CH AND PRACTICE THEORY

A new cross-national empirical research program

INTRODUCTION

In the final session of its September 8-11, 2011, meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, the Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) international collaboration agreed to undertake a new cross-national research study under the rubric *Action Research and Practice Theory*. The partner researchers in PEP have been involved for many years in participatory action research projects involving groups of teachers in a variety of settings including early childhood education and care, primary and secondary schooling, vocational education and training, adult and community education, and higher education. Working with twenty such groups, the partners intend to explore how educational work is enabled and constrained in those settings by the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that exist in the sites being studied.

Appendix 1 presents a list of the initial twenty projects expected to contribute to the new collaborative empirical research program *Action Research and Practice Theory*.

BACKGROUND

Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) is a cross-institutional, collaborative research program which brings together researchers investigating the nature, traditions and condition of pedagogy, education and praxis and how they may be developed in different national contexts and various educational settings. The institutions participating in the *Action Research and Practice* Theory research program are Charles Sturt University (Australia, led by Professor Stephen Kemmis), Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands, led by Professor Petra Ponte), the University of Gothenburg (Sweden, led by Professor Karin Rönnerman), Åbo Akademi University (Finland, led by Professor Petri Salo), University of Tromsø (Norway, led by Associate Professor Eli Moksnes Furu) and the University of Sheffield (United Kingdom; Professor Wilfred Carr). The University of Stockholm (Sweden, led by Associate Professor Matts Mattsson) has also been part of PEP since its formation in 2005.

The PEP international program emerged out of a series of discussions about the way in which the bureaucratization and de-professionalization of education were now eroding the moral, social and political commitments that informed pedagogical practice until the recent past, and a shared conviction of the need for a form of educational research committed to reviving and restoring these commitments. The outcome was the formal creation, in 2005, of an international research program that would create and support a collaborative network of scholars committed to:

- reviving and reconstructing the classical concept of ‑praxis‑in ways that make it applicable to a critical analysis of the present condition and future development of educational practice, and

- conducting research that would expose impediments to, and promote the development of, praxis in different educational settings and in relation to a variety of educational issues as they emerged in a variety of national contexts.

Encouraging a reflexive dialogue between the European traditions of ‑Pedagogiek‑ and the Anglo-Saxon tradition of ‑Educational Philosophy and Theory‑ continues to provide theoretical resources for understanding how the concepts of ‑education‑, ‑pedagogy‑ and ‑praxis‑ are understood in the different traditions of thought and practice of countries participating in the PEP international collaboration.

Researchers participating in the collaboration meet regularly to manage the research program, to plan collaborative initiatives, and to encourage the cross-fertilisation of ideas. Research groups facilitated from the lead institutions differ in their specific areas of research interest and their particular ways of working, but they have all attracted research students, acquired research funding, produced significant publications, conducted high quality research projects, and hosted exchange visits of researchers in the fields defined by the program's aspirations and aims.

The strength, vitality and sustainability of the program result from a research strategy developed and continuously revised at a series of planning meetings held since 2005. This strategy has already produced some notable achievements:

- The creation of a collaborative international research community of established scholars, early career and post-doctoral researchers and doctoral research students.

- ...raxis¢book series with six inter-related books examining the condition of educational *praxis* in different countries.
- A substantial number of scholarly research papers published in leading research journals.
- Keynote presentations at major educational research conferences.
- Dissemination of the program¢s research achievements through papers and symposia at major international conferences, 2005-2011 (including the European Conference on Educational Research, the Australian Association for Research in Education; the Nordic Educational Research Association; and the Collaborative Action Research Network).
- International Doctoral Schools attended by doctoral candidates from Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden (accredited by the University of Gothenburg; 7.5 higher education credits for European Union doctoral candidates):
  - February 11-14, 2008, Wagga Wagga: *Understanding and Researching Professional Practice*; 11 doctoral candidates;
  - April 20-24, 2009, Gothenburg: *Researching Professional Practice*; 18 candidates;
  - December 6-10, 2010, Wagga Wagga: *Researching Professional Practice: Spectator and participant perspectives*; 22 candidates;
  - October 3-7, 2011, Gothenburg: *Researching Professional Practice: Challenges and issues in action research*; 13 candidates;
  - November, 2012, Coolangatta, Australia;
  - November, 2013, Tromsø, Norway.
- Significant grants of research funding from national funding agencies and host institutions, and a Swedish Research Council Networking Program Grant 2010-2012 for travel and support (840,000 Swedish kronor or about AUD $125,000).
- Bilateral Memoranda of Understanding to Cooperate in Research between most lead institutions in the collaboration.

Research Agenda:

The program¢s research agenda is organised around five general research questions to be answered through

- theoretical studies of the concepts of pedagogy, praxis and praxis development as they have come to be understood in different intellectual, theoretical and cultural traditions, and
- empirical studies informed by, and critically informing, these theoretical studies, by bringing them into dialectical confrontation with how praxis and praxis development are instantiated in the practical realities of teachers¢ work and careers.

1. What is educational praxis? Here the aim is to articulate a coherent theoretical account of ±educational praxis¢ and of what might count as ±the development of educational praxis¢ that can be used to critically examine contemporary educational and pedagogical practices and to inform empirical studies of how, in different national contexts, educational praxis develops through various stages of the teaching career, from initial teacher education through to the continuing professional development of experienced teachers and teacher leaders.

2. How, in different national contexts, is good professional practice (±praxis¢) being understood and experienced by teachers? Here the aim is to explore differences in the ways educational praxis is understood by teachers at various stages of the teaching career, from initial teacher education through continuing professional development to experienced teachers.

3. How, in different national contexts, is good professional development (praxis development) being understood and experienced by teachers? Here the aim is to investigate how teachers¢capacity for educational praxis does (or does not) develop at various stages of the teaching career, from initial teacher education through continuing professional development to experienced teachers.

4. How, in different national contexts, are the changing cultural, social, political and material conditions for praxis and praxis development affecting the educational practices of teachers? Here the aim is to explore how the changing conditions for pedagogy and education are differently forming and transforming praxis and praxis development at various stages of the teaching career, from initial teacher education through continuing professional development to experienced teachers.

2

is and praxis development in different international contexts?

Here the aim is to examine existing approaches to ÷practice-basedø and ÷praxis-relatedø research (for example, educational action research) and develop a more adequate understanding both of the forms of research that can promote the development of praxis, and of the conditions under which this kind of ÷praxis researchø might be conducted (and by whom), in different educational settings.

The Research Plan 2008-2011

Between 2008 and 2011, the main strategic priority for the PEP international collaborative research program was to integrate an interconnected series of empirical projects on ÷*Praxis Development throughout the Teacherøs Careerø* This was achieved through the conduct of three cross-national empirical projects:

- *Leading and Learning: Developing ecologies of educational practices* (Australia, Norway, Sweden), investigating the interdependencies between practices of leading, professional learning, teaching and student learning in schools;

- *Education for All as Praxis* (The Netherlands, Australia, Finland, Sweden), investigating practices of exclusion and inclusion, social justice and democratic education in schools; and

- *The Practicum and Praxis* (Sweden, Australia, Norway), investigating the role of, and alternative models for, professional experience (the practicum) in initial teacher education programs.

As distinct from the specific outcomes and findings of these separate projects, now emerging in conference presentations, articles and books, the purpose of this overarching program was to

- disseminate the outcomes of these projects through a planned program of scholarly publications, research reports and conference presentations,

- make international connections between these projects by exploring how different intellectual and research traditions shape ways of understanding pedagogy, education and praxis in different national contexts,

- promote dialogue between these different traditions in order to extend the theoretical and methodological resources available to researchers and practitioners, and

- attract international funding for travel, translation and other support to maintain and strengthen the program as a cross-institutional, international collaboration.

The September, 2011, PEP international meeting in Gothenburg received reports of the progress with these separate cross-national empirical projects and also considered draft chapters for the book (in preparation) *Pedagogy, Education and Praxis: A conversation of traditions* emerging from the theoretical and empirical work of the international collaboration so far. The draft chapters gave accounts of the European tradition of Pedagogiek and the Anglo-American-Australian tradition of Educational Philosophy and Theory, both of which have been made vulnerable by the imposition of technical, neo-liberal approaches to school development initially adopted by OECD member states and now being imposed through development programs in all parts of the world.

The Research Plan 2011 and forward

The 2011 Gothenburg meeting decided to explore educational praxis in a wide range of contexts through action research projects aimed at locally sensitive, site-based education development in the different conditions pertaining in the countries participating in the PEP collaboration. The twenty existing action research projects initially to be involved in the program (Appendix 1) give fine-grained access to the conditions for praxis in different sites and levels of education in our countries, and to the conditions for professional learning and leadership at different stages of the teaching career. They thus permit further exploration of the five research questions for the PEP international collaboration enunciated above, and will continue to inform our investigations of the practice traditions that have formed the work of educators and pedagogues in our different countries. They also allow us to explore how action research itself, taking different forms that have been shaped by different practice traditions in our different countries, can be understood as a practice shaped by the different kinds of practice architectures (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements) to be found in the diverse sites in which our action research projects are being conducted. Thus, for example, we see differences in the forms taken by action research in different countries and settings ó for example, Nordic action research shaped by the *folk enlightenment* tradition, ÷emancipatoryø educational action research in Australia shaped by a version of critical social science, and practical educational action research in the tradition of the human sciences in the Netherlands.

-BASED EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

The twenty action research projects initially to be involved in this collaborative study have in common a notion of *site-based education development* ó that is, the development of education so that it is appropriately and effectively responsive to the very different local needs, opportunities and circumstances of different kinds of students, schools and communities. The notion of site-based education development has precursors. In Sweden, for example, ÷local development work in schoolsø or (in Swedish) *lokalt utvecklingsarbete* (Hardy, Rönnerman, Moksnes Furu, Salo and Forsman 2010), was the first stage in the process of decentralisation of schooling in Sweden from 1984. According to this notion, schools and local municipalities were to respond to local needs and circumstances ó for example, the striking differences between the north and south of Sweden that had previously been overlooked in (southern-dominated) curriculum materials. A similar process occurred in Finland from 1980, described by Peter Johnsson (2006) as the period of ÷delegation and deregulationø, when many decisions about curriculum and teaching were delegated to the municipal level. In Australia, the 1980s notion of ÷school-based curriculum developmentø served similar intentions of local responsiveness of education.

The leaders of the twenty action research projects initially to be involved in the *Action Research and Practice Theory* collaboration take the view that educational work is necessarily responsive to the particular needs and circumstances of students and teachers in diverse sites and situations. They recognise that education cannot proceed without engaging studentsø and teachersø existing forms of understanding, modes of action and ways of relating to one another, as it proceeds to initiate them into new forms of understanding, new modes of action and new ways of relating to others. As defined by Kemmis (forthcoming),

> Education, properly speaking, is the process by which children, young people and adults are initiated into forms of understanding, modes of action and ways of relating to one another and the world, that foster individual and collective self-expression, individual and collective self-development and individual and collective self-determination, and that are, in these senses, oriented towards the good for each person and the good for humankind.

Participatory action research projects create *communicative spaces* for the play of educational ideas and facilitate experimental educational practice responsive to diverse needs and circumstances that exist in different, sites ó each unique in its particular local combination of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. Such spaces are designed to foster communicative freedom among participants, which in turn engenders communicative power and legitimacy for the ideas and practices they develop through their communicative action (Habermas 1996; Kemmis 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart 2005). By creating these communicative spaces, participatory action research initiatives give form and substance to the notion of the teacher as an ÷extended professionalø and a researcher (Stenhouse 1975), and as an ÷activist professionalø (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler 2009; Sachs 2000, 2003) who does *educational work* (in Swedish and Norwegian, *pedagogik work*; in Dutch, *pedagogiek*; and in Finnish *kasvatustyö*) aimed at the good for each student and the good for humankind in the classroom, school, community and beyond.

To do this kind of educational work requires that teachers, as individual professionals and collectively as a profession, be professional experts in site-based education development; that is, that they be expert in interpreting and adapting national curricula and educational policies in order that the educational encounters they arrange will engage and develop their particular studentsø understandings of, modes of acting in, and ways of relating to their communities and the world.

The ÷siteø ó e.g., a classroom in a school in its community ó is always *the existential and ontological given* in education. It is the place where things happen ó where people meet and engage with one another in practice. The site of practice is the phenomenological reality that always and necessarily escapes standardisation in curricula, standards, assessments and policies. The notion of the ÷siteø is crucial for the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program. It is not only a matter of happenstance (where their practices happen to take place and where things happen to be arranged as they are), nor only because the site is the specific location in which participantsø practical deliberation and their practical action takes place. The ÷siteø is also crucial *theoretically* ó to be understood in existential and ontological terms as an actual and particular place where things happen, not just as a location in an abstract and universal matrix of space-time.

Recognising this, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program aims to articulate new ways of understanding and theorising professional practice *in* local sites, and, following Schatzki (2002), of understanding and theorising practice itself *as* a site. Our program of research has been

practice architectures (site-based arrangements that enable and constrain practice) and how these practice architectures can be transformed, and showing how different kinds of practices relate to and depend on one other in *ecologies of practices*.

The *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will engage teachers and teacher leaders in collective projects of site-based education development, aimed at the education of students in the sense described above. The research program will pursue this objective at two levels: (a) at the level of small groups ó ÷*professional learning communities*øó across the teaching career, and (b) at the level of an *Innovative Professional Practice Network (IPPN)* that connects these learning communities and supports their site-based education development work.

Professional learning communities

The twenty professional learning communities initially to be involved in the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program consist of established groups of teachers and teacher leaders working together in *action research* projects (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Rönnerman 2005; Lendahls Rosendahl & Rönnerman 2006; Rönnerman, Furu & Salo 2008; Rönnerman 2008; Eilertsen, Gustafson & Salo 2008; Ponte 2009; Ponte & Rönnerman 2009; Ponte & Ax 2010; Rönnerman & Salo, 2011). These projects are conducted as particular forms of social practice, shaped by different practice traditions of action research ó for example, the Anglo-Australian tradition of emancipatory action research advocated by Carr & Kemmis (1986), or by the Nordic tradition of research circles and *folk enlightenment* (Rönnerman & Salo 2011), or by connection with the European traditions of pedagogy (as a human science) and *Bildung* (Ponte & Rönnerman 2009).

Some of the action research projects under way involve *peer mentoring* or *peer group mentoring* in the straightforward sense that groups of teacher who are peers are conducting research (acting, observing, reflecting) together. Some also involve *facilitation* by people from outside these groups of peers ó a facilitator from a nearby university, for example. For the entire history of action research, there has been discussion of the roles of such facilitators and their participation or non-participation in the action being studied (see, for example, Lewin 1946; Corey 1949; Elliott & Adelman 1973; Kemmis 1980; Ponte, Ax, Beijaard & Wubbels 2004; Kemmis & McTaggart 2005; Rönnerman 2005; Lendahls Rosendahl & Rönnerman 2006; Rönnerman 2008). Kemmis (2010) offers a critique of the long-standing tradition of action research that makes a distinction between ÷researchersø and ÷participantsø on the basis that the ÷researcherø is someone from outside the group and setting under study (from a local university, for example) and the ÷participantsø are the usual inhabitants of the setting (for example, a community, organisational or industry setting). He favours participatory action research in which the participants are the researchers, whether or not anyone from outside helps or facilitates the participant-researcher group.

To extend the range of previous work of the PEP network, the professional learning communities involved in the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will include *peer mentoring* projects specifically for Early Career Teachers (ECTs), also described as Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in the process of induction into the profession (Heikkinen 2011; Kemmis & Heikkinen 2011; Jakhelln 2011; Tynjälä & Heikkinen 2011).

In all these projects in the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program, the work of the groups will be focussed by projects of site-based education development in their own and nearby schools and settings. Groups may work by engaging in shared tasks of various kinds (for example, from open professional discussions through to substantial action research projects), and will meet face-to-face as well as through social networking and professional learning applications.

Unlike some other researchers working with the notion of professional learning communities who focus solely on the *actions*, *intentions* and *learning* of practitioners who participate in these learning communities, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program is focussed particularly on the different kinds of *practices*, *practice architectures* and *ecologies of practices* that bind these communities together. In this, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program takes a practice-theoretical view of learning communities rather than a social learning theory perspective (for example, Lave & Wenger 1991).

An Innovative Professional Practice Network (IPPN)

As indicated, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will build on the basis of empirical work already under way in some of the partner institutions participating in the *Pedagogy, Education and Praxis* international collaboration. These partner institutions already have long-established relationships with teachers conducting action research in a range of settings encompassing early

tion, vocational education and training, adult and community education, and in higher education.

Once the network of existing projects is established, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will begin to build the means for communication among the individual participatory action research initiatives stretching across the universities involved, internationally. In this way, it will take some steps toward creating a large-scale program of professional development and professional learning to secure this expertise in the education profession. The IPPN will develop into large, professional development program ó an independent, ‑grassrootsø forum for free exchange of experience among teachers and learning communities within and between early childhood, school, vocational education and training, adult and community education, and higher education (including teacher education) settings.

One of the objectives of the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program is to iteratively develop the *IPPN* so it will operate to support learning communities in a variety of ways, in particular, (a) to provide social networking applications that support members of learning communities in their communication with one another; (b) provide learning communities with advice and support on what site-based education development means and how it can be done; and (c) provide a variety of means for learning communities and their members to communicate with others across the IPPN ó for example, to invite people to join a new project or to exchange ideas and advice about site-based education development work in different kinds of settings and with different kinds of students and communities, or to contribute to the development of a shared professional theory of site-based education development.

The IPPN will create an engaging and educative space for the play of educational ideas and to facilitate innovation in educational practice in teachersø busy professional lives. It will be a large network for professional development and learning, connecting learning communities devoted to site-based education development.

THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The research program underpinning the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program is already investigating organisational arrangements that enable and constrain teachersø and teacher leadersø practices. The theoretical work underpinning the research program has been developed through the theoretical and empirical work of the international PEP collaboration since 2005. The research follows new directions in practice theory pioneered by Theodore Schatzki (University of Kentucky, USA; and also an Adjunct Professor of Charles Sturt Universityøs Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education ó RIPPLE; Schatzki 2010, 2011a, 2011b). These new theoretical developments include construing practices as located in *practice-arrangement bundles* (Schatzki 2011a) and in *site ontologies* (Schatzki 2003). In the light of such theoretical developments, and through our theoretical and empirical work, the PEP international collaboration has been developing the theory of *practice architectures* and the theory of *ecologies of practices*.

As already indicated, and in addition to these theoretical developments, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will draw on previous PEP theoretical work on the different intellectual and practice traditions of Pedagogy and Educational Philosophy and Theory in relation to praxis in education, and in relation to action research as a practice shaped by local traditions, needs and circumstances.

The theory of practice architectures

The theory of *practice architectures* (for example, Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Hardy 2010a, 2010b; Kemmis 2011; Salo, Stjernstrøm & Nylund 2011) aims to explain how social and educational practices are constituted in relation to the particular cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that support them. Figure 1 below illustrates the general theory of practice architectures.

The theory of ecologies of practices

Through our theoretical and empirical work, we have also been developing the theory of *ecologies of practices* (for example, Kemmis, Wilkinson, Hardy & Edwards-Groves 2009; Kemmis & Mutton 2011; Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2011; Hardy, Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2011; Wilkinson, Lund, Olin, Rönnerman, & Stjernström 2011; Kemmis & Heikkinen 2011; Fransson, Jokinen, Klages, & Eisenschmidt 2011; Kemmis, Heikkinen, Aspfors & Hansén 2011; Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson & Hardy forthcoming). This theory aims to explain how practices relate to one another in ecological relationships of interdependence. In the ‑Leading and Learningø project in Australia, for example, the

actices, teacher professional development practices, teaching practices and practices of student learning exist in interdependent relationships with one another. Figure 2 below illustrates these relationships of interdependence.
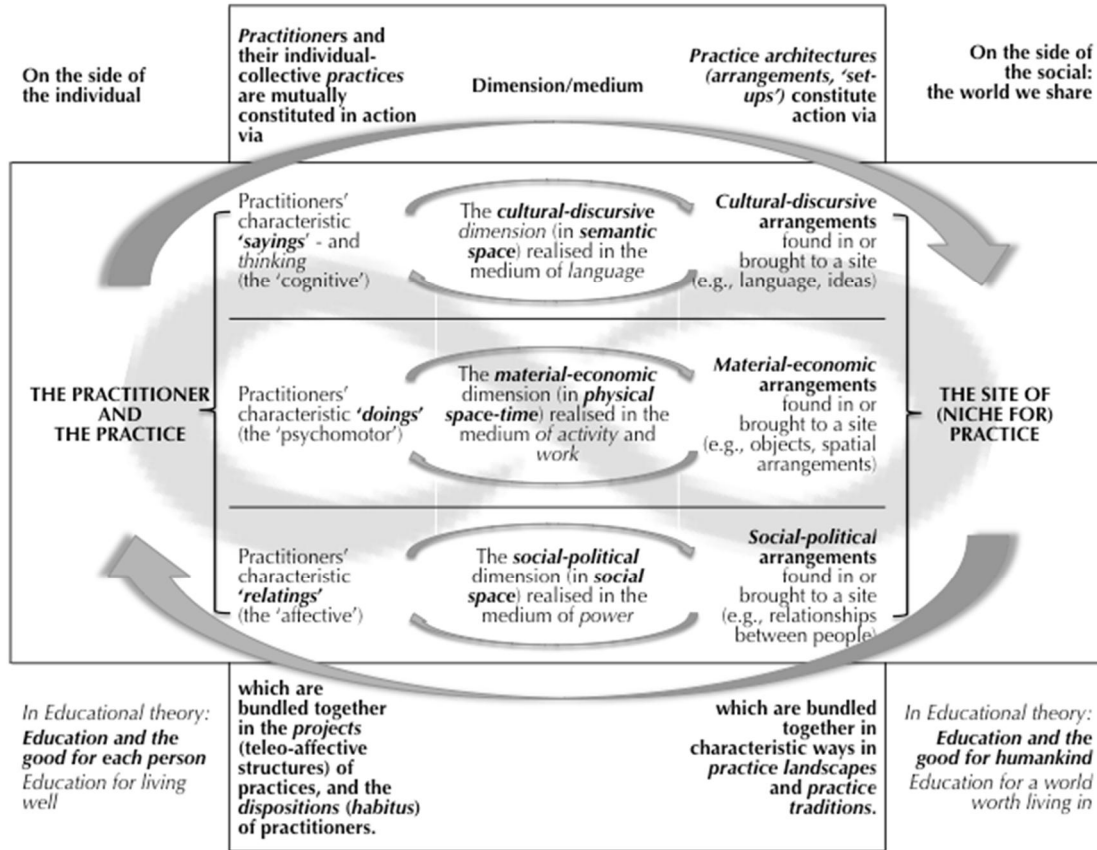

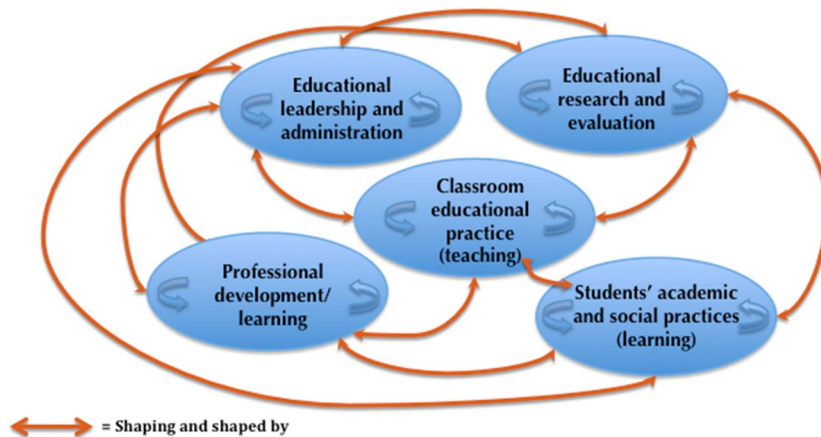*Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the theory of practice architectures*

Figure 2: Interdependence between practices in an ecology of practices

The PEP international research team is breaking new ground in conceptualising and locating educational practices in the specific historical and material conditions that pertain at particular sites, rather than conceptualising them in terms of the abstract and generalised ─social structures‖ that alternative practice theories posit as entities alleged somehow to organise practices. Our new practice theories thus offer new ways to think about interventions to enable and constrain the development of practices at particular sites ó as is proposed, for example, in the arrangements to be created in the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program to support site-based education development by learning

n the IPPN. The practice theories we are developing are also capable of informing teacher researchers about how they can develop their own practices *in situ.*

Using our practice theory framework, the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will allow us to investigate nine kinds of interrelated practices in a coherent way**,** namely, the practices of (1) *leading,* (2) *professional learning,* (3) *teaching,* (4) *student learning,* (5) *site-based education development,* (6) *action research,* (7) *facilitation* (of action research, for example), (8) *peer mentoring*, and (9) *communication within and between learning communities* in the IPPN.

An existing empirical basis for the new research program

Twenty existing action research projects being conducted by researchers participating in the Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) international collaboration have been identified as able to contribute to the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program (see Appendix 1). Most of these projects have been under way for some time (in some cases, more than five years) and they have already contributed to research collaborations in the PEP research program. In this new phase, however, the focus will be on these projects as examples of the practice of action research, and the ways in which the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political conditions in these sites enable and constrain the practice of action research.

From this empirical basis, and on the basis of our international collaborative work in previous PEP empirical research programs that have interrogated and developed the theories of practice architectures and ecologies of practices, partners in the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program can quickly build cross-national explorations of the conditions that support the practice of action research and the seven other practices identified above.

Our intention for the work beginning in 2011-12 and until 2014-15, then, is to establish *cross-national teams* which will explore particular issues in action research and site-based education development seen through the lens of practice theory, and further to investigate the nine kinds of practices identified earlier.

Thus, for example, we will consider how to build cross-national research teams working with empirical material from local action research projects to investigate how different kinds of local practices shape and are shaped by different kinds of local practice architectures, and the kinds of issues that arise regarding these practices and practice architectures within and across settings. Such cross-national studies give us unique opportunities to see the nature and effects on practices of different kinds of intellectual traditions, languages and specialist discourses, policies, funding and administrative arrangements and the conditions that pertain in different kinds of local practice settings ó different kinds of local sites, differently constructed in terms of local cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. One way to conceptualise this space for the formation of cross-national research collaborations is represented in Figure 3:

Countries *Practices and practice architectures of*	Australia	Finland	Norway	Sweden	Netherlands
Leading	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Professional learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student learning	✓	✓			
Site-based education development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Action research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facilitating action research	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Peer mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Communication within and between learning communities		✓	✓	✓	

Notes: (1) ✓ indicates research underway in projects in Appendix 1; (2) grey fill indicates already published collaborative work; (3) the absence of ticks and grey fill in the Canada column is because it is new to the PEP international collaboration

Figure 3: Conceptual space for cross-national collaborations investigating different kinds of practices

Within this conceptual space, several cross-national teams in the PEP international collaboration have already been exploring practices of (to give just three examples)

(1) *action research* (for example, Eilertsen, Gustafson & Salo 2008; Eilertsen & Jakhelln 2008; Eilertsen & Støm 2008; Ponte & Rönnerman 2009; Rönnerman & Salo 2011; Eilertsen Furu & Rørnes 2011),

Groves & Rönnerman 2011; Ponte & Rönnerman 2009; Salo, Stjernstrøm & Nylund 2011; Wilkinson, Lund, Olin, Rönnerman & Stjernstrøm 2011) and

(3) *professional learning* (for example, Mattsson, Johansson & Sandström 2008; Mattsson & Kemmis 2009; Hardy, Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2011; Hardy, Rönnerman, Moksnes Furu, Salo & Forsman 2010; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Hardy & Edwards-Groves 2009; Männikkö-Barbutiu & Rorrison 2011; Mattsson, Eilertsen & Rorrison 2011; Rorrison 2010).

Our cross-national teams have been able to show how these practices have shaped and been differently shaped by different local conditions ó that is, local practice architectures. The *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program will enable us to extend our research theoretically, empirically and strategically ó that is, in terms of contributions to understanding and further developing practices and the conditions for practice in different places.

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...ts so far identified as contributing to the *Action Research and Practice Theory* collaboration

Australia (7 projects)

Leaders (and institution/s):
Dr. Laurette Bristol and Dr. Jane Wilkinson *(Charles Sturt University)*
Project title:
Early Career Principalsø(ECPs): Practices of *Leading* and *Learning to Lead across national contexts*
Description:
This project builds upon research already being conducted in Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia and Australia with ECPs. The project explores the socialization experiences and practices of ECPs using an interpretivist approach which draws on interviews, photography and memory work. Using practice theory for its analytical frame the project is expected to excavate the tensions between understandings and practices of leadership and learning to lead, culture and the formation of professional identities. Making explicit the social-discursive, cultural-economic and socio-political conditions (Kemmis and Grootenboer 2008, Kemmis et al Forthcoming) which configure their leading practices would enable ECPs to make targeted interventions into their leading practices for the transformation and enhancement of their school community.
Key participants:
Early career principals (ECPs) in Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia and Australia and school teachers

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ☑	Student learning ❑	Site-based education development ☑
Professional learning ☑	Action research❑ ☑	Peer mentoring ❑
Teaching ❑	Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Jane Wilkinson, Ninetta Santoro, Kiprono Langat, Jae Major *(Charles Sturt University)*
Project title:
Social practices and resources which contribute to refugee studentsøeducational achievement: Students as co-researchers
Description:
This research project is investigating out-of-school networks and practices that generate the capital necessary for educational success for African refugee young people in regional Australia. Through interviews, observations and an action research approach, in which students take on a co-researcher role, the participants are facilitated to identify the key out-of-school factors that are supporting their achievements. The project is expected to bring about new knowledge in education practice in terms of educatorsøunderstandings of the contextual factors that shape the successful practices of these learners, as well as create new theoretical understandings of the interplay between capital and practice.
Key participants:
Refugee students

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ❑	Student learning ☑	Site-based education development ❑
Professional learning ☑	Action research ☑	Peer mentoring ❑
Teaching ☑	Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Jane Wilkinson, Christine Edwards-Groves, Stephen Kemmis, Laurette Bristol *(Charles Sturt University)*, Ian Hardy *(University of Queensland)* & Peter Grootenboer *(Griffith University)*
Project title: Action Research in Leading & Learning
Description: This project extends the current *Leading and Learning: Developing Ecologies of Educational Practice* study which is examining the interconnections between leading, professional learning, teaching and student learning practices. In the proposed study, researchers will utilise a range of visual methods in order to work with both formal and informal teacher leaders in three different sites who have been identified as exemplary classroom practitioners. The aim of the study is for teachers as co-researchers to critically reflect on and develop a meta-awareness of the conditions for practice which are facilitating and shaping their leading, professional learning and classroom practices.
Key participants: Teachers, teacher leaders, principals, university co-researchers

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ☑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):   Peter Grootenboer *(Griffith University)*
Project title: Leading from the Middle
Description: This project focuses on developing middle-leaders (e.g., senior teachers, head of faculty, head of department, syndicate leader) as mathematics curriculum leaders in their schools. The middle leaders use action research as a structure to facilitate data-driven site-based staff development with teachers, with a particular focus on mathematics education and Indigenous learners.
Key participants: The project provides most of the support and professional development to middle-leaders, who in turn then go and do likewise with the staff in their own school. Currently there are 2 clusters of schools involved, with 5 schools in each cluster. The schools include primary and secondary schools.

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ❑ Action research ❑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Stephen Kemmis, Ros Brennan Kemmis, Laurette Bristol, Kathleen Clayton, Christine Edwards-Groves, Annemaree Lloyd, Jane Wilkinson and others *(Charles Sturt University)*

Project title:

Teacher Talk: Action research and critical praxis in higher education

Description:

This project builds on, and incorporates, the activities of a small community of university academics who have been collaboratively examining their own praxis and the conditions for praxis for some time. The study focuses on critical academic praxis and the conditions that enable and constrain critical praxis in a university setting. The academics, as co-researchers, are using a critical participatory action research approach to explore how the academic praxis of the primary participants in the study is impacted by and implicated in the contemporary conditions of university work and life, with a view to generating ways in which conditions that debilitate academic work might be changed through practice. Primary methods of data collection include scholarly discussions, interviews and observations by a participant observer in the group, and interrogation of practice theories relevant to understanding academic work.

Key participants:

University academics (co-researchers)

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ❑	Student learning ❑	Site-based education development ☑
Professional learning ☑	Action research ☑	Peer mentoring ❑
Teaching ☑	Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):

Christine Edwards-Groves and Rhonda Hoare *(Charles Sturt University)*

Project title:

=Talking to Learn': The role of dialogue for learning among pre-service teachers

Description:

This empirical investigation aims to develop an understanding of pre-service teacherøs development of skills in classroom interaction as a core educational practice. Specifically, the research is part of a faculty-wide initiative involving first year Bachelor of Education students from Charles Sturt University NSW, Australia. The research investigates the impact that a focus on the role of dialogue for learning (both in university subjects and practising in classroom sites) has on 124 first year education pre-service teachersø interaction practices with students in their professional experience placements. A selection of volunteer first year students will act as co-researchers in this project. The research aims to utilise new developments in practice theory, in particular practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) and =ecologies of practicesø(Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson & Hardy, 2010). The research aims to achieve innovative rich characterisations of individual and extra-individual (cultural, discursive, social, material) aspects of teaching practice. The study aims to derive implications for theory, policy and practice in relation to teacher education, practice theory, and more specifically education for the initial education of teachers.

Key participants:

First Year Pre-Service Teachers, University Lecturers, Classroom Teacher Mentors, CSO District Consultants

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ❑	Student learning ☑	Site-based education development ❑
Professional learning ❑	Action research ☑	Peer mentoring ❑
Teaching ☑	Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Jeannie Herbert, Stephen Kemmis, Debra Evans, Faye McMillan, Lloyd Dolan, John Nolan, Shane Atkinson *(Charles Sturt University)*
Project title: Wiradjuri Language and Cultural Heritage Indigenous Empowerment Project
Description: This project is based in the work of the Charles Sturt University (CSU) Wiradjuri Language and Cultural Heritage Program, aimed at the recovery, maintenance and development of the language and cultural heritage of the Indigenous Wiradjuri nation whose land occupies the south central part of the state of New South Wales. The Program is overseen by a committee co-chaired by the Chair of the Wiradjuri Council of Elders and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of CSU. The Program involves about 30 separate initiatives in language recovery and resources development; language teaching; cultural heritage recovery and development (including oral history); the recovery and maintenance of historical records and objects significant to Wiradjuri people; and community healing. This project aims to involve Wiradjuri community members in ÷empowerment researchøto develop their capabilities and resources for the work of language and cultural heritage recovery and maintenance.
Key participants: Wiradjuri community members, the Wiradjuri Council of Elders, and University and community participants in the CSU Wiradjuri Language and Cultural Heritage Program.

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ❑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Liselott Forsman *(Åbo Akademi University)*

Project title:
School language: developing site-based strategies for supporting the school language

Description:
This 3-year project (2010 - 2012) aims at developing and implementing site-based strategies for supporting the school language within all work done in and in relation to the school (e.g. over-arching strategies to be implemented by the whole school and/or strategies anchored within the work of smaller groups/individual subject teachers). Initiated and financed by the Finnish National Board of Education, the project is conducted in cooperation with Åbo Akademi University, University of Helsinki and four Swedish-medium schools in different regions of Finland (grades 7-9, lower secondary level). Thus, the four participating schools share the starting-point of educating Swedish-speaking (or bilingual) students through the second national language of Finland, but they all have their specific õlanguage profilesö, resources and needs, mainly due to the variety of home languages found among the students, the immediate linguistic milieu surrounding the school sites and also more global influencing factors. Ultimately, the aim is for the teachers to find ways of supporting all their students to understand, use, reflect on and engage with language, in order to develop their potential for (further) studies and participation in society. The work in the schools mainly involves the teachers (basically all of them; around 20-30 teachers per site depending on the size of the school) and the principals at a minimum in their role as leaders but often also as participants on the same level as the teachers. Some schools have also involved students and parents, and in one site the local school board has taken on a very active role. See (in Swedish): www.skolsprak.fi

Key participants:
Teachers (plus, at some sites, principals, students, parents)

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ☑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Gunilla Karlberg-Granlund *(Åbo Akademi University)*

Project title:
Facilitating professional development, collegial networking and site-based education development in small schools

Description:
This research and development project is connected to in-service training for teachers and principals in small schools. Through teacher-researcher collaboration and an action research approach, the participants are empowered to analyse their own experiences, and improve their working context and practice. The project is expected to bring out new knowledge about the professional development and working conditions of teachers and principals, as well as create new concepts for collaboration and collegial support between small schools.

Key participants:
School principals, teachers.

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

16

Petri Salo *(Åbo Akademi University)*
Project title: *Collaborative school leadership practices on a local level*
Description: This action research and development project is anchored in the everyday professional school leadership practices on a local level (9 principals in the municipality of Karleby). It aims at helping principals to (a) distance themselves from and reflect on their everyday leadership practices, (b) identify individual and collective developmental needs, (c) reflect on them collectively and, (d) act systematically in order to both develop and get insights into school leadership practices. Action research and peer mentoring n small groups (4-5 principals) is used to further principalsø site-based education development.
Key participants: School principals

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s): Petri Salo *(Åbo Akademi University)*
Project title: *Part time teachers professional learning within popular adult education*
Description: Part time teachers within popular adult education in Finland are a highly heterogeneous group, consisting of both professionals with teacher training and self-taught amateurs. The aim of this project is (a) to get insights into the various practices of adult teaching and learning, and collaborative learning practices within popular adult education, and (b) to use these insights in order to further site-based education development amongst part time teachers in Innovative Professional Practice Networks, formed initially amongst part time teachers within the Swedish speaking communities in Finland.
Key participants: Various groups of part time teachers

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ❑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Ben Smit *(Leiden University)*

Project title:
Teachers and students as co-researchers

Description:
The project is aimed at incorporating and further developing student participation (student voice) in current teaching practice in primary and secondary education by means of an action research approach. On a broader level, the project contributes to developing and legitimizing educational practices in which students are seen as full partners and in which education is based on creating opportunities for all students.

Building on earlier work with students and teachers as co-researchers in out-of-school settings such as museums and libraries, in this project, teams of students and their teachers co-research different aspects of education in order to better understand and to improve current school practices. By doing so, they also move forward to a participatory practice in the classroom and in the school as a whole. Parallel academic research within the project investigates teachersø and studentsø views on the participatory processes and aims to contribute to better understanding of teachersø professional development due to co-researching with students. It may also provide suggestions for ways to include the issue of student participation in teacher education. |

Key participants:
Teachers (primary/secondary education), students

Partners: Dutch Teacher Learning Centre (Expertisecentrum Leren van Docenten; based at Leiden University); Dutch Institute for Educational and Pedagogical Affairs (NIVOZ) |

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate

Leading ❑	Student learning ❑	Site-based education development ☑
Professional learning ☑	Action research ☑	Peer mentoring ❑
Teaching ☑	Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Eli Moksnes Furu & Torbjørn Lund *(Tromsø University)*

Project title:
Facilitating school development through network and dialogue conferences in a region

Description:
The aim of the research program is to foster professional learning within groups of teachers and principals who work to implement new ideas of Assessment for learning in their classroom and among their colleagues. Another aim is to see how collaboration between teachers, principals, school administration and the University can be developed through an Action Research program using dialogue conferences as the central instrument. The research in this project may contribute to a better understanding of how developmental groups may contribute to school development by being a partner in e network using dialogue conferences as a tool for knowledge building. Secondly we try to understand the role of Action Research has in collaboration between the University and schools in networks in general, and the use of dialogue conferences in special.

Key participants:
Students, Teachers, principals,

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Rachel Jakhelln (University of Tromsø, Norway)

Project title:
Early career teachers

Description:
This research and development project is building on my earlier work with early career teachers in upper secondary schools. Drawing on the national program *Mentoring newly qualified teachers* and together with the regional project group in Troms and Finnmark county, I will continue to facilitate groups of teachers doing AR in their own work for professional development. The project is expected to bring out new knowledge about the professional development and working conditions of new teachers in their early career in both lower and upper secondary schools.

Key participants:
Early career teachers in schools, and the regional group in Troms and Finnmark of the national program *Mentoring newly qualified teachers.*

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ❑ Action research ❑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Tor Vidar Eilertsen, Matts Mattsson (University of Tromsø), Sirkku Männikkö (Stockholm University) and Doreen Rorrison (Charles Sturt University)
Project title:
Practicum as a participatory and empowering practice
Description:
Through site-based action research we will try to further understand and develop practicum as a participatory and empowering practice. As a point of departure we will use the studies we have already reported inspired by the *Pedagogy, Education and Praxis* collaboration (for example Mattsson & Kemmis 2007; Rönnerman *et al.* 2008; Mattsson *et al.* 2008; Rorrison 2010) Assessment of the practicum in teacher education; Eilertsen, Furu & Rørnes, (2011) The Tromsø PIL Project; Mattsson et al (2011) A Practicum Turn in Teacher Education and Männikkö-Barbutiu & Rorrison (pending 2011) Visitors in the Classroom. The new project is expected to deepen our knowledge about practice theories including perspectives, models, methods and criteria for judging quality in teacher education.
Key participants:
At each site (Tromsø, Stockholm, South Australia) we will initiate/support a participatory action research project involving teacher educators, preservice teachers, practicum supervisors, school teachers and leaders. The local networks that have participated in our previous projects will be approached as well as other groups identified as crucial to the development of practicum in the three regions.

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ☑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based educational development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

Sweden (5 projects)

Leaders (and institution/s):
Karin Rönnerman *(University of Gothenburg)*
Project title:
Nurturing professional development and site-based education development through research circles
Description:
Early childhood teachers who have taken part in an action research program and today facilitate groups of teachers in their own preschools meet together with a researcher to deepen their knowledge around issues they themselves choose for discussion and reflection. The project aims to nurture a professional learning community and shared understandings within the group and also between groups. Furthermore the research aims to follow the teachers when they facilitate peers to study how site-based education development turns out in a local site.
Key participants:
Early Childhood teachers

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

Anki Wennergren *(Halmstad University, Sweden)*		
Project title: A model for teachers´ learning and development		
Description: This action research project is in cooperation with an educational program for principals, teachers and preschool teachers. The 90 participants are working and learning together in groups that can be compared to communities of practice. The goal is to develop research skills, and improve practice by doing research on a regular basis. Over a period of four years, the academic researchers support processes of research and learning and conduct research in cooperation with different groups. The research is focused on educational quality and standards in the classroom and in preschool.		
Key participants: Teachers (90), head teachers (4)		
Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Site-based education development ❑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

Leaders (and institution/s): Jan Nylund *(University of Gothenburg)*		
Project title: Experienced principalsødevelopment: Improving pedagogical leadership and interaction with teacher leaders		
Description: Principals and teacher leaders together follow and document day-to-day practice to see how they negotiate, distribute and handle pedagogical leadership.		
Key participants: Principals , teacher leaders		
Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Anette Olin (University of Gothenburg)

Project title:
Professional learning in a research circle ó a collaborative project with peer facilitators in the area of Early Childhood

Description:
In this project the aim is to study if, and in that case how, the research circle may support teacher leaders in creating new insights about their own leading/facilitating practice, which may eventually lead to improvements in their work. The teacher leaders are Early Childhood educators with the task to facilitate colleagues who are doing action research projects in early childhood settings in a specific municipality.

Key participants:
Peer facilitators of action research in Early Childhood

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ☑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Ulf Blossing *(University of Gothenburg)*

Project title:
Teachers as development leaders for school improvement

Description:
This project focuses on teachers appointed as development leaders in schools with the task of driving school development. Questions asked are: Where are they in the school organisation? How is the organisational structure built and retained around them? What role and what functions do they take on? How does the organisation, that is school leaders and teachers, learn about this new role? And how do the development leaders themselves understand and learn about their role? An important part of the project is to relate the role and the functions of the development leaders to students and their learning environment in school. Do development leaders make it better for students? Methodologically, the project takes on the investigation of the practice of school leaders with a multi-theoretical perspective. In what way do different praxis theories contribute to understanding development leaders and their functions? A starting point will be to compare the theory of practice architectures with the theory of communities of practice.

Key participants:
Development leaders, principals and chief education officers, teachers.

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ☑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ☑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ☑ Communication within and between learning communities ☑

22

Leaders (and institution/s):
Petra Ponte *(Utrecht University of Applied Sciences)*

Project title:
The fundamentals of action research

Description:
1. My work on action research in near future will be:
2. The book about Facilitation of Practitioner Research in Transformative Partnerships, with Susan Groundwater Smith, Nicole Mockler, Jane Mitchel and Karin (deadline the first of January 2012).
3. The paper that I will write with Laurette about EfA and Action Research (see the proposal for the special issue).
4. Supervision of Leon Plomp's PhD study (at University of Goteborg) on Students and co-researcher (Karin as supervisor, me as co-supervisor).
5. The book on the (Anglo American and continental ó European) roots and fundamentals (in Dutch). This book might be translated in Swedish, with an extended foreword by Karin. Deadline first of January 2013.
6. Revision of my book on Action Research for teachers and educators (in Dutch), with some examples of PEP-members (Anette and Liselotte). Deadline is the first of February 2012.
7. A handbook on students as co-researchers (Ben Smit, Gijs Verbeek and me as third author, in Dutch) with examples from the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools in Sydney. Deadline spring 2012

Key participants:

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ❑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ❑ Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Site-based education development ❑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Leaders (and institution/s):
Karin Rönnerman and Anette Olin

Project title:
Learning for Leading: Early childhood teachers and action research

Description:
From the project in Sweden we plan to write two articles.
1) Mapping teachers ÷sayingsø as an interview method
2) Using Practice Architecture to analyse professional learning and development on three levels in a municipality.

Key participants:
Directors, principals, teachers, mentors/teacher facilitators

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ☑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ☑ Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Site-based education development ☑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑

Praxis Collaboration

Leaders (and institution/s):
Project title:
Description:
Key participants:

Foci: Please copy ☑ to replace ❑ where appropriate		
Leading ❑ Professional learning ❑ Teaching ❑	Student learning ❑ Action research ❑ Facilitation (of AR) ❑	Site-based education development ❑ Peer mentoring ❑ Communication within and between learning communities ❑