Researching Practices Across and Within Diverse Educational Sites

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Researching Practices Across and Within Diverse Educational Sites: Onto-epistemological Considerations

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Abbreviations

AFN	Assembly of First Nations
CAE	Collaborative Autoethnography
EALD	English as an Additional Language/Dialogue
HPE	Health and Physical Education
IK	Indigenous Knowledges
NATOA	National Aboriginal Trust Officers Association
NIRAKN	National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network
PEP	Pedagogy, Education and Praxis
PNG	Papua New Guinea
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RJ	Restorative Justice
RQ	Research Questions
TPA	Theory of Practice Architectures

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About the Authors

Levon Ellen Blue is an Anishinaabe woman who is a member of the Beausoleil First Nation (G'Chimnissing). She is originally from Canada and lives on Turrbal and Yugara country in Queensland, Australia. She is a Senior Lecturer and National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN) Coordinator in the Carumba Institute at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). She works with Indigenous peoples in both Australia and Canada on community-driven research projects, including the financial literacy needs related to First Nations' trust accounts, small business owners, and the needs and experiences of Indigenous higher degree by research students. She is a Chief Investigator on two Australian Research Council-funded grants: special research initiative – National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN), and Discovery Indigenous – Empowering Indigenous businesses through improved financial and commercial literacy. She has previously worked on other research projects regarding the role of education and technology in First Nation Trust Settlements and how young adults interact with digital financial tools. She is currently researching how to develop financial capabilities in an era of finance apps and cryptocurrencies.

Mervi Kaukko is a Professor of Multicultural Education at the Faculty of Education and Culture at Tampere University, Finland, and an Adjunct Fellow at Monash University, Australia. At the time of finalising this book, she is a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, researching what makes schools welcoming for newly arrived children. Most of her research is done with refugee children and youth. In her work with school-aged refugee children in Finland and Australia, she has tried to understand how refugee children experience educational success and what kind of educational practices have been helpful for them. In a larger Finnish/Norwegian/Scottish project titled Drawing Together, she is exploring how former unaccompanied minors build relational well-being in their new home countries. Most of her current research is framed within practice theories, especially within the theory of practice architectures. She is the Finnish Coordinator of the Pedagogy, Education, and Praxis Network (PEP).

Kristin Elaine Reimer is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, focussing on educational access, relational pedagogy, and restorative justice. At Monash, she works to advance the idea of education as a humanising

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About the Contributors

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Lorelle Frazer joined the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2018 as Dean, School of Business and Creative Industries. She previously held academic appointments at Griffith University, University of Southern Queensland and the University of Queensland. She was the Dean, Learning and Teaching of the Griffith Business School from 2006 to 2014. She was the first person in Australia to be awarded a PhD in Franchising, pioneering the development of franchising as an academic discipline. In 2010, she was honoured with the Contribution to Franchising Award by the Franchise Council of Australia for her 'significant contributions to the education of the Australian franchise community'. Attracting more than A$2 million in research grants, she is regarded as one of the country's leading franchising experts and scholars. She has co-authored the biennial Franchising

Australia surveys since 1998 and Franchising New Zealand since 2010. She served as a Board member of the International Society of Franchising from 2014 to 2017 and as a member of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Small Business and Franchising Consultative Committee from 2006 to 2015.

Doug Hunt holds a PhD in Economics. He has expertise in mine closure, cost-benefit analysis, desktop research, field research, stakeholder engagement, policy development, strategic development and strategic planning, project management, and developing positive business relationships. He is also a Board Member RDA Logan and Redlands, Board Member/Director Sycamore School, and a Board Member Carmel College Thornlands. He now works as a Senior Regulatory Economist at Telstra and was previously a Lecturer in Economics at the University of Queensland and Griffith University and Senior Research Fellow at Griffith University.

Stephen Kemmis is Professor Emeritus at the School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Australia. He is interested in action research and practice theory and has published widely on education, educational research, case study methods in education, educational evaluation, educational reform, and the theory of practice architectures as a theory for understanding and transforming educational and social practices.

Juliana McLaughlin (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia where she teaches critical Indigenous studies in higher education, education, decolonising methodologies, research ethics and protocols, and culture studies. Her teaching and research are informed by postcolonialism, critical race and critical theories, and decolonisation and Indigenous standpoint frameworks. Her research is driven by her passion for decolonising research and education, social justice, equitable development, and international education. She has extensively published in refereed journals and book chapters, serves on journal editorial boards, and has provided expert reviews for a number of manuscripts for publishing firms. She is a Past President for the Australian New Guinea Comparative and International Education Society (ANZCIES), currently Oceania CIES. She is from Manus Island, Papua New Guinea.

Scott Weaven is Head of the Department of Marketing in the Griffith Business School. He has a PhD in Asymmetric Marketing Exchange Relationships and Firm Performance, and has active research interests in relationship marketing, 'big data', and behavioural aspects of consumers and sellers in offline and online contexts. His research has been published in various national and international journals including the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Retailing, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Small Business Management, Journal of International Marketing* and *International Small Business Journal*. Professor Weaven's recent research has focused on examining digital, relational

and hybridized methods of international market entry, e-commerce and encroachment issues in franchise systems, hybrid sales structures, online relationship marketing and consumer sentiment analysis and market segmentation in a variety of business contexts. He has had success in attracting more than $1.9 million in external funding including three Australian Research Council grants (with a range of government agencies including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Department of Industry, Franchise Council of Australia), and consultancy projects investigating online education and due diligence, conflict and survival in small business (with Department of Industry, CPA Australia, Franchise Association of Australia and New Zealand and Queensland Government Office for Small Business).

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Foreword

Stephen Kemmis

As a doctoral student at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in 1973, I was struck by a remark by Tom Hastings, Director of the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation, that 'to the person who has only a hammer, the whole world looks like a nail' (Hastings, 1966). Hastings was critiquing contemporary research methods in education, arguing that researchers studied the problems that were most amenable to the research methods in which they were experts. At that time, many educational researchers specialised in regression analysis and factor analysis, to identify hidden correlations between variables in large bodies of correlational data about, for example, student achievement. Others used experimental designs and multivariate analysis to explore the relative contributions of different variables – for example, students' aptitudes and different educational 'treatments' – to student achievement on experimental tasks. Educational psychology and statistical methods had an outsized influence on the study of education in those days, and much research followed one or another of the noble families of correlational researchers versus experimental researchers.

In those days, educational sociologists and anthropologists inhabited separate villages outside the city walls of educational psychology. Dissatisfied with the empiricist and positivist approaches of those inside the city, many of these villagers were finding ways to jettison those approaches (e.g., ethnomethodology) or reach compromises with them (e.g., grounded theory). Increasingly, such researchers explored what were then called 'interpretivist' approaches to research in education – which by the mid-1980s came to be called 'qualitative' research. And still, beyond those villages, educational historians continued to ply their rag-and-bone trade, picking through the mounting refuse heaps of documents and archives left behind by the march of civilisation. Although less methodologically inclined than the social scientists, the historians were nevertheless daintily clad in historiographies that cover their vulnerabilities when they were challenged by the imperious methodologists. In alliance with some of the sociologists and anthropologists, however, and riding a wave of developments in the philosophy of social science after Thomas Kuhn's (1962/1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the historians and philosophers of social science also breathed new life into the approach of empathetic understanding and 'the method called *Verstehen*' (Outhwaite, 1975) in the study of education and social life, and later critical hermeneutics.

Alongside and out of those developments, the approach of critical theory and critical social and educational science emerged (e.g., Habermas, 1972, 1974). Wilfred Carr and I (1986) wrote about it in our book *Becoming Critical*. Its advocacy of critical social and educational science made the book a contribution to what came to be known as 'the paradigm wars' that grumbled through the social and educational sciences in the 1980s.

As the 1980s wore on, those uneasy truces in the paradigm wars were shattered by a range of new revolutions that changed the contours of social and educational research: the rise of feminist approaches with their stinging critiques of the gender-blindness of much social and educational research of the time, and the rise of poststructuralism and various postmodernisms that challenged the twentieth century 'grand narratives' of scientific progress. These upheavals significantly reshaped the contours of educational and social research, bringing new perspectives to bear about the conduct of research. Soon, further upheavals came in the form of Indigenous and Indigenist perspectives and postcolonial approaches in social and educational research that still further shifted the ways in which education and social life, and educational and social research, could be understood – grounded in distinctive ways of knowing and forms of knowledge.

This diversification of perspectives shattered not only the illusion of scientific 'objectivity', but also an ideology that had tacitly defined who 'researchers' were, what their standpoints would be vis-á-vis the people and phenomena they studied, and what their research would be used for – mostly through prescribing policy and making recommendations for professional practitioners. By the mid-1980s, my own identity as a researcher had been transformed, and I gave up on many of the certainties that had framed my view of social and educational 'science' in the 1960s and 1970s. I came to recognise that, as a young researcher trained in educational psychology, I had aspired to add to the knowledge of my field. At that time, I was interested in the interactions between 'aptitudes' like state and trait anxiety and 'treatments' like the structure of tasks (easy vs difficult and structured vs unstructured). To a large extent, the researchers whose work I read in this field were white men, mostly North American, and I read their 'voices' through the careful 'rational' construction of their academic texts. I wanted to write *those* kinds of texts, and, although it didn't seem so obvious at the time, for *that* kind of audience. As a young scientist, 'my' audience, 'my' scientific community was very largely composed of men like that. As I learned my voice, as a scientist, I was learning to speak with *their* voice – a serious (not to say earnest), imperious, patriarchal voice of reason interpreted not as 'reasonableness' but as sharp-edged, logic-chopping rationalism. By the early 1980s, however, I was coming to recognise and acknowledge that *that* voice had colonised *my* thought, settled, taken up residence …. It had defined what 'science' was and what it meant: to speak with those men's authoritative voices. And now, in the early twenty-first century, thanks to thousands of critical conversations with colleagues and texts, I have a very different view of what social and educational science is and what it does. Thanks to work over the last 15 years or so with colleagues in the Pedagogy, Education and Praxis international research network (described by Kaukko and Wilkinson in Chapter 2 of this book) I – and we – have come to practise research

very differently. I inhabit a different research world than the one I entered in the 1960s and 1970s.

Now, in the early twenty-first century, many different species of educational and social research coexist – sometimes uncomfortably – in the landscapes of education and social life. The methodological debates of the 1950s and 1960s now seem to be arguments about the relative merits of chocolate versus vanilla when a whole world of other flavours is now available.

This book, *Researching Practices Across and Within Diverse Educational Sites: Onto-epistemological Considerations*, offers a different way to understand the diverse life and work of contemporary educational and social research. Importantly, it looks at research from the perspective of *research practice*. To do so, it uses the power of practice theory including the perspective of the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014), but with a range of other perspectives thrown in. It makes sense of research practice through practice research.

Like Whatman, Wilkinson, Kaukko, Vedeler, Blue, and Reimer in Chapter 1, I have written (e.g., 2009, 2012) about the practice of research, including action research, and advocated the empirical study of research *in practice*. This contrasts with much discussion of research approaches from a philosophical perspective (e.g., in phenomenology, Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1989; Merleau-Ponty, 2012) or empirically as, for example, in science and technology studies (e.g., Latour, 2005; Stengers, 2000). Some emerging practice theory perspectives (e.g., Green, 2009) also discuss science and research from an empirical perspective. Now, from the perspective of practice theory, Whatman and associates bring fresh eyes and fresh theoretical resources to the philosophical–empirical task of studying educational science.

In Chapter 1, the authors lay out the broad theoretical framework that informs the studies reported in the book. In particular, they describe epistemology, ontology, and axiology and show how they fit together in (axio-) onto-epistemological approaches in research. They argue that different research approaches tap into different realities and reveal different worlds. This focus narrows in Chapter 2, where Mervi Kaukko and Jane Wilkinson introduce the theory of practice architectures as a frame through which to view different approaches to social and educational research. They set the stage for the chapters that follow, which describe a number of different research studies.

In Chapter 3, Mervi and Jane describe research with, rather than 'on', refugee children and youth. The studies they describe attended closely to the voices of these young people, and to *their* constructions of 'success' at school. They used the theory of practice architectures as an analytic framework to identify the kinds of arrangements that supported these young people inside and outside school. The students identified some of the kinds of arrangements that supported their feelings of success in school. Some were cultural-discursive arrangements, like accepting and supporting the young people's use of their home languages alongside the languages spoken in school – through the resources of their own first languages, the students were included in the conversations of school life. Some were material-economic arrangements, like clean desks and walls, curtains in windows in schools, and sporting and church settings and resources – the kinds

of arrangements the students saw as deliberately provided for *their* use and well-being. And some were social-political arrangements, like smiling, friendly, and welcoming teachers and peers, and church and sporting organisations which gave the students a sense of belonging that spilled over into social relationships in school, not just outside school. These studies brought to the surface young people's knowledge about what is important *to them* in their lives and their education, including things teachers and others may take for granted inside the school (e.g., clean walls and curtains in windows) or miss because they are influences from beyond the school gates (e.g., the pro-educational commitments of churches and sporting organisations). The studies also demonstrate the power of research practices that make space for the voices of the other, humanising rather than colonising (Paris, 2011) the experiences and knowledge of those others.

This theme of dialogue is extended in Chapter 4 by Gørill Warvik Vedeler and Kristin Elaine Reimer. On one level, the chapter reports 'dialogues' of discovery in which the researchers, in separate studies, conducted dialogues with others to identify phenomena about social relationships and restorative justice (Kristin) and home–school collaborations (Gørill). As in Chapter 3, these dialogues aimed to attend to the participants' voices and elicit their constructions of the phenomena being explored. At a second level, the study explored Reimer's and Vedeler's autoethnographies of the research they had conducted, through a reflective dialogue which explored the site-based research arrangements (conditions) that shaped Gørill's and Kristin's research practices.

Chapter 5, by Susan Whatman and Juliana McLaughlin, argues for forms of research that create opportunities to hear the voices of subaltern (Spivak, 1988) groups – in this case Indigenous pre-service teachers in practicum placements in their initial teacher education programmes in Australia. Instead of viewing these students as in some way deficient, people in this teacher education programme negotiated with supervising teachers and others in schools to give Indigenous students opportunities to present Indigenous knowledge in their teaching, as envisaged in the Australian Curriculum. The chapter exemplifies one kind of Indigenist research (Rigney, 1999), in which the Indigenous pre-service teachers became co-researchers with the authors, telling their stories of their practicum experiences in their ways, and drawing on their Indigenous knowledge of place as well as knowledge of ancestor stories. Such research project disrupts and dislocates colonialist research practices that privilege the voice of the outsider-researcher as the one who determines what counts as data, collects it, analyses it, and reports findings, using research practices that subjugate the perspectives, knowledge, and voices of Indigenous participants.

Levon Ellen Blue's Chapter 6 also concerns Indigenous people, in this case a First Nations community in Canada, focussing on issues about community engagement in decision making about the First Nations Settlement Trusts which hold and develop investments on behalf of these communities. Tensions arise between the interests of the beneficiaries of the Trusts (community members), the corporate (usually non-Indigenous) and member (usually Indigenous) trustees of the trusts, the Chief and Council of the Band concerned (who manage many of the resources made available from the Trusts), and a variety of financial organisations (e.g., banks) and professionals (e.g., financial advisers and accountants) who

receive fees for services from the Trust income. The chapter explores differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous axio-onto-epistemological perspectives on practices related to the Trusts, for example, about Indigenous concerns about the sustainability of Trust resources for the coming seven generations versus year-to-year Trust financial management arrangements which the community perceives as colonising because the arrangements are specified in the language and regimes of (non-Indigenous) Canadian laws that regulate Trust governance and financial management and accountability. The research gives voice to Indigenous community perspectives on the current arrangements, revealing a few areas in which the community is satisfied with current arrangements and many areas where it is not.

Chapter 7 is by Levon Ellen Blue, Doug Hunt, Kerry Bodle, Lorelle Frazer, Mark Brimble, and Scott Weaven. The research reported here is conducted by three Indigenous researchers, Blue, Bodle, and Frazer in collaboration with three non-Indigenous researchers. It explores the experience of the owners of Indigenous businesses in Australia as they interacted with three government initiatives intended to support Indigenous business development in Australia: Indigenous Business Australia, the Indigenous Procurement Policy, and Supply Nation (an initiative aimed at facilitating interaction between Indigenous businesses and the procurement departments of various agencies). The researchers interviewed 36 Indigenous participants (franchisees, independent business owners, and business stakeholders) from urban, remote, and regional locations. The research reveals areas in which these three initiatives supported Indigenous business development, and a range of areas in which the initiatives did not meet the circumstances or the needs of Indigenous businesses and people. The lens of the theory of practice architectures was used to explore these areas of match and mismatch between Indigenous businesspeople and the government initiatives intended to support them in the development of their businesses. It concludes with recommendations to government agencies about how to make the initiatives more responsive to the circumstances and needs of Indigenous businesspeople.

Researching Practices Across and Within Diverse Educational Sites: Onto-epistemological Considerations set out to show epistemology, ontology, and axiology fit together in different axio-onto-epistemological approaches in research. The studies presented in the volume do indeed show that different research approaches tap into the different realities of different people and groups, and that research employing these different approaches does indeed reveal different worlds. In particular, of course, the book reveals much about cultural differences including among people with different language backgrounds. But it also shows – for example, in the three chapters focussing on Indigenous people and issues – how different cultures have different conceptions of the world (based on different languages and discourses, different ways of being in the world (based on different characteristic ways of living and working), and different ways of relating to others and the world (e.g. as shown in Chapters 6 and 7 which explore the 'relational accountability' of participants to their families and communities, in contrast with individualist perspectives in research that cast participants and informants as individuals more or less independent of the social relations that underpin their identity).

The volume is thus both a challenge and a resource for social and educational researchers. It poses a challenge to researchers to reach into the

axio-onto-epistemological commitments and perspectives that frame both their research and the everyday lives and work of those they study. And it is a resource to assist researchers to identify and explore the axio-onto-epistemological commitments and perspectives that frame the everyday lives of the participants and informants with whom researchers engage in the conduct of their research.

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Preface

This book explores what it is that we as educational researchers believe is our role in uncertain, risky times and, as a consequence, what promises we can keep to our students and communities. The book examines how what we *do* – our researching practices, their consequences, and how things 'turn out' in seemingly unpredictable ways (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) – is related to *how* we set about to understand these practices. These are the onto-epistemological bases of action: doing by knowing and being.

The book achieves three critical tasks. Firstly, we examine how research approaches are enabled and/or constrained by what Kemmis et al. (2014) called 'prefigured knowings' from the theory of practice architectures, including how this leads to unquestioned researching practices. We suggest that an understanding of *onto-epistemology* assists in revealing these unquestioned practices by considering the connections between knowing, being, and doing research. Secondly, theoretical arguments and empirical examples of the site-based research practices from various cultural and intercultural contexts are provided in subsequent chapters, arising from action and reflection upon our research practices with particular groups of people. Lastly, a short, reflective chapter concludes the book, zooming in, as Nicolini (2012) would suggest, on the contributions to researching practices of an awareness or sensitivity to axio-onto-epistemology – ways of doing, being and knowing – and inviting the academy to respond. Taken together, the book seeks to trouble the taken-for-grantedness of research traditions by focussing on the practice architectures that enable and/or constrain the theory–method nexus of *coming to know* across culturally diverse and intercultural sites.

The chapters within this book present a dialectic between humans and practices, of humans *in* practices, and of humans *and others in practices*. It becomes dialectical when researchers return their interpretations of events to other key 'knowers' (participants or expert peers) for consensus or renegotiation. This dialectic between humans, others, and practices is required to transform cross-human and cultural misinterpretation into informed consciousness and future, socially just action (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

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Chapter 1

Onto-epistemological and Axiological Considerations for Researching Practices

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Abstract

In these uncertain and risky times, the work that educators and educational researchers carry out may feel inconsequential. In preparing young people to live well in a world worth living in, educators must consider, firstly, what roles they can play in a global environment riven by volatile economic, social, and environmental contexts, and secondly, the responsibilities they bear as researchers to produce forms of understanding, modes of action, and ways of relating to one another and this world.

In this chapter, we introduce the pedagogy, education, and praxis (PEP) network and how it is that we, as researchers from around the world, came together to discuss our researching practices in coming to know and explore educational research problems concerning equity, diversity and social justice within and across different cultural settings. We share short stories of ourselves to reveal how it is that we have come to know, be, and act as researchers in our projects and how working alongside each other – our mutual relatings – have generated further understanding about our own and each other's researching practices.

This chapter establishes the purpose of the book, where we share empirical work through the lens of practice architectures. For instance, what is considered to be an educational equity problem across international or cross-cultural sites? What are considered acceptable forms of evidence of coming to understand educational inequity in its diverse forms in different sites? How are taken-for-granted research practices enabling and/or constraining different forms of understandings about educational inequity,

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including the issues to be researched and/or the direction of the research project? We then provide an overview of the remaining chapters.

Keywords: Axiology; educational research; epistemology; ontology; onto-epistemology; pedagogy; practices; praxis

Introduction

We live in an era of heightened political and social tensions. Inequality is rising within societies and between nations. The number of refugees fleeing war torn nations due to wars and climate emergencies has risen to figures not seen since the end of the Second World War. Unabashedly pro-fascist governments are gaining ascendancy in democratic nations such as Italy and Sweden respectively, whipping up populist policies which deliberately fan hatred and fear of minority groups. Globally, we are experiencing threats of nuclear war and an unprecedented climate emergency. In these uncertain and risky times, the work that educators and educational researchers carry out may seem inconsequential.

However, if the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us nothing else, it has reminded us of the crucial role that education and educating can play in fostering 'resonance' (Rosa, 2019); that is, a 'healthy, harmonious connection' between students and educators, through which a 'rewarding relationship to the world can grow' (Schatzki, 2021, p. 12). Building these healthy connections is a key premise of what Kemmis et al. (2014) describe as the double purpose of education, that is, 'to prepare people to live well in a world worth living in' (p. 27). However, what constitutes living well in a world worth living in is highly contested and subject to much debate. What role can educational researchers play in contributing to these debates, particularly in a global environment riven by heightened economic, social, and environmental precarities and volatilities sketched above? What responsibilities do we bear as researchers to produce forms of understanding, modes of action, and ways of relating to one another and the world (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 26) that foster this double purpose of education, rather than exacerbating inequities through our researching practices?

In this book, we examine the preceding questions as part of our shared commitment as educational researchers who work with children and young people in intercultural and cross-cultural contexts. Brought together by the PEP international network (see next section), we have discussed over a number of years the key problems that arise through our researching practice and praxis when it comes to working with children and young people in these contexts. This book arises from these discussions. Specifically, it examines the following questions, drawing on Kemmis et al.'s (2014) definition of the double purpose of education and, by extension, educational research: what constitutes ways of knowing, forms of action, and ways of relating to one another and the world that contribute to (rather than undermine) the double purpose of educating when it comes to

educational researching practices in inter/cross-cultural contexts? What is taken for granted about these researching practices in these contexts and how might they be disrupted in ways that promote the notion of education defined above? How might particular taken-for-granted practices frame the types of questions that are asked, the educational 'problems' or issues that are identified, and the relationships that ensue? How can we as educational researchers disrupt these practices and the conditions that prefigure them? How might such practices perpetuate or contest taken-for-granted assumptions in intercultural and cross-cultural contexts with diverse peoples who experience the ongoing and often violent consequences of such taken-for-grantedness? In sum, we examine how our researching practices, their consequences, and how things 'turn out' in seemingly unpredictable ways (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) are related to how we frame what counts as educational issues. These questions also raise the axiological, ontological, and epistemological bases of research action: doing by being and knowing.

We understand that the researching questions raised in the preceding paragraph are not new. Rather, they build on a rich corpus of scholarship including Indigenous, critical feminist, and postcolonial work and that of action research, particularly from Latin-American, Scandinavian, and Anglo-American traditions. However, what distinguishes this book from others is that we examine the preceding questions through a practice lens. Specifically, we adopt the theory of practice architectures [TPA] (Kemmis et al., 2014) for it allows us to 'zoom in' (Nicolini, 2009) on the very taken-for-grantedness of our researching practices. In TPA's terms, this practice lens allows us to examine the knowings, doings, and relatings to other participants and to the world that render our practices distinctive as researching practices (rather than as teaching practices or engaging in professional learning, etc.; Kemmis et al., 2014). Hence, in this chapter in particular, we sometimes speak of research*ing* practices, rather than *research* practices. We do so to capture the fluidity, dynamism, and always-coming-into-being of the verb form of this word. Our aim is to disrupt the notion of research as a state, entity, as fixed bodies of knowledge and ways of acting in the world.

Simultaneously, a practice architectures lens allows us to 'zoom out' (Nicolini, 2009) to examine the diverse conditions that prefigure (but do not predetermine) researching practices in inter/cross-cultural contexts with children and young people. Drawing on Kemmis et al. (2014), it permits us to ask questions such as: What cultural-discursive arrangements such as our knowledges and understandings about diverse children and young people may prefigure how we frame research problems and the bodies of scholarship that we draw on? What (material-economic) arrangements such as the availability of research funding may prefigure our modes of action, for example, which children and young people we work with? What (social-political) arrangements in terms of power and forms of solidarity frame our ways of relating to these groups and the world in which we live? These arrangements include our system roles as researchers and our life-world relationships with those with whom we research. And finally, what do these arrangements and their concomitant practices connote when it comes to working in inter/cross-cultural contexts, particularly when it comes to transforming these contexts in ways that promote the double purpose of education noted above?

We aim to achieve three critical tasks in this book. Firstly, as noted above, we examine how research approaches are enabled and/or constrained by 'prefigured knowings' (Kemmis et al., 2014), including how such knowings (doings and relatings) lead to unexamined researching practices. We suggest that an understanding of *onto-epistemology* (see Understanding Research*ing* Practices section) assists in revealing these unquestioned practices by considering the connections between knowing, being, and doing research. Secondly, drawing on a range of empirical studies we have conducted with children and young people in inter/cross-cultural sites, we utilise TPA to reflect on and theorise our researching practices, including their epistemological, ontological, and axiological implications for these groups. Thirdly, we conclude by 'zooming in' (Nicolini, 2009) on the contributions to research axiologies – researching values and ways of doing – that close attention to researching practices via the lens of onto-epistemology can achieve, suggesting ways in which the academy can respond. Taken together, the preceding chapters seek to trouble the taken-for-grantedness of research traditions by focussing on the practice architectures that enable and/or constrain the theory–method nexus of *coming to know* across culturally diverse and intercultural sites.

This chapter is organised into four sub-sections. The first section provides the reader with an understanding of the PEP network, a crucial intellectual foundation from which this work has sprung. The second section provides an encounter with the authors: who we are and how we came to work together. Both sections are crucial in rendering visible the practice architectures that shape our ways of knowing, being, and doing educational research in intercultural contexts. In the second section, we turn to key understandings of research, practices, epistemology, ontology, and axiology, as they shape and inform research practices, and particularly those practices outlined in subsequent chapters. The third section zooms in on the idea and, indeed, the question of, what are researching practices? What is taken for granted about such practices? What are the dangers of unquestioned assumptions, particularly in intercultural and cross-cultural contexts with diverse peoples who experience the consequences of this taken-for-grantedness? The final section provides an overview of the chapters, identifying connections and raising questions for scrutiny and contemplation in the remainder of the book.

The PEP International Network

The PEP network preconfigured the particular kinds of research relationships that brought us together as educational researchers from Australia, Canada, Norway, and Finland. The network and how we relate within it has shaped the thinking, dialogue, and reflection required to bring together our different research projects within different research traditions and epistemes.

The PEP network is a cross-institutional, collaborative research programme which brings together researchers 'investigating the nature, traditions and condition of pedagogy, education and praxis and how they are understood, developed and sustained in different national contexts and various educational settings' (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016, p. 77). The network includes researchers from Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Colombia, Finland, New Zealand, Norway,

Sweden, and the Netherlands (see https://research.tuni.fi/pep/). Through these collaborations, the PEP network of scholars has been exploring education practices, educational development, and action research through a range of theoretical frameworks, including but not limited to TPA (Kemmis et al., 2017).

Sustaining such a network is only possible via shared concerns and action with complex problems. The PEP international network began with a shared commitment from educational researchers steeped in varied action research traditions to fostering dialogue between the diverse intellectual educational approaches from which the researchers came. The desire for dialogue was based on shared concerns that these traditions were increasingly being ploughed under by the advent of neoliberalism which reduces broader questions of the purpose of education and the practice of educating itself, respectively, to an economic and private, rather than a public good, and a technical endeavour. The five overarching research questions that frame PEP's research programme foreground these concerns. The questions ask the following (in different national contexts): (1) What is educational praxis? (2) How is good professional practice ('praxis') being understood and experienced? (3) How is good professional development ('praxis development') being understood and experienced? (4) How are the changing cultural, social, political, and material conditions for praxis and praxis development affecting the educational practices of educators? (5) What research approaches facilitate praxis and praxis development in different international contexts? This fifth question is the one from which we take our cue for this book (c.f. Kaukko et al. 2020). Arising from these questions, the PEP network organises its research conversations around a broad programme of research, currently focussed on what it means to live well in a world worth living in. Three distinct but interrelated researcher groups have worked together on a number of research projects, one concerned with leading, the second with learning and didaktik, and the third with sustainability, social justice, and diversity. It is this latter group from which our work in this book has developed.

In viewing research approaches as practices with distinctive practice architectures that prefigure them, we seek to illustrate how dialogues between international collaborations made possible by the PEP network have laid bare taken-for-granted *researching* practices of Western research traditions. As we attempt to make sense of our own worlds, and the worlds of our colleagues, the intellectual foundations from which our axiological, ontological, and epistemological assumptions derive invariably collide. In examining the existing approaches to 'practice-based' and 'praxis-related' research, we can progress our understandings of not only the forms of research that can promote the development of praxis in different national contexts but also the conditions under which this kind of 'praxis research' might be conducted (and by whom; Pedagogy, Education and Praxis Network, 2021).

Who Are We?

In this section, we provide a brief introduction of the authors' stories and of how we came to be involved in the PEP network. We share how ways of knowing, being, and doing influence each of us in unique ways based on our cultural backgrounds, life experiences, beliefs and values, and researcher identities. We are from

Australia, Canada, Finland, and Norway, working and researching in various educational settings. Each of us comes from particular sites in these countries; from remote places or central cities; from tropical, temperate, or polar climatic zones; and from faith-based or secular, political, or academic families. As our stories will show, coming together to work on shared interests and commitments to social justice and diversity, we have influenced each other's understandings of education. Our 'back stories' are part of our research approaches and research journeys. To reveal our different points of departure, we share some glimpses of our personal stories.

Sue's Story

I was born from descendants of Welsh, Scottish, Irish, and English immigrants to Australia on *Minjungbal* land in North Eastern New South Wales, Australia. Why my state was called 'New South Wales' was never really at the forefront of my consciousness growing up, nor did it trouble me. At school, we learned that some place names in Australia were given because colonisers thought the landscape reminded them of 'home', but the fact that we were growing up on land stolen from the Minjungbal people – the First Nations people in our part of Australia – was never part of my schooling.

I did not learn whose land sustained my childhood until after I completed six years of tertiary education, firstly in a teaching degree and then a Master's degree. It was only when I started working with First Nations academics in my university in the mid-1990s, when we started to acknowledge Country at the beginning of meetings and lectures, that I wondered whose Country it was on which my home town was located. This personal and contextual explanation of my lived reality of *terra nullius* – the convenient British decree that said Australia was an *empty land* which could be annexed by the Crown (Burney et al., 2020) – is one repeated in every corner of the continent. White people's schooling deliberately excluded this shared history, carefully crafting the coloniser's narrative of 'settlement'. White people 'didn't know' the true history of invasion, genocide, and theft of land and children. But, now we do and we are obligated to act.

I now live and work near where I grew up, on Yugambeh Country, working alongside many other First Nations people in the south-east corner of Queensland at Griffith University. Griffith University acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of the lands upon which its campuses stand, which include Turrbal, Jagera, Yuggera, Yugurabul, Kombumerri, and Yugambeh. I lecture and research in Health and Physical Education (HPE), having spent equal parts of my tertiary career teaching critical Indigenous studies and HPE. My research interests began in understanding how and why communities exercise their democratic and pedagogic rights in designing health education for First Nations girls in 'remote' schools (Whatman, 2008) and transformed into decolonising practice in teacher education (Whatman, 2020) as a consequence of my engagement with First Nations' ways of knowing, being, and doing.

My involvement in PEP began with an invitation from Peter Grootenboer (cf. Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) to attend a PEP International Network meeting

in Brisbane. It was unlike any other conference I had been to, as we were given readings in advance, were asked to come prepared to discuss them, and found that 'flying under the radar' (hooks, 2008) as a newcomer/outsider was not acceptable. A compulsory debrief on the last day was initially disconcerting to me. PEP attendees were asked to give feedback to the organisers then and there about which aspects of the meeting should be improved for next time. The delegates were forthright in speaking about what needed to be improved. With a preference and level of comfort with anonymous feedback practices, my Anglo-Celtic values and way of being to not criticise the hosts were challenged by what I came to understand as internationally sustained, reflective, and reflexive pedagogical practice of the PEP network. I had experienced open dialogic discussion in Indigenous yarning circles and community meetings before, but this was the first time I had experienced something similar in a mostly White, non-Indigenous research forum. Mahon et al. (2020) described this introduction to the PEP network as being 'stirred into practice'. What initially appeared as confrontational criticism soon became welcome and routine insights into approaches that made our future meetings and writing collaborations richer and more rigorous.

Jane's Story

I was born in the city of Melbourne, in the southern state of Victoria, Australia and on the Wurunderi Nation of the Kulin people. Like Sue, my schooling made no mention that we were growing up on land stolen from the Wurunderi Woi Wurrung people – the First Nations people. It was only in my adulthood when I lived in Wagga Wagga, on Wiradjuri country, that I became aware of another history of First Nations people that had been violently repressed over the generations. There was another bitter irony here that I came to understand later in life. My mother's family were Romanian Jews who had fled the pogroms of Europe in the nineteenth century to settle in Palestine. In so doing, they escaped the holocaust of the Second World War, but dispossessed the Palestinians in a bloody and violent civil war which plays out to this day.

My mother and her older sister arrived in Australia towards the end of the Second World War, speaking no English and desperate for the chance of a new life. They had borrowed money from their father for the journey from Palestine to Australia and had threatened a dual suicide pact if he did not give them the funds. One day when she was elderly, I asked my mother point blank if she and her sister would have carried out their suicide threat. She responded, 'Of course! We had no hope. We were desperate to escape and couldn't see a future for ourselves.' Her response stayed with me and helped me to comprehend the desperation people can experience because of war, violence, poverty, and suffering. It gave me a personal interest and sense of connection to the generations of refugees who had fled to Australia post the Second World War. My father came from a working class, Anglo-English family who were nominally Anglican. Much to his mother and family's horror, he married my mother – a Jew. My mother's father was equally horrified: to marry 'out' of one's Jewish religion was a highly unusual act in that era. However, like many children from bi-cultural families, I learned to move

between two contrasting cultures and negotiate their contradictions. I absorbed the culture of my Eastern European mother's background whilst accepting that my White Australian grandmother called England 'home' (she had never visited there) and enjoyed eating the typical meals of her northern English homeland. Simultaneously, I learned to deal with the antisemitism of my grandmother's family, mainly directed at my mother, but which echoed the racism I experienced throughout my schooling and in Australian society more generally.

My interest in refugee education came from a background that many children of immigrants will recognise. I wrote shopping lists for my mother in English and negotiated on her behalf the attitudes of a bureaucracy who treated a non-Anglo woman with a heavy 'foreign' accent as inferior and 'other'. These experiences fuelled my interest as a teacher to work with young people who had English as an additional language/dialect (EALD). In my late twenties, I moved to Wagga Wagga, a large regional town in Wiradjuri country in southern New South Wales and began a new career as an academic. There I witnessed large numbers of families arriving from Southern Sudan to settle in what had been a largely White and Indigenous country town. I wondered what the experiences were like for families, students, and educators as they negotiated these new beginnings. This began my research journey with refugee education and with my crucial, bridge-building colleague, Dr Kiprono Langat (cf. Wilkinson & Langat, 2012). Simultaneously, I joined a group of researchers in my university led by Professor Stephen Kemmis that eventually became the Australian 'node' of the PEP international research group. It was then that I began to forge precious connections with Scandinavian, Caribbean, and Latin American researchers who opened my eyes to rich histories of education beyond the 'anglosphere'.

Mervi's Story

I grew up in North Finland, mostly (we moved houses frequently) in wooden houses located in rural areas in pine wood forests. The land on which these homes were located had once belonged to various nomadic and reindeer herding peoples of Northern Scandinavia. Both sides of my family were also reindeer herders, but with no close family lines to the Indigenous Sami people of Finland.

I had a typical, middle-class Finnish family, with a teacher mother, a sales manager father, two brothers, and a changing combination of pets. After finishing secondary school, I spent some years volunteering abroad. During my stays in Australia, Ireland, the USA, and different countries in Europe, I worked with a range of different groups of people who were somehow marginalised for different reasons. In Ireland, the USA, and later in Finland, I worked with children, youth, and adults with developmental and physical disabilities. In the Netherlands, I had a chance to work with children and families from refugee backgrounds. These experiences made an impact on me. I enjoyed learning to know people from different backgrounds, and I enjoyed working with them. After returning to Finland, I started my studies in a programme called Intercultural Teacher Education (University of Oulu). I was not overly interested in becoming a teacher like my mother. Instead, I was drawn to the programme's overarching themes of social