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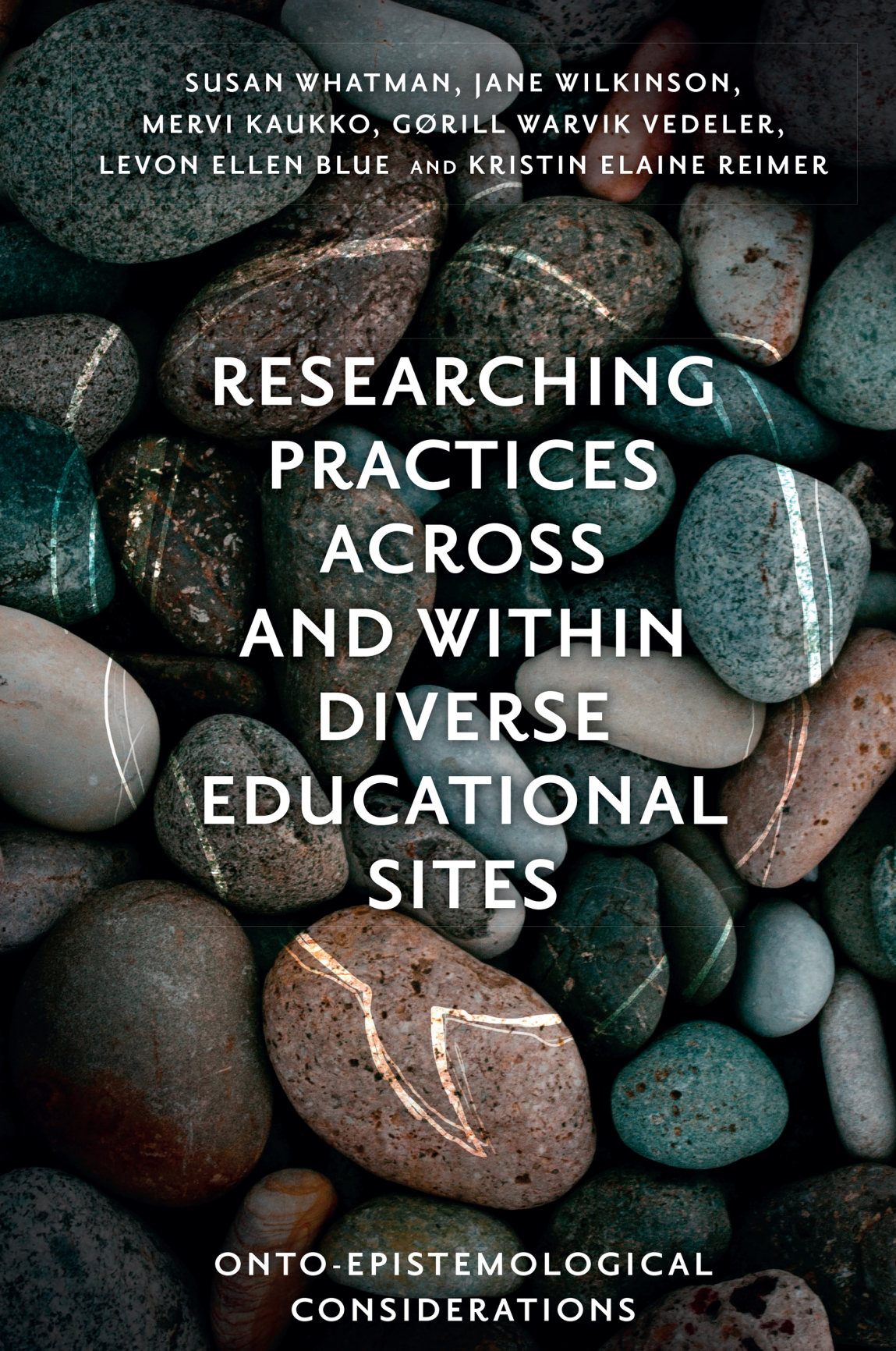

RESEARCHING PRACTICES ACROSS AND WITHIN DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL SITES

ONTO-EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researching Practices Across and Within Diverse Educational Sites

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

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Abbreviations

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

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About the Authors

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

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

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

practice. Restorative justice education (RJE), the main focus of her work, is one such humanising approach in schools. Beyond RJE, other threads of her research and practice reinforce education as a connective endeavour: alternative education for justice-involved youth; access to higher education for non-traditional students; experiences of refugee and asylum-seeking university students; global citizenship education; and intergenerational teaching relationships. She is currently helping to lead a Pedagogy, Education, and Praxis (PEP) International Network project exploring how education helps us to live well and to create a world worth living in for all.

Susan Whatman is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, living and working on Yugambeh Country, Queensland, Australia. She is a non-Indigenous woman and academic, an expert in health and physical education curriculum and sport pedagogy, critical Indigenous education, initial teacher education, and teacher and coach professional learning. As a Senior Fellow in Higher Education (SFHEA), her practitioner-focussed research is fuelled and characterised by a sustained commitment to social justice, equity, and, particularly, decolonising education. She co-facilitates the Educational Justice, Excellence and Equity (EDJEE) group in the Griffith Institute of Educational Research (GIER), which includes the Pedagogic Codes, Pedagogic Rights (PCPR) Lab and the EDJEE channel (www.vimeo.com/edjee).

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About the Contributors

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Kerry Bodle is the Academic Director (Indigenous) for the Griffith Business School. She has a PhD in Business Failure and has active research in Indigenous business success, commercial and financial literacy, and business education. She is also an honourary Associate Professor at ANU. She is invited to be keynote speaker Australia-wide and has ARC, CPA, and NIAA research projects that contribute knowledge to impact industry, professionals, and government policy-makers. Her story as the first Indigenous Accountant with a PhD and CPA qualifications became the feature article in the CPA Magazine *InTheBlack*, with an embedded video and a boardroom named after her at the headquarters of CPA Melbourne. She has been recently awarded a Fellow of CPA Australia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Foreword

Stephen Kemmis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Preface

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

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

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

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