The Pedagogy, Education and Praxis International Collaboration

ACTION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE THEORY 2016 – 2020
A cross-national empirical research program

INTRODUCTION

In November 2015 in Åbo Akademi University, Finland, PEP members met to negotiate the PEP research agenda for the next period (2016-2020). At this meeting a new series of research programs were developed under the broad theme of Action Research and Practice Theory. This new program involves a range of collaborative research projects concerned with the different and dynamic dimensions of conducting action research in a range of practice landscapes. The programs draw on practice theories, in particular the theory of practice architectures and the theory of ecologies of practices, to draw attention to the conditions – and so practices and practice architectures - that enable and constrain site based education development in educational work. The research programs include:

- **Program 1: Leading**, investigating the dynamics of leading practices including middle leading, principal leading practices; researching dimensions of trust, identity, collaboration, connects to leading the learning of others in action research (professional development/learning).
- **Program 2: Teacher Education**, examining the conditions afforded by developing AR as a way of working in teacher education and development, investigating the improvement of teacher education programmes within national policies, study of reflexivity as a teacher educator; intersubjective meaning making.
- **Program 3: Diversity and Social Justice**, investigating the enabling and constraining conditions for addressing diversity in a range of practice landscapes.
- **Program 4: Higher Education Pedagogy**, investigating intercultural learning and collaborative learning in the higher education sector, and examining critical praxis.
- **Program 5: VET, workplace learning and pedagogical leadership**, investigating the pedagogies in different trades, examining formative teaching, action for praxis and making learning visible in the workplace

In light of current and ongoing research conducted by PEP researchers, and in response to the report prepared by Dr Kathleen Mahon (see Appendix C), it is anticipated that these five sub-programs will address the PEP research agenda and questions (formulated several years ago; see below). It will generate a substantial body of work important to the field of education globally.

(A separate document: Appendix A presents a list of the empirical projects that will contribute to the five research foci that form the basis for the cross-national empirical research program **Action Research and Practice Theory** (2016-2020). Appendix B presents a list of PEP Publications in the form of an annotated bibliography (also prepared by Dr Kathleen Mahon).

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 network are Charles Sturt University, Australia (coordinated by Dr Jane Wilkinson 2012-2013; Dr Christine Edwards-Groves 2014-), Leiden University, the Netherlands (coordinated by Dr Ben Smith), the University of Gothenburg, Sweden (coordinated by Professor Karin Rönneman), Åbo Akademi University, Finland (coordinated by Professor Petri Salo), the University of Tromsø, Norway (coordinated by Associate Professor Eli Moksnes Furu) and The Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogota, Colombia (coordinated by Dr Doris Santos). Bilateral Memoranda of Understanding to Cooperate in Research and/or Letters of Intent have been established between a number of the lead institutions in the collaboration. In addition there is an Australian node, i.e., South East Queensland (University of Queensland and Griffith University, led by Associate Professor Peter Grootenboer).
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 ‘Pedagogik’ (Pädagogie) 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.
- A ‘Pedagogy Education and Praxis’ book series with seven inter-related books examining the condition of educational praxis in different countries.
- A further book explicating a theory of practice architectures and ecologies which PEP researchers have been developing.
- A substantial number of scholarly research papers published in leading research journals, including two special issues.
- Keynote presentations at major educational research conferences.
- Dissemination of the program’s research achievements through papers and symposia at major international conferences, 2005-2013 (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):
  - 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. Followed by AARE, Melbourne, Aus
  - October 3-7, 2011, Gothenburg: Researching Professional Practice: Tensions and issues in action research; 13 candidates. Followed by FIERA, Jyvaskyla, Finland.
Outline of the Action Research and Practice Theory Research Program

- November 22-28, 2012, Palm Beach, Australia: Researching Professional Practice: Transforming theory, policy, practice; 16 candidates. Followed by AARE Sydney
- November 2014, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong; no doctoral school. Followed by APERA, Hong Kong.
- November 13-15, 2015, Åbo Akademi University, Finland; 11 candidates. Followed by FIERA, Vasa, Finland.
- November 27-2 November - 2nd December (Brisbane) (that week – beginning with the Doctoral School). Followed by AARE Melbourne (from Sunday 4th December).

- Significant grants of research funding from national funding agencies and host institutions, and a Swedish Research Council Networking Program Grant 2010-2013 for travel and support (840,000 Swedish kronor or about AUD $125,000).
- PEP International Profile

It is also notable that in 2015, the Pedagogy Education Praxis Network gained international recognition in three ways: first, the publication of an article in a 2016 Special Issue “Action Research Networks: Prospects and Challenges of Greater Global Connectivity” in Educational Action Research Journal on international research networks (see 1 below); second, (and as a result of the EARJ article) and invitation to contribute two chapters to Palgrave International Handbook of Action Research.


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.

5. What research approaches facilitate praxis and praxis development in different international contexts? Here the aim is to examine existing approaches to ‘practice-based’ and ‘praxis-related’ 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 research’ 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 Teacher’s Career’. 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 Pedagogik 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 2012-2015

At the November 25-29, 2012 meeting at Palm Beach, Australia, the Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) international collaboration agreed on four themes, which form the basis of a cross-national research program, entitled *Action Research and Practice Theory* (2012-2015).

The four themes were:

1. Creating communicative spaces
2. Partnership and recognition
3. Responding critically to changing historical conditions
4. Research as practice/praxis

The members also agreed upon the adoption of a key strand, which will run through all four themes, that is, Action Research and Site Based Education Development as enablers of social justice and equity. At the November 2-7, 2013 meeting in Tromsø the themes above were slightly modified:

1. Creating communicative spaces
2. Partnership and recognition
3. Site Based Education Development
4. Research as practice/praxis

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. 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 prefigure the sites being studied.

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. A number of action research projects in the program listed in Appendix 1 of the original document arising from the 2011 meeting aimed to 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.

At the 2012 meeting these projects were used as a basis for identifying themes across the projects in the Action Research and Practice Theory empirical research program. These themes have led to the formation of cross-national collaborations, which are permitting further exploration of the five research questions for the PEP international collaboration enunciated above. They are continuing to inform our investigations of the practice traditions that have formed the work of educators and pedagogues in our different countries. At 2013 meeting these themes were further refined and new researchers were engaged in the research programme. These themes 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 – for example, Nordic action research shaped by the *folk enlightenment* tradition, ‘emancipatory’ educational action research in Australia and Colombia shaped by a version of critical social science, and practical educational action research in the tradition of the human sciences in the Netherlands.

The list of action research projects originating from the 2011 meeting onwards has been revised and updated. A list produced after the 2013 meeting is included in Appendix 1a of this document. A revised elaboration of the themes and their work plans is included in Appendix 2 of this document.

**EDUCATION AND SITE-BASED EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT**

The revised action research projects which form the basis of the cross national collaborations and themes from 2012 onwards have in common a notion of *site-based education development* – 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 schools’ 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.

1 Currently this theme is inactive but still open for members to engage with.
According to this notion, schools and local municipalities were to respond to local needs and circumstances – 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 deregulation’, when many decisions about curriculum and teaching were delegated to the municipal level. In Australia, the 1980s notion of ‘school-based curriculum development’ served similar intentions of local responsiveness of education.

The researchers 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 students’ and teachers’ 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 (2012, p. ),

**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 – 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 professional’ and a researcher (Stenhouse 1975), and as an ‘activist professional’ (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 students’ understandings of, modes of acting in, and ways of relating to their communities and the world.

The ‘site’ – e.g., a classroom in a school in its community – is always the existential and ontological given in education. It is the place where things happen – 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 ‘site’ 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 participants’ practical deliberation and their practical action takes place. The ‘site’ is also crucial theoretically – 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 showing how practices are organised amid 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 – ‘professional learning communities’ – across the teaching career, and (b) as a vision of
establishing an Innovative Professional Practice Network (IPPN) that connects these learning communities and supports their site-based education development work.

**Professional learning communities**

The *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program consists of groups of teachers and/or 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, 2012; Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman, 2012; Hardy, Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman, 2012; Wilkinson, Olin, Lund & Stjernström, 2013). These projects are conducted as particular forms of social practice, shaped by different practice traditions of action research – 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 2012), 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 group mentoring or peer coaching* in the 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 – 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; Groundwater Smith, Mitchell, Mockler, Ponte & Rönnerman, 2012). Kemmis (2010) offers a critique of the long-standing tradition of action research that makes a distinction between ‘researchers’ and ‘participants’ on the basis that the ‘researcher’ is someone from outside the group and setting under study (from a local university, for example) and the ‘participants’ 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. The Nordic traditions of action research build on bildung and folk enlightenment in which the researcher participates in the action research in a democratic way, aiming to go beyond the binary of participant/researcher (Rönnerman & Salo, 2012; Salo & Rönnerman 2012).

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 (Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer and Bristol, in press). 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).

**THE RESEARCH PROGRAM**

The research program underpinning the *Action Research and Practice Theory* research program is already investigating organisational arrangements that enable and constrain teachers’ and/or leaders’ 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 University’s Research Institute for Professional Practice, Learning and Education – 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 is drawing 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.
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The theory of practice architectures

The theory of practice architectures (for example, Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Hardy 2010a, 2010b; Kemmis 2011; Salo, Stjernström & Nylund 2011; Eilertsen & Jakhelin, 2012; Furu & Lund, 2012; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Bristol, Hardy & Grootenboer, 2012; Rönnerman & Langelotz, 2012; Rönnerman & Olin, 2012a; Rönnerman & Olin, 2012b; Salo & Rönnerman, 2012; Salo, Forsman, Granlund-Karlefos & Phörn, 2012; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer & Bristol, 2014; Salo, Rönnerman & Lund (Eds.) forthcoming) 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; Kemmis & Heikkinen 2011; Fransson, Jokinen, Klages, & Eisenschmidt 2011; Kemmis, Heikkinen, Aspfors & Hansén 2011; Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2012; Hardy, Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2012; Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson & Hardy 2012; Wilkinson, Olin, Lund, & Stjernström 2013). This theory aims to explain how practices relate to one another in ecological relationships of interdependence. In the ‘Leading and Learning’ project in Australia, for example, the researchers have shown that leadership practices, 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](image-url)

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**On the side of the individual:** Practitioners and their individual-collective practices are mutually constituted in action via

- Practitioners’ characteristic ‘sayings’ - and thinking (the ‘cognitive’) - The cultural-discursive dimension in the medium of language - Cultural-discursive arrangements found in or brought to a site (e.g., language, ideas)
- Practitioners’ characteristic ‘doings’ (the ‘psychomotor’) - The material-economic dimension in the medium of activity and work - Material-economic arrangements found in or brought to a site (e.g., objects, spatial arrangements)
- Practitioners’ characteristic ‘relating’ (the ‘affective’) - The social-political dimension in the medium of power - Social-political arrangements found in or brought to a site (e.g., relationships between people)

**On the side of the social:**

**In Educational theory:**

**Education and the good for each person**

Education for living well

which are bundled together in the projects (telic-affective structures) of practices, and the dispositions (habitus) of practitioners.

**In Educational theory:**

**Education for humankind**

Education for a world worth living in

which are bundled together in characteristic ways in practice landscapes and practice traditions.
The PEP network 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 – as is proposed, for example, in the arrangements being created in the Action Research and Practice Theory research program to support site-based education development by learning communities of teacher-researchers potentially linked in the IPPN. The practice theories we are developing are also capable of informing teacher researchers and researchers more generally about how they can develop their own practices in situ.

Using our practice theory framework, the Action Research and Practice Theory research program is allowing us to investigate six kinds of interrelated practices in a coherent way, namely, the practices of (1) leading, (2) professional learning, (3) teaching, (4) student learning, (5) facilitation (of action research, for example), (6) peer group mentoring and/or peer coaching.

In 2013 we have built on cross-national collaborations established at the 2012 meeting, grouped around the four key themes (see Appendix 2) which are exploring particular issues in action research and site-based education development seen through the lens of practice theory, and further investigating the six kinds of practices identified earlier. These cross-national collaborations 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 – different kinds of local sites, differently constructed in terms of local cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements.

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

1. action research (for example, Eilertsen, Gustafson & Salo 2008; Eilertsen & Jakobsson 2008; Eilertsen & Støm 2008; Ponte & Rønnerman 2009; Eilertsen Furu & Rønnes 2011; Rønnerman & Salo 2012),
2. leading (for example, Edwards-Groves & Rønnerman 2012; Ponte & Rønnerman 2009; Salo, Stjernstrøm & Nylund 2011; Wilkinson, Olin, Lund & Stjernstrøm 2013), and

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


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Outline of the Action Research and Practice Theory Research Program

APPENDIX A

Action research projects so far identified as contributing to the Action Research and Practice Theory Collaboration

Program 1: Leading (Peter, Karin, Jaana, Torbjorn, Susanne, Petri).

Program 2: Teacher Education (Rachel, Gunilla, Ben, Ian, Lena, Jessica, Michaela, Anette, Eli)

Program 3: Diversity and Social Justice (Mervi, Lill, Jane, Ingrid)

Program 4: Higher Education Pedagogy (Doris, Kathleen, Ela)

Program 5: VET, workplace learning and pedagogical leadership (Annette, Birgit, Ingrid H L, Ingrid B, Gun-Britt, Viveca, Sarojni, Susanne, Ingela)

(Note: names as per PEP International Network meeting, Vaasa Finland 2015)
(Note: these groups are fluid and flexible since members may be working in one or more of the research programs, these groups may change in configurations with new members joining the network).