowledge are explicitly housed in linguistics or modern languages. My multilingualism is more of an informal, background multilingualism, which could easily go unnoticed. There are nuances that intuitive multilingualism can bring out. During the writing-up of this thesis, there have been daily acts of translation and reformulation between my research (predominantly *written* in English), civic projects of the Burgundy-based association (mostly *verbalised* in French) and design for new teaching modules using the shepherd's hut (currently *modularised* in German). Navigating these repertoires and finding the parallels and distinctions between the words used, for example when moving from an informal village animation with French volunteers to the validation board of new curricular designs at a German university of applied sciences in the same day, is incredibly inspiring. In the end of November 2022, I was trying to sum up the idea of 'vehicular scholarship' (outlined in 6.2) for an abstract submitted to a French life story and biography conference. I checked on Google if a term like '*médiation véhiculaire*' already existed. Terms like '*médiation animale*' and '*médiation artistique*' for example are part of a very popular professional vocabulary in the French linguistic context to designate pedagogical interventions explicitly supported by animals or by art-making. Alongside websites of car insurance companies and a few local projects in the style of a '*Bibliobus*' (library bus) as a *véhicule de médiation culturelle*, I stumbled upon an intriguing expression.

In French, the term '*langue véhiculaire*' seems to be applied widely to signify a *langue tierce*. Synonyms in English are *lingua franca*, link language or bridge language. In German, the term used is '*Geschäftssprache*', the language of business which made me immediately think of the commercial language in business deals, or big-scale briefings to the United Nations. But in French, the use of the word vehicle caught my *poetic* imagination. Of course, even in French there are metrics involved. Apparently, a *taux de véhicularité*, the global reach of such vehicular languages, can be measured. The idea of a *lingua franca* is historically tied to the

Western expansionist colonial logic and feeds the contemporary linguistic domination of Global English in science (Corradi, 2017). *Lingua franca* can be regarded as a functional framework, not tied to one specific linguistic history as it is systematically used to make dialogue possible between those who do not share a native language or dialect (Calvet, 1981). It has been used for cultural, religious and diplomatic reasons alongside commercial uses. Liturgy as well as Esperanto can then also be considered a bridge language, different from national languages, but connecting those from different mother tongues. If belief systems can have their own language, what about the spatialised affective poetry of the hut?

I let the idea of a poetic, affective ‘trade language’ within the high-stakes of Scottish education wander in my own imaginations. I pondered the possibility that the hut is not only a methodological vehicle after all, but that its vagabond ecosystem is also deeply interwoven in scientific communication. The hut is not just a ‘communicative support’ for dissemination devoid of a language of its own, it can be a trading tongue for the shared experiential joys of an itinerant fairground for an intuitive, improvised and embodied science. My conference contributions reflect this multisensory fairground. The hut could to some extent serve as a ‘*langue véhiculaire*’ for affective academic hospitalities. This opens up the thesis to the vast field of public engagement in academia, a territory that I had been explicitly asked to invest for my PhD.

7.3 Public engagement: a parallel PhD or the centre of gravity of this thesis?

[Parts of this section are based on the following book chapter: Hanser, C. H. (2021). Touring academic events with a tiny house "conference fringe": Artistic welcome in a mobile storytelling shed as relational research into invisibility and (non-)belonging. In A.S. Jepson & T. Walters (Eds.) *Events and Well-being*. London: Routledge.]

The reader can now hop onto the significance of this ‘superfluous’ chapter by understanding that the conference fringe was created in response to a requirement stipulated by my PhD funding. One of the conditions stated in my award letter for receiving the Scottish Government’s funding was the ‘public engagement, dissemination and promotion of research’. Public engagement is a catchy term now widely associated with strategic societal impact from the academic spheres to the wider public (Holmes et al., 2019). There is not just ‘dissemination’, but also ‘knowledge exchange’ as a distinctly reciprocal *language* of the hut which allows to sketch out a novel form of public engagement: “Outreach to local

communities and institutions requires more work, as it now has to take place in another language than that of academic publication” (Housay-Holzschuch, 2020, p. 43). The ‘conference fringe’ is then a connecting embodied vocabulary.

Public Engagement

An expected part of your scholarship will concentrate on public engagement, disseminating and promoting research to audiences beyond the University. This might include giving public talks; or seeking public input into research. Such activities will help to encourage a greater understanding about the issues and possibilities that develop from research.

Figure 30: Public engagement as requirement for funding

At the very start of the PhD, I impatiently asked my supervisors until what stage I should wait to do public engagement to meet the funder’s expectations. At the same time, I wanted to challenge the standardised linearity of a policy PhD as expert preparation – expert research – expert dissemination: “dissemination of research findings is an integral part of the academic research process and conventionally assumed to be ‘the end-point of a linear research design . . . a ‘relatively complete, apolitical, formal act or process . . . in which the researcher is viewed as an authoritative bearer of knowledge” (Barnes et al., 2003, p. 160). My supervisors agreed that it did not seem necessary to wait. I proposed the idea of a conference-based ‘literature review’ as guiding element of the first year of my PhD, a way to reshuffle what Youngblood and Jackson describe as the linear “process of traditional research design – question, literature review, data collection and analysis and then representation” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 7). While also making use of the university library for more conventional literature reviews, I enjoyed much more to identify Scottish academic conferences in the social sciences with a likely presence of stakeholders beyond the academy: representatives from activism, diverse professional fields from health to design, regional partnerships, policy, media and citizen science. I wanted to attend important gatherings where academia, practitioners and policy meet, but introduce an informal space for storytelling instead of the conventional panel discussions. What was meant by a storytelling space here is not the idea of story dissemination, but the explicitly unscripted invitation to anyone curious to enter the hut at educational events to share their own narratives and definitions of attainment. I applied for these conferences with a suggestion for outdoor workshops in my experiential hut (here often described through different terminologies such as the ‘tiny house’).

Public pedagogy

The lens adopted here then situates the sphere of learning in the public, as a public pedagogy. Public pedagogy is “not set up as a form of instruction that tells citizens what they should do and be, nor does it present an exemplary form or mode of citizenship and civic action that would deserve repetition” (Biesta, 2012, p. 694). Conferences are then reimagined as indoor and outdoor spaces with malleable boundaries: “public pedagogy interprets educational institutions as fluid, open systems that are themselves nested within multiple, overlapping, and contested sites of learning.” (O'Malley et al., 2010, p. 697). Public activities are often seen as complementary add-ons, as “supplementary activities when undertaken in schools and recreational when occurring elsewhere” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, xii). Installing the shepherd's hut at events is also about sounding out possibilities of public disruption through listening as relational care:

“To ‘stage’ dissensus is to introduce an incommensurable element – an event, an experience and an object – that can act both as a test and as a reminder of publicness. It is an element that can act as a ‘test’ of the public quality of particular forms of togetherness and of the extent to which actual spaces and places make such forms of human togetherness possible” (Biesta, 2012, p. 693).

The idea to visit conferences with the hut was a playful way to make myself familiar with academic events in Scotland as a newcomer from abroad, to fulfil the funder's requirement for public visibility as well as to disrupt the way in which networking takes place.

I ‘stumbled’ into my own public conference voice. The free-roaming nurturing of a conferencing landscape soon developed a very intriguing methodological life of its own. This “experimentation is not documented to establish a replicable, reproducible way of knowing public pedagogy” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 8). It is a unique narrative of academic hospitalities, witnessed but not contained, experienced but not evaluated to then be standardised: “Neither the public nor the encounter can be held in the space [...] In the public, it can escape without trace” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 81). This experimental public pedagogy started as an immersive, experiential rescripting of desk-based literature review standards for the first doctoral year. At this stage of the doctorate, it was still possible to experiment ‘before data’. If I had felt the pressure to extract data from my playful conference tour to make it directly relevant as findings for policy, I might have had to design this whole experiment differently, aiming very directly at presentable results. Running in parallel to the

PhD, no data about visitors of the conference fringe was collected. I could risk going 'off topic', erring for a while, to stroll off and away from my office desk through my conference fringe. I am now able to bring an 'unplanned' conference language into my PhD that was enabled by sidestepping the pressure to bring data. The public pedagogy conference tour exemplifies the possibility to engage in open-ended chronologies of surprise, wonder and awe. From March 2020 onwards, four months after the final conference of my experimental conference tour had ended, such a research design would have become unthinkable for at least the next two years to come. It would simply not have happened online.

Paradoxically, the unpressured operating of the conference tour then led to an extended scholarly visibility and several peer-reviewed publications foregrounding my observations about the way knowledges can circulate at academic conferences. What started with the small idea to get involved in a locally hosted large-scale international event (ECQI 2019) at my own university (see Hanser, 2021a) finally became a wide-reaching experiential oscillation, continuously sustained by feedback, commentary and encouragement from wider and wider groups of academics, for example in the field of Critical Event Studies (see Hanser, 2021b). The fringe approach developed further without formal protocol. My Graduate School could also have perceived this time-consuming and intense role as conference workshop facilitator in opposition to the successful pursuit of the PhD. I was able to say that I was 'on track' for my progression because of the ongoing, parallel research with student teachers. But this is not the full picture. Leading two activities in parallel is also part of the temporal privileges I could afford at that time (Valkenburg, 2022) but it would be unimaginable today when my own priorities for the amount of time and money I could spend at academic events has significantly shifted. The playfulness of this conference fringe is therefore also situated in a short time frame of chance and commitment as a full-time Early Career Researcher. Because something tangible had happened in this accidental emergence of my conference voice before Covid-19, the speculative experiment could start again in 2022, with new experimental organising shared with other PhD students (Tiny Campus, 2022).

7.3 Academic hospitality

The concept of 'academic hospitality' invites to theorise when institutional welcome is received, offered and rearranged. As previously argued by Phipps and Barnett, "the concept of academic hospitality is, we would argue, a fruitful one for considering the changing nature

of academic life, knowledges and being” (2007, p. 239). Many dimensions of possibility and limitations can be explored here, ranging from the material, epistemological, linguistic to the touristic aspects. It has been pointed out that “authors have largely focused on discussing the theoretical dimensions of academic hospitality [while] studies putting the concept empirically ‘to the test’ remain scarce” (Ploner, 2018, p. 165). I would argue that many potential authors of such empirical academic hospitalities have focused on the translations of the theory into the everyday acts of academia rather than continuously evidencing them in publications. This can be due to a dominant temporal order in academia which already makes it difficult to engage in academic hospitalities altogether, but which will make it even more unlikely to get the chance to do both: “the intensification of academic work means that all academics are time-poor. Prospective guests can have difficulty finding a suitable time when the academics they seek to visit are available” (Kenway & Fahey, 2009, p. 556).

In my own example, “concrete hospitality is a spatial, relational practice with affective dimensions” (Bulley, 2015, p. 188). What matters are the real instances of affective academic hospitalities, not a meticulously prepared agenda to evidence them. These acts need multiple layers and dimensions of attention, and the empirical is only one of many: “we might come to understand the modes and forms of academic hospitality through their envisioning, through their enactment and through their embodiment. As such, academic hospitality serves as both a metaphor and a performative principle for action and a way of conceptualising academic life” (Phipps & Barnett, 2007, p. 252). I would add that the conference fringe is storied in small experiential moments which make it easy to overlook their wider societal relevance: “Does anything change from being involved in a conference?” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 55). A lot of transformation can happen at the fringe. Languages have to be unlearned and relearned from the inside out and from the outside in “to distinguish in each concrete instance ‘welcome’ from ‘trespass’” (Candea, 2012, p. S44) at the outskirts of the usual conference flows.

Gates opening and closing

Installing the shepherd’s hut during conferences requires the hospitality of conference organisers, of their chosen venues and institutions. The conference fringe as a roaming language for academic hospitalities has to pass several thresholds: disciplinary knowledge, academic benefits, practical and logistical feasibility etc. What can initially be perceived as a

disturbingly unusual contribution could then be explained to organisers as original and worth testing for the sake of transdisciplinary knowledges. Reviewers did ask back and offered opportunities for dialogue. One peer review provided the following feedback: “A unique proposal for [conference name], which offers real diversity. Please clarify where the "hut" would be put and how delegates would have such open-ended access without damaging their ability to attend more conventionally timetabled parallel sessions” (Internal E-Mail, 2019). Explanations allowed the logistical green light that the hut could be ‘managed’ on site.

Dewalling

Placing an unconditional conferencing space in sight of and right outside of the main conference venue is an attempt at *dewalling*: “to construct spaces without walls, *deprivileged* atmospheres that have entry requirements which are transparent and as low as possible, offer freedom of movement, and sanctuary for all manner of vulnerabilities” (Vrasti & Dayal, 2016, p. 1003). This allowed that catering staff, dog walkers and in general a very eclectic mix of unexpected visitors could come along. It had been a dogwalker in Edinburgh who gave the name for my new way of speaking at conferences, telling me that I was proposing a ‘conference fringe’. One crucial aspect of academic hospitality looks at the gestures through which attendees are greeted when entering the sphere of an event: “Who/what is welcomed with open arms? What language do they speak?” (Phipps & Barnett, 2007, p. 248). In my conference attendances before the conference fringe I would mostly have perceived the selective language of ableism. This now changed. In some ways, it was my turn in my new status as a now funded ‘insider’ of academia to make the boundaries of the institution porous again and to ask what counts as knowledge exchange to connect through dialogue for meaningful knowledge. At the fringe, other ways of interacting academically with and in the public can emerge, dissolving gatekeeping and boundaries: “bounding positions speakers and fields as not sufficiently scientific, thus casting doubt on their academic validity as such. This has obvious implications for status and position within the field.” (Bacevic, 2021, p. 6).

Entering academia had been possible through the visibility of my vehicle at a conference in 2018 and I could subsequently find my own spot to speak my more affective language because of the many welcoming conferences that followed. The tour of scientific events dedicated to opening the shepherd’s hut to others has tried to renegotiate selective processes of conference networking. The in-betweens of events through the lens of the conference fringe

and the fluid networking thereby enabled something different to enter the academy which could not enter through conventional channels of legitimisation and accreditation, often “motivated by [internal] politics, rather than by ‘genuine’ scholarship” (Bacevic, 2021, p. 6). But is the conference fringe an example of a more ‘genuine’ form of scholarship? I would argue that the conference fringe contributions throughout the doctoral years have allowed me to find an experiential language through which different forms of scholarship can be collectively envisioned. Sitting in the shepherd’s hut during a loaded conference helps to realise how the timetabling and cognitive load of standardised presentation formats can exclude certain ways of conceiving of ‘genuine’ scholarship: “We can see how academia only enables specific kinds of people and favours particular ways of learning and working” (Brown, 2021, p. 4). Not all ways of creating knowledge are welcomed at academic events.

Gatekeeping and ableism

Bacevic (2021) has analysed the academic selection processes as a mix of epistemic, social and cultural criteria. This involves ‘everyday’, routinised elements of validation such as conferences (Henderson, 2015) and even corridor talk (Downey et al., 1997). For those not invited into the corridors of academic buildings, the conference fringe encourages to explore *outdoor corridors* of participation and access. These could in the best moments become *corridors of rest* within the fast-paced keeping-on-track with symposia and parallel sessions. Events are organised and structured around stable categories for event logistics. This appears as a practical necessity but also refers to a normative system of hierarchies. “For a hospitality that is premised on White normativity to work, stable categories and hierarchies of difference are required” (Shirazi, 2018, pp. 107-108). Conferences also require unstable categories, the discomfort of improvised flows beyond the “structural differentiation of the field of knowledge production” (Abbott, 2001). Outdoor attendance then allows edges of belonging. Public pedagogy is often applied in very informal community settings. But the fact that my conference tour took place in the outdoors, while embedded within prestigious conference spheres with costly entrance fees, allows to observe the ways in which “gendered, racialized, ableist and heteronormative public spaces are infused with pedagogical intent and demarcations” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 2). And still, temporary room for otherness can sneak its way into bounded institutions. Academic events are increasingly researched along the lines of issues of inclusion: “significant issues remain around accessibility, diversity and

inclusion for many groups including women, academics with disabilities and impairments, students, early career and precarious academics, and those with caring responsibilities” (Walters, 2019, p. 230). What kind of space is needed to respond to the strangers, those excluded from dominant event infrastructures? If we can see beyond the measurably spectacular, then the “enactment of hospitality [...] is propelled by the material-affective infrastructures” (Zembylas, 2020, p. 43). A purpose of conferencing could then be to move “from the veneration of the keynote speech, the one who is already in and on top of citation scores, to learning to adjust and fine-tune the volume of conference spaces to the *existential whisper* of those who are overlooked and othered” (Hanser, 2021a). As an example, some scholars have to continuously negate their overwhelmed bodily sensations. In the conference fringe, different neurotypical and neurodivergent languages can meet. This is a precious but also fragile zone, not just for verbal but for sensory and existential multilingualism:

“Autistic people are not deficient in communication ability [...] Communication difficulties arise during cross-neurotype interactions – that is between non-autistic and Autistic (Crompton et al, 2019). Quite simply we speak different languages. Autistic people already work incredibly hard to understand the language and experiences of non-autistic people, *we ask that you learn our language and culture so that we can meet one another on a more equitable footing*” (Farahar & Foster, 2021, p. 211)

Decolonising the academically validated ways of speaking multilingually also means de-creating the expectations to learn ‘typical’ and colonial communication first (Phipps, 2019).

7.4 SERA 2022: One vignette from a tour without end

The example of my most recent conference fringe, at the SERA conference 2022, draws together many aspects of learning from the pre-pandemic tour to speak an affective language. In May 2022, I submitted an arts-based contribution in the ‘innovative research methods’ strand, entitled “From the research-policy-practice triangle to a collaborative Festival map: exploring arts-based affinity spaces within the Scottish Attainment Challenge through a vagabond PhD” (Appendix 11). My intention was to bring the shepherd’s hut as a continuous drop-in space to the Ayr campus of the University of the West of Scotland, similar to the way I had done this at the SERA 2019 conference in Edinburgh. I decided to come to present my PhD research, during 1.5 days. When I saw that my installation was scheduled in a Car Park on the conference programme, I was also acutely aware that this less than glamorous location

may not attract any attention at all. As I arrived, it turned out that there could not have been a more visible spot. Surprisingly, it was very difficult for those who walked in and out of the main campus building to miss the presence of the hut. Few people would probably volunteer to relocate their conference session, their mock-viva or even their viva to a car park. In this case, the outdoors became an incredibly noticeable, welcoming spot.



Figure 31 a/b: the #SERACnf22 experience

What I then experienced at SERA 2022 is in my view a much more substantial conclusion to my engagement with the Scottish Attainment Challenge than trying to evidence an abstract mastery of policy terminologies or justify theoretical frameworks, something I have argued against in chapter 3. I have discovered that in the time of the PhD, I have come to *inhabit* a certain spot within Scottish educational research, one that makes the outdoors an attractive temporary dwelling place at academic conferences. This contribution has built up over time, in a learning curve towards instances of affective academic hospitalities.

Learning to speak through the fringe

By the time of my first SERA conference in 2019, after the experience of the first five conference fringe events, I had stopped offering scheduled time slots, but instead opened the conference fringe as a drop-in for the whole duration of the day. Where I had started waiting as a solitary fringe facilitator at the first conference, I now felt part of a fluid temporal community, not as if I was missing out. The conference fringe tested the possibility for retreat and cognitive sanctuary in the middle of a spectacular event. There is an ebb and flow in the hours of waiting inside a conference fringe. People come at the most unexpected times, there is no best slot or ‘prime time’ at odds with evaluative logics: “If the numbers don’t add up then the program, class, event is not viable” (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 48). In a relational

educational stance, meaningful fringe days are not measured in numbers but in the depth of encounter. Hospitality as an alternative framework to attendance numbers implies building safe environments: “the need to create a safe ‘shared emotional space’ (Lacey, 2005: 289) in which academics may explore and work ‘vulnerably’ through the emotions brought about through their daily work” (Butler-Rees, 2021, p. 38).

A safe space as dream tank

My role with the conference fringe is not necessarily to give voice (as if I had that power to ‘give’), as there is no amplification of what happens inside the hut back to the keynote audience room. Dignified public pedagogy is about creating “spaces [which] are private enough to provide a safe venue for members of marginalized communities to be open about their identities and to build trust, while public enough to allow for a relatively free flow of both people and information in and out of the space” (Mironova, 2017, p. 2). A civic sanctuary on campus is a public pedagogy in the protective walls of a ‘private’ hut. There is no club to join, just a few thresholds to pass. Temporary belonging characterises the enclaved agora.

The idea of introducing a ‘dream tank’ was a playful way to situate my workshops in relation to the highly established knowledge infrastructures of policy *think tanks*, yet propose a more-than-cognitive, affective and emotional form of educational debate. I operationalised a ‘safe space’ itinerary beyond cognitive overstimulation for welcoming delegate interactions outdoors and around the wood fire stove of the hut. My dog and the wood fire stove were powerful invitations to reverse the unilateral scientific move “to go from the guts to the intellect, from the comprehension of the flesh to the knowledge of the text” (Wacquant, 2009, p. 122) and try to build genuine reciprocity where science still works too much through dualisms. I had learned at a conference in September 2019, in the breath-taking beauty of the University of Stirling’s campus that outdoors conferencing can allow non-humans in. After the approval (or should I say insisting?) of the conference organiser to keep the family dog Jazzy at the shepherd’s hut and not hide her in my car, she became a centre of attention from which more conversations started. At other conference (SERA 2019), she rose to immediate fame onto the main conference message board. People valued the detour into the conference fringe. It is about bringing other bodies into the debates as well as talking differently about the spheres of knowing. Instead of brief presentations to a fixed panel audience, delegates came to sit down and talk, for extended periods of time and beyond disciplinary knowledge

claims. I was able to discuss my research methodology (displayed through the academic poster inside the conference venue) in depth, in celebration of incompleteness and possible untranslatability. This was not formal assessment feedback, but dialogue - sometimes for an hour. There was no awkward moment when the audience does not ask the presenter anything back. I felt I had spoken my own language in this format, and others joined in.

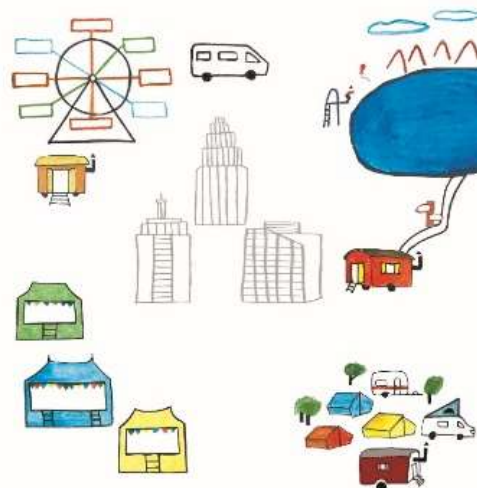
7.5 Fringes of becoming

My research ambitiously set out to rescript the Scottish Attainment Challenge in one of the research questions. The outer shell of my doctoral journeying was framed by SAC. But this SAC does not represent the intrinsic sparks of my thesis. My thesis has provided insights into the negotiation of my own personal language with a language of data-driven standardisation that is not my own. I intended to use a language that is not only framed by academia. My contributions to the SERA conferences talked about the poetry of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (Appendix 10, 11) wandering onto a festival map and roaming away from these skyscrapers in which experts may already have settled for a widely approved but not very nuanced SIMD tongue. Although my conference contributions always mention the Scottish Attainment Challenge, no one ever came to my conference fringe to discuss the policy statistics. Still, many people came and talked enthusiastically about the hut afterwards. The conference fringe helps to answer an at times distressing question: “what might happen to social research when intuitive wayfaring practice collides with a relentless striving for quality” (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009, p. 276)? Gordin (2015), in his research on science communication before Global English, “distinguishes between language identity—the strongest language of the writer or speaker—and vehicular language—the one most suitable for communication” (Nye, 2016, p. 41). The language and identity of my own professional becoming is neither in the academic jargon of one discipline nor in one single professional field. I am not fluent in the vernacular of classrooms or academia, not a native to ITE. My thesis as a roving hub struggled towards a *langue tierce* beyond disciplines but also beyond the central triangle of the policy-research-practice nexus. But the hut allowed me to connect to a cohort of student teachers, to researchers from a national collaborative scheme, to policy makers and the general public alike, all within one single PhD. My many activities during this PhD are not all translated into a written, scientific, global, publishable, anglophone standards. Yet, this untranslatability has found a distinctly wandering spot. By opening the shepherd’s hut at

conferences, I have added a connecting and bridging language into the scientific repertoire available at academic conferences. This fairground offers a sensory repertoire of embodied experience.

Carving out a 'niche' or bridging through a cascading language

Creating a sheltered existence in the academy can pay off strategically: “carving out a ‘niche’ can bring not only recognition, but also funding, followers, even fame” (Bacevic, 2021, p. 8). The vagabondage of the fringe is never static. The vagabond vehicle suggests the opposite of ‘stay in your lane’. The niche builds up a clearly located support infrastructure, the itinerant fringe also builds support, but through *dispersed continuity*. In an infinity of possible connections but also of public exposures to unfamiliar networks, the hut fringe is not just a niche. As a series of temporary belongings to a moment, to an experience, to an encounter, the space becomes an affective bridge. This fringe goes on a tour like a miniature theme park as an intrinsic fair ground. It may be seen like a travelling circus, but it reaches many more people than could fit around the wood fire at the same time. ‘Speaking’ publicly in this way without becoming a scheduled speaker cascades into more and more connections. At SERA 2022, new invitations to bring the conference fringe to Ireland, Sweden and other Scottish institutions were part of the fair. The next conferences are now lined up and other researchers want to join in and to co-host. This activity could become a tour without end. Its aim is not expansionism, but co-existence in a pluralising scientific world of welcome. There is a multilayered dewatering, a simultaneity of un-occupying. The ongoing affective hospitalities of the fringe suggest “that the margin be no longer margin but part and parcel of a multifaceted whole, a center of decision among other decision-making centers, an autonomous center of knowledge production among others” (Hountondji, 1997, p. 36). The dispersed cascading of a wandering thesis has led to an itinerant language inside science. The fringe-as-centre becomes the most continuous of all the detours. Ending this thesis also means opening anew.





Memory board 9: Conference fringe 'public engagement' tour in parallel to my PhD

Postscript: the student voice

The meaning of this research has relied on reciprocity. The possibilities of these ongoing dialogues are conveyed in the response by one of my research participants in December 2022. The end of the PhD as doctoral training route has opened the window for new, post-doctoral and post-ITE ways of connecting with those preserving meaning in the teaching profession:

“Congratulations on getting to the final stages of completion for your thesis! I have read the representations of my contributions and think it’s all spot on. Thank you for making such honest and insightful observations. It’s very cool to see what you have created from my drawings!

The card game idea sounds fantastic I’d love to be kept in the loop with what happens with that some day!

If you are able I’d love to see a final copy of your work so that I can share it with my family.

You may be interested to know that I am still in education teaching ___ in ___ High School. Please feel free to reach out if you’d ever like to work in our school community.”

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Appendix

1. Ethical approval hut experience day (1 page)
2. Full transcript hut experience day (8 pages)
3. Ethical approval mapping (1 page)
4. Participant consent form mapping (2 pages)
5. Participant information sheet mapping (3 pages)
6. Invitation introductory mapping workshop (4 pages)
7. Example map for exercise during lockdown (3 pages)
8. Example transcript after mapping session (4 pages)
9. Ethical approval school visits (1 page)
10. SERA conference abstract 2019 (1 page)
11. SERA conference abstract 2022 (1 page)



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Our Ref: 1905

Date: 01/03/2019

Christian Hanser
PhD Candidate
Moray House School of Education

Dear Christian,

Title: A Scottish classroom beyond walls

The School of Education and Sport Ethics Sub-Committee has now considered your request for ethical approval for the studies detailed in your application.

This is to confirm that the Sub-Committee is happy to approve the application and that the research meets the School Ethics Level 3 criterion. This is defined as “applies to novel procedures, research without consent, sensitive personal data, or the use of atypical participant groups. Also projects in which ethical issues might require more detailed consideration but are unlikely to prove problematic”.

You are reminded that if the research changes in any way from that described on your application form, you may need to re-apply for approval.

Should you receive any formal complaints relating to the study you should notify the MHSE Ethics Committee immediately by email to MHSEthics@ed.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

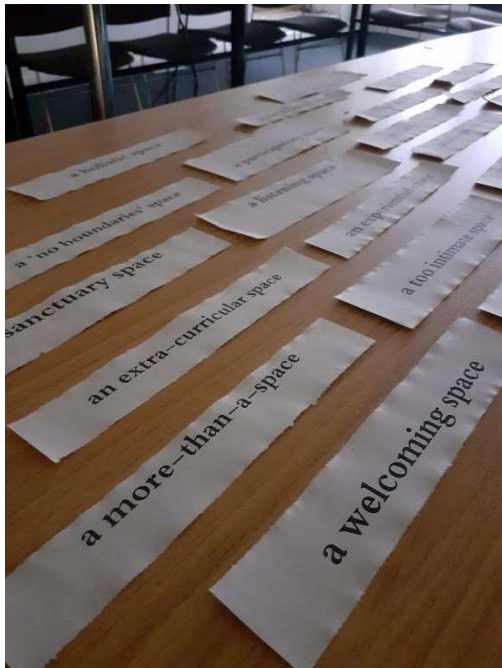
Ben Scullion

On behalf of:
Dr Ailsa Niven
Convener, School Ethics Sub-Committee

s1656634, PhD Classroom beyond walls

Full transcripts of participant notes

The 'hut experience day' on January 18th 2019



Group 1 RN	
A timeless space	<p>Sense of time standing still Absence of the constraining timescales of everyday life with young children and a busy timetable A sense of possibility without being constrained by time limits or age. Children/ Young people may come to see themselves as defined by their class/ year group or (later) by their generation. Sitting in this small space with people of many different ages made me think about we are all 'just people'. Holiday feeling – timber surroundings, wood fire, peace A feeling of being insulated from the outside world</p>
A meaningful space	<p>I believe for learning to be meaningful it should be personal and experienced, not prescriptive and simply 'told': This space encouraged individual discovery through all the toys, instruments, books and other physical or visual stimuli. The warm and safe setting was also a collaborative experience which meant we could all learn in our own way but together. In a literal sense the space itself was also incredibly meaningful as it was different, special and the learning was tied to the space as well as the experience.</p>
A sanctuary space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Breaks down the boundaries of the traditional classroom ➔ Allows people to ask 'why am I here in the hut?' to examine the walls and different objects and to process your own thoughts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Silence and thinking space is possible, away from the chaos of everyday life ➔ You can be more present, focusing on those around you, rather than day-to-day tasks and your own thoughts ➔ Questions the structure of the traditional classroom set up, what does this make pupils think about? Associations of traditional classroom – lack of exploration
A community-led space	<p>The teacher teaches, student learns Relationship melts away in this space. I felt a sense of community because there was a commonality about the space. It was a place that created an equal level for everyone. Where we could all share experiences, knowledge & stories without worrying about our place in the world beyond the hut. Social standing, age, politics etc. felt worlds away. I can imagine the inter-generational community ethos flourishing in this environment.</p>
A more-than-a-space	<p>I felt I hadn't quite thought through all of my feelings or considerations in terms of application of the hut in educational settings. This phrase [more-than-a-space] was chosen so I could articulate the opinion that it was a flexible space, certainly when thinking about how it made me feel in the moment, and how it might foster shared learning experiences which are cross-generational and multi-cultural. The inside and outside of the hut mean the space is not just intimate, it can be replicated by reaching into outside spaces, while using the artefacts from inside.</p>
A nested space	<p>I chose this phrase for the hut as I associate 'nested' with a feeling of comfort, to me the word conjures up a feeling of home. The hut felt lived in, the artefacts and objects created a feeling that the hut had been used comfortably many times before. I think it shows a great deal of privilege to current..., positive feelings to the word 'nested' and obviously links to a positive experience of 'home' as a place. This is something that many students may not have. So how fantastic for them would it be for them to experience something such as the hut. I think this idea of a 'nested' space is something very unique and not often associated with formal evaluation, yet it is needed. Getting to experience something like this with learners would allow you to challenge the traditional power dynamics that often accompany teachers in a traditional setting.</p>
A warm space	<p>I didn't think about 'warm' as in temperature (although I did like the temperature, and it contributed to my enjoyment of the space). I thought about 'warm' as the feeling of safety and comfort I felt from being inside the hut. I thought of building forts/huts and creating spaces when I was a child and how this seems to be something that many children do. Create a small and cosy space for themselves. I think the small size of the spaces that children create is why the hut felt warm. It reminded me of a part that a child would create. But this was created for adults and children – so both could feel comfortable. It works because children naturally seem to enjoy small, dark and</p>

	warm spaces (pillow forts or tree houses) and adults can remember liking these spaces.
An intimate space	Being with people we know in close proximity but not feeling uncomfortable Being able to share personal or intimate information without feeling awkward Not too many people that it felt overcrowded, yet not too few that it felt empty and uncomfortable
A relational space	Seems to invite sharing of stories because of the small, cosy atmosphere created by sitting closely in a warm space. A different way for teacher + pupil to interact, on the same level instead of unidirectional classroom setting. A way of getting to know each other in a different context as 'people' not just pupils, but also as impetus to rethinking the traditional learner-teacher environment.
An experiential space	The most important part of the hut experience to me was the actual experience. I believe learning should be done in this way rather than the standard transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. It was also interesting to see that everyone in the space was having a different, personal experience, yet all taking some valuable knowledge away. There is the opportunity to experience a variety of things including discussions, play etc. which is not possible in a traditional classroom set up. The hut created an experience!
Group 2 DC	
An open space	In both senses of the word
An enabling space	A space where nothing is fixed, predetermined Everything means anything...let the creativity soar, imagination flourish. Through exploration and discovery of small, meaningful treasures and objects, children and young people can open their minds to the unlimited world of learning and teaching. How could I use it? Multicultural storytelling -> discovering where all of the treasures came from, the story behind them: real or imagined. Creative writing/ learning storytelling?
A more-than-a-space A safe space A children-led space	The combination of experiential factors – the space itself, the material used, the wood-burner, the close seating arrangement and much more means the hut becomes more than the sum of its parts. The activities and questions from the boxes mean we go where the children want to take us in a way that feels safe and secure for them I could see it being used in many ways – reading, imaginative writing, learning history of community and surroundings, mental health, and well-being focused lessons. So many opportunities!
A 'digital detox' space A sanctuary space	Somewhere to get away from the stresses in life and to think about other things for a while. Somewhere to be calm and feel safe. The hut would be great to use for literacy – so many ideas for storytelling, and giving children the chance to try something new in a completely different space. There are a lot of things that will set the imagination moving.

<p>A 'commons' space</p> <p>An impractical space</p> <p>A technology-free space</p>	<p>The space neither belongs to the school or the wider community and so provides a more neutral meeting point that both children and community members feel equally at home or not at home in.</p> <p>Only so far in that a full class could not fit in together. It creates extra logistical problems of what the rest of the class will do in that time, who will look after them, will all children in the class have the opportunity for an equally meaningful experience? (impractical is not the right word that couldn't find another to fit!)</p> <p>A place without technology or the need for it as there are many other stimulating things</p>
<p>A 'meaningful' space</p>	<p>To me, a meaningful space could be anywhere. A common classroom, a house or flat, a park. Indoors or out. What makes the space meaningful is often not the space itself but the memories within that space. Or it could be the deep and emotional conversations that are held within that space.</p> <p>For some the hut could be a place of safety. To talk about issues and open up to others that then may make the hut meaningful to them.</p>
<p>A timeless space</p> <p>A community-led space</p>	<p>A space where you feel free from the pressures of timetables, schedules, appointments...and time itself! Also timeless in the sense that it is useful/ meaningful to all age groups.</p> <p>A space to invite different members of the community, which can enable learning by others than traditional educators. A space which gives people an opportunity to share skills but also stories, in a safe, unjudgemental environment</p> <p>Ideas for use: poetry/ creative writing workshops (perhaps go outdoors, collect a piece of 'nature' (anything you find in the environment) bring it inside & come up (together or alone) with adjectives/ ideas/ memories in order to develop ideas for a creative piece of writing. Or even an art project?</p>
<p>'space'</p> <p>'an imaginary space'</p> <p>'an improvised space'</p>	<p>The final frontier. These are the voyages of the welcome hut.</p> <p>The hut might give room to imagine how your life could be different if you lived another life</p> <p>The hut becomes what you need or want it to at a certain moment</p> <p>In a school context: The hut is very similar in terms of a fire, space and storytelling to many Gaidhlig traditions of hospitality and storytelling so would be culturally familiar and probably easy to get pupils to be comfortable in.</p> <p>Might be good for talking about culture and tradition? Easier than the classroom to start.</p>
<p>A wood fire space</p> <p>An all-ages space</p> <p>A collaborative space</p>	<p>Sitting around a fire = community, being safe (music, art, sharing etc.)</p> <p>Trust, chopping wood, wood fires – warmth, memories of comfort, Home</p> <p>A central focus that is not TV/ technologies</p> <p>Wood fire gives a purpose/ task to maintain and share – also brings together when cooking/ boiling water – feels more involved</p> <p>All ages – importance of other generations, connecting with community develops respect and sharing between all ages.</p> <p>Collaborative spaces – community, group involvement! Importance of looking after a space for everyone 'common good etc.'</p>

	<p>Like at festivals/ fairs/ events</p> <p>Brings people together in a cosy space to talk, cook, create with each other which is often lost in society. People realise that many people out there believe in same things, can connect where maybe wouldn't in 'everyday life'</p> <p>Could be used for music/ art/ stories</p> <p>Community fairs – link with similar creations (woodtrees, blacksmiths? Creative workshops) Cooking, sharing, making an event, collaborate with community.</p> <p>Also in schools, sharing with community. Stories from older generations. Place to read poems, stories, learn about history of community.</p> <p>Could be a great space for children to do oral literacy assessments as comforting, warm, less scary? Reciting poems?</p>
<p>Observations from Group 2 facilitator DC</p>	<p>Non-tech</p> <p>Frightening</p> <p>Too "close"</p> <p>How to treat fire</p> <p>Problems to solve</p> <p>Saw a lot of problems</p> <p>Enabling space – imagination</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Innovative assessments</p> <p>More-than-a-space</p> <p>Mutual</p> <p>Revothèque: where it is ok to dream, to hope, to have space</p> <p>Space = freedom</p> <p>Pupils to ask questions – learn how to ask questions they want to ask</p> <p>Transfer from asking about others to talking about self, or "feeling" being self, this might be silent</p> <p>Definite – slow space</p> <p>Pluriliterate spaces</p>
<p>Group 3</p>	
<p>A metaphorical space</p>	<p>I choose metaphorical because many likenesses can be drawn from this space with the real world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A physical representation of 'difference' when set against the body of the traditional school. Can parallel a feeling of acceptance and importance of difference in other aspects of life, inc. ethnic/ gender/ special needs identities - The living spaces in terms of size which some people might genuinely live and learn on a daily basis - The silence it can represent in moments of loneliness which can trigger mindfulness, but equally a sense of belonging when/ if sharing a dialogue or activity together <p>However, it can also be an extension of negative feelings depending on how it is used, re-inforcing power dynamics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a 'reward' for 'good pupils'/ 'good' behaviour

	<p>- As a passive space for a repetitive activity which, if very scripted, will not change pupils experience of learning too much in comparison with their classroom. I.e. like any new space – i.e. moving from primary to secondary – the experience might seem novelty at first, but is that feeling sustainable? Can they take ownership in a more meaningful way amidst scripted solutions to its use</p> <p>For me, when I remember my school days, one-off experiences/ excursions were fantastic, but they were seen as ‘other’ to ‘real’ learning in the classroom. I would hate for the Hut to become an ‘extra-curricular’ space which children see as separate to their classroom experiences. How can I try and do this? There must be genuine/ authentic links made with pupils lived experiences.</p> <p>Also very valuable to talk (or let the children talk) about what they are learning from their own experience and how useful it has really been for them.</p>
<p>An experiential space A too intimate space</p> <p>An imaginary space</p>	<p>→ Not something that children would do everyday → For some students this could be too much, whereas for others this could be a ‘safe space’</p> <p>→ Living ‘dream’ – daydreaming</p> <p>Truly enjoyed the experience, it could be used in many ways. Hoping I get the chance to use it. I enjoyed my experience and I feel I could use it as an experience. However I don’t think it could be used for everyday subjects depends – not inclusive for every child</p> <p>→ I also think for everyday its too small. But I truly enjoyed the experience for once → Also Health & Safety plays</p>
<p>A warm space</p> <p>A nested space</p>	<p>Where everyone has to make their physical distance between each other: smaller, like in a nest, where everything around is life, living, lived on to live</p> <p>Where each of us can feel safe of playing and learning to fly I would probably add a touch of another little sensory idea. It seems missing a very simple food or drink preparation that in my opinion would make the hut even more inclusive.</p> <p>I would probably let everyone decide where to sit, making them free to find a position in their nest.</p> <p>I would probably make the hut move slowly, but that is another story.</p>
<p>A relational space</p> <p>A challenging space</p>	<p>Because I personally see it as a space where guests are building a stronger connection than in a formal space. It would also be a bit weird if two persons who don’t get along are using the Hut, and it would make an interesting experiment to check if after the Hut experience if they get along or their relations it’s the same or worse</p> <p>My vision of using the Hut, would be to make it as a project for students to build one. Surely it would be challenging: budget, allocating time, work and safety.</p> <p>But it would be a wonderful project, and it would enable in them a sense of responsibility, team-work and in the end they will feel a reward for hard-work. It will also enable a sense of pride.</p>
<p>A welcoming space</p>	<p>A child’s view?...</p>

<p>An unregulated space</p> <p>A collaborative space</p> <p>A sensory place</p>	<p>Feel free, feel like a little child, try new things, touch, feel. No one is looking at you. No one is in charge it's fun, friendly, everyone is equal</p> <p>No desks no chairs no feel of school no teacher, no rules! Anything goes... I can be creative, I can explore, it's timeless & I won't be corrected or caught out, my mind can happily drift...</p> <p>Opportunistic music, sharing of treasures well thumbed from ages past! We can make music, talk, read, explore, laugh, ask questions. PTO!</p> <p>Smell: wood burner Feel: warmth See: cosiness Touch: interesting things Hear: music, laughter Taste: I'm not sure!</p> <p>After the hut we came into a long florescent room in Paterson's Land. I've been in these rooms many times before. The noise is of central heating & traffic. The light is unnatural. Desks & chairs dominate for here, we must sit & work. Why desks? There is nothing creative to engage with. Even the smell of the woodburner was interactive & I enjoyed the aroma it left on my coat. Perhaps I enjoyed the hut more as it reminded me of childhood holidays by the sea in our caravan... small spaces where treasures are neatly tucked away in secret drawers. It feels safe, happy, where simple fun can be had away from the world :)</p>
<p>An affective space</p> <p>A removed space</p> <p>A questioning space</p>	<p>As we were grouped together the mood of the us and the space changed. First we explored and tried out the different toys instruments.</p> <p>No one managed to solve one of the puzzles, that was okay, turning the space into a secure space where emotions and also mistakes were allowed</p> <p>We learned about the story behind the hut. How it was used by shepherds. It is not a space that is in common usage now, so it transported us into a different dimension. Even though it meant we were focusing only on the present moment, this 'unreal' aspect of the hut also meant we were removed from the present moment</p> <p>Looking at the book showing children's sleeping spaces really showed...</p>
<p>An improvised space</p>	<p>Or rather a space open to improvisation – a space that can be used for many things and can capture the imaginations of its visitors. In theatre when you improvise, anything is possible, many kinds of stories can be told: comedy, drama, soap, tragedy, romance, horror, etc. It can be familiar or totally unexpected. Similarly this is a space open to many possibilities.</p> <p>As you say, many classrooms or teaching spaces almost seem to come with a 'script' that dictates the learning that is possible, and the characters that are welcome.</p> <p>With improvisation, or a space open to 'improv' there is no script or set characters.</p>

<p>A digital detox space</p> <p>A timeless space</p> <p>An extra-curricular space</p> <p>A more-than-a-space / a bridging space</p>	<p>There is no Wifi, no ipad, no computer, tablet etc. in the hut space, instead a lot of natural & hand-made toys have been provided. So it's a good 'non-digital' space for this generation of children who have been 'over-digitalized' in the highly-advanced technology era. When I sat in the hut I didn't notice there is a clock. There I felt the peace and calmness floating in the atmosphere. Also the decorations and artefacts are put inside the hut will not remind you a particular period of time, which provides a "balance" feeling. I think it'll help children who easily get anxious in a busy school environment. To help them be released from a traditional "school" busy environment, from the time pressure, and to calm down, to focus better.</p> <p>There have been a lot of extra-curricular activities/ clubs existing in schools nowadays. For example, lunch-time football club, after-school dance club etc. The hut space can be easily used to provide a space for extra-curricular activity space. Especially with its mobility it can be taken to some poor household areas, to provide music, science, life-skill coaching. etc. since these families may feel difficult to travel, to spend money on.</p> <p>It's a unique space to be used to connect people from different backgrounds when people generally feel difficult to step out of their shells to make friends & to share etc...</p>
<p>Observations from Group 3 facilitator YF</p>	<p>One student teacher shared how he felt when he arrived in Scotland – the language was just noise. Nothing he understood or connected with. Then when he went home to Italy, he relaxed and could understand, felt connection with those around him.</p>
<p>Final plenary notes</p>	<p>Let imagination roam Intimate, not possible in traditional classroom. Warmth, equal value. Can be used by staff too When window went up it changed feeling – into a shop with counter. Links to Health and Wellbeing with boxed questions Nature of space facilitated conversations linked to circle time Literacy assessment. More comforting space. Develop reading Modern languages space – lesson space. Context to learning language Traditional classroom has particular communication of relationship patterns. Assumption: you can only learn here. Teacher is talking to us, power relationships in learning. Barriers were broken among us. Multisensory – smell, sights, music Modern languages – artefacts Play with the space Disruptive classroom (ontological disruption) Intergenerational classroom</p>



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Ref: 2574

Date: 8th October 2019

Dear Christian,

Title: Student teachers' mapping of trajectories into meaningful teaching

The School of Education and Sport Ethics Sub-Committee has now considered your request for ethical approval for the studies detailed in your application.

This is to confirm that the Sub-Committee is happy to approve the application and that the research meets the School Ethics Level 2 criterion. This is defined as “applies to non-intervention research where you have the consent of the participants and data subjects. This may include, for example, analysis of archived data, classroom observation, or questionnaires on topics that are not generally considered ‘sensitive’. This research can involve children or young people, if the likelihood of risk to them is minimal”.

A standard condition of this ethical approval is that you are required to notify the Committee, of any significant proposed deviation from the original protocol. The Committee also needs to be notified if there are any unexpected results or events once the research is underway that raise questions about the safety of the research.

Should you receive any formal complaints relating to the study you should notify the MHSE Ethics Committee immediately by email to MHSEthics@ed.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,
Ben Scullion

On behalf of:
Dr Ailsa Niven
Convener, School Ethics Sub-Committee

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Arts-based mapping workshop “Journey into meaningful teaching”

Researcher’s name and contact details: Christian Hanser;
c.hanser@ed.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet (Version 1 dated 25/09/2019) for the above study.
2. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided, ask questions and have had these questions answered to my satisfaction.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can ask to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without my medical care or legal rights being affected.
4. I understand that my anonymised data will be stored for a minimum of 2 years and may be used in future ethically approved research related to this PhD project.
5. I agree to my artistic expressions (drawing, sound, fine arts etc.) being photographed and video recorded during the course of the workshop.
6. I agree to take part in the above study.

A classroom beyond walls, V.1.0 25/09/2019

Name of person giving consent

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

1x original – into Site File; 1x copy – to Participant;

Non-medical research

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Arts-based mapping workshop “Journey into meaningful teaching”

You are being invited to take part in research on student teacher agency and curriculum reform in Initial Teacher Education. Christian Hanser, PhD student at the University of Edinburgh is leading this research. Before you decide to take part it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to investigate student teachers' negotiations of meaning when applying transformative pedagogies through a mobile tiny house as experimental classroom. The research question is: How do student teachers navigate between their own ideas, hopes and dreams for transformative teaching and the professional reality and routine of their placement institution? The aim of this study is to better understand student teacher trajectories in their 2nd year of study in order to develop a set of activities for ITE programmes which can accompany student teachers to translate their activist and engaged identity from the MSc TLT programme into the settings of their work placements.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a student in the 2nd year cohort of the MSc Transformative Learning and Teaching, a postgraduate programme which has been selected as focus for this study to investigate meaningful improvements to the lived experience of student teachers in Initial Teacher Education.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

No – it is entirely up to you. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Deciding not to take part or withdrawing from the study will not affect your programme of study. Please note that your data may be used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g. journal articles, conference papers, theses and reports) prior to your withdrawal and so you are advised to contact the research team at the earliest opportunity should you wish to withdraw from the study.

If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research, and that you are happy to participate.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DECIDE TO TAKE PART?

You will be asked a number of questions regarding your own journey into a meaningful form of teaching and you are invited to share your personal perceptions of entering the teaching profession through your placements and progress in the MSc TLT. In these group discussions together with no more than 7 other MSc TLT students, you are free to decide the amount of personal experience you want to share with the group. These discussions are not recorded through audio, but Christian Hanser as the group discussion facilitator keeps a researcher diary to make notes of the discussion topics that emerge in these workshop sessions. The main focus of the data collection are the arts-based workshops for creative expression through mapping. These will take place in a safe environment at a time that is convenient to you. Ideally, we would like to photograph your works of art and progress in your artistic expressions (and will require your consent for this). The location should be in a fairly quiet area, mostly in the shepherd's hut parked at the Moray House Quad. The meetings in small groups should take around 2 hours and are taking place as a workshop series once in October, once in November, once in January, once in February and optionally in March.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

There are no direct benefits, but by sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping Christian Hanser and the University to better understand the lived experience of student teachers in an ITE programme and you can significantly contribute to innovative approaches to curriculum reform.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

There are no significant risks associated with participation.

WILL MY TAKING PART BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law. All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Unless they are anonymised in our records, your data will be referred to by a unique participant number rather than by name. Your data will only be viewed by the researcher/research team. All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer file and all paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk.

For general information about how we use your data go to:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/privacy-notice-research>

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY?

The results of this study may be summarised in published articles, reports and presentations. You will not be identifiable from any published results. Quotes or key findings will always be made anonymous in any formal outputs unless we have your prior and explicit written permission to attribute them to you by name. Anonymised information may also be kept for future research linked to this PhD research. A summary of the findings from the study will be made available to participants who indicate they would like to receive this. This summary will be sent to participants by email.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

This study has been organised by Christian Hanser, enrolled in the PhD Education together with a supervisory team (Dr Yvonne Foley, Prof Do Coyle, Dr Robbie Nicol). The PhD research is sponsored by the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge Research Project for ITE curriculum reform for the duration of 2018-2021.

WHO HAS REVIEWED THE STUDY?

The study proposal has been reviewed by the Moray House School of Education and Sport Ethics Committee.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the lead researcher, Christian Hanser by e-mail: c.hanser@ed.ac.uk

If you would like to discuss this study with someone independent of the study please contact Dr Aileen Kennedy: aileen.kennedy@ed.ac.uk

If you wish to make a complaint about the study, please contact: Dr Yvonne Foley: yvonne.foley@ed.ac.uk or Prof Do Coyle: do.coyle@ed.ac.uk

Working with the Welcome Hut in Year 2 of MSc TLT

Introductory day 12th September 2019,

10 am – noon: mapping workshop for Year 2 cohort

3pm – 5pm: informal afternoon drop-in for Year 1/ Year 2 cohorts



Visual: Tanya Kuznetsova

We will talk about possibilities to work with the hut during your MSc degree (within your cluster, through the university community award and other grants)

I will introduce a workshop series open to the 2nd year cohort (from October to March) inside the hut: mapping your teacher journey with arts-based methods

Why mapping your own trajectory into teaching?

- Before using the tiny house in classrooms, you can start to prepare your own creative ideas for practice in small group reflections inside the hut
- You can take time to express the motivational dimension for your profession: what makes teaching meaningful for you?
- You learn about participatory, arts-informed mapping methodologies which can also be applied when working with children in class (also as part of a wider focus on *spatial literacies* in the Welcome Hut research)

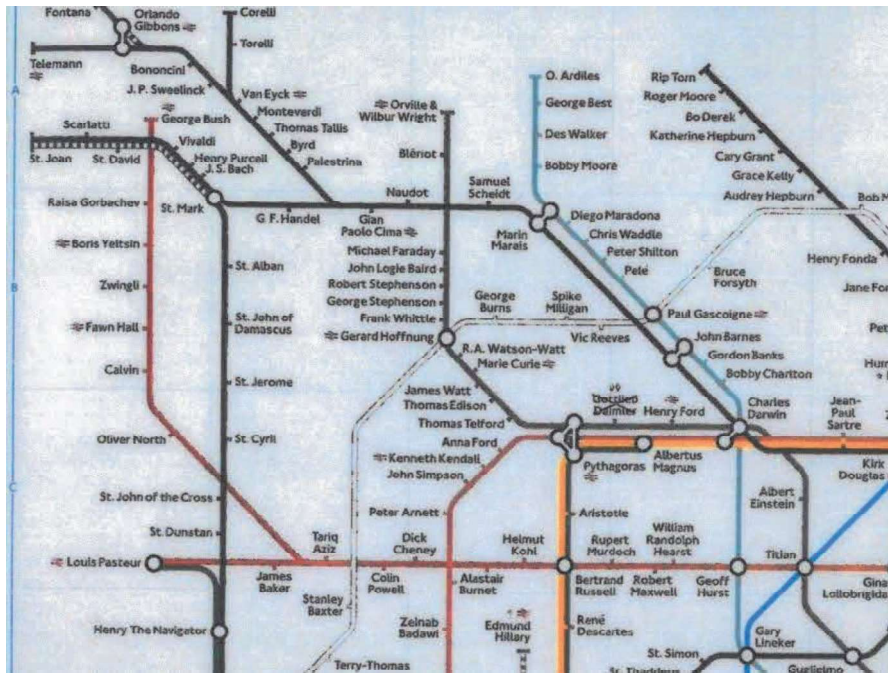
Preparation for the 12th September:

Simply think in advance what kind of life experiences have brought you into teaching as a professional choice. This is only the starting point for many future discussions about the work space landscapes you encounter on your way to becoming a teacher.

These maps below show you the creative range of mapping: you can decide about the scale, the legend and the detail of your own personal map to illustrate your singular journey into meaningful teaching!

(maps taken from books which will be presented on the 12th September)

What if your MSc TLT trajectory had more stations than the tube map?

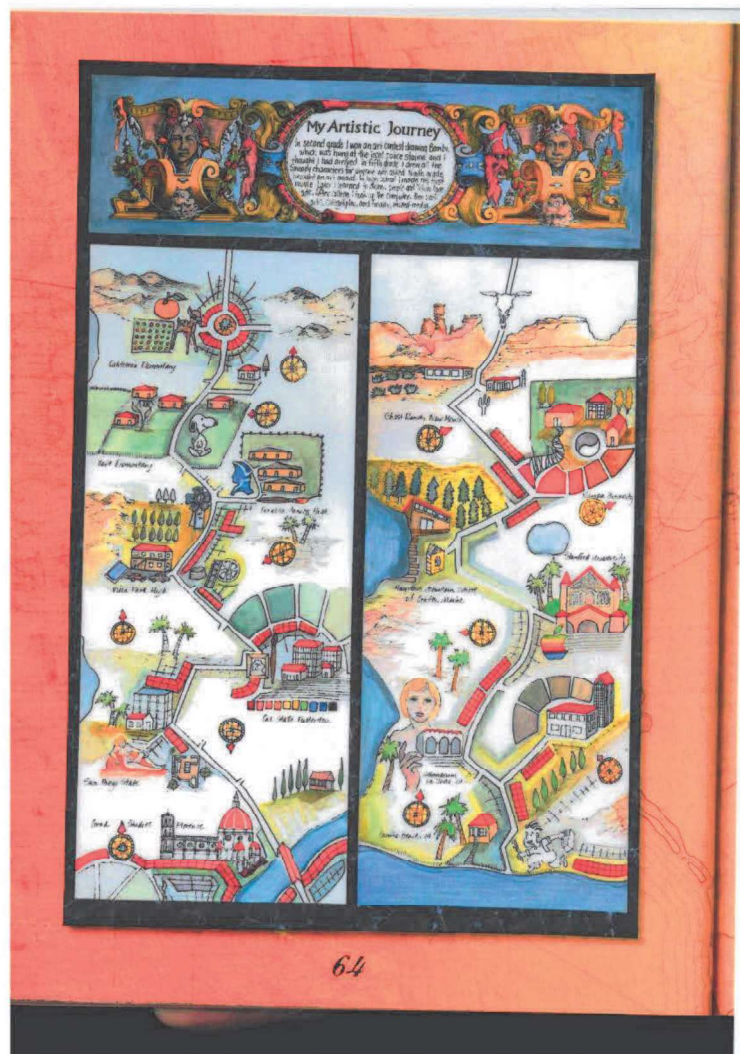


What if you draw your own map of your school day inspired by the way children map their world?



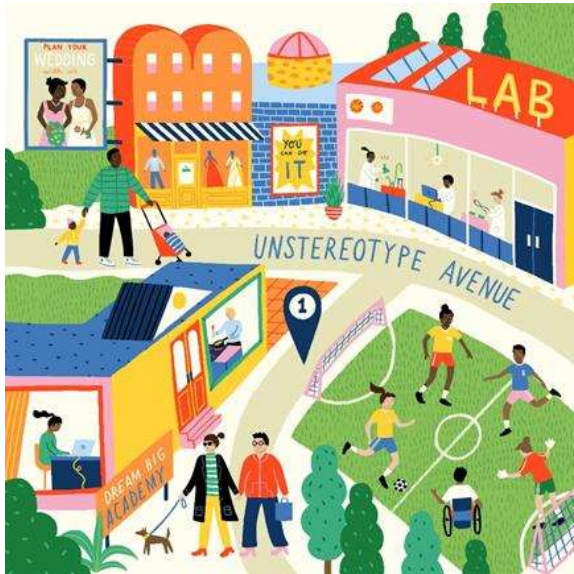
Sara Fanelli, *Map of My Day*, 1995
Mixed media, 10 x 23 inches
From *My Map Book* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995)

What if your creative pedagogical ideas were expressed in an artistic sketchbook?



Looking forward to seeing you on the 12th September and thank you for your continued interest in the Welcome Hut project during your final year. Your written and oral reflections from the first experience day in January were really *exceptional* contributions to the first year of my PhD research,

Christian



Unstereotype Avenue

If you ask a little girl walking along Unstereotype Avenue what she wants to be when she grows up, she could tell you I can be anything: a scientist, an engineer, a supreme court judge, an Olympic champion, an artist or astronaut—not even the sky is the limit when it comes to dreaming big.

The word stereotype has lost its meaning in this country. People root for the girl who wants to be a professional football player, not question her capabilities. Teachers encourage all of their students to choose STEM fields instead of assuming that girls wouldn't be interested in them.

Toxic Masculinity Recycling Plant

Just like in every civilization, citizens of Equiterra are affected by the human history, including patriarchal ideas of gender roles and what it means to be a boy or a girl, a woman or a man, a transgender person or a gender-nonconforming person.

Instead of conforming to these historical gendered stereotypes that have restricted men and women for generations, people of Equiterra question toxic masculinity. In the Toxic Masculinity Recycling Plant, through innovative dialogues and learning, toxic behaviours are transformed into attitudes that perpetuate gender equality.



Inclusion square

Inclusion square is where families and friends meet to relax and spend time outside. Anyone and everyone can enjoy the space: It's accessible for those living with disability; people don't feel judged or discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation, race, religion or socioeconomic standing. Here, everyone feels welcome and included. Here, everyone is safe and able to enjoy themselves.

Education Boulevard

In Equiterra, education is a top priority. On the school grounds, you see young girls and boys reading history books that include stories of both women and men who have shaped their communities and culture.

Children attend school without worrying about their safety, and girls and boys share chores at home. They have access to all the books and technology they need to learn and grow.

Girls are taught science and math without the presumption that it's not for them. Boys learn humanities and art and learn the importance of gender equality. There's no such thing as child marriage that pulls girls out of school to become brides.

PhD s1656634

Transcript of Mapping Workshop

Group B, Session 3: *Gateway into transformative teaching*

Data Collection on 11th February 2020

11:30 – 13:15

At Welcome Hut installed in the Moray House Quad

Arrival:

The group is complete (4 participants). Participant C could not come for the previous session which allows the three other participants to briefly summarise our activities from 2nd session (the path to self-care). Participant C is happy to do this mapping exercise at home and later share it with the group. The group atmosphere is very friendly and talkative. The session had been rescheduled from the week before because of illness of one person (all participants had agreed to reschedule to keep the group together). Participants come in to campus especially for the mapping on that day.

Focus Group discussion (questions in little boxes):

Question 1: Who are you doing this MSc TLT for? For your placement school, for the national educational system, the university, the children, the community, or particularly for yourself? Where do you situate these stakeholders on your own TLT map?

Aim of the question: Icebreaker, but also to find out if the children lifeworlds are 'on the map' of the student teachers' priorities.

Debate:

Participant A : when I started out, it was for me, for the children

Where I am now, I am not doing it for this. I do it for others. I have to satisfy others to get through.

It is for someone else's benefit, not even for myself anymore. Not for the children

Participant C: but we are learning. We can't change the system all at once

Participant A: of course, the long game. I don't feel I have that vision

Participant C: I don't have the opportunity for change yet, right now I just want to get through. Maybe I should do all these amazing plans now, but it is for later. It would be silly to put that pressure on yourself. I don't care anymore about the university ambitions. Last semester we had so much pressure. I was not ok with it. Now I do it for me and the students

PhD researcher asks question to the group: Do you then feel the course makes false promises? In the way it is advertised as Transformative Learning and Teaching...

Participant A: Some of it really lives up to it.

Participant C: There is something problematic, maybe unethical to put teachers into unhealthy environments, to put them into these pressures

Participant A: Much of that stuff It doesn't help the teaching. We just don't go. If I see I have that lecture but I haven't done my lesson plan. We want to be good for teaching. [Participants B and C nod]

Participant D: but without theory I wouldn't be able to invent. Uni time is very useful for me.

Participant C: library access, workshops, CPD, yes. This is the place with the most updated information. Uni teaches me to think.

Participant B: back to the question! I didn't know much about the course, didn't know what I signed up to.

I enjoy being with children. To make it enjoyable, not only academically. Also emotionally, for relations, to learn to cooperate. Maths is always related to high pressure. Most important for me is to make it fun and nice. To be able to say: now we're gonna do some maths and play! I chose a transformative path to change the view of maths, for the recognition of my subject area.

Participant D: I chose this course purely for myself after personal crisis. Once I started working in school I really enjoy it. Learning opened a new world for my brain. There is so much to seek for.

Question 2: Imagine what potentials are hidden behind the label SIMD. Map an imaginary lifeworld of those you are trying to reach through your teaching. What could be the centre of these people's lives? Where is the school on this map? How important is the classroom? What are the sites of struggle and the sites of empowerment? Most importantly, where on the map do you situate an entrance to this world based on trust?

Aim of the question: if making assumptions is inevitable, I invite student teachers to make assumptions of positive things, to develop an awareness of invisibilised resources. What do the student teachers need to move from 'critiquing deficit-focus of SIMD/schooling' to creating their own models of positive connection with children's lifeworlds? Can map arts and crafts help in this?

Debate (participants debate collectively before starting to draw):

"SIMD is just another label"

"It starts to lose meaning"

"It is about deprivation but not about poverty"

"It is again the narrative about teachers who need to solve it all"

"The agenda behind it reinforces classes"

"If you are not living in these environments..."

Drawing process: own reflections

Three participants immediately start the drawing. Participant C is very hesitant to start the exercise, but does so by searching dialogue with me and expressing the fear and ethical challenge to map

others. I reassure Participant C that the exercise is not about projecting something into another lifeworld, but about developing an awareness of the invisible strengths behind SIMD labels. I invite participant C to try to imagine a concrete example of persons who might not be seen in the positive aspects of their existence and how to give space to this on the map. Participant C stays sceptical for a few more minutes but finally draws a substantial map and later volunteers to present first. Participant C is more talkative in the process than the other three (who are extremely concentrated on their own process of drawing). The direct dialogue between C and me allows to understand the difficulty C has with this challenging exercise:

Participant C (after 10 minutes of drawing): “Sometimes there is something but it is not tangible”

My reply: “Embrace it and see what emerges. But some of it has to stay intangible. The exercise makes us aware that we need the child to bring the tangible to our intuitions. If our imagined maps of the child’s lifeworld were already fully tangible, where would the child still fit in?”

During the 30 minute drawing time, I sometimes remind the participants of possible ways to think of their maps.

“Think of what gets lost in translation, what gets overlooked about the child”

“How do you bring out what they are passionate about?”

“How do you make their world shine? Develop an angle and focus of positive connectivity to a child’s ecosystem”

They seem to be aware of it already from previous discussions. All 4 participants are highly engaged in the map-making activity. Three of them would have continued drawing if I did not stop for presentations for the group. As always I deliberately leave the hut 10 minutes before the end of the mapping exercise to allow time among peer group without the external facilitator.

Map presentations:

Participant C:





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Ref: 2624

Hanser Christian
ETL
Moray House School of Education and Sport

Date: 24th of January 2020

Dear Christian,

Title: Student teachers host a mobile experimental outdoor classroom in their placement school

The School of Education and Sport Ethics Sub-Committee has now considered your request for ethical approval for the studies detailed in your application.

This is to confirm that the Sub-Committee is happy to approve the application and that the research meets the School Ethics Level 2 criterion. This is defined as “applies to non-intervention research where you have the consent of the participants and data subjects. This may include, for example, analysis of archived data, classroom observation, or questionnaires on topics that are not generally considered ‘sensitive’. This research can involve children or young people, if the likelihood of risk to them is minimal”.

A standard condition of this ethical approval is that you are required to notify the Committee, of any significant proposed deviation from the original protocol. The Committee also needs to be notified if there are any unexpected results or events once the research is underway that raise questions about the safety of the research.

Should you receive any formal complaints relating to the study you should notify the MHSE Ethics Committee immediately by email to MHSEthics@ed.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of:
Dr Ailsa Niven
Convener, School Ethics Sub-Committee

The poetry of the Scottish Attainment Challenge as seen from the SERA Edinburgh Fringe: re-scripting SIMD in three acts through experiential encounters in a tiny house conference hut

Christian Hanser, Moray House School of Education, c.hanser@ed.ac.uk

Arts-based session (Social Justice and Inclusion) engaging up to 10 participants at the same time

The conference fringe contribution seeks to diversify temporal and spatial experiences through a novel format of tiny (house) disruption. As the Scottish Attainment Challenge is frequently discussed from a centrist positionality with expertise produced through dominant discourse and not insights from scientific outskirts, the proposed format takes delegates a few steps out of the institutional walls. Experiential encounters take place around the wood fire of a tiny house shepherd's hut, installed inside of Moray House but outside of the conventional indoors conference flows. The Welcome Hut practice argues that remoteness combined with mobility is a factor for proximity. Engaging with the shed happens through drop-in rather than sign-up. Discussions are open-ended and improvised, not limited to time slots. As a 'dream tank' amidst busy think tanks, the topic of the Scottish Attainment Challenge is approached through arts-based inputs in order to rescript an often deficit-oriented discussion as a *poetics* of difference where the margins are not constantly asked to assimilate and catch up (Young, 1990).

Day 1: **SIMD 1 Sanctuary Initiates Multiple Disruptions**

Spatial outreach to environments that are not considered safe learning spaces; community mapping and community clocking as spatial, temporal shelter

Day 2: **SIMD 2 Singularity Inspires Mutual Diversity**

Existential journeys, learning trajectories and 'space to be'; eco-narratives, pluri-literacies, diverse formats of assessment

Day 3: **SIMD 3 Salutogenesis Invites Meaningful Dialogues**

Meaningful attainment as a concern for 'health and wellbeing'; starting from teacher utopia, not teacher burn-out; collaborative research guided by children-led SIMD narratives

Each participant has the possibility to craft own SIMD poems while visiting the hut. Some poems written inside the hut by participants from SIMD-area schools and communities will be shared. The Welcome Hut will have collected street-level poetry through public sphere hospitalities in such postcode destinations before the start of the conference.



From the research-policy-practice triangle to a collaborative Festival map: exploring arts-based affinity spaces within the Scottish Attainment Challenge through a vagabond PhD

Theme: Innovative Research Methods

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My proposed participatory sessions reflect on the use of a highly experimental, itinerant PhD methodology which investigated the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) through indirect pedagogy, public pedagogy and existential mapping. This research evolved around the use of a mobile shepherd's hut as a safe learning space for *being with* stories and emotions, rather than *doing for* better external testing scores in educational settings. One of the outcomes of the arts-based, relational inquiry is a crafted festival map to conceptualise attainment through the lens of a fluid ecosystem of interconnected 'affinity spaces' (Gee, 2014). Non-linear understandings of the research-policy-practice nexus as an immersive festival landscape can highlight collaborative aspects of educational detours and the emancipatory potential of de-optimisation in times of increasing pressures to deliver on benchmarks.

The shepherd's hut as concrete methodological space as well as site for public engagement could be installed at Ayr campus in the form of a 3-day continuous 'conference fringe' to allow delegates and UWS students to reflect on the methodological potential and challenges of itinerant research housed in the in-betweens. This installation follows up from my previous conference contribution at the SERA conference in 2019 and its return would allow to discuss the outcome of PhD research by asking a wider question around the very idea of knowledge co-construction: "How can knowledge be reconceptualised, not so much as something new but a recognition of the ways of knowing from which the new can arise?" (Charman & Dixon, 2021, p. 41).

Requirements:

For this installation, I would need to use a space (parking or grass) of 3m x 5m on UWS Ayr campus (no electricity needed) in close proximity to the conference venue.