

Abstract

Creating a Pedagogy of the unique through a Web of Betweenness

This thesis examines the growth of my educational knowledge and development of my practice, as higher education educator, over six years of self-study. The thesis sets out to report on this research and to explain the evolution of my educational influence in my own learning, the learning of others and in the education of social formations. By education of social formations I refer to Whitehead's (2005a) meaning of living values that carry hope for the future of humanity more fully in the rules and processes that govern its social organization.

The context of my research was the collaborative process that developed between myself and participants on the M.Sc. in Computer Applications for Education and the M.Sc. Education and Training Management (ICT) at Dublin City University. Within that context, I worked with a sense of research-based professionalism, seeking to improve my practice through using a 'living educational theory' approach that has sustained me in asking, researching and answering the question; 'How do I improve my practice?' This has enabled me to critically examine my own assumptions and values.

I clarify the meaning of my embodied values in the course of their emergence in my practice-based research. My values have been transformed into living standards of

judgement that include a ‘web of betweenness’ and a ‘pedagogy of the unique’. The ‘web of betweenness’ refers to how we learn in relation to one another and also how ICT can enable us to get closer to communicating the meanings of our embodied values. I see it as a way of expressing my understanding of education as ‘power with’, rather than ‘power over’, others. It is this ‘*power with*’ that I have tried to embrace as I attempt to create a learning environment in which I, and practitioner researchers, can grow personally and professionally. A ‘pedagogy of the unique’ respects the unique constellation of values and standards of judgement that each practitioner-researcher contributes to a knowledge base of practice.

As a researcher, I have supported practitioners in bringing their embodied knowledge and values into the public domain as they design, develop and evaluate multimedia and web based artefacts for use in their own practice contexts. This has involved the supervision of Master degree ‘living educational theory’ enquiries. My PhD enquiry has been a professional journey that has involved risks, courage and challenges, but I have learned that in creating my ‘pedagogy of the unique’, I learn and grow, recognising the contribution I myself make as an individual, and also recognising the contribution dialogue, participation and collaboration with others achieves.