

Being critical and creative

**Transformational research** 

**Human Flourishing** 

Practitioner research

#### Heavy feet of stone





#### Practitioner Research Issues

- Dominance of utilitarian rationale for undertaking PR focus on outcome rather than process and the transformation of the individual.
- 'those who know and do not act and those who act and do not know' – hierarchy of knowledge bearers and knowledge users
- Research quality vs practice quality "if there are no flaws in the design and conduct of the study, then we are compelled to accept the findings as applicable to practice" (Rolfe 1998)
- Practitioner research as the telling of 'romantic uncritical recollections and stories' (cf Fine 1994)

#### Practitioner research

"practitioner research is a formal and systematic attempt made by practitioners either alone, or in collaboration with others, to understand their work, with the intended purpose of making public new knowledge about the transformation of self, colleagues and work contexts" [McCormack, in press (adapted from McCormack 2003)]

# Systems elements: structures, processes, patterns

Structures	Processes	Patterns (after Plsek 2001)
<ul> <li>organisation boundaries</li> <li>layout of equipment, facilities, departments</li> <li>roles, responsibilities</li> <li>teams, committees and working groups</li> <li>targets, goals</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>patient journeys, care pathways</li> <li>supporting processes such as requesting, ordering, delivering, dispensing</li> <li>funding flows, recruitment of staff, procurement of equipment</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>decision-making: Rapid by experts vs hierarchy and position bound.</li> <li>relationships: generate energy for new ideas vs draining of energy.</li> <li>conflict: opportunities to embrace ideas vs negative and destructive feedback.</li> <li>power use: power to enable vs power over.</li> <li>learning: Eager to learn and improve vs learning that is threatening and risky to the status quo.</li> </ul>

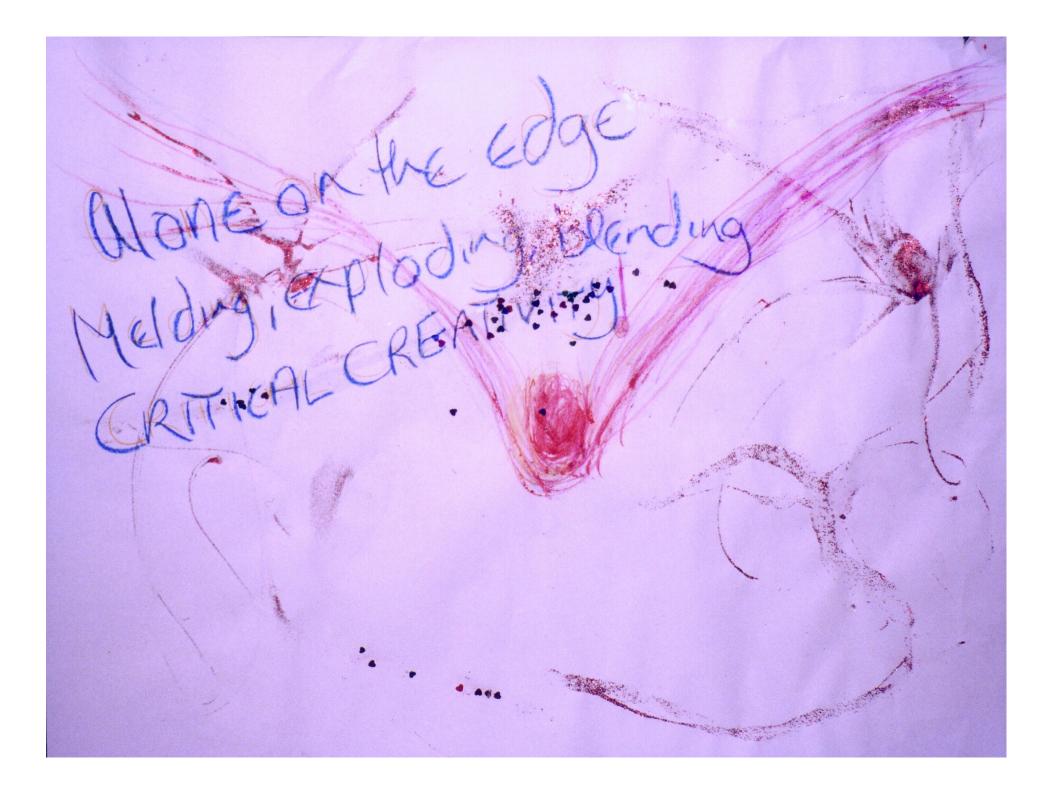
"The Disconnected Disorder" (adapted from Arabena 2006)

The disconnection between those engaged in ... developmental processes fuelled by an insensitivity to those who are most intimate with it

# The 'Yes and' of Transformational Research: 'unearthing new treasures'

Empirico analytical	Interpretive	Transformational
Measurement, prediction, explanation	Discovery, understanding, clarification	Improvement, reform, empowerment, change
Objective, structured, scholarly	relational, descriptive	Contextual, experiential, descriptive, reflexive, critical, praxiological

"... changing practices is not just a matter of changing ideas of individual practitioners alone, but also discovering, analysing and transforming the social, cultural, discursive and material conditions under which their practice occurs" (Kemmis, 2006: 474

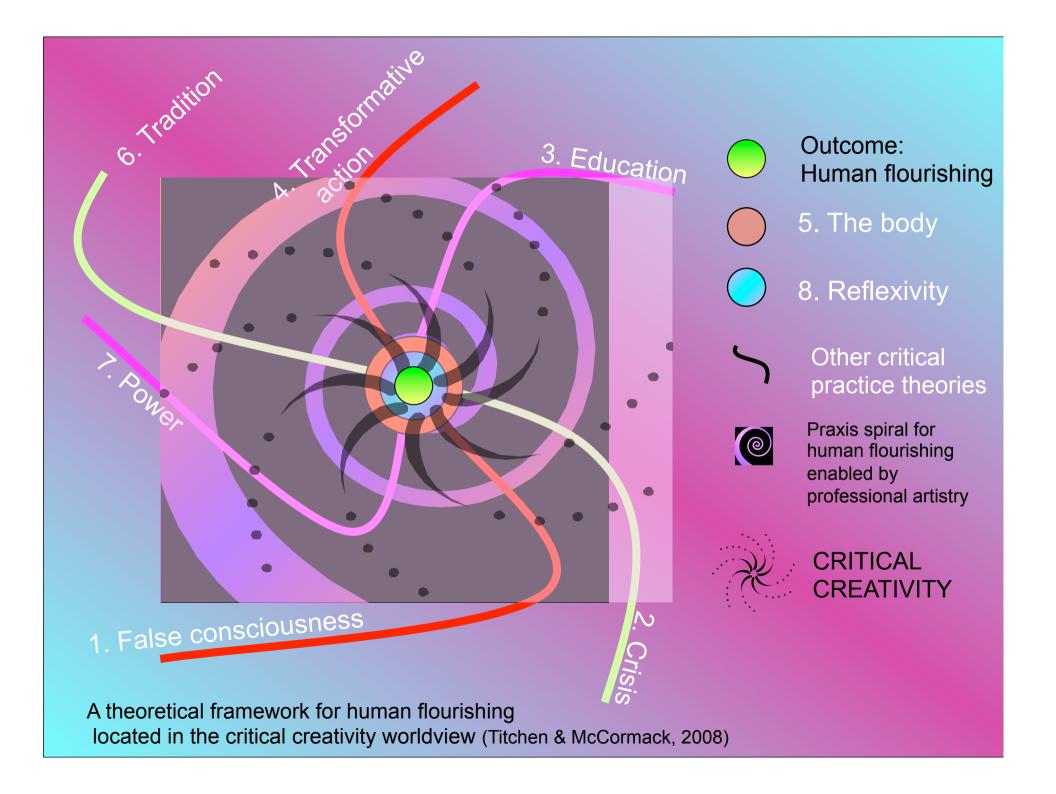


The Theories of Critical Social Science (see McCormack & Titchen, 2006, adapted from Fay, 1987)

Fay's Theories		
1. False consciousness		
2. Crisis		
3. Education		
4. Transformative action		
5. The body		
6. Tradition		
7. Power		
8. Reflexivity		

#### **CRITIQUE**

- Does not explicitly acknowledge the creativity required in PR approaches
- Does not recognise moral and sacred dimensions as people push out the boundaries of the known within their own practice
- Insufficient epistemological and ontological support for creative practice
- Need for a critical, creative and inclusive perspective



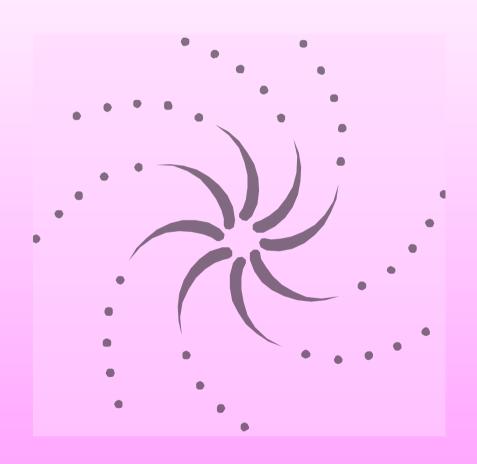
#### The need for a Praxis spiral

- Practical activity involves skills, sensitivities and capacities
- Practical activity is a form of Praxis
- Praxis can be informed by a theory but is much more
- Kind of creative activity required for human flourishing
- Praxis spiral is enabled by 'professional artistry'



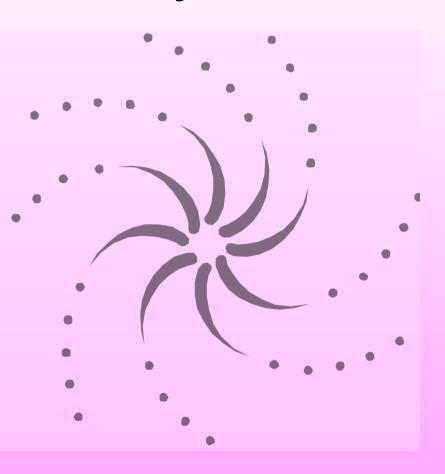
### **Critical Creativity**

- Centres on the basic concepts of PRAXIS and HUMAN FLOURISHING
- Within critical creativity the concept of praxis is extended to include action that is also creative



## **Critical Creativity**

- Creative thinking (thinking about thinking) and critique, blended with creative imagination and expression
- This new understanding of praxis is the means through which human flourishing is brought about



### **Human Flourishing**

- Focuses on maximising the potential for individuals to achieve their potential for growth and development
- Human flourishing is seen as both the end and the means of practitioner research and development
- The framework presented offers new theoretical understandings of how practitioners can transform themselves and enable it in others



# Stillness in a landscape

Early morning light

Chi Gung on the stones

Same place but different space

Five rhythms

Expressed in authentic movement

Informal and formal

Stones slippery when walking

But steady when dancing

RHOTH'S 5 RHYTHMS:

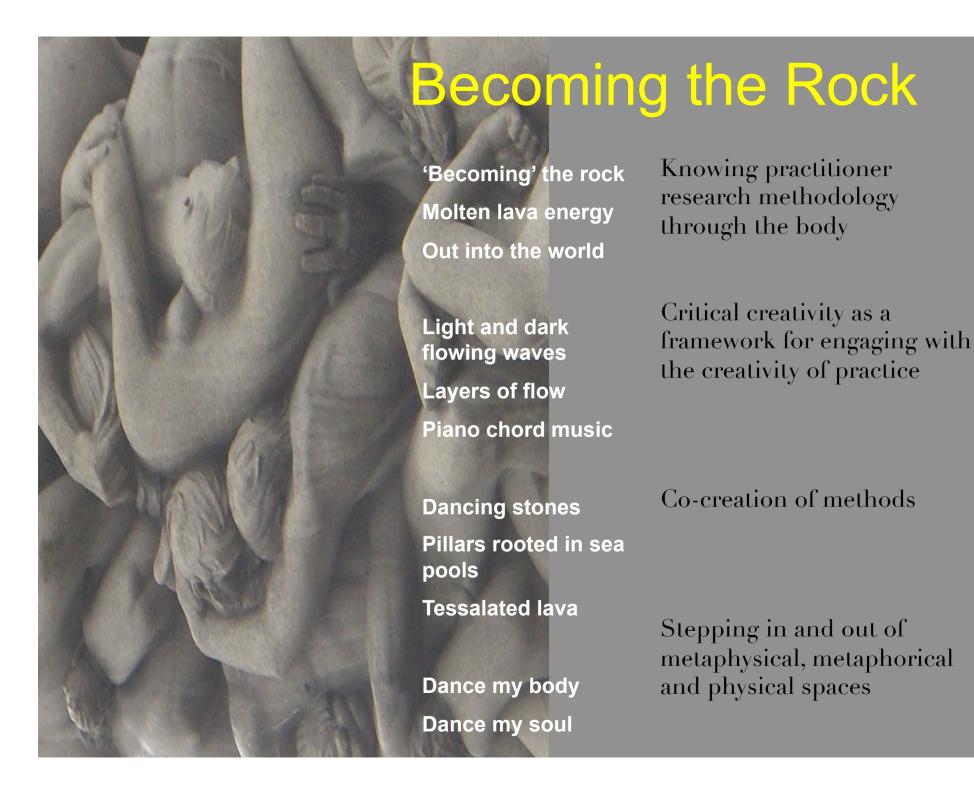
Flowing

Staccato

Chaos

Lyrical

Stillness





Hermeneutic praxis

Stepping into the unknown

**Emancipation through new knowing** 

Freed from the fear of unknowing

We know we can fly

**Exhilaration** 

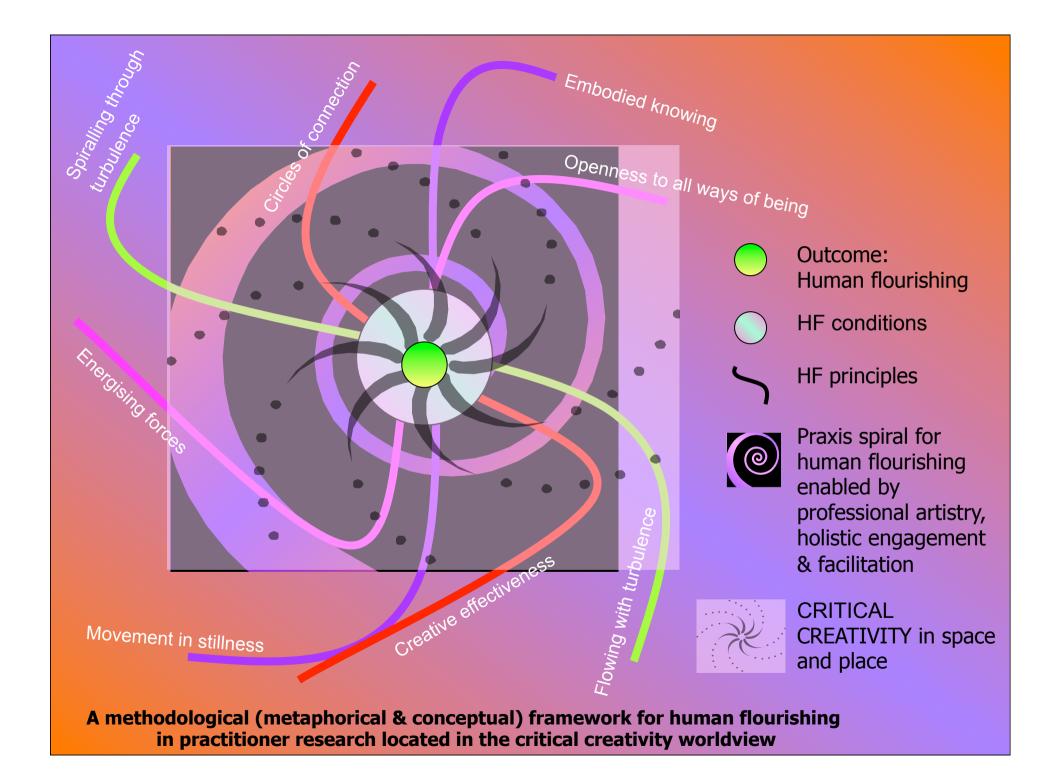
Carrying through the fears and boulders

Creating the conditions for transformation

'Being' rather than 'doing'

Embodiment of critical theories

Practice transformed through critically-creative, holistic engagement with practice



#### How do we help people to flourish?

Metaphor	
Spiralling through turbulence	Authentic facilitation that is consistent with the shared values and beliefs of co-participants and that results in human flourishing.
Circles of connection	Co-construction of a shared reality and spiralling awareness and understanding that has no beginning and no end.
Creative effectiveness	Through blending, improvisation, synchronicity, atunement and balance of professional artistry, particularised creative approaches are made possible.
Movement in the stillness	The stillness of reflection, contemplation and emptying the mind creates a movement that enables future meaningful, ethical action and understanding to occur
Embodied knowing	connection with the environment through an internalisation of its culture(s) or the culture is enacted and seen through a person's body/being in the world.
Energising forces	Transformation occurs through moments of 'crisis' that trigger a need for change. Creative expression at moments of crisis generates energy from a new ability to express feelings, experiences, spirituality, ethical concerns, embodied and tacit ways of knowing
Openness to all ways of being	Practitioner researchers need to be open to and appreciative of different world views
Flowing with turbulence	Working with turbulence requires the use of emotional and spiritual intelligences

