Wellbeing integrated learning design framework: a multi-layered approach to facilitating wellbeing education through learning design and educational practice

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The interest in wellbeing education has risen dramatically as we emerge from a global pandemic and examine what is needed to address the lingering impacts in education. Of course, the need for wellbeing education was apparent long before this, driven by a need to mitigate the growing mental health challenges faced by our youth. Indeed, there is a substantial body of evidence for the impact of such education on students in primary through to tertiary settings. However, little is known about how we are "educating the educators" to facilitate wellbeing through their curriculum and educational practices. This goes beyond the topics or content of wellbeing education to focus more on how we create enabling environments for wellbeing to emerge in our educational practices. This article proposes a Wellbeing Integrated Learning Design (WILD) Framework to address this gap. We outline the central tenets of the WILD framework, including the underpinning theoretical principles and systems approach that guided the development. Practical examples are provided to demonstrate how the framework can be applied in preparing experienced educators to build enabling environments in their own context. We reflect on the insights gained in trialing the approach in an education faculty in a large Australian university and explore the opportunities to refine the framework further to support its replication in other educational settings.

KEYWORDS

wellbeing pedagogy, enabling environment, self-determined learners, curriculum design, wellbeing

Introduction

There is no doubt that there has been an increased focus on wellbeing in education settings in recent times. While this has risen to prominence through a global pandemic and the subsequent recovery, wellbeing education has become a global trend in school settings over the last decade (O'Reilly et al., 2018). When it comes to population-wide priorities, however, it is imperative to consider systemic and sustainable approaches to implementing initiatives. For example, addressing the upstream determinants of mental health and wellbeing is likely to be a more effective method of health promotion (Lo Moro et al., 2020). Many have argued that educational systems are well placed to implement a health promotion or primary prevention approach (Sturgeon, 2007; Seligman et al., 2009; Slemp et al., 2017). These approaches are

predicated on the belief that the development of wellbeing capabilities can buffer against mental illness and support future-focussed skills such as collaboration (Young et al., 2020).

Indeed, in their comprehensive action plan for addressing mental health 2013–2030, the World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted that school-based approaches are among the most effective for mental health and wellbeing promotion (WHO, 2021). This action plan goes beyond a call for an individual intervention or capability development approach to consider how we facilitate an environment that enables the complexity of wellbeing to emerge.

This is a significant evolution in the application of wellbeing science in schools, as several criticisms have been leveled at early attempts to address this large-scale issue. For example, some have criticized the overfocus on content over context (Ciarrochi et al., 2016; Kern et al., 2020), emphasizing the 'positive' over growth and challenge (Wong, 2011; Lomas and Ivtzan, 2015; Gruman et al., 2018), individual over collective wellbeing (Kern et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2022), explicit vs. implicit curriculum (Waters and Loton, 2019), and wellbeing theory vs. learning theory (White, 2021). However, moving beyond these polarities to instead embrace dialectical thinking that allows us to integrate these differing perspectives may enable us to design more sustainable solutions for implementing wellbeing in education. Targeting the specific design of a learning climate that enables wellbeing to emerge can be one way to achieve this.

Wellbeing is a complex, multi-faceted construct understood differently across various disciplines and contexts (Mead et al., 2021; Alexandrova and Fabian, 2022). Broadly it can be defined as feeling good and functioning well both intrapersonally and socially (Deci and Ryan, 2008; Keyes, 2013). We draw on this broad definition of wellbeing, noting that it does not include mental illness or health perspectives that shape the conceptualizations of wellbeing in some disciplines (Mental Health Commission of NSW, 2017). Allison et al. (2020) have argued that facilitating wellbeing occurs not only through targeting individual knowledge and capability development but also through contextual conditions of the learning environment. However, when we think about how educators are being trained, there has been a much heavier focus on teaching *about* wellbeing, or explicit approaches, rather than teaching *for* wellbeing, more implicit and contextual strategies that weave wellbeing into the learning environment itself (Ciarrochi et al., 2016; Halliday et al., 2019).

The impact of the global pandemic has shone a spotlight on the need to weave wellbeing into learning environments. For example, in Victoria Australia, the Department of Education has included wellbeing alongside learning at the center of their framework for student outcomes (FISO 2.0[1]). Furthermore, at a global level, UNESCO declared that flourishing is "the central purpose of education" (de Ruyter et al., 2020, p. 2). Flourishing involves, in part, "being engaged in relationships and activities that are meaningful," and it is closely related to the concept of wellbeing (de Ruyter et al., 2020, p. 2). Importantly, UNESCO noted that "Flourishing… requires an enabling environment" (de Ruyter et al., 2020, p. 2). It is imperative that our teachers are prepared through educational programs that explore not only how wellbeing capabilities can be developed and

assessed but also how to cultivate learning environments that create a context for flourishing (Allison et al., 2022).

It is these enabling environments that we address in this paper. How might we enable wellbeing and flourishing to emerge through "how" teaching is delivered, irrespective of "what" academic content is being provided? We are curious about what comprehensive wellbeing strategies can be woven into a learning design framework to foster enabling environments, as we know the learning environment can detract from or build flourishing (Allison et al., 2020). This paper will explore the development of a conceptual framework, the Wellbeing Integrated Learning Design (WILD), to address these questions. We seek to support educators to consider how they can design their curriculum and teaching practice to foster such an enabling environment. We outline the WILD framework, providing examples that evolved in the context of two postgraduate programs. Our students are experienced educators seeking to develop their skills in implementing wellbeing education in their context.

Overview of theoretical underpinnings of the WILD framework

This approach has evolved over several years through our teaching in an education faculty at an Australian university. Through teaching wellbeing-related subjects at both an undergraduate and postgraduate level we began to experiment with different ways that we could create an embodied experience of what we were teaching about. This provided fertile ground to trial and iterate our approach across a large and diverse student population of more than 5,000 students over 4 years. In developing the WILD framework, we were cognizant that many of the common criticisms of positive education have been positioned as polarities (e.g., explicit vs. implicit, wellbeing vs. learning theory), and the inherent limitations in this binary and, at times, reductionistic approach (Goodall et al., 2022). Instead, one of the fundamental principles of our approach was to build an integrated framework that moves beyond positionality to an appreciation that each element is important and synergistically influences one another. Our primary aim was to create an embodied and integrated experience through a *pedagogy of wellbeing* in our teaching programs founded upon a selection of wellbeing theories that can be leveraged in educational settings.

We implemented this approach in the re-design of our postgraduate programs to support experienced educators in integrating wellbeing education in their school context. It was therefore important that the framework be designed to integrate within the existing learning philosophy and practice of the educator. This is crucial contextual background to the development of the framework, as the design was shaped by an appreciation of the audience: existing educational practitioners who have developed skills and comfort in their pedagogy. Therefore, the purpose of the framework was to create a tool to expand their practice by considering how psychological wellbeing theories could be integrated into their curriculum design and pedagogy. These foundational wellbeing theories were selected based on their relevance in supporting a climate for wellbeing to emerge in educational settings. Our criterion for selection was that the theories were well-established with empirical evidence supporting their application in education. We have also provided examples of how learning theory has been infused into the

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1   https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/fiso/policy

framework to illuminate the synergistic benefits of an integrated approach.

Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a central theory to facilitating wellbeing in educational settings (Ryan and Deci, 2020). It is important to this body of work because it illuminates basic psychological needs that, when supported, activate student wellbeing and autonomous motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2017, 2020). In addition, understanding SDT can prompt educators to reflect on the reasons that students engage in activities (Urdan and Kaplan, 2020). It can also help educators to amplify their behaviors that support student wellbeing and to notice controlling practices that could thwart student wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2017, 2020). SDT consists of six mini-theories, an outline of which is beyond the scope of the present work (see Ryan and Deci, 2017 for a comprehensive overview of each theory); however, a summary of key aspects of SDT that are most pertinent to facilitating wellbeing are outlined below.

SDT explicates three universal basic psychological needs that hold substantial utility for wellbeing education design and practice. The three needs are autonomy (i.e., inherent need to self-regulate one's activities, a sense of volition), competence (i.e., the desire for environmental mastery and feeling that one's aspirations can be achieved) and relatedness (i.e., the innate desire to connect and belong; Ryan and Deci, 2017). The satisfaction of these needs is deemed essential to growth and wellbeing across diverse contexts and among different age groups and cultures (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Conversely, the frustration of these needs is likely to lead to illbeing (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Wellbeing learning design and practice that consider these needs can be even more impactful when coupled with an understanding of motivational qualities.

Like many motivational theories, SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivation (i.e., engaging in activities out of interest or enjoyment) and extrinsic motivation (i.e., engaging in activities to achieve an end); however, SDT goes beyond this binary distinction by further breaking down extrinsic motivation into four regulatory styles (Ryan and Deci, 2017). At a high level, these can be categorized as controlled or autonomous forms of motivation (see continuum figure in Howard et al., 2017). Extrinsic *controlled* motivation involves acting to (i) receive rewards, (ii) avoid punishment, (iii) feel proud of oneself, (iv) avoid feeling guilty, or (v) avoid feeling anxious. Extrinsic *autonomous* motivation entails acting because an activity is (vi) important, (vii) significant, (viii) personally valued, or (ix) congruent with one's identity (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Intrinsically regulated actions are also deemed to be autonomous motivation. Additionally, SDT recognizes amotivation (i.e., no motivation due to not valuing an activity, not being interested in it, or not feeling competent at it), which is considered neither controlled nor autonomous. A person's motivation for an activity (e.g., sport, math) is predictive of their level of wellbeing within that context (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

Through an internalization process, extrinsically regulated activities that start out as more controlled can become more autonomous over time. This process can be facilitated by satisfying all three basic psychological needs or undermined by thwarting these needs (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013). SDT describes the social and contextual influences in supporting basic psychological needs,

autonomous motivation, and the internalization process. Specific behaviors that support or thwart basic psychological needs are well documented but are beyond the scope of the present work (for detailed examples see Ryan and Deci, 2017). In classroom settings, teachers can impact students' basic psychological needs, which in turn affects student motivation and wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

Achievement goal theory

Achievement goal theory (AGT: Nicholls, 1984; Dweck, 1986) draws attention to the aim of the goals, such as goals students set in educational contexts (Urdan and Kaplan, 2020). AGT aims are organized into mastery goals, which can be self- or task-referenced, and performance goals, which are other-referenced (Elliot et al., 2011). For example, self-referenced goals can involve scoring more points in a competition than previously, and task-referenced goals can entail getting as many answers right on a test as possible. In contrast, performance goals are focused on determining competence compared to others. Each goal type can take the form of an approach motive (e.g., to achieve success) or an avoidance motive (e.g., to avoid failure) (Elliot, 1999).

While a substantial body of literature has investigated the aims of goals, AGT goes beyond examining goals at the state level (Urdan and Kaplan, 2020). The theory describes two additional discrete levels at which mastery and performance distinctions can occur: a dispositional level representing an individual's general goal orientation and a motivational climate level focusing on how achievement goals are facilitated within social contexts (Harwood et al., 2015). For instance, students' perception of their motivational climate, whether mastery- or performance-focused, is predictive of their personal achievement goals. Each type of climate is associated with its corresponding goal type (Bardach et al., 2020).

AGT and SDT are interrelated in numerous ways. For instance, mastery climates predict basic psychological need satisfaction (Harwood et al., 2015) and mastery approach goals predict intrinsic motivation (Mascret et al., 2015). Autonomous vs. controlled reasons for pursuing goals add further nuance to the aims of achievement goals (Urdan and Kaplan, 2020). In sum, AGT challenges educators to consider competition vs. internal standards of success in curriculum design (Urdan and Kaplan, 2020).

Hope theory

Hope theory can be integrated into the design of learning environments to provide processes that leverage wellbeing in achieving learning goals. Hope has typically been conceptualized in the psychological literature as a cognitive tool that supports achievement through an individual's sense of agency (WillPower), or a belief in one's ability, and pathways planning (WayPower) to progress goals (Snyder, 2002). These two thinking styles are thought to interact together in a dynamic motivation system, in a way that enables individuals to draw on resources in their environment to support their wellbeing and achievement (Snyder, 2002). Recent advances in hope theory have expanded beyond individual goal pursuit to consider a collective view (Bernardo, 2010), and the consideration of both intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that enable hope to emerge

(Colla et al., 2022), drawing attention to the importance of a climate that facilitates hope. This collective approach also aligns with Freire's (1992) argument for a pedagogy of hope to enable a collaborative environment where shared dialog can create a deepened understanding of others' perspectives and thus create hope for social change.

Cultivating hope in learning environments benefits students, as those with a high sense of hope exhibit a wide range of adaptive psychological and school-related functioning. For example, there is a dynamic relationship between hope and intrinsic motivation that impacts academic self-efficacy (Bozgun and Baytemir, 2022). Studies also show an increased likelihood that high-hope students will set mastery rather than performance goals (Snyder et al., 2002), the benefits of which have been outlined in the previous section on AGT. A recent meta-analysis demonstrated the relationship between hope and academic outcomes, showing that hope enabled students to be more resourceful, supporting their academic achievement (Marques et al., 2017). Hope has also been shown to be an important resource in protecting students from adversity and building their resilience (Marques, 2016; Goodman et al., 2017).

Hope can be sparked in a learning environment that provides the opportunity for students to get excited about goals that are personally or collectively meaningful, that facilitate divergent thinking in the planning to meet those goals and enable opportunities to replenish a developing sense of agency (Marques et al., 2014). However, it is also relevant to consider how social connectedness is fostered between students and teachers, as higher levels of social support lead to higher levels of hope (Hui and Sun, 2010) and can create a safe environment for students to engage in respectful dialog that fosters inclusion (Carroll et al., 2017).

Broaden and build theory

Inducing positive emotions (e.g., joy, pride, calm) through educational design may seem instinctual to facilitate student enjoyment and wellbeing, but can it undermine learning? Broaden and build theory would suggest not. The theory posits that in contrast to negative emotions, which narrow our thought and action repertoire (e.g., inducing us to run or fight in the face of danger), positive emotions may broaden thought and action possibilities, supporting creativity (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). In turn, this can support the development of the pathways thinking component of hope. Positive emotions can also build intellectual, physical, and social resources (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001) and have an undoing effect on negative emotions (Fredrickson et al., 2003). Broaden and build theory can be translated into teaching practice through activities that integrate playfulness, humor, and imagination (Tidmand, 2021).

Flow theory

Flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) can inform the design of activities that are intrinsically rewarding in and of themselves. Flow, or "being in the zone," is an optimal psychological state that involves being fully absorbed in a task without being distracted by one's ego, thoughts or emotions (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). A fundamental condition for facilitating flow is an optimal challenge-skill

balance. When a challenge is too high, anxiety can be experienced if the person's skill is too low; when skill is too high and challenge is too low, boredom can be the outcome. A flow state can be cultivated when challenge and skill are balanced (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Flow has been associated with commitment, enjoyment, achievement, and lower anxiety in educational settings (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). SDT and flow theory are the widely used theoretical frameworks underpinning gamification design (Bozkurt and Durak, 2018), which can be leveraged to facilitate wellbeing.

Learning theory

In addition to weaving these wellbeing theories into our practice, it is worth noting several interdependent learning design principles that underpin the WILD framework. Firstly, we have intertwined declarative (explicit teaching) and procedural learning (skill development) throughout. While there has been debate regarding whether these two learning systems operate independently or interact together (Ashby and Crossley, 2010), utilizing experiential learning design allowed us to integrate both to create an embodied learning experience. Our intention was to develop skills and provide numerous metacognitive reflective points with a view to supporting students' capabilities to articulate the knowledge and theories that underpin their learning and thus enhance their ability to apply this in their own context.

Secondly, our approach is influenced by collaborative learner-centered design principles drawing on a social constructionist paradigm of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Designing learning environments to support the three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy dovetails with this learning theory to facilitate high-quality motivation for learning and provide the building blocks for flourishing. We have taken a contextual lens to this development, ensuring that educational activities were grounded in students' life experience to support transformational learning (Kolb, 2015). Our methodology was inspired by Morris (2019) proposed expansion of Kolb's experiential model ensuring that learning was designed to elicit contextually rich concrete experience, critical reflective observations, abstract conceptualizations that were contextually specific, and pragmatic active experimentation to embed learning.

Finally, we draw awareness to the intentional selection of relevant educational practices at different points in the learning process; moving between pedagogy (teacher-led) to andragogy (adult learner directed) to heutagogy (discovered learning that supports self-determination; Wehmeyer et al., 2021). While, Blaschke (2012) argues that heutagogical learning design, where learners are highly autonomous, is likely to support students' capabilities to respond to the complexities of today's workplace, it is imperative that this is taken through the broader lens of student development. We view these educational practices along a spectrum that we can move fluidly along depending on the stage of learning.

Translation of the WILD framework from theory to action

When considering how these psychological theories could be layered upon an educator's existing approach we began with

reflection on our praxis. Using methods drawn from grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), we began by identifying themes in the data from our student experience surveys and unsolicited student feedback. This process identified touchpoints throughout the learning design lifecycle that could be categorized across three broad areas: curriculum design, teaching practice, and teacher attributes. The various elements that made up these touchpoints have been represented in a heuristic prototype in Figure 1 below. We position this as a prototype to indicate that this is an evolving model that has not yet been through rigorous theoretical development but is a useful starting place to gather further data to iterate and refine. Indeed, part of our intention in sharing the development of the approach in this article is to invite further feedback from the broader scholarly community.

We have attempted to create a degree of *simplexity* in representing the complex dynamic approach to preparing educators to integrate wellbeing using the WILD framework. This identifies several elements that make up this dynamic system, but it is important that our visual representation does not minimize the interplay between each of the parts. Assessment design, for example, could have been categorized as a subset of curriculum design as they both inform and impact upon one another. Each of these elements can be used to determine where we may integrate wellbeing theories in the design of the learning environment. If we look through the lens of curriculum design, for example, we may consider how we foster basic psychological needs (self-determination theory) and positive emotions (broaden and build theory) by designing our curriculum using a Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Garrison and Arbaugh, 2007). We can integrate wellbeing theories in our teaching practice, such as supporting competence (self-determination theory) through creating mastery climates (achievement goal theory) and scaffolding activities to find an optimal skill/challenge balance (flow theory). And finally, we can consider how we model wellbeing practices through our presence as

an educator, such as by developing a personal grounding practice before coming into a teaching space to support our capacity to regulate emotions in the classroom (self-as-educator).

Examples to illustrate the WILD framework

While heuristics, such as the one we have developed in Figure 1, can be useful in helping us avoid cognitive overload and make sense of complexity, breaking this down into its constituent parts does not highlight the interconnectedness and interdependencies between these elements that can have a synergistic impact on wellbeing (Mason, 2013; Jacobson, 2019). The WILD framework is not designed as a checklist but rather to elucidate the relevant elements that interact in a non-linear fashion to enable wellbeing to emerge organically through learning design. This synergistic approach is represented in Figure 2 below. This model demonstrates how each of the three broad areas *propels* an emergent experience of wellbeing, such that the whole is greater than the sum of each of the parts. We have documented a series of examples below that illustrate ways the WILD framework can be implemented, and mapped these to each of the broad areas in Figure 2 to demonstrate the integrated approach. For each practice, we have demonstrated ways we have drawn on the underpinning theoretical principles to help illustrate the process of creating an enabling environment for wellbeing to emerge.

a. **Self as Educator** – Educators have been described as one of the key system elements that support wellbeing in a learning environment (Graham et al., 2011). Yet perhaps we underestimate the impact of our wellbeing practices and the role they play in putting us in the best state to facilitate wellbeing in our classes. Simple transition practices, such as
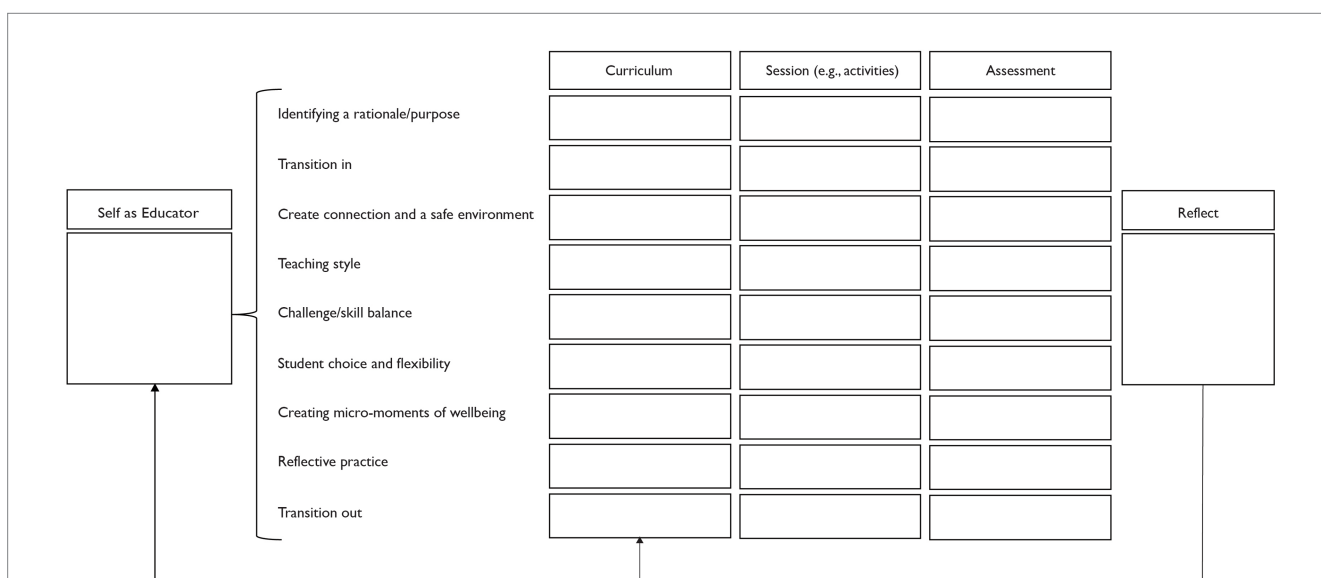

FIGURE 1
The WILD framework learning design process. Self as educator—the starting point of the WILD framework whereby the educator's awareness of their own wellbeing needs and how they show up in their teaching are identified; curriculum, session and assessment design all draw on wellbeing science theories (e.g., SDT, AGT, hope theory, broaden and build theory, flow theory). The framework invites educators to draw on the purpose of the activities they design, the transition into the activity, then follows through to the transition out. The reflective cycle that feeds back into self as educator and curriculum design is fundamental to the dynamic system that draws on feedback loops.
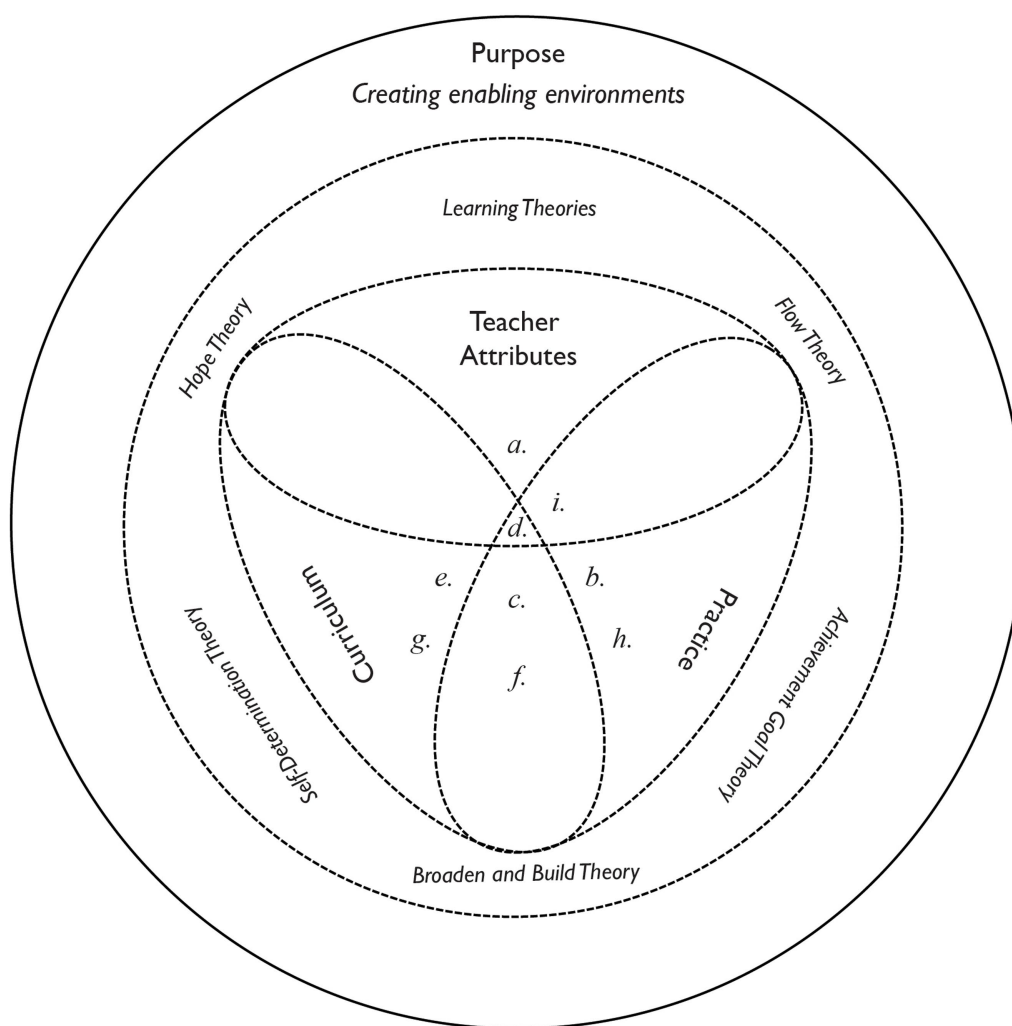
FIGURE 2
Propeller lens for reflecting on learning design and educational practice that embed wellbeing science. The letters in this figure represent example activities that draw on the theories included in the WILD Framework. These activities are (a) strategies for self as educator; (b) non-linear discussions and activities designed using HSP hotspots or world café activities; (c) learning circles; (d) creating thriving classroom systems; (e) different ways of knowing: (f) legacy boards; (g) personalized blog assessment; (h) paper planes mindfulness activity; (i) tuning-in activities. The position of the letters indicates the element(s) of learning design (i.e., curriculum, teacher attributes, and practice) these activities address, including where there are interconnections between elements.

some mindful breathing or chair yoga prior to moving into the teaching space can support educators to be present and enhance their emotion regulation. In turn, this can create the emotional capacity for an educator to foster a need-supportive environment (Hascher and Waber, 2021). Given teachers themselves view their own emotions as a key determiner of the emotional climate in a classroom (Shewark et al., 2018), this is an important element to bring into the wellbeing learning system.

b. **Non-linear Activities** – One of the simplest strategies in our teaching practice to support student autonomy has been to provide choice about how to work through activities. For example, choice can be provided by telling students they can work through discussion questions in any order they would like as well as offering the option to pass on questions (the latter being an important choice for more personal topics around wellbeing). Bullet points, colored boxes or online H5P

interactive hot spots can be more effective for presenting discussion questions than a traditional liner list that implies a set order of progress. A more sophisticated activity that is designed to also support autonomy is the World Café. In our sessions, we create a variety of cafe stops around the world, each with different discussion questions or activities. The stops contain fun facts connect the location to significant facts about subject content. Students are invited to collaboratively plan their own world tour in groups.

c. **Learning Circles** – In one of our subjects we have designed the curriculum to have students working in learning hubs. Students have the autonomy to indicate the areas they would like to apply their learning and groups are formed based on shared interests. These learning circles are designed to both workshop the subject content and build relational capabilities in students, supporting both their relatedness and competence needs. Students are guided through a series of "circle practices" that

relate to each theme of the curriculum and begin by forming a group identity, which has been shown to foster strong relationships among the group (Allison et al., 2022). These practices also draw on hope theory, allowing students to tap into a sense of WhyPower as they articulate a shared purpose, and elicit divergent perspectives (WePower) as students work together to consider different pathways to their goal (WayPower; Colla et al., 2022). The learning circles are tied to the assessment tasks, drawing on aspects of more extrinsically regulated motivation, and yet students have commented on how this has supported their motivation to participate which, in turn, led to a greater belief in their abilities to bring their goals to fruition (WillPower). We have mapped this practice to the WILD Framework Learning Design Process to provide a worked example of how this could be used to create an enabling environment for wellbeing to emerge. This is included as Figure 3.

d. **Creating a Thriving Class** – A practice that straddles several elements in the WILD framework is an activity that enables the co-design of a thriving class system. In this subject, students are learning about wellbeing through a systems lens and this experiential activity enables them to integrate both declarative and procedural learning. This process draws on students' autonomy to contribute to how their wellbeing and learning would best be fostered, as well as deepening their relatedness to each other and to the teaching team by highlighting the interdependencies between these elements in the learning system (these are mapped using causal loop diagrams). In this activity, it is essential that the educator can manage uncertainty and facilitate an emerging vision of what this particular thriving system will involve. This can mean developing "pedagogical care" (Burke et al., 2021) as they consider their responsiveness both in terms of students' expressed needs, as well as how they may modify their learning design based on this information. Practices such as this can provide greater

awareness of the group-based phenomenon, such as the impact of coregulation and collective goals that "once made visible can be more intentionally manifested" (Allison et al., 2022, p. 13).

e. **Ways of Knowing** – Given the diversity of definitions and cultural nuances in wellbeing, we have intentionally designed our curriculum in one course to expose students to different ways of knowing. This is well scaffolded to provide competence-support to ensure that students are not overwhelmed in their struggle to integrate these different views. However, bringing in different voices and perspectives can enable a thriving system, allowing it to be more adaptive and resilient. A key aspect of this approach has been to foreground Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing to both broaden students' understanding of wellbeing but also provide an exemplar of a systems model of wellbeing that has emerged over millennia. This decision is supported by Goodall et al. (2022) who posit that "contextually-responsive and complexity-informed approaches to wellbeing in education settings are strengthened by valuing indigenous and local perspectives, knowledge and practices" (p. 91).

f. **Legacy Boards** – In the final session of our subjects, one of our teaching practices is to include online legacy boards that are created by students using images of themselves and responses to questions such as, "what is one takeaway from this subject for your own life?" and "what message would you like to share with next year's cohort?" As part of the curriculum design, the boards are then embedded on the homepage of the following year's cohort so that when the next cohort join the subject, they are welcomed by faces of former students and subject highlights they can look forward to in the subject. Drawing on SDT, the legacy board are designed to create a sense of connection among the students as they contribute to the boards and a sense of belonging to a community for new students.

g. **Personalized Blog Assessment** – In line with our curriculum design, the first written assessment in our Masters' program
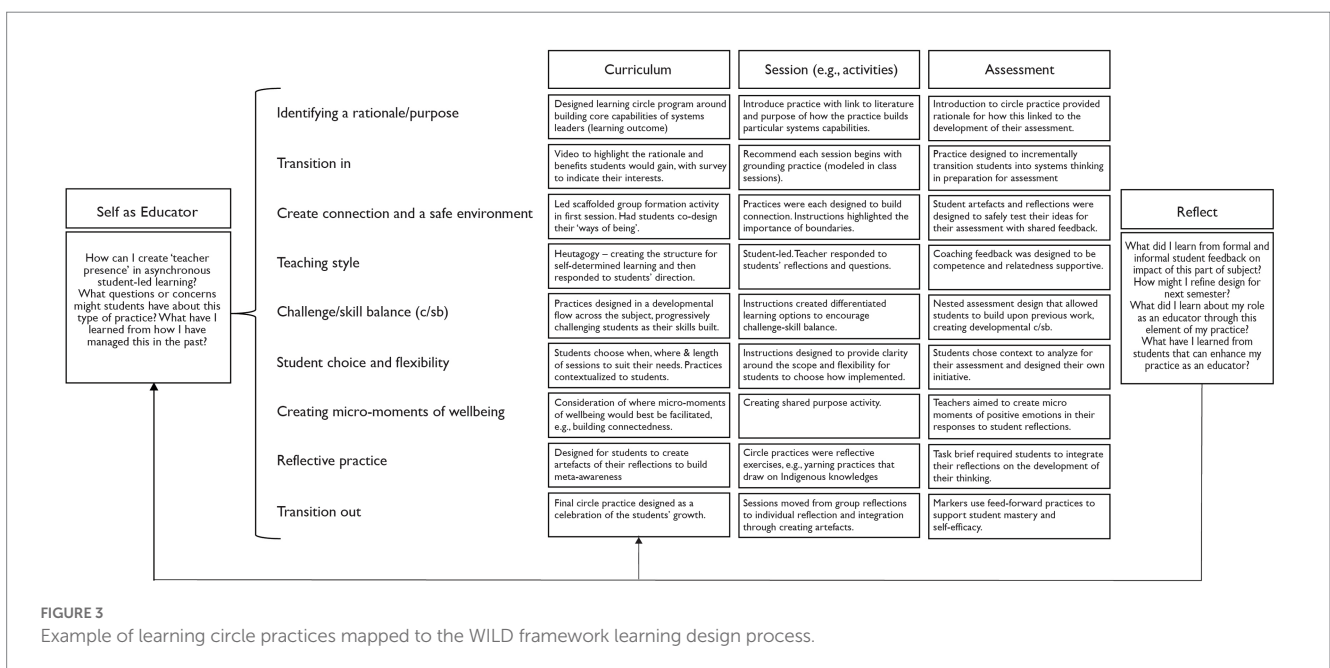

FIGURE 3
Example of learning circle practices mapped to the WILD framework learning design process.

challenges students to think about how to disseminate the wellbeing science they are learning about to a broader audience of their choice. To support student autonomy, a rationale is provided, which emphasizes the importance of this capability for our graduates. The assessment is inquiry-based and requires students to translate the evidence they have explored for their own context (e.g., schools, healthcare). It also asks students to go out to people within their chosen context (e.g., colleagues, organizational leaders) and ask what some of the field's terminology means to them (e.g., positive psychology, wellbeing), to get a sense of how the language of wellbeing science is understood by lay people. Often there is a considerable disconnect between the science and lay perspectives, which allows students to reflect on the gap and how they might adjust the way communicate about wellbeing within their context. The blogs are then shared on the subject's learning management system (LMS) to promote peer-to-peer learning. The personalized nature of this assessment supports students' autonomy by providing them with choice, enabling them to choose a context that is of personal interest, and making the assessment more meaningful. The opportunity to share the blog posts on the LMS also builds connection and learning across the cohort.

h. **Paper Planes Mindfulness Activity** – An effective activity from our teaching practice that integrates several theories in the WILD framework is a two-stage paper plane mindfulness activity. The activity teaches both *about* wellbeing and *for* wellbeing. The first stage entails students choosing a paper plane to make from a website (see https://www.foldnfly.com/#/1-1-1-1-1-1-1-2). The planes on the site range from easy to expert, which supports students' autonomy (e.g., through choice). Additionally, the varying degrees of difficulty support students' competence because, in line with AGT, the challenge is designed foster a mastery climate; it is not about students performing better at the task than each other, but rather, selecting a task that interests them most. Students are in control of choosing a challenge to match their skill, which can facilitate flow. They are instructed to bring a present-moment awareness to this activity as they fold the paper plane, which students describe as bringing a sense of calm and relaxation, low-activation positive emotions, whereby they forget about their stresses. The second stage of the activity involves students learning about mindfulness for performance approaches (Gardner, 2016) by throwing their plane at a target. They are provided with past, future and present instructions for their throws. This part of the activity is high energy, generating positive emotions such as excitement, amusement, and pride. Thus, the activity seeks to leverage the broadening effect described in broaden and build theory, by generating a range of high- and low-activation positive emotions.

i. **Tuning In** – There are several simple practices that we have implemented to support students to attune to their own wellbeing. Drawing on embodied learning practices, this can include inviting students to attune to how they feel after an activity such as listening to peers talk about strengths, or watching a video that can elicit different emotional experiences. It may also include building in grounding practices as a transition into the learning space, inviting students to attune to

their cognitive, emotional, and/or somatic experience as a standard practice, building their awareness of some of the influences on their wellbeing.

Discussion and future directions

Our objective with this paper was to present a framework for facilitating learning environments that enable wellbeing to emerge. An essential criterion for this objective was to embrace dialectical thinking that integrates different perspectives (Gruman et al., 2018) to achieve sustainable wellbeing in education settings. In addition, we sought to emphasize our position that this work is a shift in focus from teaching about wellbeing to teaching for wellbeing. The WILD framework draws on key psychological wellbeing theories and is designed to break our complex dynamic approach down into tangible processes for educators. We aimed to achieve this without minimizing complexity thinking by overlooking the interconnectedness and interdependencies between the framework's elements (Goodall et al., 2022).

The practical implications of this work are that the WILD framework could be applied across various learning environments irrespective of subject matter because it is designed to complement learning theories. Furthermore, the applied examples from our teaching practice illustrate tangible approaches educators can adopt. This approach has developed as an iterative evolution in our practice, as we sought to find ways to integrate a pedagogy of wellbeing, demonstrating to our students how these theories can be embodied in the ways we design teaching and learning. Early indications in qualitative feedback from education students is that this has been a valuable approach that they could model in their own context. For example, one student noted "*The experience of completing the [program] was unique in that, not only were we improving our wellbeing literacy, knowledge and strategies to improve our wellbeing pedagogy but we were also developing and growing our own wellbeing through the purposeful and structured application of wellbeing strategies throughout the courses*." One of the implications of the iterative approach to the development of the framework though is the challenge of analysing the impact from a comparative perspective of our prior teaching approach. Our plan is to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the framework across multiple subjects to assess its efficacy in building wellbeing for students, as well as the relevant mechanisms that enable this. Such data will also allow a more rigorous evaluation of the cross-application of the WILD framework in subjects that are not specifically teaching *about* wellbeing.

It is important to acknowledge that we are experienced in the application of the theories outlined in this paper and that relevant professional development may be needed to support educators in implementing the framework in their context. We propose that understanding conditions that foster wellbeing should be considered as a component of teacher professional development if educational systems are expected to promote the wellbeing of students (Colla et al., 2023). Such training could include (a) a solid foundational knowledge of wellbeing theories, (b) consideration of how wellbeing theories can layer with educators' existing educational philosophy, and (c) capabilities to leverage wellbeing theories in learning design. Additionally, depending on the level of experience and expertise of the educator, they may need foundational teaching skills in order to

integrate the theories into their practice. With such training, students in arts, languages, mathematics, physical education, and sciences lessons may be able to enter classrooms to learn subject matter *and* experience wellbeing.

When developing a prototype framework, a clear articulation of the purpose of the framework is requisite, along with transparency on how the framework is conceptualized and operationalized (Praetorius and Charalambous, 2018). Hence, our work should be read considering some conceptual and methodological constraints. First, our conceptualization of wellbeing does not focus on mental illness. Thus, we do not claim that our approach can remediate psychopathology. Nonetheless, contexts that support basic psychological needs have been associated with lower illbeing (Yu et al., 2016; Mossman et al., 2022). Second, five wellbeing theories have informed the conceptualization of the WILD framework; however, these theories are not meant to be an exhaustive list. A broader range of literature from wellbeing science, such as the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2016), character strengths (Park et al., 2004), and positive psychology coaching (van Nieuwerburgh and Biswas-Diener, 2020) may be relevant, but beyond the scope of the present work.

Third, the approach to the development of the WILD framework is constrained by the wellbeing context in which we are embedded, that is, professional higher education programs in wellbeing science for educators. Our students have predominantly opted to study wellbeing science at a postgraduate level because they have an interest in wellbeing. As a result, they come with a degree of readiness for change in considering how they may integrate wellbeing into their educational practice. Furthermore, the program is developed and delivered in Australia, which ranks high on individualism (Hofstede Insights[2]), while also representing a multi-cultural environment. We have chosen theories that have demonstrated cross-cultural applicability, however, the universality of the WILD framework requires testing. Establishing the transferability of the framework is crucial because evidence suggests that teaching strategies that work in one context may not be effective in another (Sinnema and Aitken, 2014). However, emerging educational practice highlights the

importance of adaptive expertise with a core focus on being responsive to student needs (Le Fevre et al., 2016). We suggest this includes an understanding of cultural factors that impact wellbeing.

To conclude, there has been a global philosophical shift toward recognizing educational institutions as pivotal in supporting wellbeing and building wellbeing capabilities (de Ruyter et al., 2020; WHO, 2021). Accordingly, we believe the time is ripe to consider how we train educators for this changing landscape. We have argued that one way to address this is through wellbeing curriculum design and teaching practice. Hence, we developed a framework for facilitating learning environments that enable wellbeing to emerge, grounded in fundamental psychological wellbeing theories. We recognize that our work is constrained by its preliminary nature; however, we do not position the WILD framework as a fait accompli but rather as a learning opportunity. To that end, we invite conversation about what may be missing and what is essential for a thriving learning climate.

Author contributions

RC and LM contributed equally to the conceptual development, research, writing, and editing of this manuscript. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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2 www.hofstede-insights.com

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