

# Practice-based research, reflective practice of interpretation, and links to education

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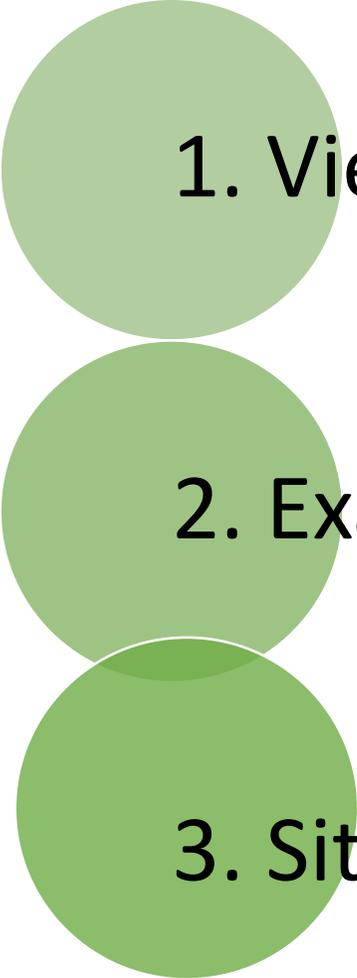
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# Research of interpretation practices – why and how?

- SCNI's goal
- Preconditions to develop methods and knowledge of nature interpretation in Sweden
- Practice-based research and reflective practice
- Closely connected with education and pedagogic processes



# Today's workshop



1. Views on research-practice collaboration

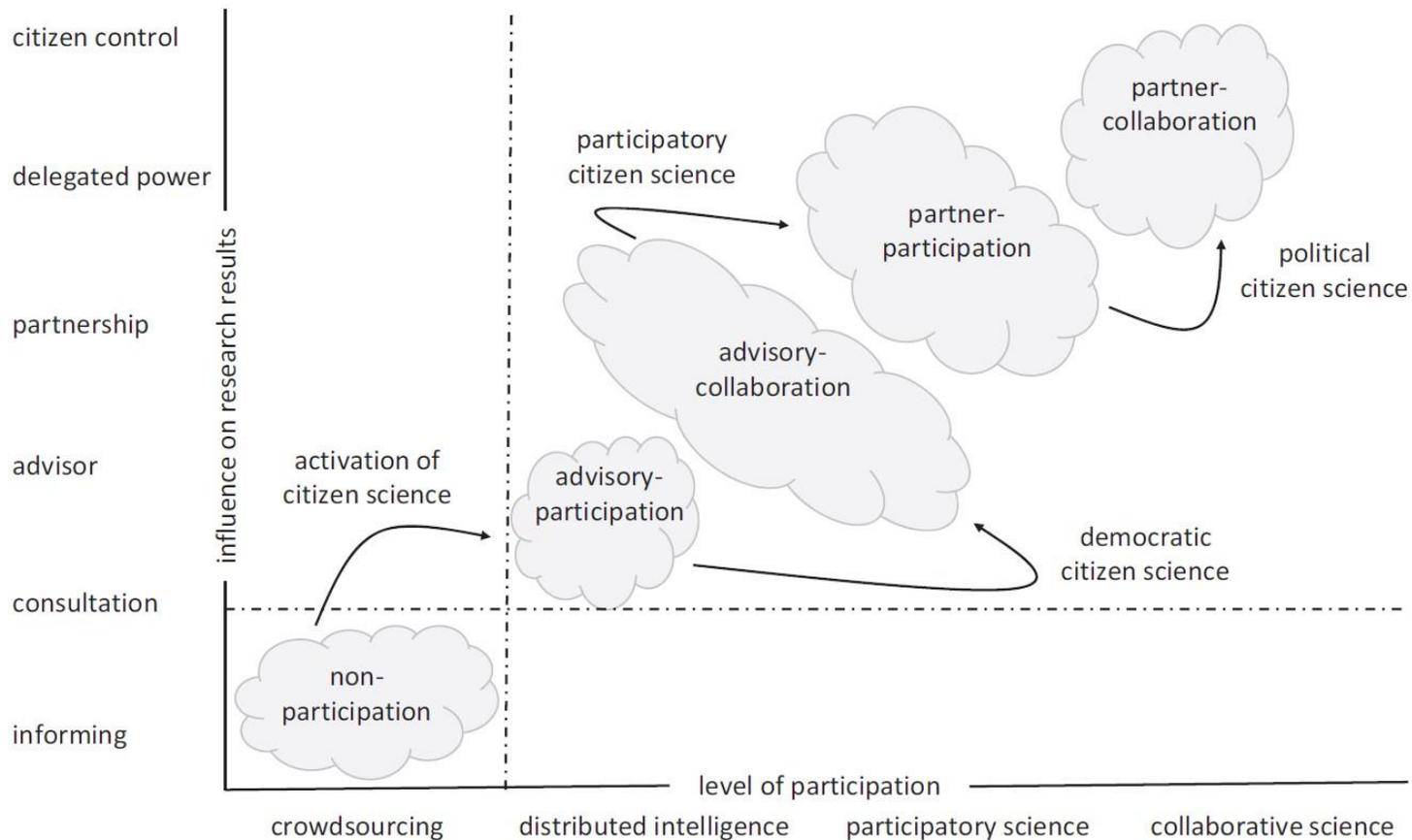
2. Examples of collaborative research

3. Situated ideals and connection to education

# 1. Views on research-practice collaboration



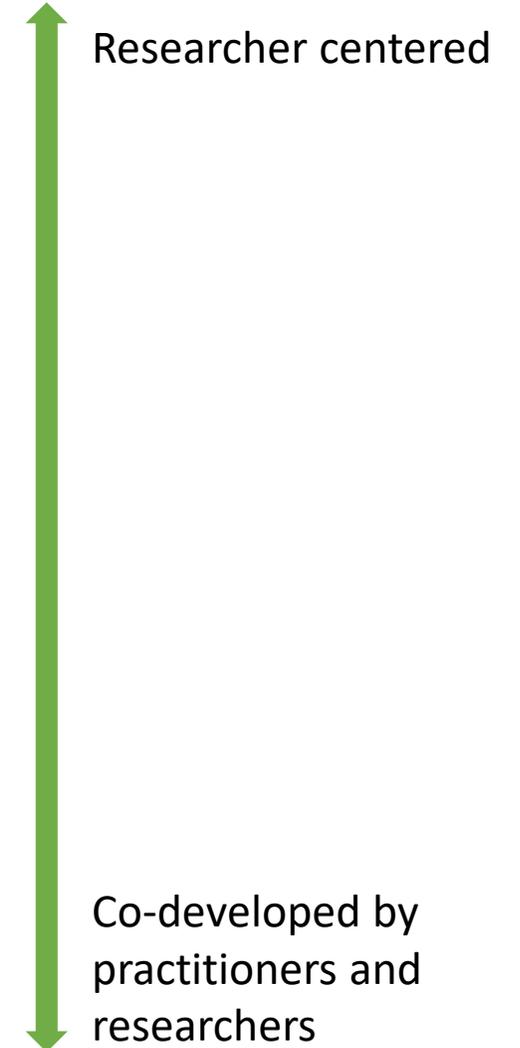
# Learning through collaborative and practice-based research: participation as a key element



van der Zwart, J., van Leersum, C. M., & Konrad, K. (2024, November). Climbing the citizen science ladder: Juxtaposing citizens' levels of participation and influence in research analysis and dissemination. In *Meeting the Inclusion Challenge in Innovation: Giving Voice to Users* (pp. 121-141). Walter de Gruyter.

# Collaboration between nature interpreters and researchers – 5 approaches from CNV's experience

- Facilitating, creating meeting place, inviting researchers to give talks
- Actively involve and invite researchers to give lectures and contribute to idea-formation of the practitioners
- Match-making researcher and practitioner, let researchers coach practitioners with clear scientific results
- Include researchers into projects that are initiated and driven by practitioners and invite researchers to ask questions out of the need of the projects
- Open ideas that can be co-developed by practitioners and researchers, and can be driven by either

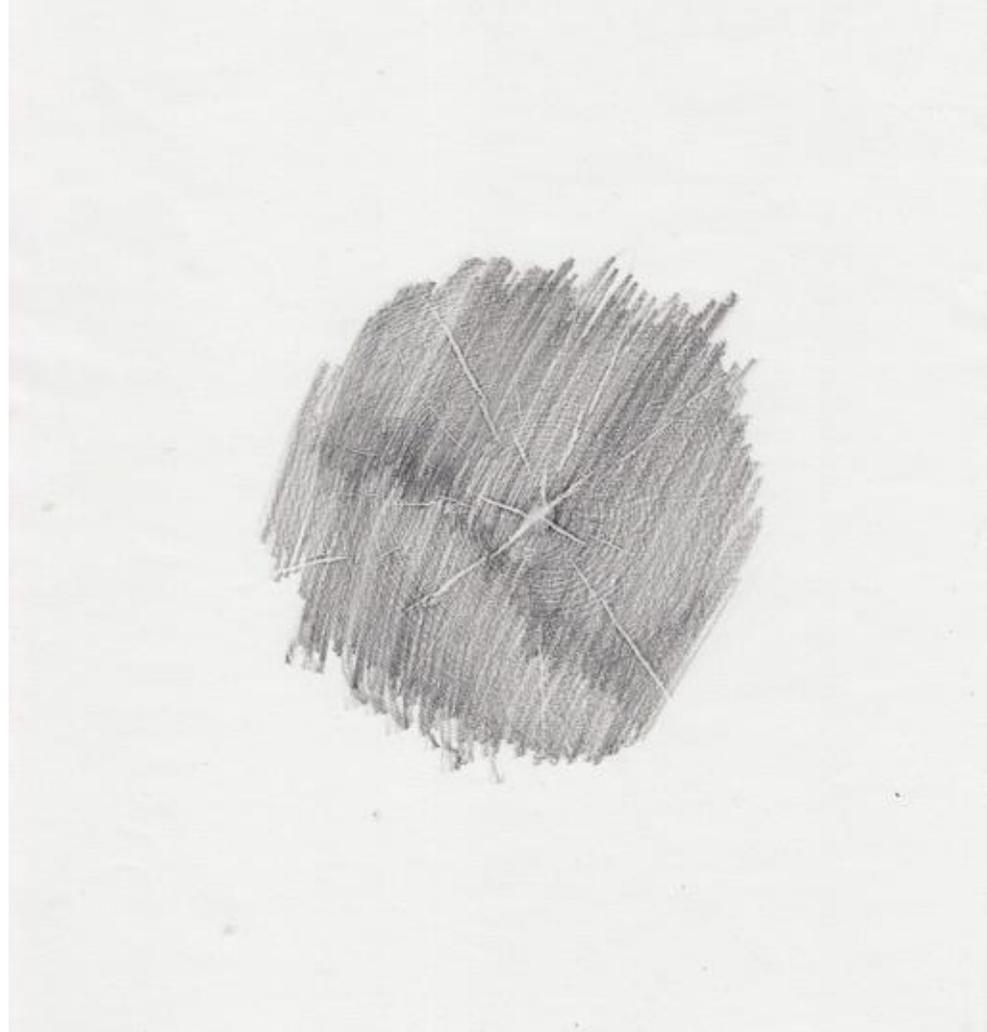


# Critical questions to ask ourselves

For academics – what can ‘research’ actually offer? How do our habits of producing knowledge actually achieve their legitimacy?

For practitioners/communities – to what extent do we in fact represent ‘the practitioner/community’? What is our responsibility to wider networks? Who are we excluding?

## 2. Examples of current CNV research projects – through collaboration and practice



# Nature Interpretation Lab

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NiLab  
**The Nature Interpretation Lab**

Nature Interpretation Lab (NiLab) is a laboratory where researchers and practitioners meet to work and learn together. The lab is based at the Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation.



# Mistra Environmental Communication Phase II (2024-2027)



Focus area 3 – Knowledge

## The constitution of knowledge and truth in environmental communication

Scientific knowledge is increasingly contested today in manifold ways – and perhaps nowhere as much as in the field of environmental policy and sustainability transitions. This focus area sheds light on such contestations by an emerging anti-scientific attitude and the spread of post-truth relativism. On this basis, we examine the interconnections between knowledge and action. What knowledge can form the basis of individual and collective action? How can environmental communication catalyse action to address environmental challenges?

[Read more >](#)



Anke Fischer



- How are knowledge, emotions and values used and combined in the crafting of stories to be told as part of nature interpretation? How are values, emotions and knowledge represented in a story? How are these stories received?

Case: nature interpretation in the becoming of Bästeträsk National Park – how is identity of a national park created and presented, and what processes of storymaking and storytelling are involved in that? What roles do nature interpretation play?

Share your examples with your neighbour



### 3. Situated ideals and connection to education



Artwork by Ali Hoff

# Reminders that collaborations are complex and take time (Facer & Enright 2018):

- Research-practice collaboration can be done in a 'divide and conquer' model – let's all just do what we do well and stitch it together afterwards
- To do research-practice collaboration we need to learn to see the same issue through each others' eyes
- Collaborating is great because we can learn each others skills and acquire each others' knowledge so that we can take on each others' roles!
- Research-practice collaboration often cause confusion, as it can unsettle identities, but doesn't create space for learning, leaving people remain torn and unable to address any accountabilities.

# Rationale

- If we want to work with and shape environmental communication practices (including nature interpretation), we need to know more about the complexities and diversity in practice.
- We aim to explore how groups of practitioners share and differ in basic professional assumptions about how the world works and how they can contribute to changing it.
  - *At this workshop, there are nature interpreters, nature guides, outdoor educators, researchers, museum pedagogues, and many more.*
  - *Project feeds into a research project on “environmental communication cultures” and a textbook chapter on “Interpretation” as a professional field.*

# Theoretical Framework

- Based on Grounded Practical Theory (Craig & Tracy, 1995, 2018)
- **Technical level:** the concrete level of repertoire of tools, 'tricks of the trade', routine strategies
  - What is done in practice? (e.g. how to plan a guided tour, how to activate participants, what to point out and when)
- **Practice/problem level:** reoccurring dilemmas/problems in practice, teleoaffective structure
  - How does practice make sense? (e.g. engage in deeper conversations v stick to a plan, what is the overarching aim)
- **Philosophical level:** situated ideals, fundamental and abstract ideas of good practice, assumptions, ideas about how social change happens, human/nature relations
  - Why does practice look this way? (e.g. epistemology [fact v experience], what does it mean to do "good work", how is the world assumed to change through the work)

# Example application of the framework; generalisation

## **Science Journalist**

*What?* Pulls science into journalistic outlets.

*How?* Translation. Relevance-driven. Paid by media outlets

*Why?* relevance and supremacy of scientific knowledge

## **Science Communicators**

*What?* Pushes science into non-academic spaces.

*How?* Translation. Content-driven. Paid by scientific institutions.

*Why?* —see left—

Exercise:  
Understand your peers' situated ideals through  
interviewing!

- handouts provided, groups of 2–3, 15 mins
- university employees may answer related to communities in research or education subjects

# Implications for collaboration and education

Useful to deeply understand who we work with, e.g. by

- Seeing the issue through each others eyes
- Understanding each others knowledge and role

Useful to reflect on and design education, e.g. by

- Making explicit and thereby discussible how situated ideals guide practice
- Engage explicitly with students'/participants' diverging ideas of professional practice
- Explore the ways in which situated ideals shape practice: what is considered a problem, how it shapes solutions, etc?

Thanks for participating  
and see you soon?

**GUIDING MEANING-MAKING ACROSS  
CONTEXTS: A WORKSHOP FOR “INTERPRETERS”  
WORKING ON ISSUES RELATED TO NATURE AND  
THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT**

<https://tinyurl.com/mec-interpretation>

Tue, 20 May 2025, 10.00–15.00

@ SLU Uppsala

register by 27 March

Questions and thoughts?

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