



ORIGINAL PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

Flowing like a river: facilitation in practice development and the evolution of critical-creative companionship

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Abstract

Beginnings: Using a river landscape metaphor, the purpose of this paper is to locate critical creativity in the evolution of practice development in the UK and show how it can be facilitated through critical-creative companionship. Critical creativity is a new landscape for practice development that has evolved through three decades of a deepening understanding of: the philosophical foundations of practice development (bedrocks); paradigms (landscapes); projects/studies (gardens); and practice development/research roles, relationships and skills (gardeners). As a practice development practitioner, facilitator and researcher, I have helped shape the course of the river, peaking with the slow-burn, yet intense, co-creation of critical creativity.

Panorama, flow and transformation: A panoramic view of the river is offered as it changes over time. This view includes the changes of flow and direction, powered by different philosophical and theoretical influences and resultant transformations in practice development practice/research and facilitation.

Unfolding: I telescope in on the critical creativity landscape, showing how it is a synthesis of previous influences and how the critical companionship of my earlier work flowed gently into critical-creative companionship. I show broad-brush how critical-creative companions help people to use the philosophical, theoretical and methodological mandalas of critical creativity, not only in their practice development, but also in their own being and becoming critical-creative companions.

Conclusion and implications for practice development and inquiry: Critical-creative companions help people to work in the gardens of critical creativity to embody and live what might seem difficult, complex and mysterious. Becoming a critical-creative companion takes time. It requires a scholarly approach to practice and the development of enabling facilitation skills and experiential and theoretical understanding. Reading resources are suggested.

Keywords: Critical creativity, facilitation, critical companionship, human flourishing

Note: The IPDJ's Academic Editor would like readers to know this submission was subject to an unblinded review. Specifically, the reviewer received a submission that contained all the context detail present in the article as published, and also knew that context in depth as well as knowing the author. The decision to proceed in this way this was made by the Academic Editor, given that a particular context and specific persons feature prominently; it was felt the submission needed to be reviewed within its context for historical accuracy. The reader might like to approach this article as a personal and authoritative account of practice development at a particular time and in a particular place within the development of practice development in the UK and internationally. Comments and responses on any aspect of the article are encouraged.

Flowing like a river: facilitation in practice development and the evolution of critical-creative companionship

'I would love to live like a river flows, carried by the surprise of its own unfolding' (Unfinished poem by John O'Donohue, 1997)



For five minutes or so before you begin reading this article, I invite you to imagine your experience of facilitation (as a facilitator and/or participant), as a river flowing through different landscapes. There are different kinds of gardens on the banks. These gardens are practice development projects, education or research that you might have experienced.

You might want to start at the source of the river and follow its course, or begin wherever your imagination takes you. As you imagine the river and gardens and move around them in any way that comes up for you, open up all your senses. Notice what you notice, what you see, smell, feel, hear, taste. Have a notebook or paper to hand. Perhaps some coloured pens, pencils or crayons?

When you are ready, find yourself a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, to sit or lie on the floor if you want to. Close your eyes. Now bring your awareness to the sounds outside the place you are in; then to the sounds inside it. Finally, bring your attention to your breath. In and out. Relax/sigh as you breathe out. Let go of any tension in your body. Now allow your imagination to drift to your river...

Beginnings

No one could be more surprised than I am at how the river of my life and career has unfolded. Originally a physiotherapist, I discovered that I had a gift for helping undergraduate students on their clinical placements to learn from working alongside me. I'd had absolutely no training or education in how to do this. In fact I hated most of my physiotherapy training in the late 1960s. For me, it was technical, rigid, didactic and unchallenging. It could never have been described as student-centred. But there was one tutor whom I would now call person-centred and who influenced me greatly through her stories

of working with patients. I wonder now if she influenced me as I intuitively shared my passion with my students and invited them to observe me working with patients and families. I began to tell them in detail what I was doing. Much to my astonishment, I discovered years later (whether by a tap on the shoulder in a hut in the Himalayas or at an arts theatre in Oxford and a 'You probably don't remember me, but I was a student at ...') that I'd had a significant impact on their choice of clinical career!

When I undertook a masters degree in rehabilitation studies and read Carl Rogers' book, *Freedom to Learn* (1983), I actually cried with relief and joy. I felt I had come home. This book began my journey towards understanding the nature of person-centred education and practice and experiential learning. A year later I put this understanding into practice as a post-registration education consultant at the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. I helped clinical practitioners and educators design person-centred curricula, using student-centred and problem-based learning approaches. In 1989, another opportunity unfolded. I was appointed by the Institute of Nursing in Oxford to work with Alison Binnie and nurses at the city's John Radcliffe Hospital on one of the UK's first major nursing practice development (action research) projects to transform a task-focused nursing service into a patient-centred one.

My actor role in the research was to help create a reflective culture on the ward and help Alison become more effective in helping the nurses to collaborate in the study, as well as become more patient-centred in their practice. I quickly established that Alison, although she had no educational experience, had been deeply influenced by Carl Rogers, but in terms of person-centred therapy (Rogers, 1967). We therefore had a common theoretical starting point that enabled us to begin working together (Binnie and Titchen, 1999). In a separate, but simultaneous strand of the action research, I studied myself as I helped Alison and the nurses learn in the midst of practice. This strand became my doctorate, from which my conceptual framework of critical companionship emerged (Titchen, 1998/2000). This framework has flowed through my work ever since in the four countries of the UK, as well as Ireland, Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and Canada, and has gently transformed into critical-creative companionship (my TED talk: tinyurl.com/TED-titchen).



Panorama, flow and transformation

Welling up in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at one of the sources of a practice development river concerned with making patient care more person-centred, was a desire to transform task-focused nursing to patient-centred nursing through intentional projects. Led by senior clinical nurses, initiatives sprung up around a small number of centres, primarily in Manchester and Oxford. Most of these nurses had undertaken a masters in nursing degree at Swansea University. In Oxford, the earliest form of practice development was characterised as organisational and professional development, and it was nurtured by the setting up of the Institute of Nursing in 1989 by Sue Pembrey (see Titchen et al., 2013a).

My observation was that person-centredness in the teams could be felt and experienced in the institute and in the wards led by the above clinical leaders, but that it had not been named explicitly.

In these early days, neither practice development nor facilitation within it had been defined. Even so, for me, there was no dissonance between what we were there for – that is, to enable patient-centred care – and the way we worked together. But I did notice that lectures at the institute and learning in clinical settings were largely didactic, that is, telling or advising in clinical settings or running courses. Thus facilitating learning appeared technical in orientation or worldview (Figure 1) and expert centred, rather than learner centred, and therefore dissonant with our purpose. Thus it would appear that the flow to person-centredness was somewhat sluggish at first. This is hardly surprising given the focus of energy on patient-centred care, rather than challenging the prevailing technical worldview shaping healthcare education and development. Commonly, professional and organisational development was linear and management centred – for example, project managers set objectives and timeframes and monitored achievement, and new learning and skills were developed through training programmes (teacher centred). So one could surmise that early practice development facilitation tended to be linear and follow set patterns as symbolised in the Figure 2 garden.

Figure 1 (adapted from Titchen, 2015): Four worldviews that have influenced development in a variety of fields over time and their bedrocks (historical, philosophical influences). As in the natural world, it is the bedrock that shapes the landscape (development/research paradigm) and thus the soil, vegetation and gardens (projects/developments/studies)



The river flowed more swiftly when nurse academics and leaders began to examine how other professions at that time supported learning formally in clinical practice, primarily clinical supervision and adapting it for nursing. There was also an interest in exploring theoretical influences in other fields, for example, in education, humanistic psychology and critical social science.

In these early days, there was often turbulence between practice developers ('gardeners') where some were more technical in orientation and others more emancipatory. This was evident in 1991 at the first Institute of Nursing Research and Practice Development Summer School in Oxford, where some of the team delivered their material through lectures (teacher-centred education) and others used experiential, discovery learning workshops (student/participant-centred learning). Those of us 'gardeners' working in the latter way began to explore, in our projects, more innovative ways of helping nurses learn in and from practice. In 1995, the institute merged with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) to form the RCN Institute and throughout the 1990s, with Brendan McCormack, Jan Dewing and Jayne Wright, we deepened and used our theoretical understandings about facilitation and practice development in our RCN Institute clinical supervision programmes, practice development schools and practice development within clinical settings. We were particularly influenced by John Heron's work on facilitation and co-operative inquiry (Heron, 1989a, 1989b; Mezirow, 1981; Reason and Rowan, 1981; McGill and Beaty, 1998), as well as other authors' ideas, shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Following others' lines: formal, structured gardens (practice development initiatives) in the 1990s



By the end of the decade and into the 2000s, the practice development river began its descent down tumultuous rapids from the technical to the emancipatory worldview (for example, Sanders, 2004), thus the river eddies, whirlpools, raging torrents and waterfalls were reshaping the landscape from the technical (doing linear development based on the empirico-analytical/positivism paradigm) to the emancipatory worldview (bringing about social justice through democratising, empowering and liberating). At the same time, assumptions from the practical worldview around the importance of understanding current cultures and contexts before being able to transform them were melded and blended with the emancipatory worldview (Figure 1). At first, we followed 'garden' designs blended with the emancipatory worldview (Figure 2), as we were unable to finding anything approaching what we wanted to do at that time in nursing and healthcare. As we critiqued key ideas, for example, those of Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Fay (1987), we began to design emancipatory action research

studies to test the ideas in practice (for example, Titchen and Manley, 2006; Hardy et al., 2009; Manley and Titchen, 2016). Some colleagues and participants in practice development projects, schools and conference workshops found these ideas difficult to understand and were fearful of breaking out of the formal, structured gardens into more liberating, democratic and emancipatory ones (Figure 3). Moreover, critical companionship was often rejected as being too complex and full of jargon. In fact, this 'jargon' was the discourse of the critical paradigm and we worked hard to make it easier for developing facilitators to understand through helping them to experience such companionship and then sharing with them the practical knowhow of what we had been doing.

Figure 3: Diverse, freeform gardens in late 1990s and early 2000s



These freeform gardens required 'gardeners' able to support new facilitators and practice developers as they navigated the rocks, rapids and waterfalls. But these gardeners first required help themselves to develop emancipatory facilitation skills and to become emancipatory practice developers or critical companions. Our work at the RCN Institute was often about helping people to overcome internal resistance. Through providing support to practice development teams in their work contexts and in our practice development schools, publications and workbooks, we introduced the gardeners to the three Es of critical social science: Enlightenment, Empowerment and Emancipation (Fay, 1987). This proved to be an anchor; it was something that people could understand and hold onto in the turbulence of the changes they were trying to bring about in their workplaces. We also enabled their development of new skillsets of: being person-centred (McCormack, 2001; Brendan McCormack's TED talk ([tinyurl.com/TED-mccormack](https://www.tinyurl.com/TED-mccormack))); transforming cultures (Manley, 2001); asking enabling questions (Dewing et al., 2014); and being a critical companion – a facilitator working in the emancipatory worldview – (Titchen, 1998/2000; 2004).

An opportunity to continue the testing of critical companionship came about in the early 2000s when the RCN Institute set up a major emancipatory action research study (Hardy et al., 2009). The aim was to help expert nurses to research their own practice for the purpose of articulating their own expertise. Critical companions would help them to become practitioner-researchers. Experienced clinicians and

educators were invited to become the companions and we soon discovered that these people needed a lot of support to learn how to live and embody the dimensions, processes and facilitation strategies of critical companionship (Figure 8, p 15), so we built in action learning opportunities for them, as well as the expert nurses. What worked really well was us telling them what we were doing (as their critical companion) in practical detail, more or less as it happened, in combination with them reading about and practising the role, processes and skills, receiving constructive feedback from the expert and from us, reflecting reflexively, engaging in critical dialogue with self and others, and weaving reiterative reading about it throughout.

Some companions and experts wrote about the challenge, power, effectiveness and exhilaration of using critical companionship (for example, Titchen and McGinley [with Brendan McCormack], 2004; Greggans and Conlon, 2009; Brown and Harrison, 2009; Brown and Scott, 2010). Others were trying it out too in different contexts and professions (for example, Richardson et al., 2004; O'Halloran et al., 2005; Vanlaere and Gastmans, 2005; Gribben and Cochrane, 2006; Odell et al., 2006; Dickinson et al., 2006; Bezzant, 2008; Brown and McCormack, 2011; Mulcahy, 2013; Akhtar et al., 2016).

Marking the transition from the technical worldview, the first practice development definition emerged from the turbulent rapids, making the emancipatory worldview and facilitation focus explicit.

Definition 1

Emancipatory practice development is a continuous process of improvement towards increased effectiveness in patient-centred care. This is brought about by enabling healthcare teams to develop their knowledge and skills and to transform the culture and context of care. It is enabled and supported by facilitators committed to systematic, rigorous continuous processes of emancipatory change that reflect the perspectives of service users (Garbett and McCormack, 2002).

In 2002, we recognised at the RCN Institute that we needed to expose our work for critique by colleagues working in different fields of development both nationally and internationally. So we created a communication space called the International Practice Development Colloquium to critique, refine and extend our philosophical, theoretical and methodological thinking about practice development through contestation and debate and then through practice development inquiry (Figure 4). Over the next five years of its life, before it became the International Practice Development Collaborative (IPDC) in 2007, a body of transformational work was undertaken including concept analyses on enabling facilitation (Shaw et al., 2008) and effective workplace culture (Manley et al., 2011) and the creation and development of critical creativity and critical-creative companionship (McCormack and Titchen, 2006; Titchen and McCormack, 2008; Titchen and McCormack, 2010; Titchen et al., 2011). By bringing together a range of new and diverse ideas and testing them in our schools and projects, the contemporary, postmodern practice development gardens in Figure 4 had been created.

Figure 4: Contemporary, postmodern gardens in the mid- to late 2000s



These developments led to a second definition of emancipatory practice development, in which person-centredness and authenticity are embedded in relation to cultures and facilitation. This definition also shows the first bubbling up of assumptions aligned with transformational practice development (Figure 1, p 4), that is, blending creativity with practice skills and wisdom and transformative learning.

Definition 2

Emancipatory practice development is a continuous process of developing person-centred cultures. 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. The learning that occurs brings about transformations of individual and team practices. This is sustained by embedding both processes and outcomes in corporate strategy (Manley, McCormack and Wilson, 2008, p 9).

A few years on, with the further development of critical creativity as a paradigmatic synthesis within the transformational worldview, a third definition was published and can be seen as elaboration of definition 2.

Definition 3

Transformational practice development is an elaboration of the definition of emancipatory practice development and goes beyond. It is a way of living, being, doing, inquiring and becoming in professional work (that is, a practice ontology and epistemology) rather than a time-limited project or programme. It is not a set of tools (although it makes use of them); rather, it is through the use of self (heart, mind, body and soul) and one's knowing, being and becoming, in relationship with others, that brings about transformation (adapted from Titchen and McCormack, 2010).

Transformational practice development builds on the assumptions of the emancipatory worldview, juxtaposes them with different influences and articulates the connections between them. These influences are primarily metaphysics (searching for meaning in life and work which has a spiritual, rather than religious, dimension) and aesthetics. Critical creativity is a practice development and research landscape within this worldview. This landscape blends the assumptions of the critical paradigm and balances and attunes them to creative and ancient traditions, for the purpose of human flourishing (Titchen and McCormack, 2010). Human flourishing is defined as occurring 'when we bound and frame naturally co-existing energies, when we embrace the known and yet to be known, when we embody contrasts and when we achieve stillness and harmony. When we flourish we give and receive loving kindness' (McCormack and Titchen, 2014, p 19). Human flourishing is supported through contemporary facilitation strategies, connecting with beauty and nature and blending with ancient, indigenous and spiritual traditions (c.f. Senge et al., 2005) and active learning (Dewing, 2008). Critical-creative companionship is one such facilitation strategy. We use it to help practice developers, educators and researchers to dance the three mandalas of critical creativity; that is, the philosophical/theoretical, methodological and human flourishing mandalas (of which more below) within their transformational practice development gardens.

A transformational practice development garden is also like a mandala (a symbol that shows the parts and the whole and their connections) as shown in the yin/yang of the stream in the smaller middle right photo and the Inca temple mandala in the larger bottom right photo in Figure 4. Within such gardens, critical-creative companions use a wider range of strategies, processes and methods than emancipatory facilitators or critical companions in order to create the conditions for human flourishing that enable people to connect more easily with their spiritual and ancient selves through the body and creative imagination and nature.

Flowing on, in the context of the contemporary mix of postmodern gardens, emancipatory and/or transformational practice development were critiqued or contrasted with other ideas and theoretical influences.

For example, Jan Dewing's work on active learning (Dewing, 2010) and her exploration of positive psychology (Dewing and McCormack, 2017); Titchen and Niessen's (2011) consideration of U theory and critical creativity; Trede and Titchen's critical-creative dialogue on transformational practice development research and critical social science (2012); Titchen and McMahan's (2013) take on radical gardening (Figure 5; using whatever is happening or to hand); McCormack and Titchen's (2014) unfolding of the nature of human flourishing in the critical creativity worldview and its connection with nature and spirituality; Tasker and Titchen's (2016) inquiry into the role of mindfulness and grace in moving towards embodied practice and; the International Community of Practice for Person-centred Practice (2017) framing of its colloquium methodology in critical creativity to advance understanding about person-centredness and options for curriculum development.

To recap, this new mandala evolved from my original critical companionship framework (Titchen, 2003, 2004) that is located in the emancipatory worldview.

Definition 4

Critical companionship is a helping relationship in which an experienced facilitator accompanies another person on an experiential learning journey towards person-centred practice, using strategies of high challenge/high support within a trusting relationship. It is powered by professional artistry.

In my practice development, facilitation and inquiry since 1998, I have used creative expression and imagination through various art forms including authentic movement, painting, clay work, poetry, music and image theatre (my TED talk: tinyurl.com/TED-titchen). When Brendan McCormack and I started developing the practice development landscape of critical creativity within the International Practice Development Colloquium and articulating what we meant by the transformational worldview,

we worked together as critical companions. But we found that our companionship naturally unfolded to be more congruent with the landscape of critical creativity. In fact it was more chicken and egg, as inquiring into the nature of our own companionship helped us better articulate the nature of critical creativity.



My painting here symbolises human flourishing as the ultimate outcome of critical creativity

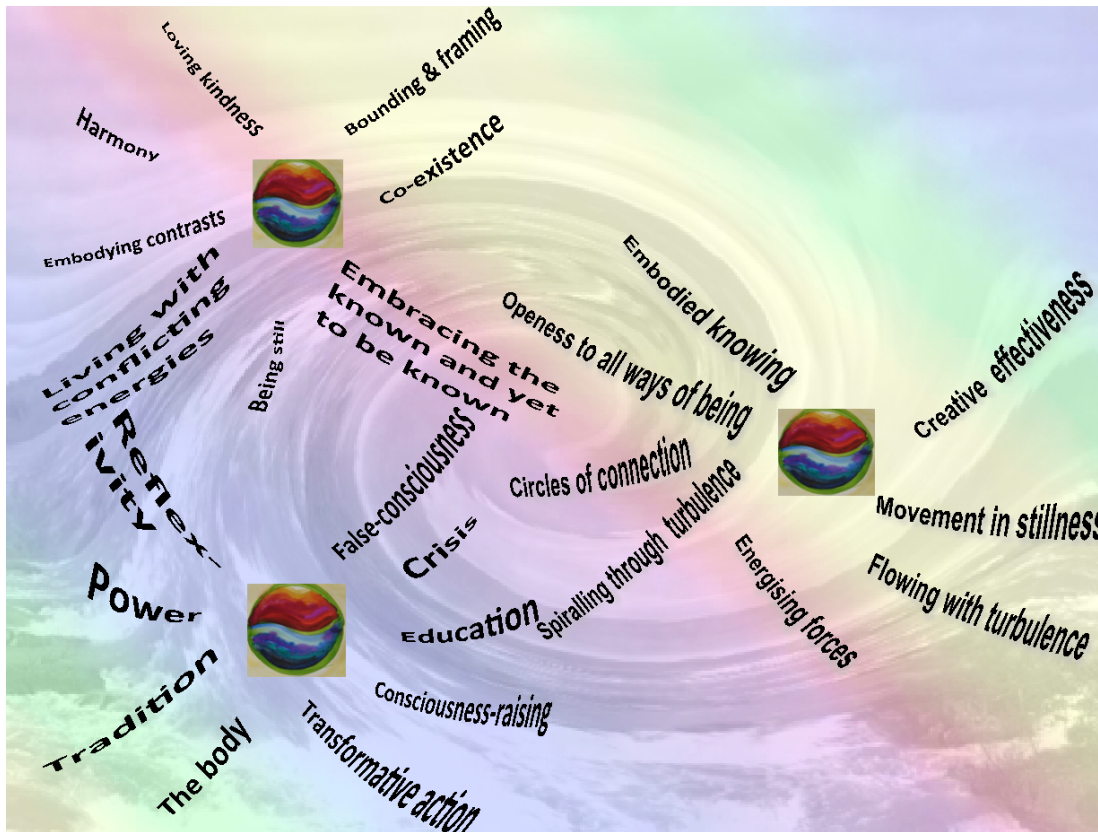
Thus, critical-creative companionship is an extension of my original framework (Figure 6). The major difference in this new version is that at its heart is the moral intent of human flourishing and social justice for all involved (Figure 8, p15). Practically, as already alluded to, the difference is that the companion uses the whole self and connects with the natural world and ancient wisdom, for example, through creative imagination and expression, metaphors, natural objects and working outside in hospital/ university grounds, gardens, streets, parks and occasionally in natural surroundings. These practical differences have the biggest impact on professional artistry as the companion is blending and melding a wider range of qualities, knowledges, ways of knowing and intelligences, for example.

Figure 6: Extension of critical companionship into critical-creative companionship



This extension of critical companionship is shown in Figure 6, which makes more visible the ontological dimensions that enable the critical-creative companion to create three conditions for human flourishing. These conditions are stillness in a landscape, becoming the rock (embodiment of critical creativity) and nurturing, flowing and connecting (Titchen and McCormack, 2010). Within these conditions, the critical-creative companion appears best able to dance the three critical creativity mandalas. In my most recent co-inquiries with doctoral students and practice developers, I have been able to articulate more clearly what it is that the critical-creative companion does to enable this dance. Fundamentally, it is to embody, intentionally role-model and articulate the practical knowhow of each mandala and how they work together (Figure 7), during or shortly after the time we spend together in our inquiry. I will try to explain this in a summary way within the context of the critical-creative companionship framework.

Figure 7: Dancing the three critical creativity mandalas as a critical-creative companion (practice developer, educator or researcher). Top left - human flourishing mandala (McCormack and Titchen, 2014); bottom left - philosophical/theoretical mandala (McCormack and Titchen, 2006, based on Fay's (1987) eight critical social science theories); bottom right - methodological mandala (Titchen and McCormack, 2010)



I invite you to look at Figure 7 as whole, with soft eyes. Let the images and words wash over you. Notice what you notice. What do you sense, feel, imagine?

Are there any resonances for you?

Now look at the words, how do they make you feel?

What about the images, what do you sense, feel, imagine?

“If you have accepted this invitation, you may have had the experience of using the wisdom of your body to make sense and meaning”

Now I invite you to use your cognitive mind. What is going on here? What does this mean? Why have I created this image? Does it resonate with what you know already about practice development, education or research – with your imagination, body and/or your mind?

Figure 7 sets out a simplified structure of the critical creativity mandalas and symbolises, as background, the commonalities of each of them, that is, the aesthetic and metaphysical bedrock of critical creativity and the praxis spiral. By using colour, river imagery, movement and symbolism I am trying to show you how human flourishing is enabled by the critical-creative companion even when – and especially when – the practice development river is turbulent. At the centre of each mandala is a praxis spiral enabled by professional artistry, with my painting of human flourishing at the heart. (I have incorporated the spiral into the turbulence of the river.) Praxis means mindful practical action with a moral intent. Within critical creativity the moral intent is human flourishing.

“Another reason for my creation of this figure was to show people that there are three mandalas in the first place! Perhaps because the development of critical creativity has been so ‘slow burn’ and the mandalas published at different times with several years between them, some people are unaware that there are more than one or two. Another common reason is that people often get mixed up between the mandalas and setting the three out together in a simplified form is found to be helpful”

I have created Figure 7 because I want you to see, as a whole, the three mandalas, the critical theories, methodological principles and elements of human flourishing and the potential for different configurations of the elements, principles and theories. Imagine the mandalas whirling and spiralling in different directions and at different speeds. At any one moment, the theories, principles and elements will be in different configurations. This symbolises the complexity and flow of the critical-creative companion at work, drawing on these different things when the moment demands (in terms of the person/people, problem/issue/question being worked with and culture, context, situation).

The companion may be conscious of this configuration in the moment, but my inquiry suggests it is more likely that they will be better able to articulate something of the configuration during a reflexive conversation with self or other, as soon after the moment as possible. This is an important point to bear in mind, as it is also the role of the companion to show those they are accompanying how to configure the mandalas themselves.

It is salient too, for the companion to ensure that people are aware that there are times when we may focus on one of the mandalas particularly. For example, if we are concerned with creating learning and inquiry spaces (Figure 8), the principles of the methodological mandala will help us create conditions of stillness (a haven in the turbulence of practice), embodiment and nurturing, flowing and connecting. Within these spaces, the companion might turn to the theoretical mandala to help people cognitively and artistically to critique and deconstruct the turbulence in their current situation, context and culture, and identify where there may be *false-consciousness* concerning, say, *power* and *tradition*, and the *crisis* that is falling out of it. Turning to the human flourishing mandala, the companion might use the element of *bounding and framing* to help people begin to understand the wider, overwhelming picture by framing a part of it. This makes deconstruction of the wider context more manageable and achievable. In our experience, the joy that arises when this understanding occurs enables people to flourish.

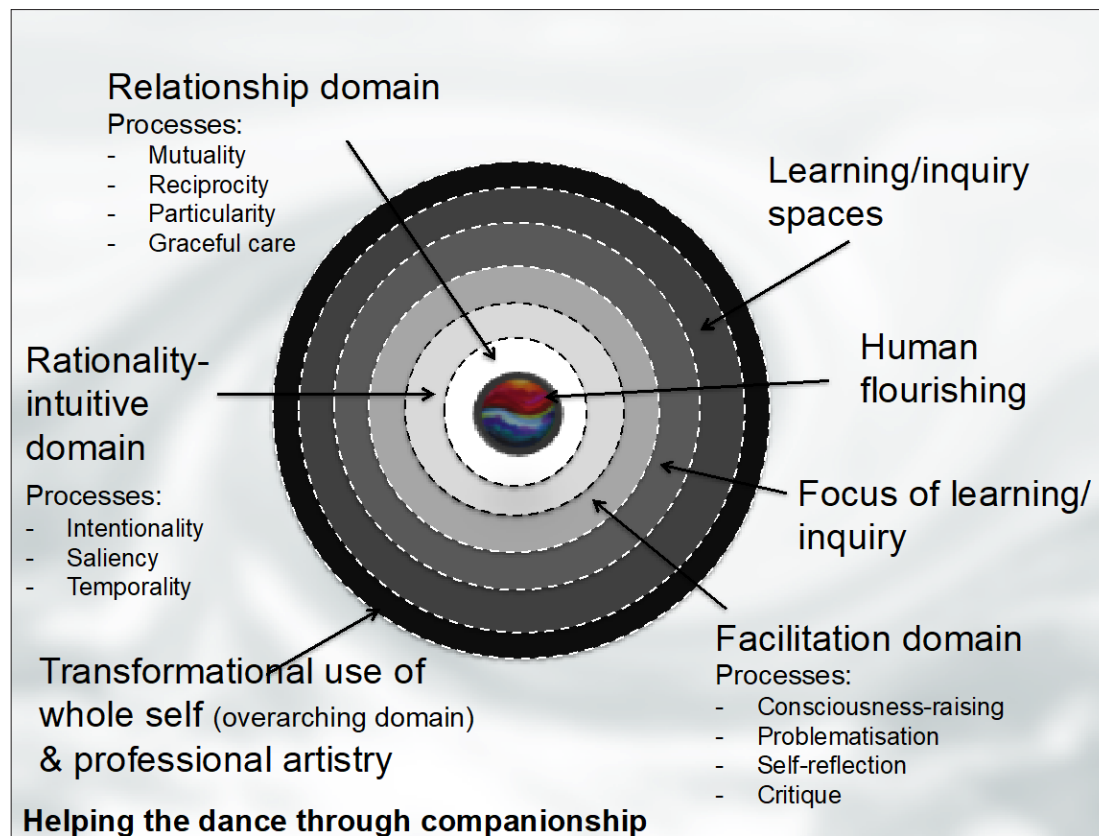
Using everyday language, metaphor, creative expression, imagery, nature and body movement like walking, the companion also helps people construct an informed way forward using the critical theories. Moreover, using such strategies enables everyone participating in the practice development/education/research to grasp, in different ways and levels of understanding, something of the complexity of the *crisis* and how to move towards *transformative action*. So using these strategies is democratising, empowering, liberating and also connects us with our creativity, spirituality and ancient wisdom through nature and ecology (as I have tried to do in this paper by using the river imagery and ecological metaphor of bedrock, landscape and gardens). Dancing the three mandalas can act as a guide for the companion to help people when they are feeling overwhelmed, confused, angry, hopeless and so on.

If you would like to see more (now or later) of how critical-creative companions can dance the mandalas of critical creativity and how they can record and express what they are doing, so that others can learn how to dance, this can be found elsewhere in my account of a doctoral supervision session with Lorna Peelo-Kilroe that we framed as a critical-creative co-inquiry (Titchen, 2013). Lorna is inquiring into the underpinnings for her methodology and I am exploring how I do critical-creative companionship. It is my written and creative expression of what I was doing during the session. There, you will see in action something of the domains, processes and strategies of critical-creative companionship that I summarise below.

Summary of critical-creative companionship

There are four domains comprising a number of processes (Figure 8) and practical knowhow strategies (see Titchen, 2003, 2004; Wright and Titchen, 2003). Professional artistry is the overarching domain and has several dimensions and processes.

Figure 8: The critical-creative companionship mandala



Relationship domain

Mutuality – working with/partnership/sharing decision making

Reciprocity – reciprocal giving and receiving of wisdom, care, concern

Particularity – getting to know the other as a whole person/sharing something of self

Graceful care – engaging the other as a whole person authentically with the whole of oneself/being a conduit of grace (Titchen and Tasker, 2017), being kind/present/emotionally engaged but balanced

Rationality-intuitive domain

Intentionality – being deliberate, purposeful cognitively and intuitively

Saliency – knowing what matters/what is significant/what needs to be paid attention to

Temporality – past, present future time, timing, timeliness, pacing and anticipating

Facilitation domain

Consciousness-raising – enabling conscious awareness of taken-for-granted assumptions, embodied wisdom and the carrying of culture in the body, discourse and language
Problematization – helping others to see problems that they are not aware of or reframing problems to help others see things from different perspectives

Self-reflection – helping people to reflect on themselves and their practices to develop self-knowledge and to be able to evaluate their impact in interaction with others

Critique – engaging in critical-creative dialogue with self and others to co-create and contest new knowledge and understanding

These processes are enacted through the facilitation strategies shown in Figure 9.

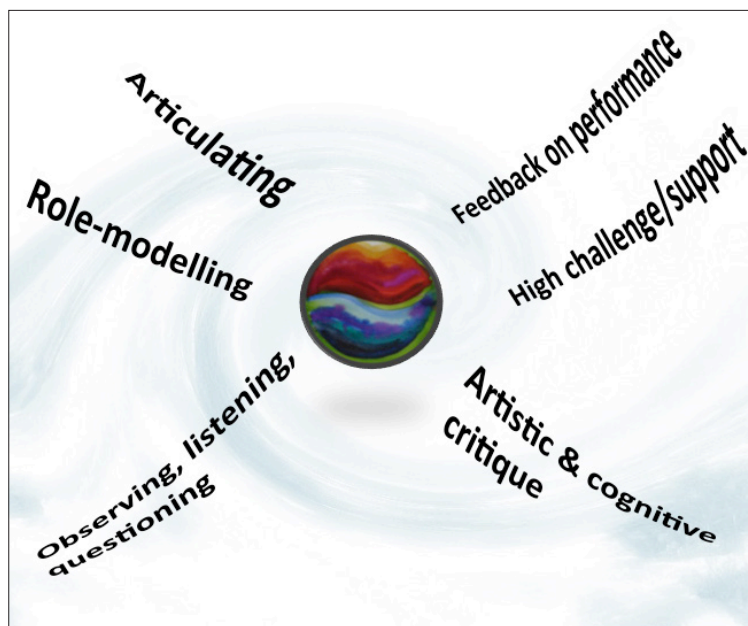


Figure 9: Critical companionship: Facilitation strategies

Professional artistry (overarching domain)

Through the dimensions and processes of professional artistry the companion blends, ‘dances’ or improvises any combination of the domains, processes and their strategies to meet the particular needs of people being helped in relation to their particular experiences, contexts and situations (Titchen and Higgs, 2001; Titchen, 2009).

Dimensions of professional artistry

Artistic qualities (Figure 10), such as connoisseurship, appreciation, discrimination, disposition to what is good, boldness, audacity and sticking power

Praxis skills for melding and blending the dimensions of professional artistry, the three critical creativity mandalas and the critical-creative companionship mandala are the capacities to flow, interplay, unravel, reveal, interweave, imagine, symbolise, harmonise, balance and echo or resonate with the natural world and human grace

Different ways of knowing and being, including pre-reflective (embodied or without mental representation), reflective, reflexive, metacognitive, aesthetic and ancient wisdom

(derived through our evolution as humans and being part of nature on our planet and the universe.

Different knowledges, for example, local, professional craft knowledge, personal, experiential and propositional knowledges

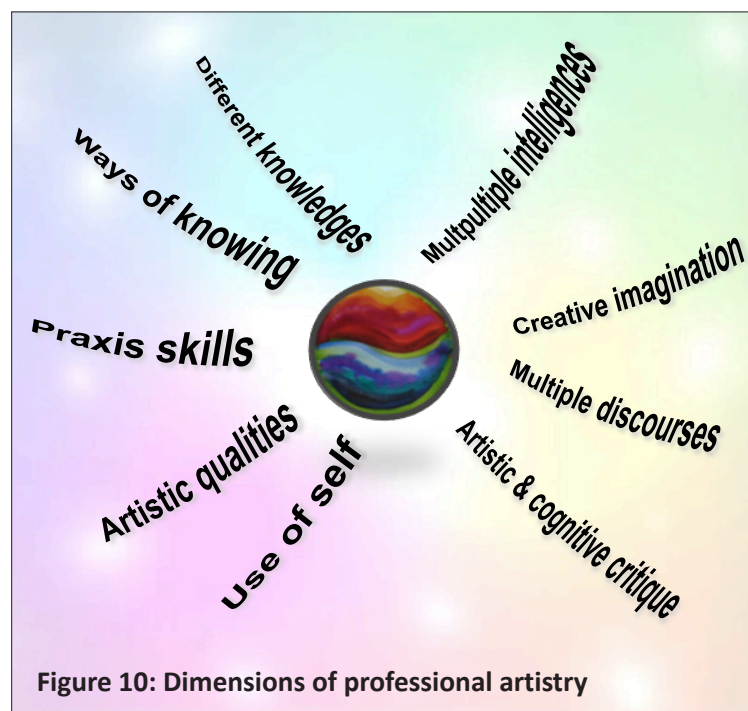


Figure 10: Dimensions of professional artistry

Multiple intelligences or the wisdom/capacity to grasp something quickly and enable the use of multiple knowledges and ways of knowing in the moment, for instance, embodied, aesthetic, emotional, spatial, musical and spiritual intelligences

Creative imagination as a means, for example, of surfacing tacit, embedded and embodied knowing that is hard or impossible to put into words, and developing new understandings, meanings and insights

Multiple discourses concerns the capacity to dance between different discourses (use of language that is imbued with specific cultural meanings) at different interfaces in and beyond the workplace and organisation

Artistic and cognitive critique occurs through a reiterative, reciprocal dialogue between words and art forms, and enables the turning of emerging understanding into informed, transformed and transforming action

Processes of professional artistry (Figure 11). The more hidden processes of attunement, synchronicity, flowing, interplay, energy (work), synthesis and balance enable critical-creative companions to dance the praxis spiral of critical creativity to achieve the ultimate outcome of human flourishing. Each 'dance' is unique, depending on the person/people involved, the problem/issue/question being worked with, and the situation and context.

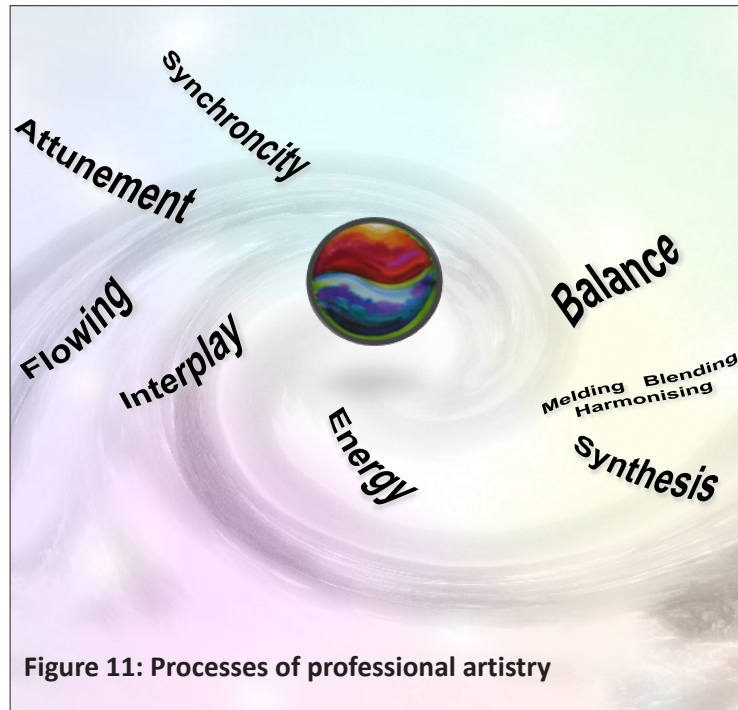


Figure 11: Processes of professional artistry

Conclusion and implications for practice

I invite you now to reflect for a few moments. Take yourself back to your creative visualisation of your own practice development river, the landscapes and gardens you have flowed through and then of your experience of reading this paper. If you skipped the visualisation, you can still do this reflection. Either way, jot down **spontaneously** random words that just well up – words that capture something of your experience. Then arrange them in three lines, with five syllables in the first line, seven in the second and five in the last. Don't think too much, just go with what comes up on its own. Then you will have written a short Zen poem, or haiku, that expresses the essence of your experience of this article.

Here is mine.

*Spiral waters flow
Folding-unfolding creates
Endless energy*

Critical-creative companionship is an intricate yet flowing, complex yet energising facilitation practice in nursing and healthcare. It is immensely exciting and rewarding partly because it is unpredictable and full of surprise. Thank you for your unfinished poem, John O'Donohue!

Knowing, doing, being and becoming a critical-creative companion is a journey – it takes time and involves spiralling, reiterative processes of reading, trying things out, evaluating, recording, expressing, reflecting on how things went, then trying again. In this article, I have shown that support is needed for those on this journey, a need confirmed by Michelle Hardiman's recent doctoral research (Hardiman and Dewing, 2014; Hardiman, 2017). Ideally, it is good to find a more experienced facilitator who can help you with this and give you feedback too. I encourage novice facilitators to get going by first developing and practising fundamental enabling facilitation skills such as described by Philip Eldridge (2011). Several years ago, Jan Dewing, Kim Manley and I wrote a faction (fiction based on empirical fact) about *Getting Going with Facilitation Skills* (Titchen et al., 2013b). This faction might give you inspiration either as a novice starting out or as a more experienced facilitator helping people on their way. You might find it helpful, along with a practice development workbook that Jan Dewing and I wrote with Brendan McCormack (Dewing et al., 2014).

As you develop your fundamental enabling skills you might like to read about the original critical companionship framework for use in practice development settings. I would recommend Wright and Titchen (2003) and Titchen (2004) as kicking-off points. If you are interested in being a critical companion in a practitioner research setting, then Titchen and McGinley (with Brendan McCormack) (2004), Brown and Harrison (2009) and Greggans and Conlon (2009) might be worth looking at. You should definitely have yourself an experienced facilitator or critical companion by this point or find someone who is also learning and explore whether you could be critical companions to each other. In this latter case, the article by Gribben and Cochrane (2006) might give you some ideas on how this might be done and what to watch out for. You might also want to consider Michele Hardiman's (Hardiman and Dewing, 2014) critical ally and critical friend roles as stepping stones to critical companionship, especially if there isn't an experienced facilitator in your workplace.

My reading recommendations so far are located mostly in the emancipatory worldview. If and when you move down the practice development river to the transformational and want to become a critical-creative companion, I suggest two more recent works I have written with practice developer Karen Hammond and clinical practitioner and researcher, Di Tasker (Titchen and Hammond, 2017; Titchen and Tasker, 2017), which also use factions and creative imagery in the writing. By this time, you will probably have read our *Dancing with Stones* paper, which sets out the critical creativity methodological mandala (Titchen and McCormack, 2010) and you will have been able to examine in that paper how we were critical-creative companions to each other. Our 'Walk in the Woods' chapter and *Human Flourishing* article shows us in action, companionship with our colleagues in the International Practice Development Colloquium (Titchen and McCormack, 2008; Titchen et al., 2011 respectively). If you are interested in reading more about the different worldviews and paradigms used in practice development/action-oriented research and person-centred research, you might like to follow up my action research paper (Titchen, 2015) and person-centred research chapter with colleagues, Shaun Cardiff and Stian Biong (Titchen et al., 2017).

Finally, you will have noticed that there is a body of work concerning critical creativity and its facilitation through critical-creative companionship that has been published in a piecemeal fashion over a long time period (because it took a long time to develop!). You may be pleased to know that Brendan and I have recently completed a monograph (Figure 12) that pulls together with new work, relevant papers and ideas in one place, with lots of new examples of critical creativity in action.

Figure 12: Dancing the mandalas of critical creativity in health and social care: A collection of new work, published papers, book chapters, creative media and blog entries with weaving commentary by Angie Titchen and Brendan McCormack



The monograph is a mandala of mandalas founded on the heart. It is invitational, gentle, flowing, delicate and provides readers with ways in and out of the central mandalas underpinning critical creativity. We use story, conversational tones and provide hooks or 'ladders' to help people into and out of this centre. It will be published as an interactive e-book and as it may be a little while before it is released, you can look at our Critical Creativity blog in the meantime for inspiration! (criticalcreativity.org).

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