SECTION TWO

METHODOLOGY: HOW I HAVE INQUIRED – MY INQUIRY METHODOLOGIES

What I do quarrel with is the effort of some to impose a single version of truth, to prescribe one church and to proscribe all others. What I have even more quarrel with is the view that a scientifically acceptable research method is "objective" or value free, that it harbors no particular point of view. All methods and all forms of representation are partial and because they are partial, they limit, as well as illuminate what through them we are able to experience. (Eisner, 1988)

One of the basic questions scholars are now raising is how we perform the magical feat of transforming the contents of our consciousness into a public form that others can understand. The assumption that the language of the social sciences - propositional language and number-are the exclusive agents of meaning is becoming increasingly problematic, and as a result, we are exploring the potential of other forms of representation for illuminating the educational worlds we wish to understand.... The concept of alternative forms of data representation presents an image that acknowledges the variety of ways through which our experience is coded. (4) (Slattery, 1997)

"the central challenge is to formulate approaches to empirical research which advance emancipatory theory -building through the development of interactive and action -inspired research design." Patti Lather (1986) quoted in Carliss Douglas' Doctoral Thesis

In my search for an appropriate methodology for my inquiry I started with its purpose and the belief that a methodology must be fit for the purpose it sets out to serve. It must have congruence with that purpose.

The methods with which we choose to do research construct a reality that is instrumentally different than another view creates. How I respond to other people, how they respond to me, and how we care for each other are all affected. My research strategies reflect a set of values that impose my presence in the world in particular ways. (Whitehead and Allender, Paper presented to the International Conference on Teacher Research 2000, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 29 April, 2000)

The ontological values that are reflected in my methodological approach integral to my desire to foreground the hidden and to draw upon that which has been denied so as to contribute to extending the epistemological base of academic and wider standards of appreciation, judgement and action. For this reason I am inspired by the work of Karen

Martin, and Booran Mirraboopa who seek to develop an indigenist approach to research methodology.

> Lester defines Indigenist research as culturally safe and culturally respectful research that is comprised of three principles: resistance as an emancipatory imperative, political integrity in Indigenous research and privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenist research. (Lester, 1999) quoted in (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987. p, 159)

I have also been influenced by an African cosmology that sees everything as interconnected and almost indivisible. I have sought to apply ways of working that correspond to notions of both/and as I engage with individuals and social formations. This has helped me avoid essentialising or polarising groups of people, individuals and situations. I have sought to apply this through recognising that everything always contains its opposite within its constituitivity and as such there is always something positive to be worked with in any system that can give possibility and hope.

> Adhering to a **both/and conceptual** stance does not mean that race, class, and gender oppression are interchangeable. For example, whereas race, class, and gender oppression operate on the social structural level of institutions, gender oppression seems better able to annex the basic power of the erotic and intrude in personal relationships via family dynamics and within individual consciousness. This may be because racial oppression has fostered historically concrete communities among African-Americans and other racial/ethnic groups. These communities have stimulated cultures of resistance. While these communities segregate Blacks from Whites, they simultaneously provide counter-institutional buffers that subordinate groups such as African-Americans use to resist the ideas and institutions of dominant groups. Social class may be similarly structured. Traditionally conceptualized as a relationship of individual employees to their employers, social class might be better viewed as a relationship of communities to capitalist political economies. Moreover, significant overlap exists between racial and social class oppression when viewing them through the collective lens of family and community. Existing community structures provide a primary line of resistance against racial and class oppression. But because gender cross-cuts these structures, it finds fewer comparable institutional bases to foster resistance. (Hill-Collins, 2003)

I have also sought to integrate the inclusional nature of African cosmology that incorporates and includes rather than putting up barriers of distinction and exclusion (to ideas, peoples. ways of doing things, etc) into my methodology. This may help explain why, as I have new experiences or encounter new ideas, I seek to look for what is of value within them and to incorporate that into my practice, rather than to engage in 'good-bad', right-wrong' dichotomising and polarising.

My understanding is that in African cosmology there are no spaces. That is there exists no places of nothingness on both a spiritual and material level (undifferentiated in African cosmology). Between all that we conceive of as solid or 'massy' there are interpenetrating flows that connect everything to everything. There are huge synergies here with notion of inclusionality and its connective, reflexive and co-creative awareness of space and boundaries. African cosmology reveals this inclusional urge in its approach to music as an

example. For instance, musical vocal qualities of hoarseness, in notions like 'funk', in rhythmic patterns, in the 'call and response of' vocal and instrumental relationships between the artists creating the sounds and the listener who participates in the process by giving it meaning and expressed affirmation which in turn assists the music to refine the quality of its symbiotic urges. The music is both highly sophisticated and 'messy' and life is understood as such. Rayner describes inclusionality thus:

> Inclusionality is an awareness that space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete massy objects, is a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organization, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication. Correspondingly, boundaries are not fixed limits - smooth, space-excluding, Euclidean lines or planes - but rather are pivotal places comprising complex, dynamic arrays of voids and relief that both emerge from and pattern the co-creative togetherness of inner and outer domains, as in the banks of a river. (Rayner, 2005)

So in terms of my research methodology I have not sought absolute or universally correct solutions. The collective impulse of African cosmology has nourished an approach in which I have engaged in the spaces that do not exist between people and social processes. Whilst there, I have sought to be as mindful as possible to my arcs of attention. I have sought ways of intensifying my inward and outer gaze both in real time and in the process of reflection and sense making writing.

My choice of appropriate inquiry methodology was not an entirely cognitive choice. I found myself intuitively and emotionally drawn to particular forms long before I fully understood them. Maybe it was my body's 'intentional arc' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). I was drawn, for example to Action research, as a philosophical approach to research partly because it valued action and change and also because I felt that I could be more of myself, explore and engage more honestly, with this approach than with the more positivist approaches. Peter Reason agues that quality in action research inquiry

> … comes from awareness of and transparency about the choices open to you and that you make at each stage of the inquiry; and as Lyotard might suggest, creatively making and articulating quality rules as you go along. Quality comes from asking, with others, what is important in this situation? How well are we doing? How can we show others how well we have done? I would also suggest that it is not necessarily a question of whether you have done well, but of how well you have done, and whether you have done well enough for the claims you may wish to make. It is through understanding the choices that have been made that judgements can be made about the nature of the knowledge and practice that has been generated. (Reason, 2005)

I hope to have shown that some of the criteria for choice of methodology have to do with the philosophical and epistemological ground they occupy. For me it was also important to have an approach to methodology that "gave life" and had the potential to enable the quality of knowing that I wanted. If epistemology is the theory of knowledge that incorporates the standards used to assess that knowledge, the why we believe what we believe to be true, then for my purposes a liberational set of standards of judgement was required. I have therefore worked with Jack Whitehead's notion of 'living standards of judgement' to assess the validity of my knowledge claims. These standards are based on

the values I seek to live in the world and the extent to which they enable the re-emergence I seek.

I agree with Debbie Smith Equine BSc, when she says

> Unlike positivistic research as in 'academic' science, a first person Action Research enquiry does not set out to 'prove'. Instead first person work is an exploratory and hopeful undertaking set to reveal and to surface insight and self-knowledge. The validation of my work is in its 'relatability' (Bassey, 1995) not its replicability and generalisability in a scientific sense. If a reader feels they can relate, existentially, spiritually or materially to aspects of my account then I will know I have satisfied my chosen validation criterion. (Smith, 2005)

As I inquire into how I can live my values more fully I am engaging in a transformational first person inquiry in that I am seeking to reveal and surface self-knowledge that can empower me in my quest for personal and collective re-emergence. It is for this reason that I explore, for example, some of the ways in which colonialism lives with me and within me. This provides explanation of some of the motivation for my inquiry and why I am engaging in influencing my own sense of who I am, the 'ground' of my inquiry. In doing so I offer examples such as my feeling my family were inferior, that White standards of beauty were the ones to judge all others by, hating the way I looked, not having a language of my own, not having a viable 'home' to 'return' to, economically deprived/ weakened, an outsider in the country of my nationality and which has 'owned' me and my ancestors for the last 400 years.

My engagement with African history and cosmology, as part of the process of my re-emergence is another obvious influence on the ways in which I engaged with inquiring. In working to develop a consciousness that is celebratory of life and transformational of unjust social formations I have sought inspiration, information and counter information in the (reclaimed) history/ies of African peoples. In so doing I am creating and embodying my own understandings and meanings of African cosmology and incorporating that in my living practice. By nature as well as through the perspectives of African cosmology I am inclusive in the range of experiences, relationships, materials, theories, reflections and much else that I draw upon in creating a practice of being that is committed to "enhancing the values that carry hope for humanity".

I have developed the belief that I need to focus on the positives while recognising the inclusion of the negative in the positive as I seek to help African peoples evolve a liberated state of being. I have engaged with inquiring, with my 'I' located within the sphere of inquiry, with an inclusional holistic approach infused with a spirit of optimism and an appreciative perspective. I have been supported in this by the spirit and focus, if not the detailed practice of Appreciative Inquiry which:

> "...refers to both a search for knowledge and a theory of intentional collective action which are designed to help evolve the normative vision and will of a group, organization, or society as a whole" (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987. p. 159)

Drawing from the spirit of Appreciative Inquiry I have evolved an inquiry practice in which I focus on "the best of what is" in existing social and power relationships and invite people to explore how we can evolve ways of being together that more consistently reflect

that spirit. I am explicit that "the best of what is" is a state in which people of African origin – and everybody else – have moved past the limitations of colonised mind-sets and iniquitous power/wealth distribution systems and evolved ways of being/relating together in which there is both psychological respect and greater economic and cultural equity.

In summary my inquiry methodology is an inclusive one that draws upon the liberated permissions of postmodernism and the positions in those schools of postcolonialism that are still concerned with a de-colonising that goes beyond literary and artistic movements and embrace political and economic transformational action and perspectives. It is inclusional and draws upon a range of different methods. It is close to what has been labelled a 'Multiplist approach' (Goldenberg et al., 2001). I have used a range of approaches and been guided by the situation that I found myself in as to how I decided to conduct my inquiry, therefore it has emergent rather than prescriptive form.

My research methodology draws upon African cosmology, Womanist and feminist traditions and others that also challenge the colonialist aspects of the modernist project and other colonising influences, including many still present in postmodern discourse. These are characterised by the extent to which they support and legitimate ways of seeing knowledge, society and individuals as indivisible and in constant movement and change and a commitment to actions that seek to create conditions of equality, justice and planetary sustainability. They do not see knowledge as existing outside of embodied understandings and experiencing, they are holistic and view the purpose of the development of knowledge as being to assist us as human beings to improve the quality of life for all sections (and dimensions) of our common humanity.

It seems to me that a method can be used in a number of different ways and serve a number of different ideals and interests. A methodology can be seen as a philosophically grounded approach to knowledge creation and validation. If we choose the latter explanation then it is, or is most ethically, inextricably linked to epistemological stances. This is what Stanley (Stanley, 2004, pppp.3-29) argues when she says:

> Instead this idea proposes that the knowledge that social science produces about social life is simply one of a number of competing versions of what 'reality' is; and concomitantly it insists on two related things. One is to refuse any separation of epistemology and methodology, by making the intellectual *processes* involved in producing knowledge-claims, and not just the end-*product* on these in the form of conclusions or 'findings', fully transparent and available for scrutiny by others. The other is to firmly subordinate questions of method to those of epistemology/methodology. The phrase 'it ain't what you do it's the way that you do it' can be used to characterise this. (Stanley, 2004)

I start off with who I am, my embodied 'I' replete with tacit knowings that I am not always consciously aware of which make themselves known to me through action. I move on to what I believe I believe, my values, etc. because I believe that they provide the impulse towards consciously 'known' beliefs. This is what Peter Reason and John Heron (Heron, 1996) refer to as propositional knowing and which I am suggesting that, though often contradictory with ones morals/values is, at the same time, embedded within the body of an individual. If I am going to be congruent with my grounded being and the philosophy and beliefs I hold then I need to work with epistemological and methodological concerns in a manner congruent with who I am seeking to be and the particular forms of knowledge

I am seeking as I seek to research from an understanding of my own 'I' as a living contradiction. (Whitehead, 1989a)

I have tried to work with the spirit of an African centred approach in the Epistemological/ methodological positions I have engaged in. From this position there are permeable and not rigid exclusionary lines of demarcation between these concepts. I have sought to embody insights from African cosmology & Ubuntu and reflect values of interconnectedness, spontaneity, intuition, reality grounded action, holism, relational awareness, inclusivity, flexibility, creativity, human centeredness, rhythm, a social validating of value of knowledge that recognises difference and individuality. This approach has enabled me to see the quest for knowledge as being embodied, relational and for purposes related to the growth and development of knowledge and action beneficial to post colonial re-emergence of African peoples and transformation of the factors that condition our oppression.

I have worked with the understanding that the type of understanding that I seek is relational; it exists and is only made known in the living dynamic that occurs between people and other forces in the world. I have worked with political activists who have claimed to have the right theory and knowledge that would lead to a desired result and I have watched with great disappointment as the actions that they engaged in contradicted and undermined the noble sounding aspirations they claimed to hold. I know that in the world of fluid interaction between opposing and different interests and perspectives that strategy is what takes place in that messy contradictory interplay. It has to shift and adapt and sometimes even question its underlying values and maybe even change them. When though, this results in outcomes that are directly contrary to the original spirit, then the propositional theoretical claims are, in my opinion, undermined and we need to seek different approaches. These I believe need to be evaluated on their ability to create the outcomes desired in that messy reality.

For this reason the notion of "theory in action" (Argyris and Schön, 1974) is one that I have been influenced by in the ways in which I have conducted my inquiry. They distinguish between a "theory of action" and "theory in action". A theory of action is a theory 'about' a situation that is then tested out in action. The person, referred to as the 'actor', to signify that they have 'agency', brings to their theory of action their constituitivity; all of their previous experiences, prejudices, skills, values and aspirations. They also bring their relationality or contextuality, in that what they bring is affected by the relationships and context that they experience prior to and during real time engagement. This is what attracts me to the notion. I wanted to work with what happens when I try to influence change while working in a complex, shifting and uncertain reality so that I could improve my ability to be an effective influence. I wanted to 'know how' more than to 'know about'.

In the process of my inquiry I have opened myself up to challenging the assumptions that I work from and with as I gain new information through the experiences I have as a result of my engagement. Argyris's (1976) notion of double loop learning theory is relevant here as it includes the importance of learning to change underlying values and assumptions whilst engaged with seeking to solve complex, badly structured problems that change as the engagement progresses. I am not sure if I have 'changed' my values as much as learned to be able to work more assertively with values that have revealed their importance to me as I have been engaged in action. Argyris makes a distinction between what somebody says

their theory is, their "espoused theory" and their actual behaviour which reflects a "theory-in-use". This is similar to Jack Whitehead's notion of "Living Contradiction" and is increasing congruence between the two is seen as critical area to be addressed in order to achieve double loop learning. It is usually only through interaction with others that the conflict between the two become apparent.

One of the things that I have been struggling with is the frame that most people operate from when they address issues to do with race and racism in this country and, in fact internationally. In the dominant discourse there are a number of taken for granted assumptions that are rarely challenged. For example, the 'problem' of Black people in organisations or Black children in schools is described as being one of inclusion. The strategy of so many is focussed on how to fit us in to their existing systems and standards. This is problematic. I do not want to fit into things the way that they are presently as I believe that the existing systems and standards are what are causing so much suffering and exploitation of other people like me. The strategies that come out of this inclusion frame are first order or single loop strategies. Double loop learning addresses itself to more fundamental questioning and action. In an organisational context double-loop learning "occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives" (Argyris and Schön, 1978). On an individual level double loop learning:

> 'involves questioning the role of the framing and learning systems which underlie actual goals and strategies' (op. cit.). (Smith, 2001)
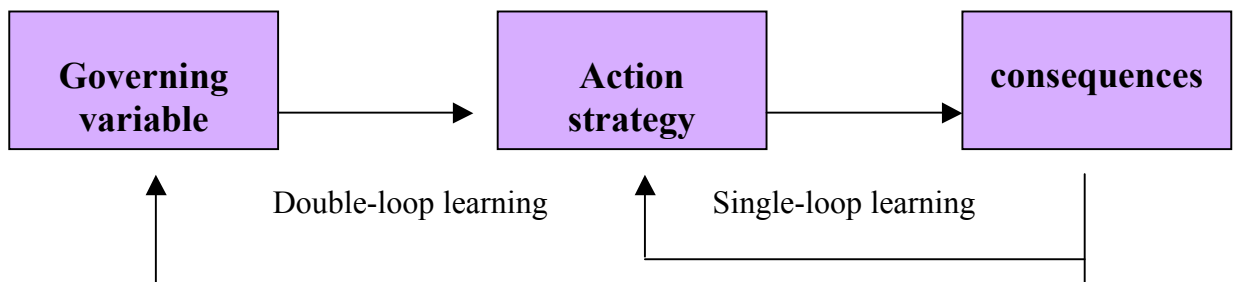
It is my desire to help influence the 'governing variable', existing in a political reality that is supported by the notion of double loop learning. As Smith (Smith, 2001) argues, the political processes that managers (and I expand this to refer to myself as an educator and activist) work in is not a distraction - it is the reality or the norm and theory needs to work with this requirement of itself.

> Thus, perhaps we need to develop theory that looks to the political nature of structures, knowledge and information. Here we might profitably look to games theory, the contribution of partisan and political institutions (Beem 1999) and an exploration of how managers can make explicit, and work with, political processes (Coopey 1998). Perhaps the aim should be 'to incorporate politics into organizational learning, rather than to eradicate it' (Easterby-Smith and Araujo 1999: 13). Quoted in (Smith, 2001)

I am then, in my inquiry, seeking appreciative ways of engaging with those that reproduce the governing variables that impact negatively upon the life chances of peoples of African

origin to influence their learning such that they consider alternatives that are capable of a qualitative difference of outcome.

I have also drawn upon the spirit of Donald Schön's notion of the 'reflective practitioner'. I like the way that Mary Hartog links this with being a 'reflexive practitioner'.

> Whereas reflective practice is concerned with looking back and learning through experience and practice, reflexive practice is concerned with knowing in action and with my understanding of my thinking processes as a result of this internal process of inquiry, enabling me to change my thinking and action to improve my practice. Both are skills fundamental to becoming a reflective practitioner and to the discipline of self-study. (Harthog, 2002)

The following excerpt from a transcript of a talk that Schön gave in 1987 captures much of how I have felt as I engaged in researching. It also provides me with a sense that I was not mad to inquire in this way.

> "The experience of the students in the architectural studio, like the experience of the teachers in the teacher project and, I believe, the experience of the students in any reflective practicum is that they must plunge into the doing, and try to educate themselves before they know what it is they're trying to learn. The teachers cannot tell them. The teachers can say things to them but they cannot understand what's meant at that point. The way at which they come to be able to understand what's meant is by plunging into the doing--the designing, the teaching, the examination of their own learning--so as to have the kinds of experience from which they may then be able to make some sense of what it is that's being said. But that plunge is full of loss because, if you've taken that plunge yourself, you know the experience. You feel vulnerable; you feel you don't know what you're doing; you feel out of control; you feel incompetent; you feel that you've lost confidence. And that is the environment in which you swim around, trying to design or trying to teach or trying to do whatever the hell it is you're trying to learn to do until you get to the place where you can understand what people are saying to you." (Schön, 1987)

I like this paragraph because I feel that I have stubbornly worked at doing things my own way, despite knowing it was flawed and knowing that there were 'safer' approaches from more experienced researchers than myself I wanted to decide how I was going to approach inquiry and I did not want to risk being taken along tramlines inherent in others' approaches that led me to a different place than the one I intuited I wanted to move towards. I have, at times, felt lost and wished for the security of a propositional approach that would yield theory that the people I worked with would understand a lot more easily than they have.

In my research I have worked with the proposition that by seeking to act purposely in the world and live the values that I wish to, seeking to work within the contradiction between the values I espouse and the reality of my being in the world I will have experiences that, if I learn well from them, can increase my ability to achieve the outcomes I want. In Reason and Heron's terms I start off with a proposition that the kind of knowledge in action that I wish to gain from my inquiry can best be developed through the process of engaging in action in a purposeful way and noticing what happens to myself, to others and to the space between and connecting us, in a number of different experiential dimensions. In order to

do so well I need to be aware of a variety of situational and relational factors as well of my own constituitivity and biases. Whatever happens in that space impacts the various other actors and factors in action in that moment of action and inquiry. This is the relational dynamic that Rayner (Rayner, 2005) speaks of. The complexity of interaction, interdependence and independence speak to me of the unsuitability of laboratory research methodology to the nature of the knowledge I wish to explore. It also informs me that whatever I 'discover' is not mechanically replicable. This does not of course compromise its validity or utility. I believe strongly in the value of the 'unique case'.

As I engage with the world I become aware of patterns of movement, of speech, of emotional reaction and engagement, of interaction, of expression. Heron and Reason speak of the importance of critical subjectivity, the ability to be aware of the various forms of knowing that one is engaged in, in the moment.

> This involves an awareness of the four ways of knowing, of how they are currently interacting, and of ways of changing the relations between them so that they articulate a subjective-objective reality that is unclouded by a restrictive and ill-disciplined subjectivity. (Heron and Reason, 1997a)

In the pages that follow I tell stories of my engagement with others in a number of areas and describe how I have sought to be aware of as many internal and external factors as possible in the moment and during subsequent reflection using models such as the off line collaborative reflection model.

As I engage in inquiring through experiential participation I develop propositional knowledge which I seek to reflect in presentational and embodied forms that can help communicate the meanings and values that I seek to be an influence in the world. I describe in the stories that follow how I have tried to create sites of action and learning that are 'communicative spaces':

> This formation of communicative space is in itself a form of action. It may well be that the most important thing we can try to do in certain situations is to open, develop, maintain, encourage more participation and new and better forms of communication and dialogue. (Reason, 2004)

My inquiring discipline has been forged around that practice of aware engagement that Torbert, Reason and others speak of. I have experienced myself intensely seeking to be a positive educative influence and developed and utilised a variety of means for enhancing the quality of that experience to produce learning that could inform my practice. I have made drawings and notes during the periods of engagement, sometimes during quite frightening moments I have put pen to paper to record my reactions in the moment. I have over the last ten years developed a practice of keeping a log of key moments and reflecting upon that as I seek to understand what has happened. These provide substantiation to my knowledge claims.

The choices I have made contribute to the quality of this piece. Here are some of these choices:

1. Using my constituitivity as starting point of my inquiry
2. Including my subjective experience and agency as part of my field of inquiry

3. Seeking to inquire and revise in the process of making change – as well as learn from the oral and documented histories of others
4. Using an inclusional approach to ideas and theories, seeking 'what gives life' within them rather than trying to 'prove' them 'right' or 'wrong'.
5. Working with an understanding that a 'theory' is a collection of ideas organised in such a way as to advance a particular cause or argument.
6. Working with methodological inventiveness, opening myself up to new ways of learning and inquiring
7. Worked with a collection of connected, dynamically permeable, questions rather than a single stable question.

My decolonising methodology

With the death of Black independent movements in the UK, there has been a shift towards what I understand as an integrationist perspective. Even when it is called 'anti-racist', it is essentially about bringing the excluded into the status quo, not about a fundamental shift in perspective and power. It is not about transforming the status quo and I therefore seek to occupy different ground. In the USA and the UK for example, bringing in Black police has not changed the racist impact of police policies and Black teachers have not changed measurably the outcomes that Black children gain from the educational system. I believe that much of the identity of the governing logic of this society still lies in colonialist patterns of thought and behaviour and my inquiry is a search for ways of knowing and being that decolonise.

It think that a methodology that moves beyond 'decolonising' needs to be based on ontological and epistemological criteria that seek to give life and validity to inclusive, relational, embodied, emergent, dynamic, subjective, intersubjective and holistic forms of knowing and of achieving knowledge. It needs to be an appreciative, creative, life affirming response to injustice that seeks to co-create other possibilities of knowing and action. It needs to also:

- Be an enquiry with purpose that seeks knowledge that undermines oppressive forms of human interaction with each other and with the planet and supports the emergence of just, sustainable ways of being.
- Inquire into real-life, real-time strategies for change rather than conducting 'experiments' in abstract conditions. As such it would not separate 'research' or 'enquiry' from the process of seeking to achieve the desired outcomes of the enquiry.
- Be messy and emergent as well as committed to consciously discovering and evolving knowledge for a purpose.
- Seek knowledge of what actually works in making a difference
- Integrate the personal into the field of inquiry as well as the 'secret stories', the untold aspects of people's lives and consciousness, that research often misses or is not seeking to engage with.
- Seek to bring 'everyday knowledge', i.e. knowledge gained by means other than the traditional, into the Academy
- Critique itself ruthlessly to ensure that it is not inadvertently helping to reinforce and reproduce the status quo.
- Avoid dichotomies between forms of knowing

- Seek to enable those who do not have power to gain it and those who have it to recognise the value for them in achieving this state of affairs.
- In seeing all of us as interconnected it would see that for some of us to change we all have to change
- Be conducted in the interests of specific groups whilst recognising that this is in the interests of the whole of humanity
- Seek to evolve gender and ethnic equity and evolve societal forms that enabled this
- Take positions challenging of political, cultural and economic norms
- Be research 'with and for' rather than 'on'. The subjects would inquire into their own situations
- Seek to defend the interests of the dispossessed and oppressed

Making Knowledge Claims

I believe that through the process of inquiry that I have engaged in I have evolved living theory for myself that enables me to be an effective influence on my own learning as realised and demonstrated in my practice. I also believe that I have found ways of being an effective influence on the learning of other individuals and on social formations. I believe that the criteria of success of that influence are to do with the degree to which that influence assists in collective moves towards de-colonising and emancipatory values expressed in our relationships with each other, in our organisations and in the purpose and identity that we evolve for them. I hope in this work to have provided sufficient data and evidence to support my claims to know.

The recollections, stories, imagery and descriptions in the chapters that follow are the data of my inquiry; they comprise the evidence for my claims to know. They reflect my originality of mind as they outline the ways in which my thinking has shifted as a result of the engagements and reflections that I have shared. My critical judgement is shown in the engagement with my own life and the lives of others as I seek new decolonised ways of being and the thinking that I have developed to support that. My contribution to knowledge is embodied in the stories that I have told as I share with you what I have done, how I have done it and the conclusions that I have arrived at which I believe are a useful contribution to knowledge

In this introduction I have been trying to convey an engagement with the ideas of others in an inclusional way. I have done so by texturing or laying different positions and arguments alongside each other and seek the elements of value within rather than seek to 'prove' one right and the other 'wrong'. This is an approach that I have tried to put into practice in my life/work. For example, emotionally I want to argue against so many of the educational strategies used in relation to the education of children of African origin. Instead of going with this response I have instead tried to focus on what they are doing that I think has promise, at least in intent and sought to build upon this by contributing other thoughts and possibilities.

The representational form of my inquiry

In writing this thesis I was concerned to find form that would reflect the, values, intention and the qualities that I wished to foreground. I came up with the following criteria:

1. It has to communicate to the heart as well as the intellect of the reader
2. It has to tell stories that assist the reader to follow the flow of my discoveries inquiry and claims to know
3. It has to be both precise and allowing for the reader to discover their own meanings through engaging with it
4. It has to be of value to people concerned with decolonisation
5. It has to be an inclusive text that offers hopes to people from the variety of social positions
6. It has to go beyond text and include communicative forms of representation of extended areas of knowledge as well as extended ways of knowing. These extended forms can include video, pictures, stories intuitive 'presenced' knowing as well as quantitative hypothetico-deductive (Reason, 2005) academic writing.

If I am to engage in processes that are decolonising of the dominant discourse and power structures then the forms of my inquiry have to be congruent with that. It follows from this that the forms of presentation of that inquiry also need to be as congruent as possible. For this reason I have used visual and other forms of representation in my work. By using forms of representation that capture dimensions of reality that the written word cannot I both enable myself to share with others a richer and more informative account of my practice and I contribute to extending my own understanding and that of the Academy in terms of what valid knowledge forms might be especially in relation to the communication of the living critical standards of judgement I have generated to account for my life in my living theory.

For example, when I look at the short video clip of me speaking with White managers below I am seeing me speaking confidently and with humour and inclusionality (Rayner, 2005). It is evidence for me of the ways in which I have managed to become 'successful' within the status quo through my engagement with trying to change it. I have reached out and connected with that within the people I work with and that within them that I believe is willing to help evolve our local, national and global identities into ones fit to sustain human life on this planet.

In seeking to create theory that can be of value for 'us' I am wanting to show how the influence that I seek to be is conveyed not just through the language and concepts that I adopt, fashion, refashion, and create but through my quality of being. That is, I communicate the influence that I wish to be through my embodied being in ways that are not always conscious to myself, which become more apparent when I study my image on video. This embodied being has the power to embrace, affirm, inform and give love and inspiration through qualities of humanity that are expressed bodily.

This study of video is of importance because I believe it provides evidence of the ways in which I have managed to evolve ways of being in which I have found it possible to be in touch with my humanity, to share that with others, to encourage them to be in touch with

the best of what they wish to be. I believe it is also of significance because I have crafted my practice whilst and through working with inclusional forms of strategy and relationship at the same time as working in ways that seek to increase fairness and help reconfigure the nature of the social formations we encounter and belong to as well as the wider society - giving hope in the process. In order to offer this as valid and of quality I utilise standards of judgement that are relatively new and contested compared with those that have become traditional in the Academy. My standards of judgement are to do with the extent to which I live the values embodied in this paragraph. The video is also then evidence of my claim to know something about my Ubuntu way of being and my ability to operate effectively from within it.

I am also using the video clip below to convey my meanings in extra-linguistic form. As I look I reconnect with what I feel to be a pleasure that I display in my own body, a being at ease with myself that is the result of years of self-study and re-evaluation. I have benefited from internalising the messages of the Black power movements for people of African origin to learn to love themselves, for themselves and not to the extent to which they replicate, imitate or coincide with the standards of beauty and behaviour of the dominant paradigm. I am Black and I am proud. I am of beauty. To be able to hold that in my body as I move through the world is of liberational significance of an order that is difficult to convey to those who have not experienced the destructiveness of living with a belief in your own inadequacy and that of those who look like you and are related to you.

I see the humour in my smile that reflects achievement in my ability to live with life affirming energy that I see projected and which others experience as giving encouragement and permission to do the same. I invite you to engage with the video of me below as I work with a large audience of Black and White managers. (CD-S2Clip 1.mov)

The confidence that I see reflected in my use of humour, my smile and my explaining to the audience what I require them to do is a living denial of the colonial imposition of inadequacy and disconnection and, as I look at it reminds me of the distance I have

travelled and affirms my intention to live with this life affirming energy that is an affirmation of our common humanity's ability to transcend. It is also significant that I am doing so while asking managers to strategise structural changes towards greater equality of opportunity for all.

I also feel tremendous pride at being able to work with Black managers and share with them ideas that they can claim (or reclaim) as their own. So the process of education and learning is a process of self-reconnection and liberation. My use of video narratives tells me, amongst other things, that it is not just the content of the models, ideas, processes and information that I share with them that has the effect that I seek. It is also the quality of my being, the congruence between the aspirations I hold for the 'us' and the story I tell through words and physical projection and interconnection.

As I hear myself speak, as I look at myself, I feel and see reflected that embodied Ubuntu way of being. I hear and see myself with a positive focus. I am looking towards success. My speech is energetic. I can see in my physical presence the conveying of belief in the audience and knowing that they all have something positive to offer. There is a belief in my voice that they will engage with the activity that I have asked them to because of the ways in which I have invited them into a web of belonging. There is an assumption in my way of being that I am credible and that this is an important thing to do. Essential to this actually working, I contend, is my guiltless recognition. I am not interested in examining what is not working and whose fault it is. I am embodying a recognition of ability and success. I am saying that "we are all successes and we all have success to share with each other so lets start with that as our starting point so that it can help generate more success."

The video has held and transmitted forms of knowing that words alone struggle to convey and for that reason I have used video, photographs and drawings as part of the presentational form of this thesis.