

## Developing evaluation culture and working with praxis teams

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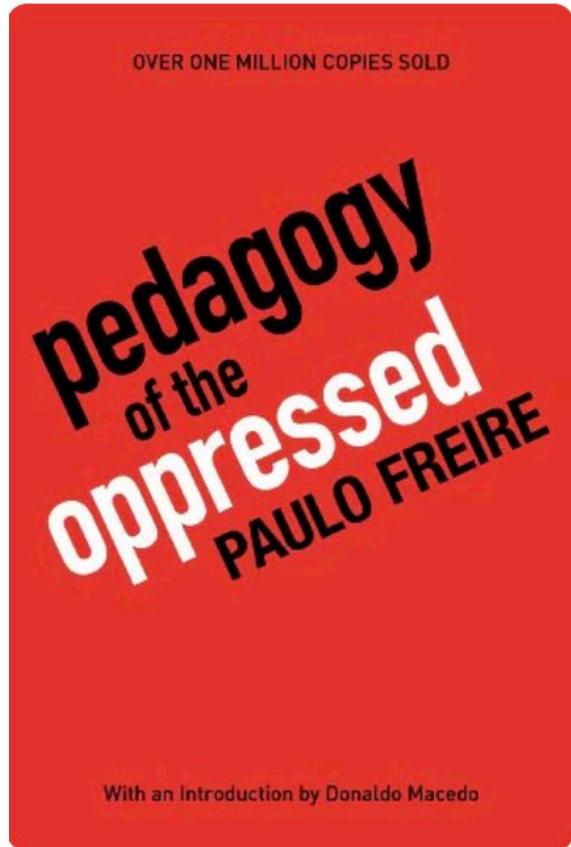


# Session plan

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1. Introductions
2. Evaluation Culture and Praxis: discussion
3. Practice example:
  - Cross-institutional co-ordinated approach to financial support at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
4. Implications for praxis teams and evaluation
5. Sign-posting to resources

# Key theoretical influences



**Freire's notions of 'praxis' & knowledge creation**

Critical pedagogies

Young and Maton's ideas of knowledge

Bourdieu: Capitals, habitus and field

Nancy Fraser social justice

Sen and Walker's concepts of capability

Yosso cultural wealths

Identities and future selves

**Theory**  
academic research  
quantitative and  
qualitative



**Practice**  
=

**PRAXIS**

# Theory & practice in education

*The most damaging effect of Oxford's largely classical examination syllabus ... .... was mitigated by recurrent pleas to undergraduates not to be outdone by their social inferiors in modern and technical knowledge.....*



[The History of University of Oxford](#)

*'Practical applications', whether in research or teaching tended to be viewed with suspicion. It was easily assumed that an interest in them betrayed not a thirst for knowledge, but a commercial materialism unworthy of a university.*

## **Surgery students 'losing dexterity to stitch patients'**

*It is a concern of mine and my scientific colleagues that whereas in the past you could make the assumption that students would leave school able to do certain practical things - cutting things out, making things - that is no longer the case, says Prof Roger Kneebone*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-46019429>

# Pedagogy for Equity

Pedagogy... is deeply connected to relations of power where the professor has historically been positioned as the expert knower

Burke et al 2017, p 41



An ethical and anti-racist framework for access and equity in higher education requires universities to provide the resources and opportunities for students from under-represented backgrounds to develop their understanding of ways of writing, reading, speaking and learning that will facilitate their access to privileged forms of being and knowing

Burke

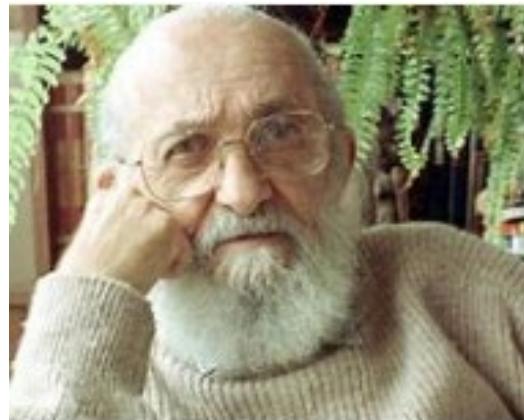
# Praxis & Theory of Change

## Theory & Practice

reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed

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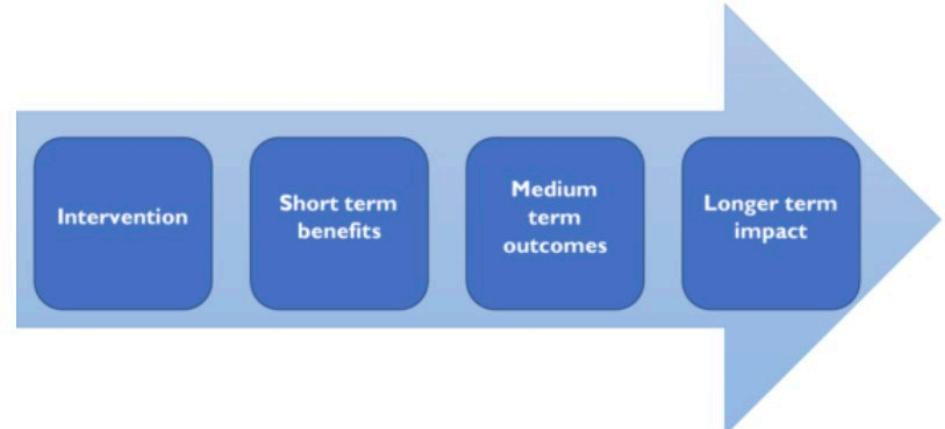
**praxis**



*Paulo Freire 1968*

**PRAXIS**

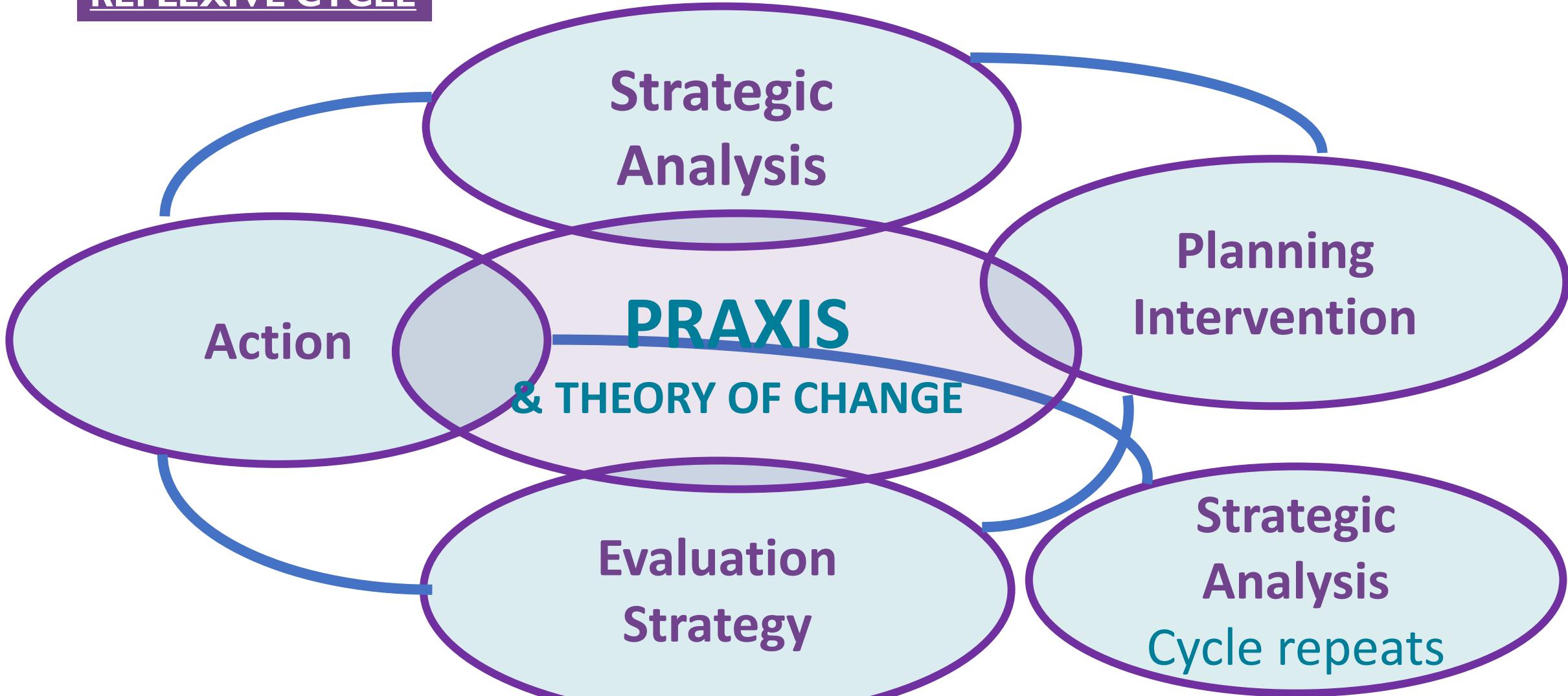
## Theory of Change



**THEORY OF CHANGE**

# Reflexive planning cycle

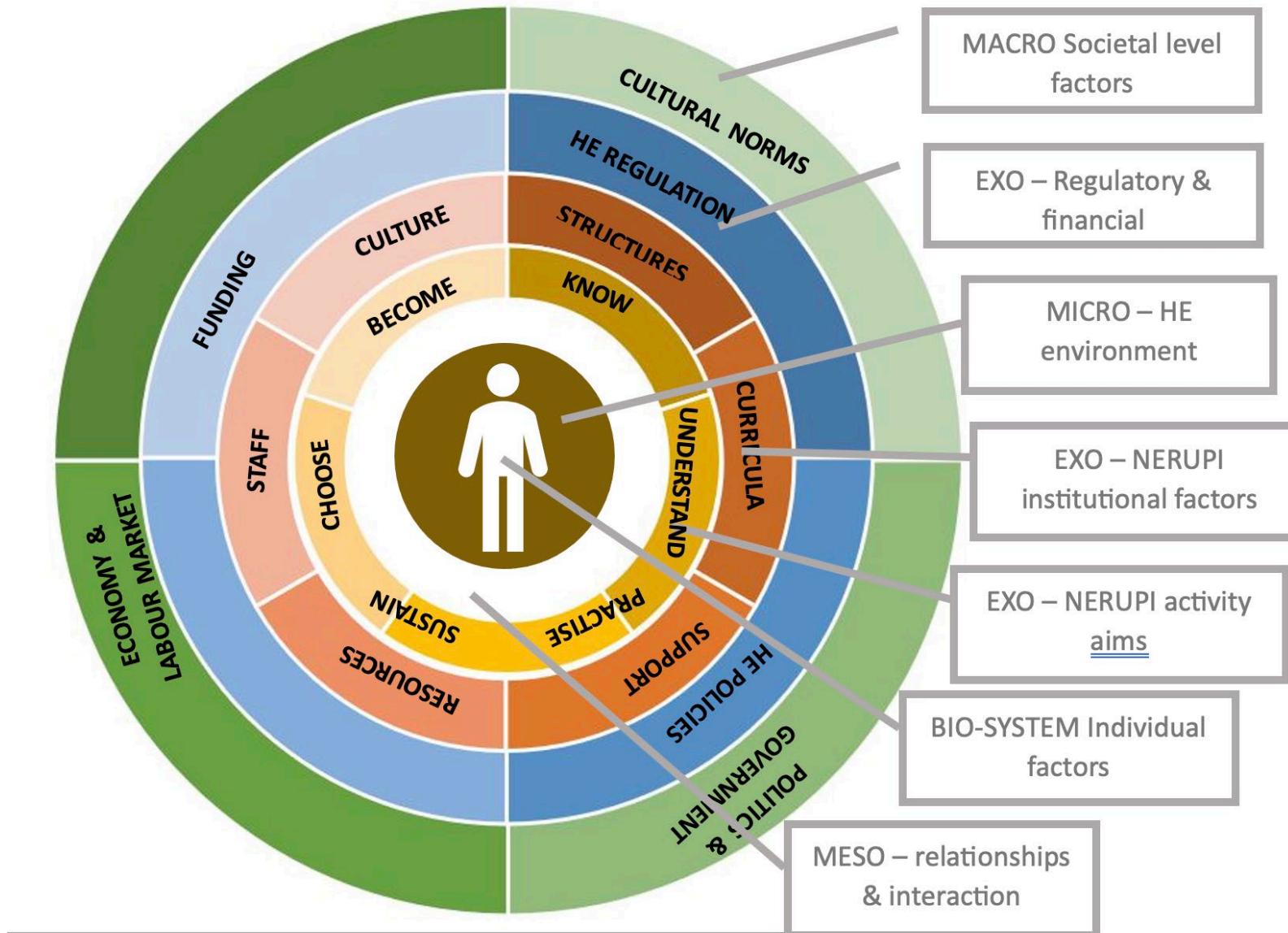
## REFLEXIVE CYCLE



# Organisational Aims

Organisational Culture & Ethos, structures, policies and procedures	Staffing (incl. student staff members)	Curricula & Pedagogy	Mechanisms for student support
ENACT	ACTIVATE	EMPOWER	ENABLE
Embed a culture and ethos, backed up by policies, procedures, and resource mechanisms internally, which promote inclusivity, supportive values and behaviour, and promote participation and engagement for all	Embed staffing and professional development arrangements, support and rewards, which build the capacity, awareness and skills of staff members to support and promote equity	Support and extend approaches to curricula and pedagogy which ensure inclusivity, and promote innovation, co-creation and partnership arrangements	Identify and operationalise types and mechanisms of financial, academic and pastoral student support to enable full participation and engagement of diverse student groups and individuals





*'.... requires a shift away from individual professionals carrying the responsibility to redress generations of disadvantage and inequality to methodologies and practices that bring people together across 'communities of praxis' to make a difference.'*

Professor Penny- Jane Burke (2020)



equity

effectiveness

# Praxis and positive change

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## 1. Why is praxis important for organising?

Praxis enables you to learn from your own experiences and from the experiences of others, and to adapt and innovate your organizing work according to the changing contexts and conditions.

## 2. How do you practice praxis?

You engage in a constant dialogue with yourself, with your fellow organizers, and the communities you work with. You research the root causes, implement your actions with a purpose and monitor and evaluate their outcomes and impacts.

## 3. How is praxis used ?

Praxis can be used to identify community problems by gathering data through participatory methods or secondary sources. It can also be used to develop a strategy for addressing the issues, such as using SWOT analysis or logic models to define objectives and activities

With thanks to **Grassroots Organizing**

<https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/how-do-you-apply-freires-concept-praxis-your>

# Praxis and positive change

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## 4. How do you develop praxis skills?

This requires commitment, curiosity, and humility. Learning from others through reading, courses, workshops, webinars, or podcasts can develop broader knowledge and skills. Discussing and dialoguing with community members, allies through techniques such as active listening, appreciative inquiry can help to enhance communication and understanding skills.

## 5. How do you share praxis skills?

Sharing your praxis with others is not only beneficial for yourself, but also for those who can learn from your experiences and insights. It can also help build relationships, networks, and collaborations with other organizers, activists, or movements who share your vision and values.

# Identifying the praxis team



Who might be involved in running a residential summer school for first gen post-16 students?



Who might be involved in developing and running a residential summer school and first year transition programme for first generation students?



Who might be involved in developing an intervention strategy to recruit more first generation students and reduce non-completion and degree awarding gaps?



# What makes for a strong ‘evaluation culture’?

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- Shared aim for continuous improvement in delivery
- Deliberately seeking information to support evidence-based decision making
- Using results to support genuine dialogue and space for learning
- Engagement in self-reflection and self-examination
- Encourages sharing of information, data, knowledge and lessons
- Encourages experimentation and innovation/risk taking
- Seeks out new approaches, risk taking

# Systems versus praxis

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## System of results

- Focus on monitoring frameworks for programmes
- Evaluations undertaken to assess the results achieved by an evaluation unit rather than theorising
- Reporting systems focusing on ‘counting’ rather than gathering intelligence

## Praxis for results

- Participation in measuring results occurs throughout the organisation
- Opportunities to discuss future directions, using available data and information
- Organisational units accountable for demonstrating that they are learning
- Decisions on design and delivery routinely and visibly informed by results information
- Information widely shared around the organisation

# Very Different Approaches?

	Programme evaluation	Action Research
Goal	Testing/proving impact and the programme theory	Problem-solving, understanding and empowerment
Framing	Accountability, outcomes, impacts and value for money	Community, stakeholders, praxis teams
Data collection processes	Quantitative and qualitative (multiple designs, pre-post, experimental, longitudinal, realist)	Quantitative and qualitative (multiple designs, observation, focus groups, feedback)
Data analysis	Internal or external expert data analysis and interpretation of delivery implications	Self-reflection and interpretation of processes between various stakeholders
Implications	Accountability and decision-making	Direct action, problem-solving and practical enactment



This is our evaluator. Every time she collects data it will help us remember what we said we were going to do in the first place.



[freshspectrum.com](http://freshspectrum.com)

# Barriers to collaborative evaluation



- For those mainly involved in delivery?



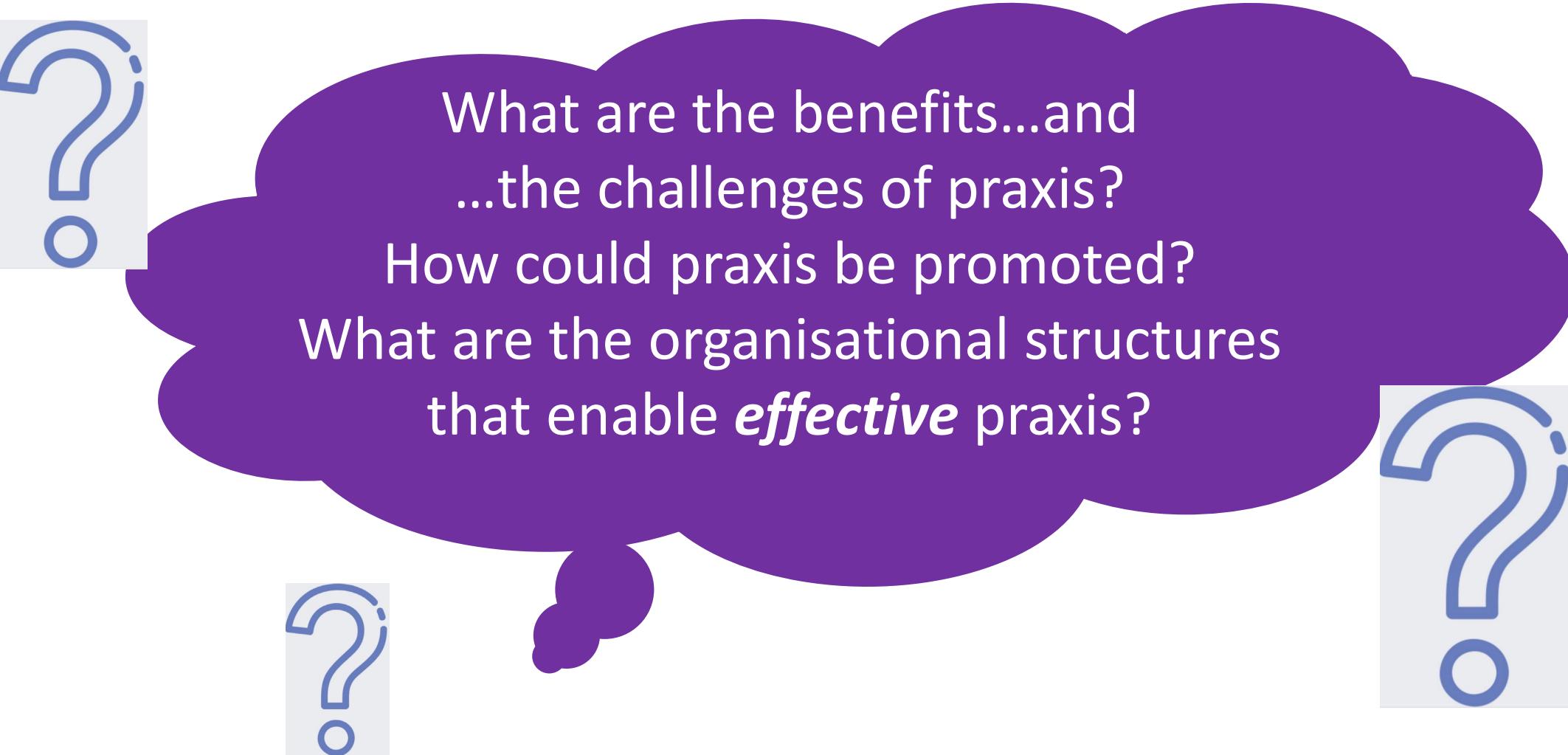
For those whose expertise is in evaluation?

# Group discussion activity

- Do you work in praxis teams? What are/would be the benefits of praxis?
- What do you consider to be the major challenges for praxis in your organisation? (e.g. major weaknesses or opportunities for improvement in relation to learning from practice and evaluation, or the concerns you have or hear others talking about?)
- How is praxis promoted in different institutions... e.g.
  - Programme steering groups, committee structures
  - Overall working group, task and finish and reference groups
  - Processes for programme planning, evaluation and review
  - Internal/external partnerships arrangements for review and learning
  - Running programmes as educational development process institutionally
  - Communities of praxis with opportunities for sharing/exchanges

## Group discussion activity - feedback

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What are the benefits...and  
...the challenges of praxis?

How could praxis be promoted?

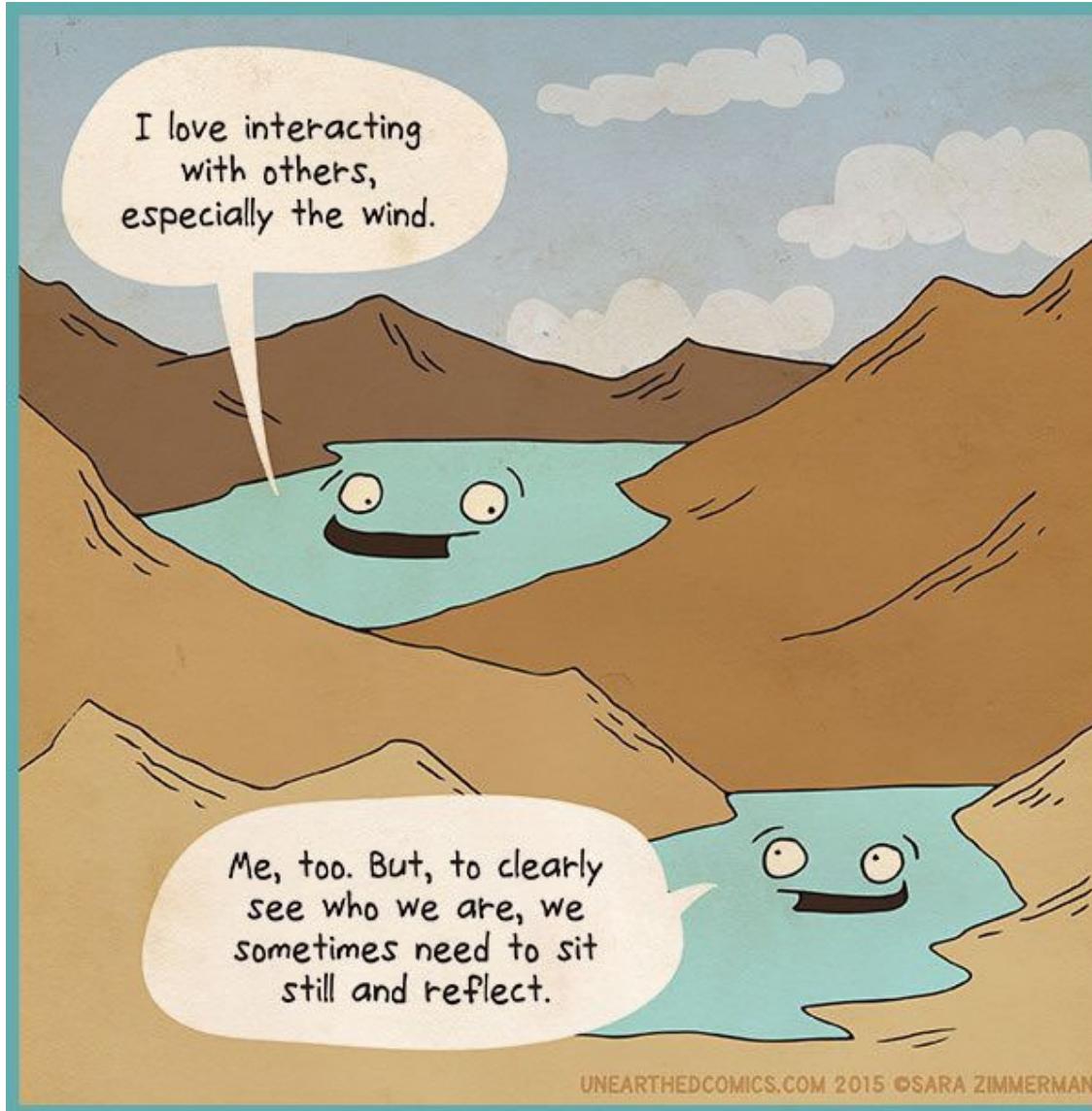
What are the organisational structures  
that enable ***effective*** praxis?

# Key features for praxis development

- Power and solidarity
- Interpersonal Trust
- Recognition
- Agency
- Collaboration
- Time
- Reflection

Social aspect of practices crucial for professional learning in educational settings and praxis development

# Time for reflection?



# Barriers to collaborative evaluation

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- Lack of time
- Distance from strategic decisions made by managers
- Evaluation not prioritised
- No culture of reflection – learning from evaluation
- Focus on collecting data (analysis happens elsewhere)
- Focus is on delivery of the set of activities
- Differences in expertise and knowledge within the group

# Our role as evaluators?

- Creating a culture of collaborative enquiry with practitioners & participants
- Supporting & valuing both research and practice
- Offering research insights into reasons for inequalities
- Providing tools to support evaluation & praxis working:
  - e.g. theory of change
  - embedded evaluation
  - participative methods
- Providing new perspectives on the research problem
- Identifying evaluation approaches that enable marginalised groups & practitioners to have a voice
- Supporting critical analysis, sense-making & reporting
- Participating in & owning recommendations for actions

The real question  
is "what isn't  
evaluation?"

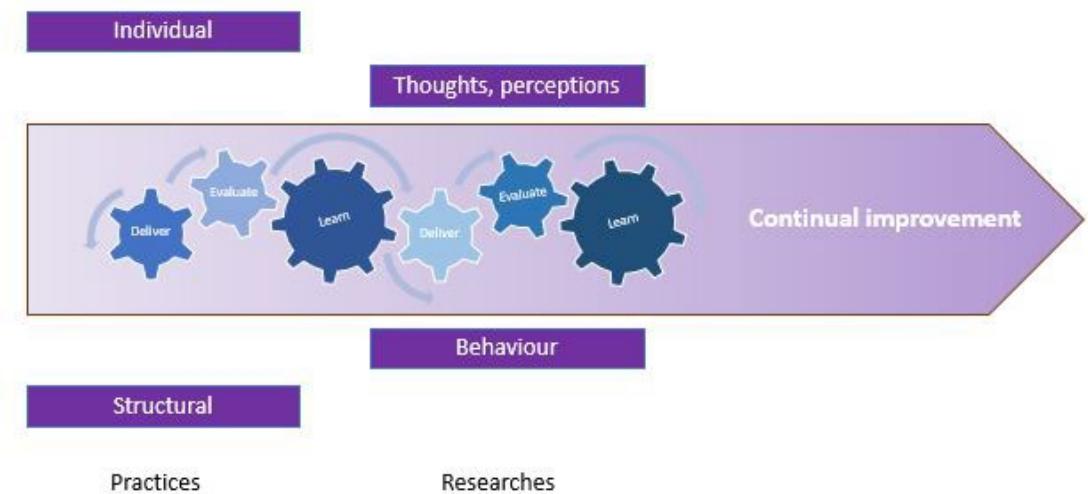


freshspectrum

Process that involves establishing mutually beneficial relationships between the researcher and members of the community of study:

- Consultative processes (theory of change, evaluation café...)
- Reflective activities
- Collaborative research activities
- Action-orientated research

Focus on reflection and informing praxis



# Operationalising praxis



- <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/centre/ceehe>

Professor Penny Jane Burke

**Centre for Equity in Higher  
Education,**

Newcastle, Australia

# Sign-posting

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- NERUPI Framework for evaluating:  
<https://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/resources/framework-for-evaluating>
- Praxis teams:  
<https://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/toolkit/basics/communities-of-praxis>
- Theory of change:  
<https://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/toolkit/basics/theory-of-change>
- Research and evaluation methods:  
<https://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/resources/research-and-evaluation-methods>
- Searchable resources:  
<https://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/resources>

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