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RIDING WAVES OF PRACTICE

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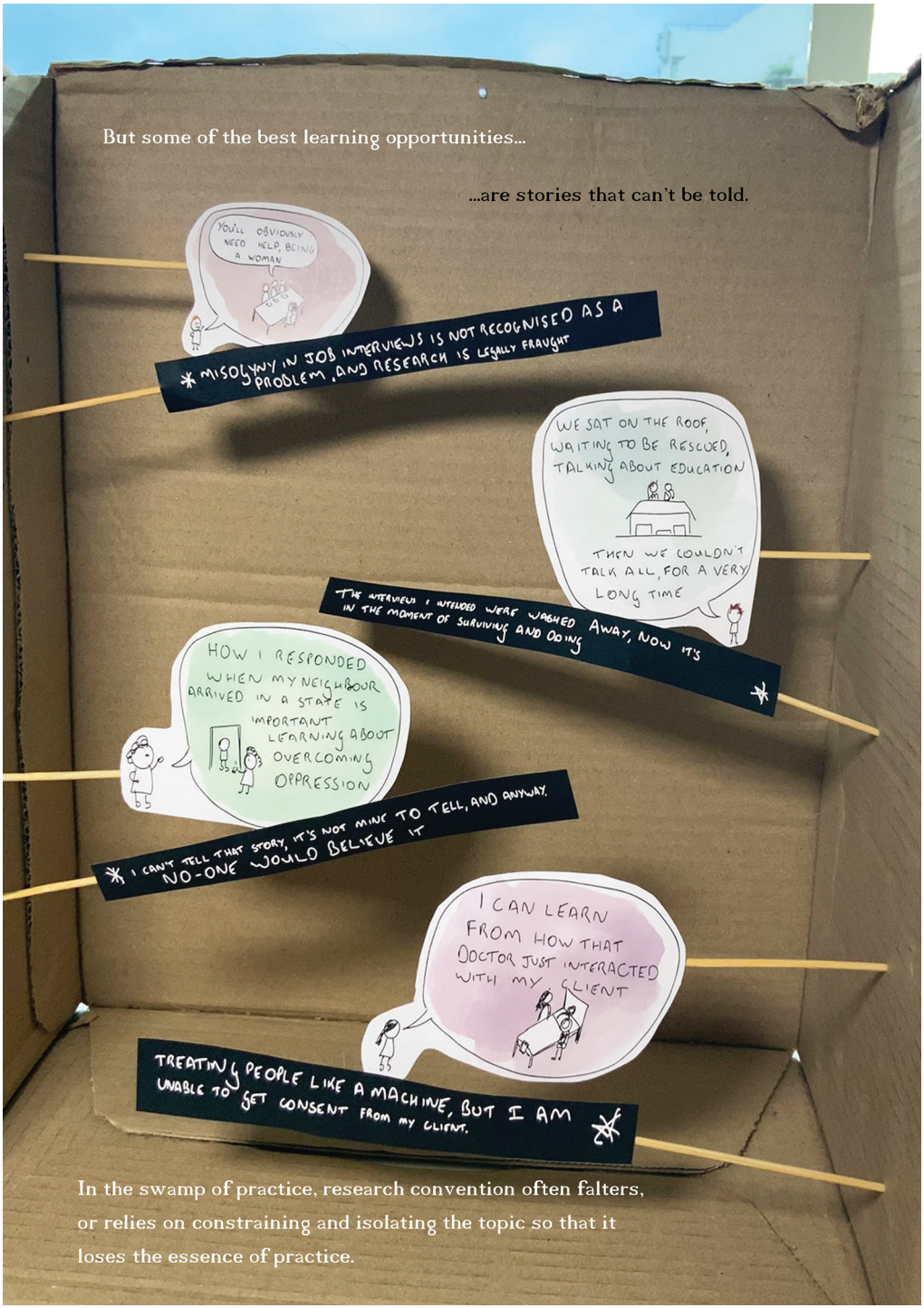
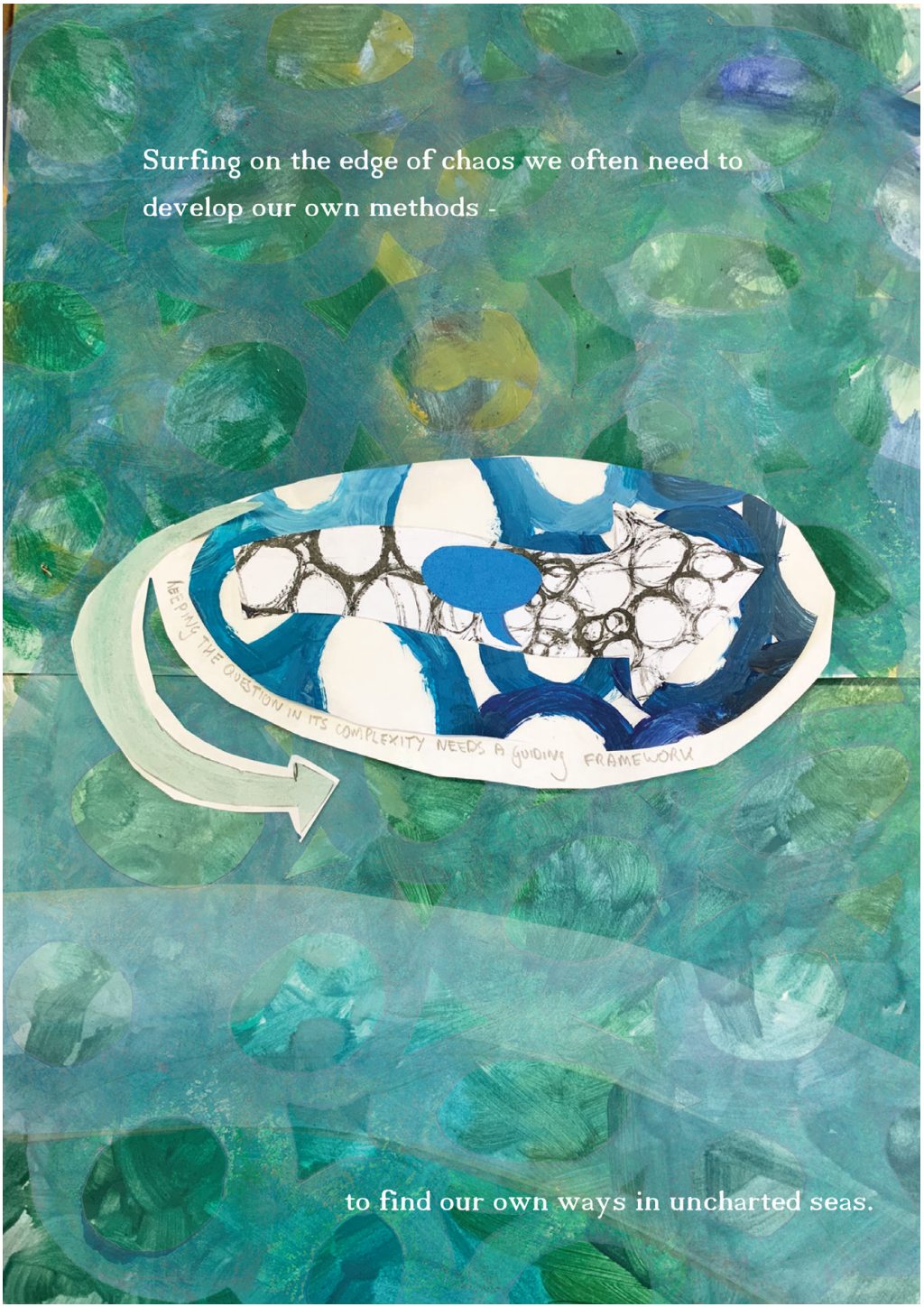
RIDING WAVES OF PRACTICE

Samuel Mann, Ruth Myers and Dave Guruge

"Riding Waves of Practice" is a visual collaboration comprising of eight scenes built with cardboard boxes, paper, fabric, and assorted joining materials and printed and painted imagery and text. Together, the scenes are shared here in a set of photographic images that aims to provide an adventure for the viewer navigating the scenes as they explore differently staged spaces and details. We celebrate the dynamic nature of practice research in progress through embracing the provisional. This adventure both plays with the navigational challenges and uncharted waters of professional practice research and introduces the reader to key aspects of our research in developing guiding frameworks.

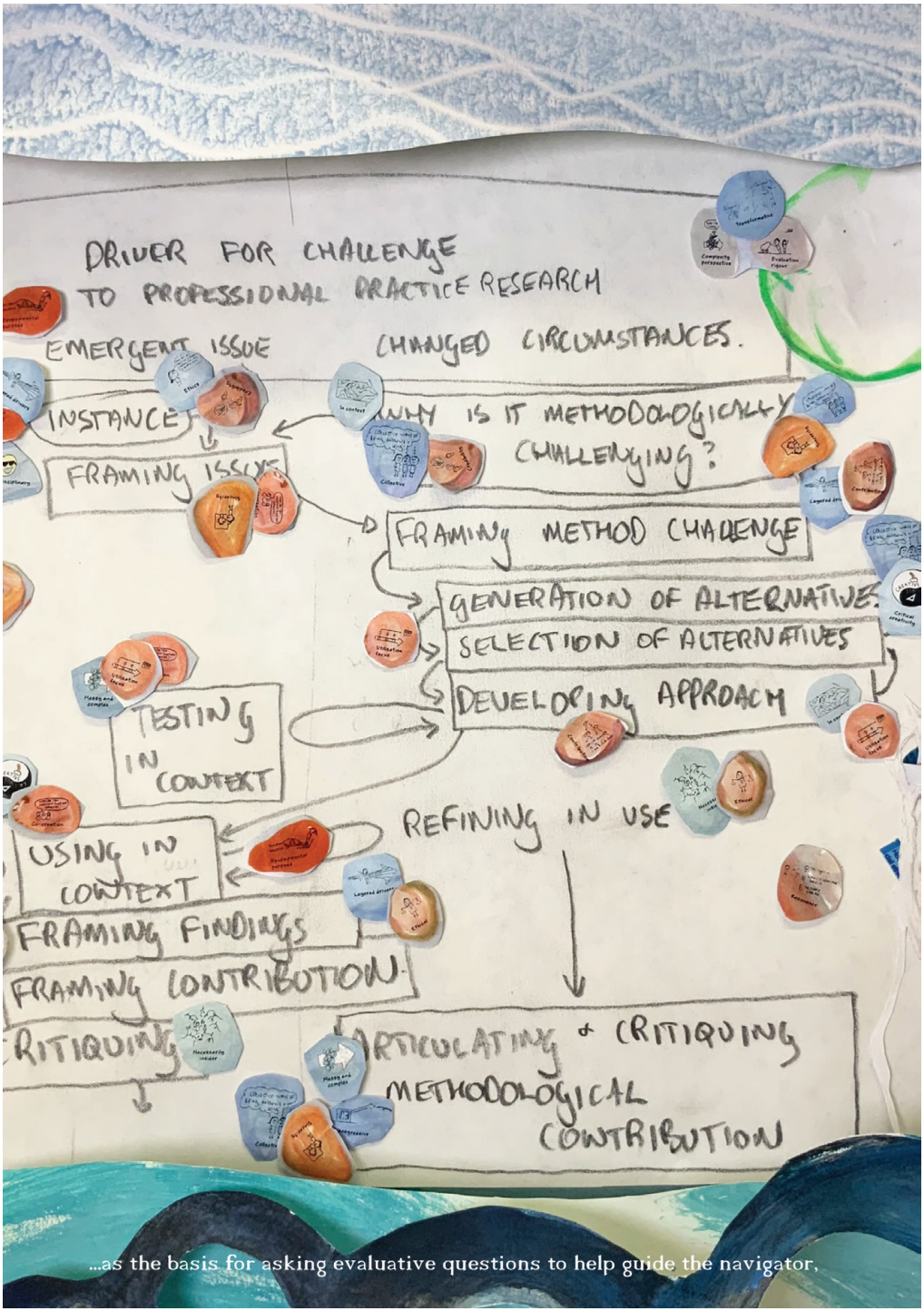
Riding Waves of Practice
I AM
WE CAN IMPROVE HOW WE...
I WANT TO BE...
PROJECT
LEARNING OUTCOMES
I AM NOW A THOUGHT AND PRACTICE LEADER IN ...
NEW ME
FRAMEWORK PRACTICE
PRACTITIONER THESIS
DEFENSIBLE ARGUMENT
The beauty of Professional Practice research is learning embedded in practice.


But some of the best learning opportunities...
...are stories that can't be told.
YOU'LL OBVIOUSLY NEED HELP, BEING A WOMAN
* MISOGYNY IN JOB INTERVIEWS IS NOT RECOGNISED AS A PROBLEM, AND RESEARCH IS LEGALLY FRAUGHT
WE SAT ON THE ROOF, WAITING TO BE RESCUED, TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION
THEN WE COULDN'T TALK ALL, FOR A VERY LONG TIME
THE INTERVIEWS I INTENDED WERE WASHED AWAY, NOW IT'S IN THE MOMENT OF SURVIVING AND DOING
HOW I RESPONDED WHEN MY NEIGHBOUR ARRIVED IN A STATE IS IMPORTANT LEARNING ABOUT OVERCOMING OPPRESSION
* I CAN'T TELL THAT STORY, IT'S NOT MINE TO TELL, AND ANYWAY, NO-ONE WOULD BELIEVE IT
I CAN LEARN FROM HOW THAT DOCTOR JUST INTERACTED WITH MY CLIENT
TREATING PEOPLE LIKE A MACHINE, BUT I AM UNABLE TO GET CONSENT FROM MY CLIENT.
In the swamp of practice, research convention often falters, or relies on constraining and isolating the topic so that it loses the essence of practice.

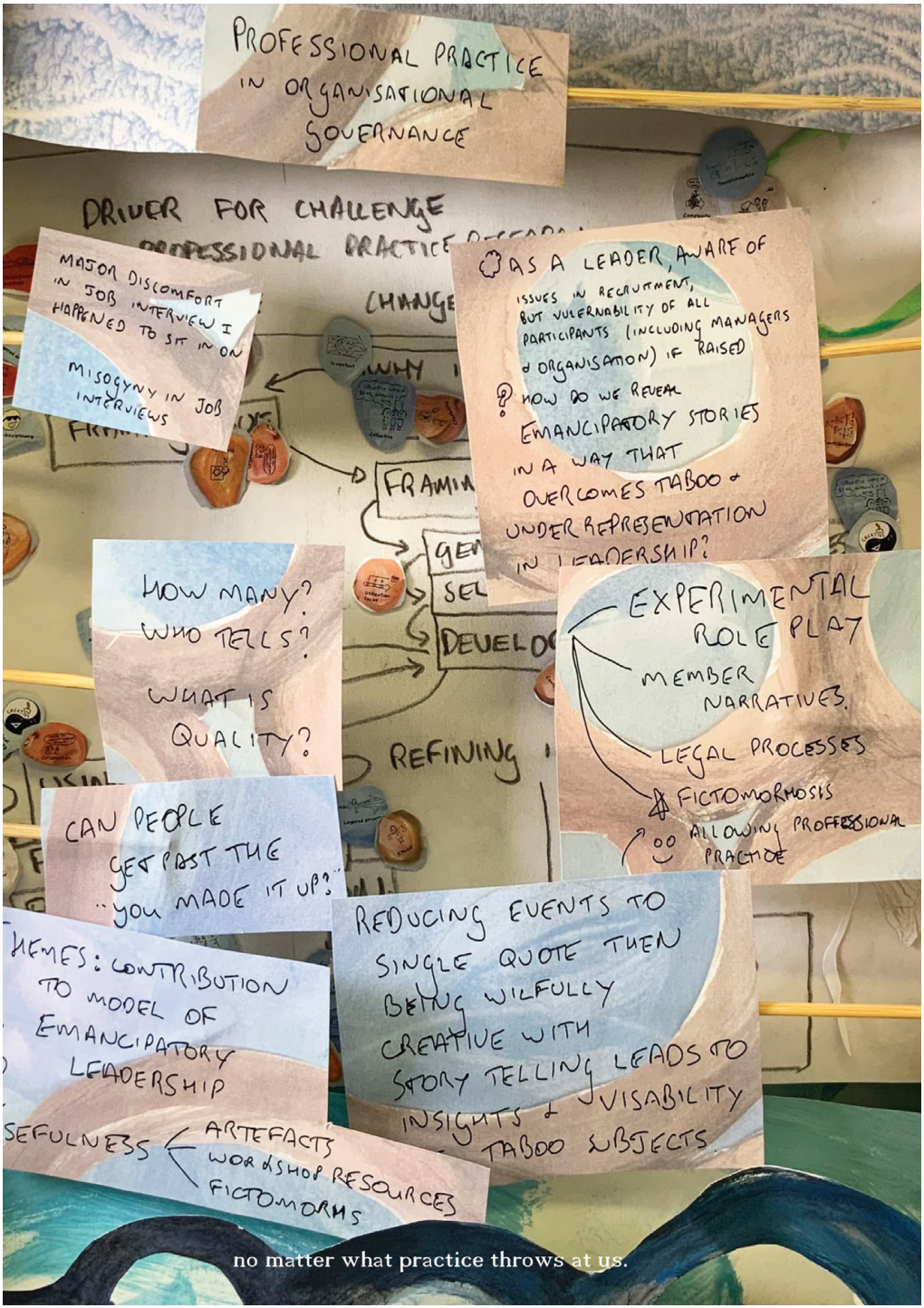

Surfing on the edge of chaos we often need to
develop our own methods -
KEEPING THE QUESTION IN ITS COMPLEXITY NEEDS A GUIDING FRAMEWORK
to find our own ways in uncharted seas.

In context
Innovation niche
Reflexive
Multi-dimensional
I AM NOW A
I AM A
Transformative
Layered drivers
Transdisciplinary
Critical creativity
CREATIVE
CRITIQUE
Meaningful coherence
HOW ARE MY PRACTICE & RESEARCH MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?
Ethics
Necessarily insider
Transgressive
COLLECTIVE WAYS OF BEING, KNOWING & DOING
Collective
Messy and complex
We turn to Principles of Professional Practice...

Innovation niche
Developmental purpose
Utilisation focus
Credibility
Meaningful coherence
Rich Rigour
Worthy topic
Complexity perspective
Resonance
Ethical
Evaluation rigour
Timely feedback
Sincerity
Contribution
Systems thinking
Co-creation
...and measures of research quality...



...as the basis for asking evaluative questions to help guide the navigator.


PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE
DRIVER FOR CHALLENGE
MAJOR DISCOMFORT IN JOB INTERVIEW I HAPPENED TO SIT IN ON
MISOGYNY IN JOB INTERVIEWS
AS A LEADER, AWARE OF ISSUES IN RECRUITMENT, BUT VULERNABILITY OF ALL PARTICIPANTS (INCLUDING MANAGERS & ORGANISATION) IF RAISED
HOW DO WE REVEAL EMANCIPATORY STORIES IN A WAY THAT OVERCOMES TABOO & UNDERREPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP?
HOW MANY? WHO TELLS? WHAT IS QUALITY?
EXPERIMENTAL ROLE PLAY
MEMBER NARRATIVES
LEGAL PROCESSES
FICTOMORPHOSIS
ALLOWING PROFFESSIONAL PRACTICE
CAN PEOPLE GET PAST THE "YOU MADE IT UP?"
REFINING
REDUCING EVENTS TO SINGLE QUOTE THEN BEING WILFULLY CREATIVE WITH STORY TELLING LEADS TO INSIGHTS & VISABILITY TABOO SUBJECTS
HEMES: CONTRIBUTION TO MODEL OF EMANCIPATORY LEADERSHIP
SEFULNESS
ARTEFACTS
WORKSHOP RESOURCES
FICTOMORMS
no matter what practice throws at us.

So that practice, research and learning can become inseparable.
THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS
GENERATION OF ALTERNATIVES
TESTING
SELECTING
DEVELOPING
METHOD CHALLENGE
REFINING
CRITIQUING METHOD
CONTEXT
FRAMING ISSUE
EMERGENT ISSUE
DYNAMIC CONTEXT
METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION
FRAMING FINDINGS
CRITIQUING
ISSUE CONTRIBUTION
MULTI-DIMEN
SINCERITY
CO-CREATED
TRANSGRESSIVE
TIMELY
RICHRIGOUR
COLLECTIVE
LAYED DRIVERS
DEVELOPMENTAL PURPOSE
TRANSFORMATIVE
CONTRIBUTION
ETHICAL
RESONANCE
MEANING COHERENCE
CREATIVITY
COMPLEX
LAYERED DRIVERS
EVALUATIVE

ACCESSIBLE VERSION OF RIDING WAVES OF PRACTICE

This paper consists of eight pages. Each page contains a single image, filling the page. Each page has a small block of text with six to 37 words overlaying the image. The images are all colour photographs of paper and cutouts arranged in cardboard boxes in the style of a child's play theatre.

Image 1:

The first image is titled **"Riding Waves of Practice."** Paper shapes are cutouts lifted (by hidden plasticine) from a blue velvet background. The shapes are arranged vertically around a large blue-grey arrow which expands horizontally.

At the top of the arrow, a hand-drawn smiling stick figure has a speech bubble reading, "I am." This figure, along with all the figures on this page, has curly yellow hair. It is not explicit, but this image represents a Review of Learning within professional practice research.

Below this figure, on the right of the large arrow, a cloud-shape contains a figure holding a small red flag. Their speech-bubble text reads, "I want to be a …." Level with this figure but on the left of the centre arrow, a cloud contains a drawing of a square with a small arrow to a yellow star. The text reads: "We can improve how we …." These two statements are the aspirational statements in the Learning Agreement.

At the bottom of the centre arrow, a larger figure with a shirt reading, "New me" smiles and holds a red flag with the text, "Framework of Practice." The figure is standing on a green hill labelled "Practitioner Thesis," surrounded by a picket fence labelled "Defensible Argument." A large speech bubble reading "I am now …" is beside a grid representing a canvas for articulating the Professional Framework of Practice.

Between the aspirational statements – "we can improve …" and "I want to be …" – and the end-game elements are several more paper shapes. On the right is a long arrow leading from the aspirational framework cloud to near the Professional Framework of Practice. This arrow is labelled "Learning Outcomes" with two smaller arrows leading to small thought clouds.

Driving vertically down the centre arrow is a utility truck labelled "project" carrying yellow triangles (components of a star) with a figure perched on top (presumably driving like Mr Bean on his mini). This figure has a brain-shape on their head that contains a small framework of practice flag. The head and learning outcome clouds are aligned such that the implied movement would result in the figure consuming the learning outcome clouds.

On the left of the centre arrow, there are three circles, each with arrows indicating that they are cycles of processes. At the top of each is a thought cloud (the same as the learning outcomes cloud), with an arrow leading to a small figure carrying out actions: giving a presentation on the vision of a yellow star, working on a half-completed blue star, and pointing to a bar graph of different colours. These action-based research cycles have arrows between them, and an ellipsis indicates the possibility of more.

Between the learning outcomes side (right) and the action side (left) are two meshed gears. One has the star-laden truck, the other the figure with the learning outcome-hungry brain. These two cogs demonstrate the required integration of the two aspects of professional practice research.

The text at the bottom of the page reads: "**The beauty of Professional Practice research is learning embedded in practice.**"

Image 2:

The second image is of a cut-away cardboard box. The box is perhaps 30cm high by 15cm wide. It is roughly cut at the top with blue sky above. The text at the top reads, "**But some of the best learning opportunities …**" in white, while the text "**... are stories that can't be told**" is in black. This white and black pairing continues on the image with four sets of images on white backgrounds (smeared with a hint of water colour), each accompanied by a rectangular black strip positioned as if the story in the sketch was being censored (we decided to have only a hint of this so the stories would be readable). Each pair of story sketch and censor strip are held in place by bamboo skewers protruding from the edge of the box/stage. Each story sketch shows a figure (all different this time) with a speech bubble containing a sketch and some text. The sketch is the situation, the text is the story that can't be told, and the strip is the barrier to that telling.

The top-most sketch contains a figure with a speech bubble containing a sketch of a figure sitting at a table being interviewed by three other figures. One of the interviewers is saying, "You'll obviously need help, being a woman." The accompanying censor text reads, "*Misogyny in job interviews is not recognised as a problem, and research is legally fraught." (Spoiler alert: this situation is explored more in image 7).

The second pair of story and censor text again has a figure with a speech bubble containing an internal sketch and story. This time, two people are sitting on a roof of their partially submerged home. The text reads: "We sat on the roof waiting to be rescued, talking about education," and, "Then we couldn't talk at all, for a very long time." The black strip of censor text reads, "*The interviews I intended were washed away, now it's in the moment of surviving and doing" (Mann & Karetai, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024a, 2024b).

The third story/censor pair has a figure and speech bubble which contains a figure welcoming another figure through a door with a cup of tea. The text with this story says: "How I responded when my neighbour arrived in a state is important learning about overcoming oppression." The censor text reads, "*I can't tell that story, it's not mine to tell, and anyway, no-one would believe it" (Karetai, 2021).

The last situation is shown by a figure standing by an occupied hospital bed along with another figure. The story reads, "I can learn from how that doctor just interacted with my client." The censor text reads, "*Treating people like a machine, but I am unable to get consent from my client."

The typed text at the bottom of the page reads, "In the swamp of practice, research convention often falters, or relies on constraining and isolating the topic so that it loses the essence of practice."

Image 3:

The background for this page is a blue-green sea roughly painted, overlain with barely visible transparencies of circles and shapes seen elsewhere in the paper. In the middle third of the page, and lifted from the sea (it was balanced on blobs of plasticine) is a paper cutout oval with a spiralling arrow. On the main part of the oval are layered cutouts of dark blue circles, a large arrow with sketched black circles, and a blue speech bubble. Around the oval, a faint line of pencilled text reads, "**Keeping the question in its complexity needs a guiding framework.**"

Towards the top of the page the sea is overlain with text stating, "**Surfing on the edge of chaos we often need to develop our own methods**" and, at the bottom of the page, "**to find our own way in uncharted seas.**"

Image 4:

This is a seascape of cutout waves, each painted with different blues and greens and various techniques – sponged, wax resist, and others. On the waves are small sketches, each labelled and representing different aspects of professional practice. There are 14 principles drawing from Costley (2018) shown:

1. In context: a figure relaxes on an arrow containing organically intertwined arrows.
2. Innovation niche: a collection of triangles with a depressed figure becomes a star with a child swinging off one arm and a figure waving a flag (reminiscent of the professional framework of practice flags from image 1).
3. Reflexive: a figure smiles at their reflection in a mirror.
4. Multidimensional: two sets of nested arrows point in different directions.
5. Transformative: a figure with a circle says, "I am a …" and leads to a larger figure standing beside a star saying, "I am now…."
6. Layered drivers: expanding arrows lead into and away from a figure.
7. Transdisciplinary: a smiling yellow face with sunglasses beside (very small!) images of a single circle (disciplinary), linked circles (interdisciplinary), venn diagram circles (multidisciplinary), and a new circle (new-disciplinary).
8. Critical creativity: a ying and yang representation with "Creative" in white and "Critique" in black. The Creative side has a rainbow ending in a cloud, while the Critique has a set square.
9. Ethics: a person with long hair and a hand to their face pondering, "How are my practice and research making the world a better place?"
10. Necessarily insider: leafy plants loosely circle a group of four people who are interacting with each other and the environment.
11. Meaningful coherence: interconnected circling loops joins four points together in an endlessly intertwined and rhizomatic way.
12. Transgressive: a caged window with broken bars and an arrow bursting out of the opening and turning into a bird flying.
13. Collective: three people standing together smiling, arms around each other saying "collective ways of being, knowing, and doing."
14. Messy and Complex: an arrow covered in faint scribbly lines with the mid-section interrupted by and made up of complex swirling lines.

At the bottom of this page are the words, "**We turn to Principles of Professional Practice ….**"

Image 5:

This image is a seaside scene with a rocky island in the middle. Sixteen rocks painted in reds, browns, oranges, and purples, with some green and grey, cover the island and move down on to blue choppy waves and yellow sand. A mound of grey sand at the bottom of the image has the words, "**… and to measures of research quality ….**"

Each of the 16 rocks has the name and sketch of a quality criteria drawn from Tracy (2010) and Patton (2015):

1. Developmental purpose: an arrow curves down then up. Inside the arrow are graph-like bumps. The top line of the arrow which dips and raises is labelled "development," the inner row of graph-like bumps, "evaluation," and, where the arrow turns upwards, "transformation."
2. Innovation niche: a person is sitting with head in hands looking at a pile of broken pieces of a star. An arrow below points to a whole star, with a person swinging feet in the air from one point of the star and, on another point, a person standing waving a flag.
3. Utilisation focus: A straight arrow has a row of three circles evenly spaced along it. Above each circle is an arrow to another shape. The first shape is a circle, the next a square, and then a triangle. The circle, square and triangle are joined together by a line which has an arrow on the end pointing to three different people.
4. Credibility: two people face each other smiling. One has a speech bubble containing wiggly lines indicating text. The other person has a speech bubble with a drawing of the first person and their speech bubble, stamped with a green tick (Tracy, 2010).
5. Meaningful coherence: rhizomatic circling loops join four points together in an endlessly intertwined way.
6. Rich rigour: a flower with four curvy arrows moving upwards and outwards in widening directions.
7. Complexity Perspective: an arrow has its midsection made up of swirling complexity squiggles. A surfer, standing on a surfboard with arms in the air, is at the top of these wiggly lines, saying "surf the chaos."
8. Resonance: a smiling person looks at a point splitting into three arrows to three people. One person says, "yes, I get it." Another says, "finally, someone said it," and the third person says, "oh, that's like me."
9. Worthy topic: two people, one short-haired and one long, stand some distance from each other, both saying at the same time, "That's interesting."
10. Timely feedback: five arrows track along two bumps, up and over the first bump, under the dip, back up towards the top of the second bump, and coming down into the final dip where the line turns into three dotted lines spreading outwards, moving up, straight ahead and down. The arrows represent timely information-based interventions guiding the development; finally, at a three-way crossroads, more information is needed.
11. Ethical: a smiling person with a heart on their torso, arms out to either side, balanced, and holding balanced scales in each hand.
12. Evaluation rigour: two people are facing opposite directions. A curly haired person, slightly in front, has their arm stretched out holding up a large rock, looking at a smaller rock underneath it. The person slightly further away with long hair is pointing towards a rock in the distance sitting flat on the ground.
13. Sincerity: a person smiling at their reflection in the mirror.
14. Co-creation: three people with different hair and body shapes. The person on the left has a speech bubble stretching over all three, asking, "What do you think the questions should be?"
15. Contribution: a triangle or tree of 15 people, starting with one person, joined by arrows to two people, then four people, then eight people.
16. Systems Thinking: a square with two arrows, one going up to a smaller square and the other extending then pointing down. One person is holding a magnifying glass over the lower arrow (which distorts in the lens). Beside them is another person saying, "focus on the relationships."

Image 6:

This page has a hand-drawn flow diagram on it, with 17 aspects of a process, each the basis for evaluative/guiding questions.

On the top edge of the page are some wavy lines and at the base, some blue looping curves and light blue brush marks link to other water-like imagery on the other pages. Sprinkled over the page are small versions of the Professional Practice Principles and Quality Criteria (blueish bubbles from the waves of Professional Practice Principles, and brownish rocks from the isle of Quality Criteria). The text along the bottom reads, "… **as the basis for asking evaluative questions to help guide the Navigator.**"

At the top is text reading, "Driver for challenge to professional practice research." Then directly below on the left is the text, "Emergent Issue," and, on the right, "Changed Circumstances" – these head two columns.

On the left below Emergent Issue is "instance," and, below that, "framing issue."

On the right under Changed Circumstances, is: why is it methodologically challenging? An arrow links back from this question to instance and framing issue on the left.

"Framing issue" on the left is connected by an arrow to "framing method challenge" on the right. Stacked directly below framing method challenge, are "generation of alternatives," "selection of alternatives," and "developing approach."

To the left, and with an arrow looping between developing approach is "testing in context."

Below testing in context, one after the other, are, "using in context,", "framing findings," "framing contribution," and "critiquing."

A curved arrow starting at "using in context" loops over to the right to "Refining in Use," and then curves back to "using in context."

An arrow stretches directly down from "refining in use" and another from "critiquing" to "articulating and critiquing methodological contribution."

Image 7:

This is the same scene as the previous image, but with overlaid pieces of handwritten text printed on organic imagery, each held by a stick protruding from sides of the box. The page represents an example of the application of the approach to a story that can't be told – that of misogyny in job interviews from the first page. The left hand side again represents the development of understanding in context, and the right illustrates the development of a novel method – in this case Dave Guruge's "fictomorphosis."

The Driver for challenge to professional practice research is, "Professional practice in organizational governance."

The Emergent issue and Instance are, "Major discomfort in job interview I happened to sit in on."

The Framing issue is "Misogyny in job interviews."

Changed Circumstances, Why is it methodologically challenging, Framing method challenge, and Generation of alternatives are: "As a leader, aware of issues in recruitment, but vulnerability of all participants, (including managers and organization) if raised," and the question, "how do we reveal emancipatory stories in a way that overcomes taboo and underrepresentation in leadership?"

Selection of alternatives and Developing approach have four lines indicate the following four options: "Experimental role play," "member narratives," "legal processes," and "fictomorphosis," which has a star beside it and a smiley face, and the words "allowing professional practice."

Testing in context has, "How many?", "Who tells?", and "What is quality?"

Using in context is "Can people get past the 'You made it up?'"

Framing findings, framing contribution and critiquing are "Themes, contribution to model of emancipatory leadership," and "usefulness" pointing to three items: "artifacts," "workshop resources," and "fictomorphs."

Articulating and critiquing methodological contribution is "Reducing events to single quote, then being wilfully creative with story telling leads to insights and visibility of taboo subjects" (fictomorphosis).

Writing along the bottom of the image says, "**No matter what practice throws at us.**"

Image 8:

The final image is a large colourful wave, made of many smaller waves and flows, forming, layering and swirling within it. Each of these contains a piece of text which fits organically into its own wavy segment or swirl of colour (blues, ochres, reds, oranges and browns). These interconnect with each other to form the large wave.

The wave has been divided into two parts and sits in front of further shapes and swirls of similar, but textless, waves, and some sea-like blue patterns.

The wave base is formed by interconnecting professional practice principles and quality criteria:

System	Ethical
Worthy topic	Timely
Critical creativity	Transgressive
Reflective	Co-created
Collective	Sincerity
Layered drivers	Rich rigour
Complex	Multidimensional
Evaluative rigour	Messy
Necessarily insider	Transgressive
Transdisciplinary	Transformative
Meaning coherence	Contribution
Resonance	Developmental purpose

Above the base are the crest and top curl of the wave, made of many smaller ones folding and layering around each other, each containing an aspect of process that informs evaluative/guiding questions based upon the professional practice principles and quality criteria swirling below:

Emergent issue	Generation of alternatives
Framing issue	Testing
Theoretical underpinnings	Selecting
Method challenge	Developing
Dynamic context	Refining methods
Critiquing methods	Framing findings
Use in context	Critiquing framing
Methodological contribution	Issue contribution

Curling along the topline of the big wave are the words, "**So that practice, research and learning can become inseparable.**"

The overlain text on all the pages can be read as a single tale of adventure:

RIDING WAVES OF PRACTICE

The beauty of Professional Practice research is learning embedded in practice. But some of the best learning opportunities are stories that can't be told. In the swamp of practice, research convention often falters, or relies on constraining and isolating the topic so that it loses the essence of practice. Surfing on the edge of chaos we often need to develop our own methods – to find our own way in uncharted seas. We turn to Principles of Professional Practice, and measures of research quality, as the basis for asking evaluative questions to help guide the Navigator no matter what practice throws at us, so that practice, research and learning can become inseparable.

Samuel Mann (Professor, CapableNZ, Otago Polytechnic) is a geographer and computer scientist whose focus is making a positive difference through professional practice. He developed the role of the sustainable practitioner, the Sustainable Lens, and the Transformation Mindset. He led the development of the Doctor of Professional Practice. When not working, he is probably swimming in open water.

Ruth Myers is a facilitator at CapableNZ and an artist living by a beautiful wild beach in Dunedin. She has research interests in performativity, body, technologies, place, sustainability, care, ethics, play, practice based/led research, professional practice, and autoethnography.

Dave Guruge is a management practitioner with over 20 years of experience. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Professional Practice at Otago Polytechnic. His research interests are in organisational ethnography, sustainability, and post-qualitative research.

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