



The Theory of Critical Creativity as a Vehicle for Transformational Learning and Development

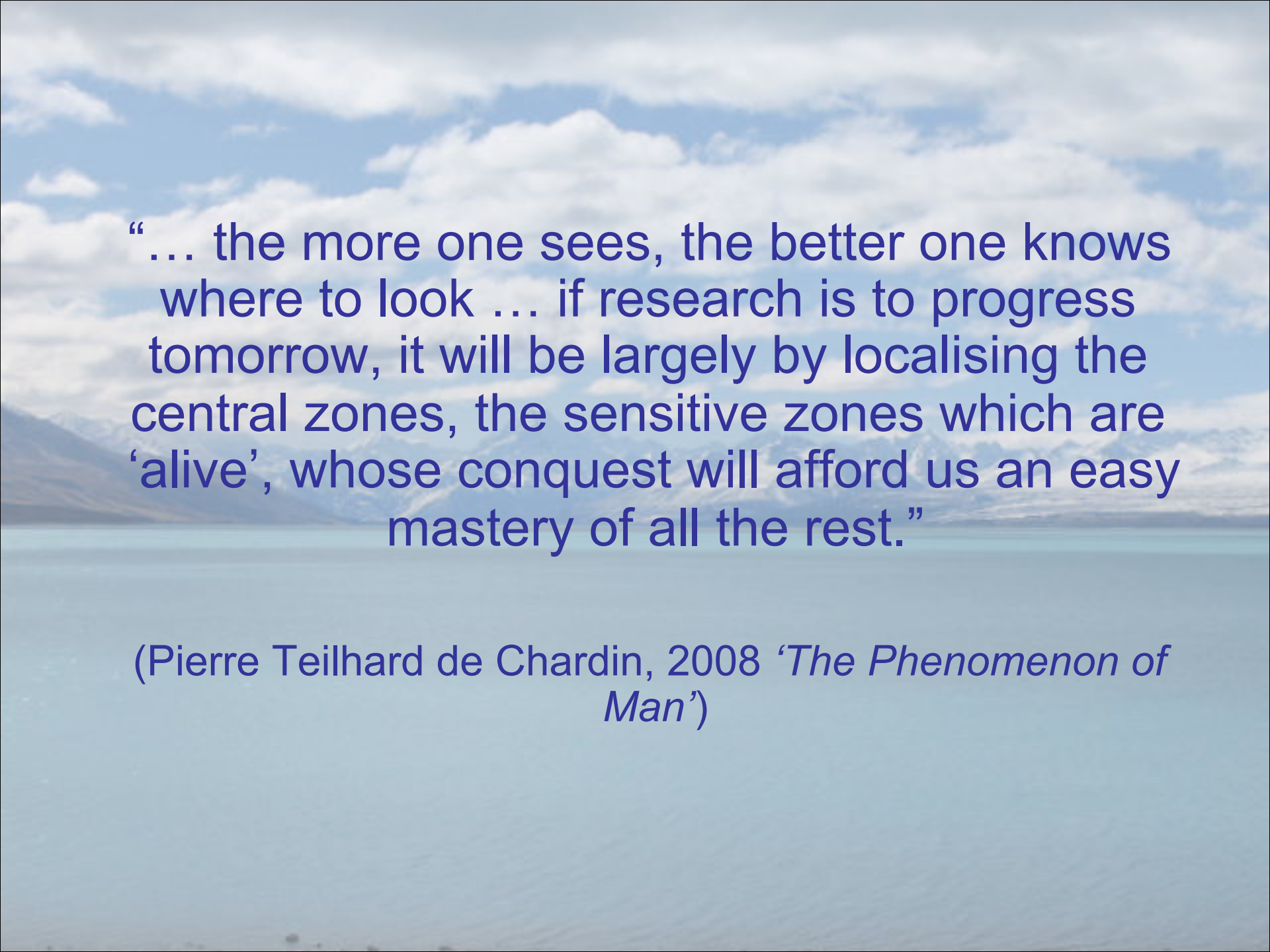
Professor Brendan McCormack
*Head of the Division of Nursing,
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh*

**Professor II, Buskerud & Vestfold University College, Drammen, Norway;
Extraordinary Professor, University of Pretoria, South Africa;
Visiting Scholar, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada
Visiting Professor, University of Aberdeen**

“Too much linear thinking and ‘thinking inside the box’ create an academic coffin of lethal security, respectability, and tenure. Yet trying to think outside the box also means having to disassociate oneself from the comforting approval of one’s theories by respected predecessors and colleagues ..”

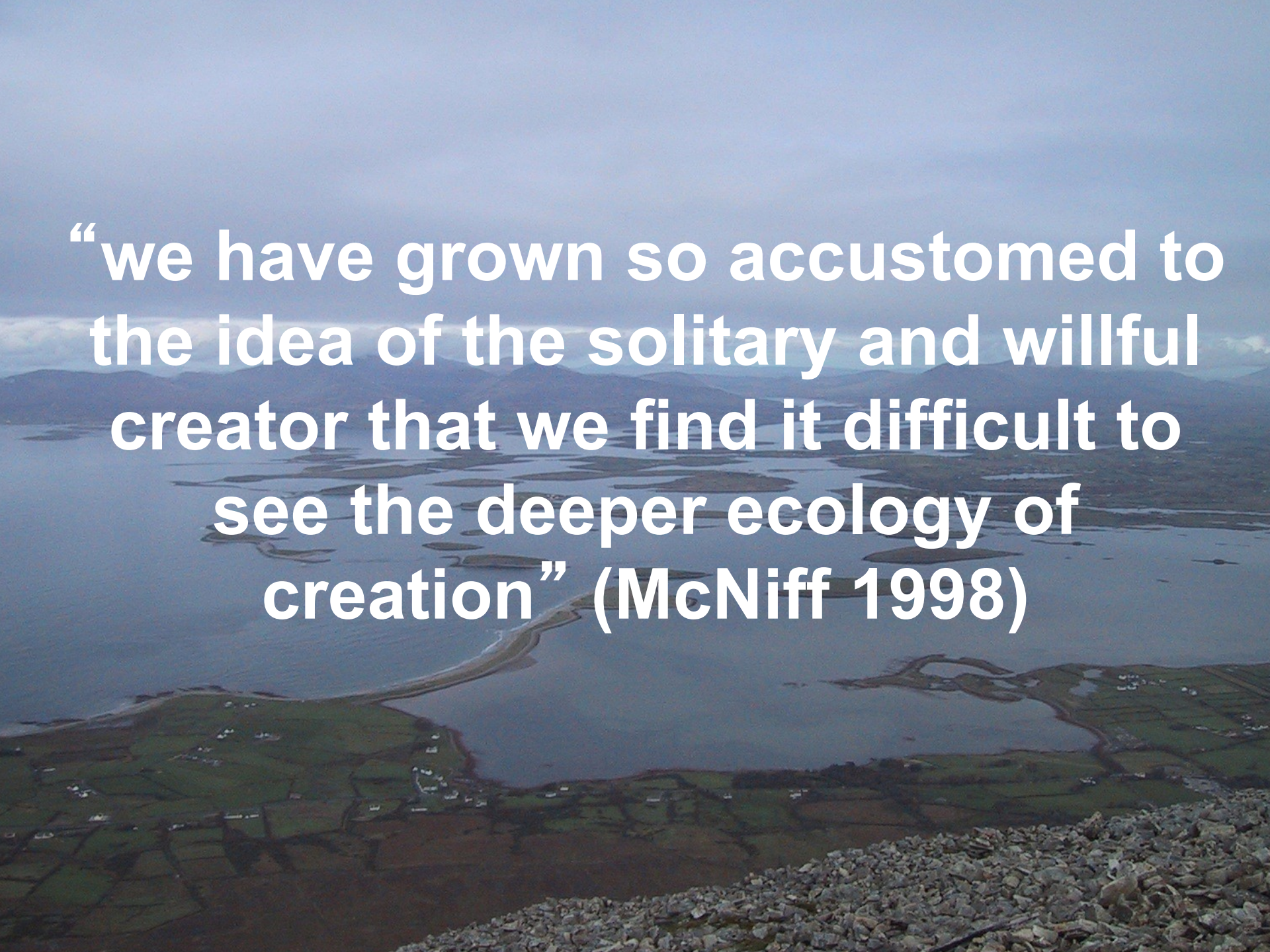
(van Renterghem 2008 *‘The Authentic Dissertation’*)





“... the more one sees, the better one knows where to look ... if research is to progress tomorrow, it will be largely by localising the central zones, the sensitive zones which are ‘alive’, whose conquest will afford us an easy mastery of all the rest.”

(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 2008 *The Phenomenon of Man*)

An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, there is a rocky, greyish-brown area. Below it, a green, agricultural landscape with a grid of fields is visible. A narrow, sandy isthmus connects this land to a large body of water. The water is a deep blue-grey color and contains several small, dark islands or peninsulas. In the background, there are low, hazy mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is somewhat muted and atmospheric.

“we have grown so accustomed to the idea of the solitary and willful creator that we find it difficult to see the deeper ecology of creation” (McNiff 1998)

A meta-synthesis of person-centredness in nursing curricula.

*O'Donnell, McCormack, McCance & Barr (in
progress)*

Meta-synthesis methodology

- ▶ Range of frameworks exist
- ▶ Noblit and Hare (1988) 7 stages of meta-synthesis

Meta-question

How is person-centredness manifest in nursing curricula?

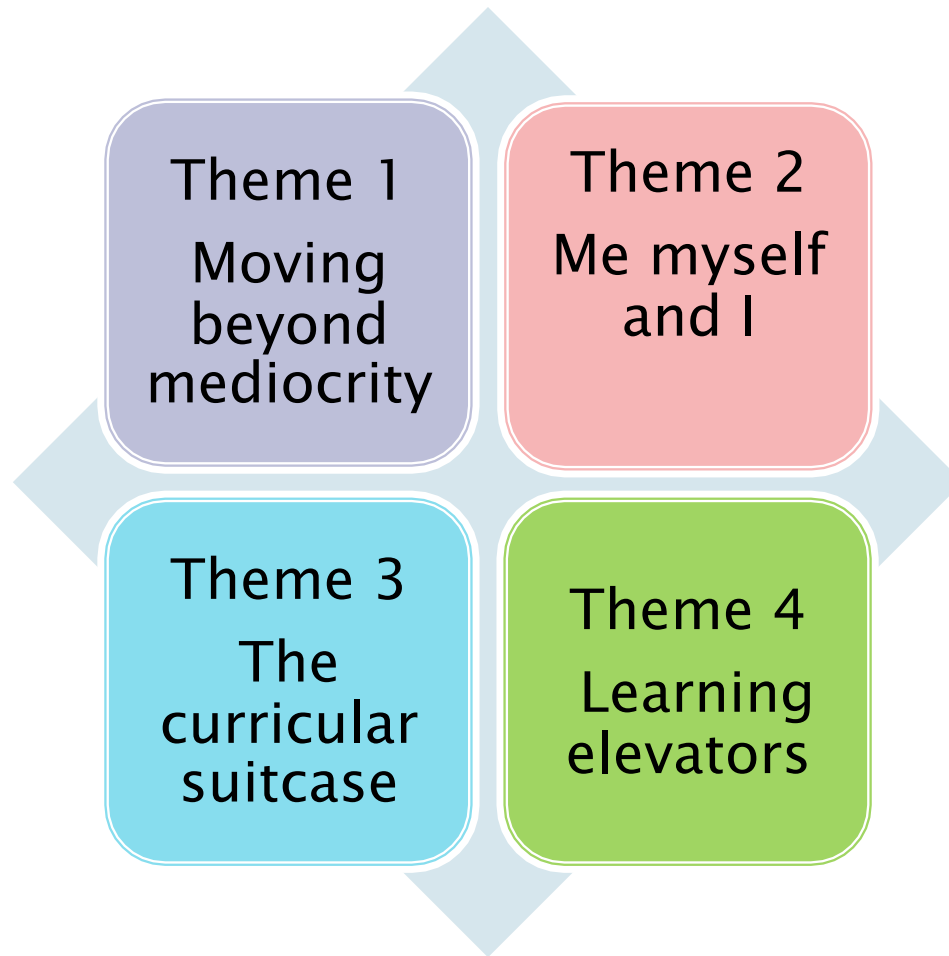
Inclusion criteria

- ▶ Inclusion criteria; qualitative data; papers in English; published in last 10 years; included term(s) from definition of person centredness
- ▶ Result: 76 papers
- ▶ First level of screening; 46 were excluded
Discussion papers (18); Quantitative papers(17); Not relevant following abstract review (11)

Reading the qualitative studies

- ▶ Second level of screening - 30 papers
- ▶ Recruited six independent reviewers who formed two expert panels (reviewed 15 papers each)
- ▶ 'Naive' reading to deep reading
- ▶ Data extraction grid
- ▶ Creative Hermeneutic data analysis (Boomer & McCormack 2009)

Themes



Conclusions

- Merits of person-centred practice widely espoused
- Manifest through specific teaching and learning activities often within modules e.g. problem based learning, reflection
- 4 themes identified to portray existing body of knowledge

Implications for nursing education

- Culture - theory informed, values-based approach
- Gaining ownership
- Supporting new ways of working
- Curricular essentials

Need for Creative Educators

“If the ultimate outcome is to produce a practitioner who can creatively solve a problem or plan an innovative care intervention for the people in their care then it follows that as educators we have a responsibility to nurture students’ creative capacity by first of all developing our own creative skills in teaching and learning” (McCormack et al, 2015)



Knowledge Dams

- Knowledge hierarchies, blind-spots and EBP
- An ethics of care versus the ethics of risk avoidance
- The space for and acceptance of participatory, emancipatory and transformational learning
- Cultures of managerialism
- The reality of telling unwelcome truths
- Over reliance on rational processes of verification

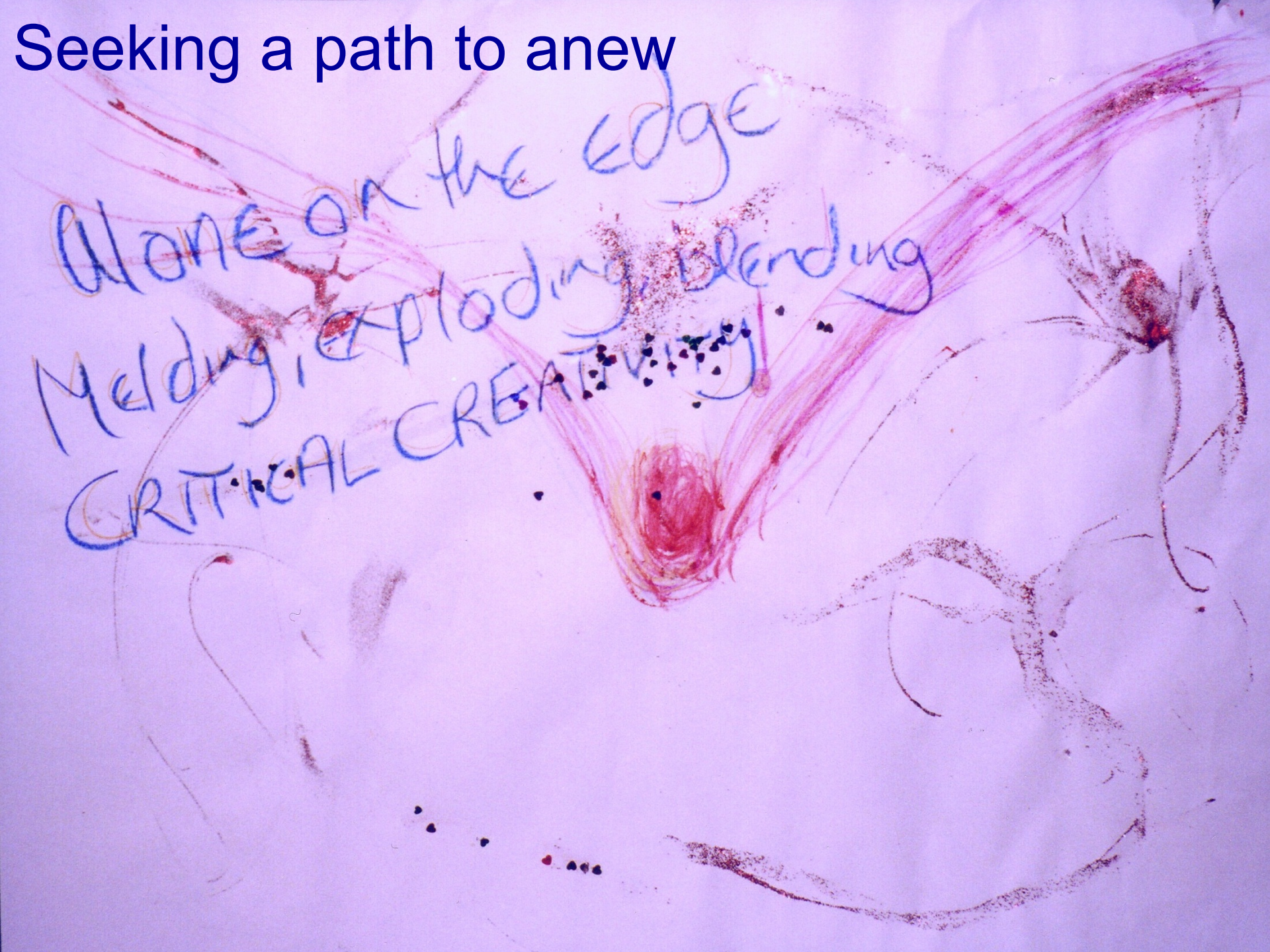


Finding Rhythm



Seeking a path to anew

Alone on the edge
Melding, exploding, blending
CRITICAL CREATIVITY!





Transformational Learning

Transformational learning is a continuous process of developing person-centred ways of being through the transformation of self and others. It is enabled by facilitators who authentically engage with individuals and teams to blend personal qualities and creative imagination with practice skills and practice wisdom in order to transform who we are and reinvent ourselves by helping us to see how our frames of reference, thinking, and behaviour produce unintended consequences, to surface and question the way we have framed our points of view about ourselves, others, or our circumstances with the idea of creating a fundamental shift.

(adapted from McCormack, Manley & Wilson, 2008 and Hargrove 2007)

Transformational Learning

A rediscovery of power such that the more critically aware learners become the more they are able to transform society and subsequently their own reality (Freire 1970)

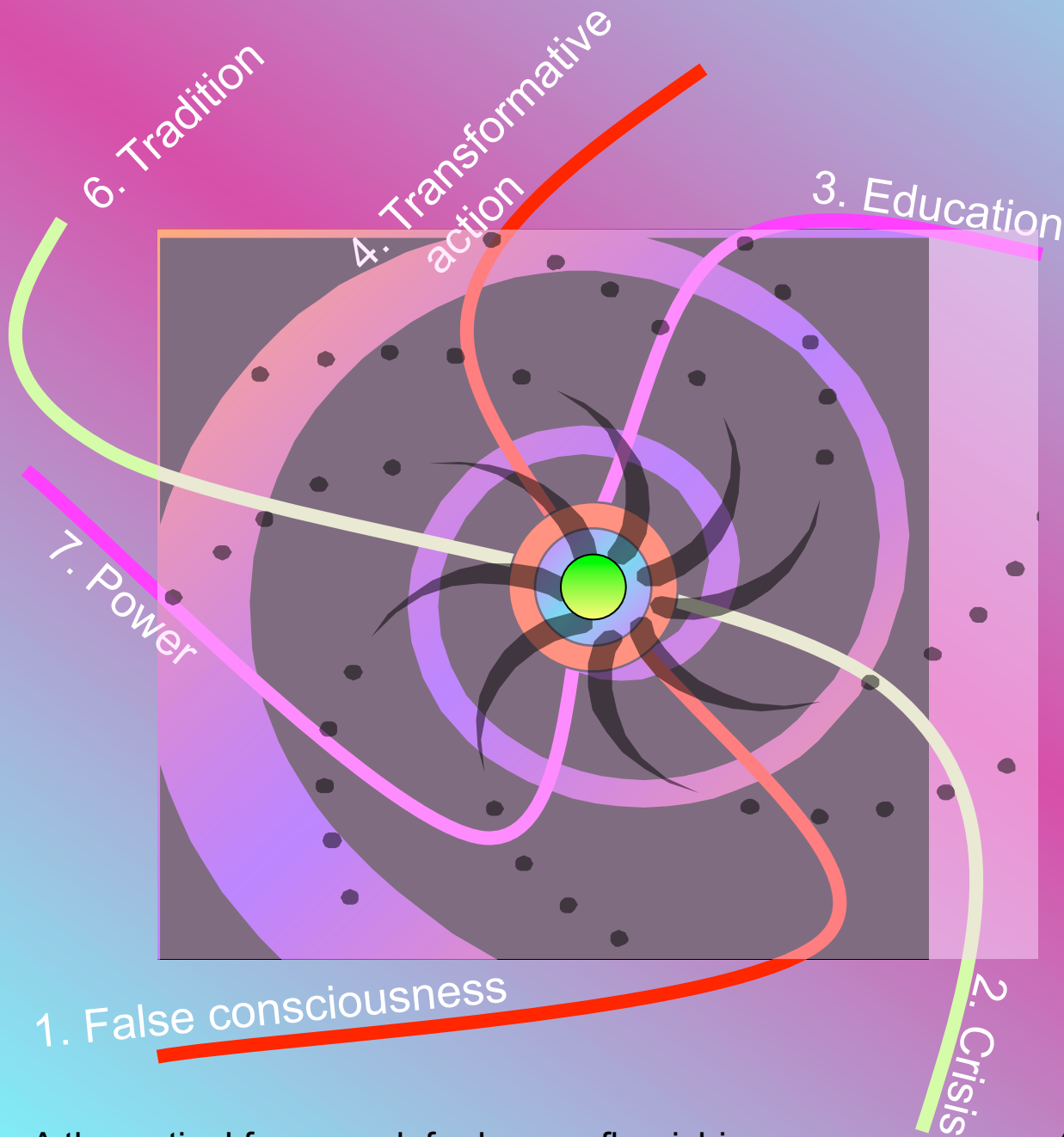
Participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview ... It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason & Bradbury 2008)

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

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

CRITIQUE

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



Outcome:
Human flourishing



5. The body



8. Reflexivity



Other critical
practice theories



Praxis spiral for
human flourishing
enabled by
professional artistry

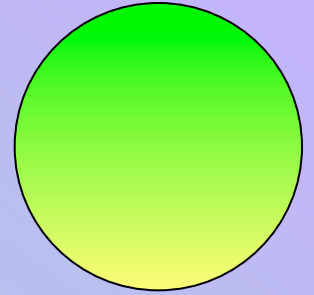


CRITICAL
CREATIVITY

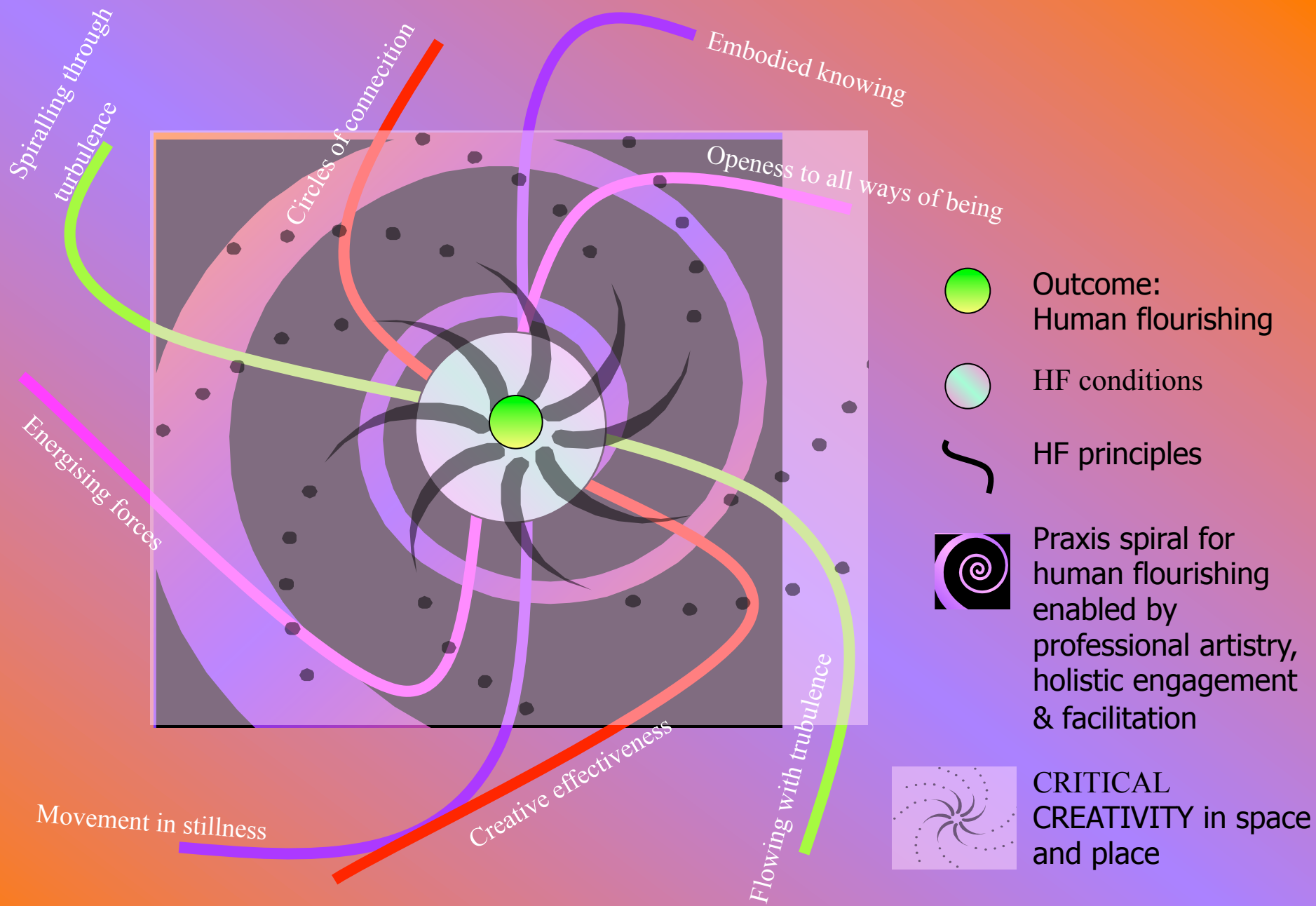
A theoretical framework for human flourishing
located in the critical creativity worldview

(McCormack & Titchen 2006;
Titchen & McCormack 2010)

Human Flourishing



- Focuses on maximising the potential for individuals to achieve their potential for growth and development
- Human flourishing is seen as both the end and the means of transformational research/development and learning



Dancing the praxis spiral: A methodological (metaphorical & conceptual) framework for human flourishing in changing practice in the critical creativity worldview

Titchen & McCormack 2010

How do we help people to flourish?

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

A Framework for
Transformational Learning
through Critical Creativity

Spiralling through turbulence

- Is your facilitation of learning ‘authentic’ and in what ways is your facilitation consistent with the shared values and beliefs of co-learners.
- Does your authentic facilitation result in human flourishing?
 - *Sensing*
 - *Presencing*
 - *Realising (after Senge et al)*





Circles of connection

Developing shared values with co-learners and holding these values as a 'rudder' to guide perspective transformation.

- How collaborative, inclusive and participative are your ways of transformational working?
- Are your approaches to learning, reflective of the 'whole self'?

Creative effectiveness

Professional artistry is the hallmark of expertise of any kind of practice ... It involves the blending, interplay, synthesis, balancing and synchronising of diverse but interconnected dimensions. Professional artistry is essentially the process that puts the dimensions together to create the dance of fluent and seamless practice. Such practice has an elegant simplicity that seems easy to the onlooker, but is enormously complex and skilled (Titchen, 2009).

- **How is the artistry of your creative practice captured in your teaching and learning and what is the impact of this artistry on outcomes achieved?**

Movement in stillness

Energy mixed fast
Speeding through body soul
Stop, change sources

- What reflective strategies and processes do you use in your practice to enable authenticity, change of direction and flow?
- How is 'reflexivity' made explicit in your practice and its evaluation?



Embodied knowing

Fitting, fleeting, flying

Fighting the monsters within

Moving, fearing, shoving

How do you make best use of your creative and artistic embodied knowing as reflective evaluation methods and 'data' in your T & L design?



Energising forces

“Dancing with beauty rather than fighting ugliness”

(Marshall & Reason 2008)

- To what extent do you actively engage with ‘moments of crisis’?
- How do you evaluate the effectiveness of change through ‘crisis’ in your practice?
- What ethical principles guide your practice and its evaluation?



Openness to all ways of being

“The more one sees the better one knows where to look ...” (Chardin 2008)

- How does your personal world-view guide your practice?
- How do you make your world-view explicit in your ways of working?
- What methodological principles guide your practice and its evaluation?

Flowing with Turbulence

“I would love to live like a river flows, carried by the surprise of its own unfolding” (O’Donohue, 1997)

- How do you use your emotional and spiritual intelligences to shape your practice?
- How do you make explicit your intelligences, their influence on your practice and their impact on outcomes achieved?



Re-framing
experience
symbolically

Following the
wisdom of the
body

Capturing the
colour,
texture,
smell, taste
and sound of
experience

Critical-creative
dialogue

Listening to the
sounds of
silence

Taking risks,
leaping into the
unknown, being
the playful child



Transformational learning methods for using
critical-creative processes

“Exploring ‘self’ as a person-centred academic, through critical creativity”

Prof Brendan McCormack, Brian McGowan, Mary McGonigle, Deborah Goode, Pauline Black, Prof Marlene Sinclair

Objectives

- Explore through different media, contrasting aspects of ‘self’ as an educator.
- Engage in playful activity in a safe space to explore own creativity and ways in which this creativity could be surfaced and integrated into everyday practice.
- Explore the potential of creativity in person-centred approaches to teaching, learning and research.
- Experience ‘risk taking’ in a facilitated environment in order to develop potential for meaningful connections with others – students and colleagues.



Methods

- Paint, clay and collage = **the expression of self as learner**
- Creative writing and poetry = **self in context through written word**
- Theatre/drama = **the alternative self(s)**
- Working in nature = **the connected self**
- Voice = **self expression**

- ***2 x consolidation workshops:***
- Exploring critical theories in the context of being creative and creative expression (theoretically grounding the creative experiences in previous workshops):

- Critical creativity and person-centred practice (bring it all together into what it means in the context of practice)





Collective Experiences

- **Enabled different thinking**

“...participation in creative approaches has broadened my horizon with regard to what helps people learn...”

- **Learning beyond the confines of competence**

“The experience has enabled me to see things from another perspective in my professional and personal life.”

- **Creating more effective relationships**

‘I feel a new sparkle of light floods my soul when I meet and greet colleagues who were on this journey with me. A new joy has been created by the friendship that makes me feel better and this is hard to describe in words.’

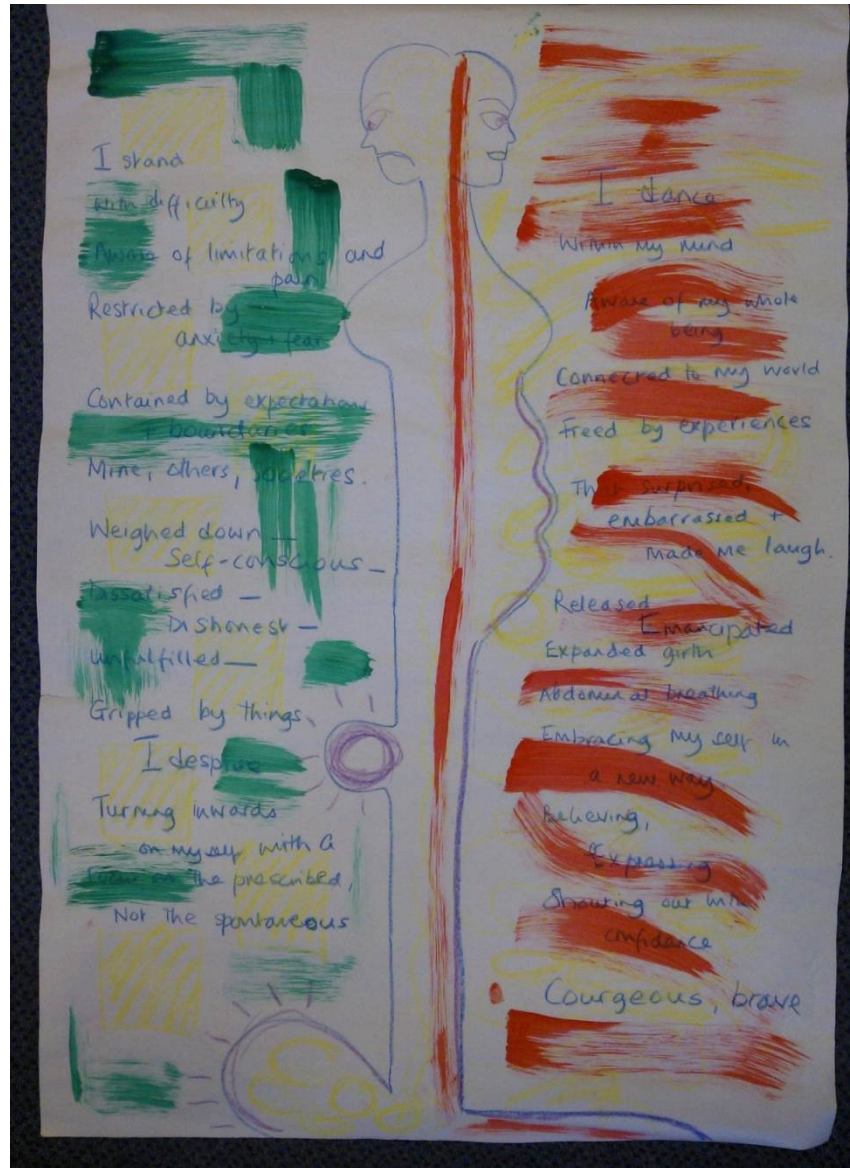


I stand with Difficulty
Afraid of difficulties
and pain
Restricted by anxiety
and fear

Contained by
expectations and
boundaries
Mine, others,
society's
Weighed down, self-
conscious

Dissatisfied-
Dishonest-Unfulfilled
Gripped by things I
despise
Turning inward on
myself

Focusing on the
presented – not the
spontaneous



I dance with my mind
Aware of my whole
being
Connected to my
world
Freed by experiences
...
... that surprised,
embarrassed and
made me laugh

Released,
emancipated
Expanded girth
abdomen breathing
Embracing myself in
a new way
Believing, expressing,
shouting out with
confidence

Courageous, Brave

Letting Go in order to let Come

- *‘At certain points in the programme, however, my need to be well organised and well prepared was severely challenged. At these times I found myself propelled into an alien world. There, in the absence and comfort of the familiar and predetermined, I felt out of control and anxious.’*
- *‘Undoubtedly, the most powerful and personal learning arose from these ‘uncomfortable’ situations. Now, instead of shying away from unfamiliar and more spontaneous learning experiences, I am learning to embrace them. No lasting damage was suffered; being able to laugh out loud at that particular situation and my final ‘performance’ is testament to this.’*





Benefits

- Inspiring
- Releasing
- Exploring
- Developing
- Enhancing
- Nurturing
- Evaluating
- Creating energy

An Ecology of Transformation

- Networks of transformation nested in practice and academic systems
- Interdependent relations between stakeholders
- Skilled facilitators who can facilitate diversity of transformational approaches
- Funding models that enable cycles of knowledge co-production instead of single-loop learning
- Stakeholders committed to facilitating creative transformational practices
- Creating dynamic balance in which practices regulate themselves within governance systems

(adapted from Kemmis et al www.aare.edu.au/09pap/wil091156.pdf)

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