Chapter Twelve   Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as a living theory
What insights does this analysis offer for the academy as a whole?

This chapter will ask the question: have I fulfilled the claims I made at the start of this dissertation? The chapter will be structured around the statements made in the opening section, and will revisit them in the light of the journey travelled thus far. In so doing I return to the metaphor of the New England quilt, made up of multiple fragmented pieces, each with their own story. All together, they form "a single piece with many parts" (Chapter 2).   In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, do they also form a coherent and meaningful picture? Does the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerge as embodied, lived, practiced and tested? Have I fulfilled the criteria by which I chose to be judged?

12.1 Learning through reflective practice
What does it mean to be creative, as a writer, an educator, a manager and a researcher? Is the nature of creativity transferable across each of these roles?

We have looked, throughout this dissertation, at different accounts of 'creativity', whilst working with a broad definition of creative as 'making something new' (Sections 3.1, 7.1). Several key notions of the creative process have emerged in the course of this dissertation, which manifest themselves in all four roles: writer, educator, team leader, researcher.

- **Creative process as 'finding a voice'.** Multiple voices and textual layering were explored in the notions of heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1934), idiolect and nation-language (Braithwaite 1999) (Chapters Two and Seven). These approaches to 'voice' formed a framework for myself as researcher in this dissertation varying voice and multiplying layers so concurrent evidence and retrospective reflection were able to 'speak' to one another (for example, Chapters Three and Ten). As a novelist, I explored in Chapter Four ways of shuttling between timescales, so that narrator-as-child and narrator-as-young-woman 'spoke' to one another using their own contrasting voices. Only through finding *their* voice was I able to fully define their character and the architecture of the novel as a whole. Similarly, these approaches formed a basis for *scaffolded creativity* in guiding students to 'find their own voices'

(Chapter Seven), using appreciation of authorial strategy as a starting point for experimenting with it for themselves.

- **Creative process as 'metaphorical confrontation with self'** (Cox and Thielgard 1987: 45): what Heaney described as "let(ting) down a shaft into real life" (1980: 41) . Chapters Four to Six illustrated the importance of the 'poetic leap' into text, in my search for authenticity as a writer, and as a writer in educational settings (Chapter Five). This 'confrontation with self' is also discussed from the perspective of the educator and team leader. Chapter Seven explored the value of educational activities which are authentic to one's life processes: in this case, ***teaching to write*** by reflecting on ***self as writer***, and making pedagogic connections between the two. In the same way as the writer might search for a perspective that is authentic to core beliefs and values, so was this an essential strategy in surviving critical incidents - as described in Chapters Ten and Eleven. In terms of the researcher role, this dissertation as a whole has attempted to 'confront self' and place at the heart of each chapter a 'poetic leap' of self into the texts and the reflections that shaped them.

- **The nature of research/information as the stimulus for creative process:** the transformational nature of ***information*** as a grounding for empathy and connection. Conrad described this sudden transformation of information into creative process, as catalyst: "what a student of chemistry would best understand from the analogy of the tiniest little drop of the right kind, precipitating the process of crystallisation in a test tube" (1920:6: cited in Chapter Two). Chapter Two opened the discussion by exploring the ways in which stories read as a child opened, not just fictional worlds, but empathy and awareness of the lived world; and Chapter Three showed how this lived world became a created one, in a circuit from reading to learning to creative process. This 'chain' of learning was also explored as an adult writer, drawing on library research and oral history as catalyst for the generation of a novel and two plays (Chapters Four and Six). Chapters Seven and Eight explored strategies as an educator, for communicating the transformational power of information through *scaffolded creativity:* knowing about language and text construction in order to grow from it. Chapters Nine and Eleven explored the ways in which new information can form a stimulus for change in practising

teachers. Here I have described the power of **delight** as a motivating drive leading to change; and that this delight can arise from contact with ideas and information that offer refreshed understanding of professional experience.

- **Creative process in which constraint and system are catalysts and sources**. Chapters Three and Seven explored the 'chaos' and order' polarities in creative process, variously described as unconscious/automatic writing v. conscious, editing processes (Goldberg 1986), throwing down the clay and shaping it (Elbow 1973), and 'exploratory' v. 'transformational' creativity (Boden 2001). My own reflections in Chapters Three to Six suggested that 'order' and system are rarely linear or sequential, but are closely intertwined. This interweaving of system with freedom has proven valid for me in all four roles explored in this thesis. As writer, it led, for example, to the transforming of language constraints into runic system, described in Chapter Five. As an educator, it led to the notion of *scaffolded creativity*, in which the learner starts with a detailed and dynamic understanding of language as system, and is guided to transform this into their own texts. As a team leader, the essential manager: leader paradox could also be described as the paradox between creativity through constraint, and through chaos; attention to the systemic and detailed, and drive towards long-term change. The tensions between these two and attempts to resolve them through cycles of staff development, are described in Chapter Eleven. As a researcher, I have found the discipline of identifying frameworks, and working within their complex architecture, liberating and empowering. Values and criteria for judgement in the opening chapter have both shaped this dissertation, and emerged from the chaos of lived story in concurrent exchange.

- .**Creative process as connecting the specific and the universal**, moving from a single point to an all-embracing one, as described by the Turkish Nobel prizewinner Pamuk: "when a writer shuts himself up in a room for years on end, with this gesture he suggests a single humanity, a world without a centre." (Pamuk 2006: 17 and cited in Chapter Six). Chapter Four describes the tension between this honouring of the specific, and desire to give it symbolic life, in my role as writer. As a researcher, it has been important to recognize the role of the specific examples I describe, in connecting with larger questions. I invite the 'compassionate leap' of the reader to recognize these stories as part of the larger human story, and deriving from an honest

account of this. It has been my challenge to extract the global and transferable from the detailed and specific, whilst recognizing the 'fallacy of induction' in making too large a claim.

- **Creative process as the embracing of paradox** was suggested in Chapter Eleven, the possibility of holding several truths simultaneously. Several of the creative processes described above, are also parallel truths which are held side by side: as a writer one must balance the specific and the symbolic (as described in Chapter Four). As a teacher one must balance the role of empowering the individual, with the role of preparing the individual for public and accountable success; assessment as the bridge between individual learning and external validation (see Chapters Eight and Nine). As a manager, Chapter Eleven explored (amongst others) the tensions of the different 'belonging' communities, and the paradox of being 'other' whilst campaigning for equity and healing of division within the team.

- **Creative process as 'generative' :** Senge's distinction between 'reactive/survival learning' and 'generative learning' was intended to describe the 'learning organisation' (Senge 1990, 2000), but in Chapter Eleven I adopted it as a framework for my own individual learning as a manager. 'Generative learning' and the journey towards it, involves, in my own interpretation, the creation of principles which can be transferred from context to context, from one medium to another. It is generative learning of this kind which has enabled me to identify the creative processes listed above: these processes have worked across roles and contexts, and have emerged from them.   The management role has involved an appreciation of the tensions between long-term vision and adapting to the immediate and urgent. My own 'generative' strategy was to join part and whole, present and future, colleague and colleague, individual growth and team growth. This same balance between 'reacting to the moment' and 'generating something new' formed part of the action research cycle for teachers, developed in my role as teacher educator and described in Chapter Nine. Here teachers were guided to extract from the detail of local difficulty and complexity, the core of what they valued as good practice, and generative principles for arriving at this.

- **Creative process as capable of development, nurturing and 'scaffolding'.**
This research has illustrated the fact that understanding the 'machinery' of the creative process can help to drive it more energetically forward. As an educator it has been

important for me to anatomise the skills and knowledges I mean by 'creative' in order to frame it for others; as a writer it has been important for me to deconstruct what I have practiced intuitively since childhood, in order to understand what it is that continues to drive and shape me as a writer. In this enterprise I have been able to arrive at an understanding of my own values as a writer, and to recognize a commitment to perpetual self-improvement as a driving principle (Section 3.3).

- **Creative process as *doing something* in the world.**

This dissertation premises that the creative process *does something* in the world because it *makes something happen*: growth in self-esteem, in knowledge of self or other, in curiosity and purpose; improved practice in the classroom, a shift within a team from teachers to teachers-as-researchers, a shift amongst learners from readers to reader:writers.

In 2005 I wrote a 'found poem' about Dartmoor wild flowers in danger of extinction; the poem was published in the New Age journal *Resurgence*, where it was 'found' and read by the friend who had first introduced me to that particular part of Dartmoor. Art *does* something, in forming chains of thought, empathy and connection, and whether tiny or large, these add incrementally to the quantum of positive change.

See Appendix Reading 9 for text of poem.

12.2 Learning about learning: knowledge transformation as deep learning

My examination leads to a theory of learning called 'knowledge transformation', which suggests that deep learning leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt. It explores how educational objectives can lead to deep learning and positive change.

The dissertation has also attempted to demonstrate *knowledge transformation* in practice, and offer evidence for its value as a description of learning. The examples explored in this dissertation, suggest that the catalyst for this transformation is the experience of delight/engagement/wellbeing. These were the essential drivers that effected change. Leonard asks the question:" what is the goal, what is the purpose of education?" His answer is: "the achievement of moments of ecstasy." (ibid 1968: 17) According to Leonard, "the master teacher is one who pursues delight." (ibid 1968: 232) "To follow ecstasy in learning in spite of injustice, suffering, confusion and

disappointment is to move easily toward an education, a society that would free the enormous potential of man." (ibid 1968: 234) This dissertation honours this view and offers the following examples of delight at the heart of learning as transformation:

Knowledge transformation as a writer

As a writer, examples in this dissertation have shown the way lived story and information transform into created story. The child's spontaneous and unconscious 'flow' between these lived and learnt stimuli and their creative reshaping is demonstrated in Chapter Three. Cropley (2001) describes **information** as the first in a ladder of creative maturation. Whilst I suggest that information can indeed be a starting point, the process I am aiming to uncover is more transformatory than Cropley suggests. Whilst his stage of maturation is *verification of experience*, mine is personal, practical or intellectual change. For example: learning the bamboo pipe as a child (described in Chapter Three) involved the transformation of knowledge into the pedagogic music book and my discovery of self as future educator. Concurrent with this, was the transformation of the experience into a transferable musicality, and a lifelong practice playing the violin. In Chapter Four, I describe my first 'learning' about Poland was the experience of 'feeling'/empathy in encountering the memorial wall. For a lifetime I had lived amongst the Polish émigré community without engaging with the specificity of their experience. What triggered a compassion/passion for their story, was exposing myself to a tiny portion of it in my own experience, and being changed by this. The 'change' led to frequent further visits to Poland, writing the oral history of my uncle's story, and the writing of a novel described in Chapter Four.

Knowledge transformation as an educator

As an educator, it emerged that students who transformed linguistic and textual understanding into the most effective new voices of their own, experienced a sense of the *self-worth* and *worth* of the exercise (Chapter Eight). Student teachers evaluated their experience on these creative writing workshops with comments such as: "this workshop is a new window to my teaching"; "(Jane) removed many of our fears and former ideas and replaced them with excitement, imagination and practical ways to bring creative writing and language development to our students"; "she has not only showed me the varieties of creative writing that can be done with our students, she has

also led me to a brand new world where we ourselves can be creative".   (**Please see student evaluations in Appendix Reading 13**).

As a teacher educator, it was possible to trace through the action research cycle, the difference between knowledge that was simply recognised, and knowledge that was *transformed* into change. Teachers who had experienced deep learning through this cycle, also described the fact that they looked differently at their own practice and were able to *do something new* as a result (Chapter Nine). Evaluations from teachers included: "Before I came here, I was sitting in front of my students. Yet now I can streightly stand up facing my students." (sic)

Knowledge transformation as a team leader

Chapter Ten explored my goals as Head of Applied Linguistics, in terms of the wish to effect positive transformation alongside the complexity of daily management. It was of concern to me, that this transformation be experienced as meaningful and grounded for each individual in the team. The team and individual testimonies in Chapter Eleven suggested that transformation had been achieved for at least one sector of the team; those who had contractual stability. The team/individual learning cycles had effected tangible change in their research involvement, empathy for the work of others in the team, engagement in joint enquiries and the wider professional arena, sense of security, status and identity.

My own capacity to set these transformations in motion itself evolved through transformation. Chapters Ten and Eleven explored a cycle of reflections in response to crisis. The chapters aimed to show that the 'learning' from the first crisis offered insights for the second crisis, and led to tangible change in strategy. The negative models described in Chapter Ten were also transformed into positive guidance in my arrival to the role of Head of Applied Linguistics: un-ease was transformed into the knowledge of "what NOT to do", with *self* fully investing in this change, and doing so on behalf of others also.

Knowledge transformation as a researcher

Section 12.1 above described the 'poetic leap' of self into this dissertation: thus, the engagement/delight which has made its completion possible under the following conditions. During the 5-year process of writing this dissertation:

- I changed my job three times.

- I was at risk of redundancy twice

- I moved twice.

- I was 'camping' during weekdays for 3 ½ years on a 60-foot narrowboat.

- The notes, files, books and manuscripts for this dissertation were scattered across three workplaces 180 miles apart, and at no time were in one place

- The longest consecutive period for prioritising this dissertation above work and family, was one 9-day period in May 2007

The dissertation writing has only been sustainable, because the process has run alongside my roles as educator/writer/manager. Change in one sphere has become change in the other. This has given the research process authenticity and impetus. As I recognised the validity of the 'poetic leap of self' into this research, it became possible to work towards more honest and more focused reflection, directly honed and tested within my everyday work and practice. Some of these were retrospective reflections ON action - returning to projects which preceded the writing of this dissertation, such as the writing of my novel, and asking new questions about the process; some were reflections IN action - accounting for my management experience as it evolved, or probing more rigorously my own values as they emerge in the assessment process. Part of my learning has involved a recognition of the connection between retrospective and concurrent learning; and also, the connection between experiencing actions, and acting as an interpreter of the actions. I have both remained deeply within the many projects described here, and hovered above and between them in search of drives, values, new understandings. Learning from practice *became* writing for research, and in this way it has been possible to transform lived practice into researched enquiry.

Music as metaphor for knowledge transformation

 Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as a living theory

Chapter Eleven offered the example of music as a metaphor for knowledge transformation.

> As I find myself analysing the musical relationship between violin and other instruments in the ensemble, I see the metaphor of the creative educator/manager emerging: blending, echoing, directing, introducing new patterns, following, providing continuity.
> (Section 11.8)

I offer here a second example of learning/un-learning/re-learning made tangible through sound.   Here, I am part of a violin and piano ensemble, and we are performing at a public masterclass at Dartington International Music Summer School 2006. This is the first time since my undergraduate student years (when I was also attending music school once a week), that I have performed solo in public.

 See Audio-Visual Files 5. Music/Massenet

The example starts with a performance of our chosen piece, Massenet's *Meditation de Thais*. This first version reveals my own nerves at performing publicly, and a moment where I and the pianist become disconnected. Some of the notes are wobbly and insecure, and I am aware that I am prioritising my own exposure as performer over the music itself. I am also aware that in the intensity of self-preservation, I am not paying full attention to the pianist, the other crucial half of the ensemble. This first performance is followed by conversation with the teacher, a pianist and accompanist in her own right. We talk through the mechanisms of nerves and its impact on musicians and discuss the way musicians can support and maintain contact with one another. I confess to the audience that this is my first solo in public for many years, and I used a strategy discussed earlier by the teacher, to 'build a bubble' in which I could be safe. The disadvantage of the 'bubble' is its disconnection with audience and importantly, with fellow musicians.   We also discussed where and how pauses and 'rubato' took place and how these could work better so the variations in intensity could be clearer. In the second performance, some of this discussion had been internalised. In the act of confessing my nerves, and hearing the audience's supportive laughter, the separating bubble had evaporated and I felt aware of the audience's presence as a communicative energy rather than as a threat. I am also aware of listening more acutely for and with my pianist, and in this, the music becomes more powerful than my own presence inside it. It is possible to **feel** the music instead of **playing** it, and to understand *physically* the 'holding back' and the

building of intensity. Here I am aware of the parallels between this and the points discussed above: of retrospective and concurrent learning intertwined, learning *from* past action, and learning *through* the action itself. I am also aware of the fragility of the balance between *I* at the centre, and *I* in connection with other. Without a continuous fine-tuning of the I : thou interconnection the music literally 'falls apart'. Most crucially, I am aware that the act of living what one has learnt entails risk and exposure. The difference between *learning about performance*, and *performing*, is also the difference between theory and **lived theory**.

12.3 Learning from multiple roles

My journey towards and with this theory draws on my experience of four personae, the creative writer in and outside the academy, and the educator, team leader, and researcher within it; and explores the strategies and issues raised by bringing these roles and intelligences together.

It is as a researcher I have brought together multiple roles and recognised their synergies. Through the process of recounting stories in each role, a number of strategies emerge, as both knowledge base and catalyst for change. I have found myself responding to challenge in the following ways:

- Recording the situation, fully and unequivocally, including the details which appear petty or dull. Never predicting which details hindsight will find useful or interesting.

- Deconstructing the situation, by identifying its parts and components: the people and their relationships, the social/physical/cultural environment and its impact, the cycles of cause and effect.

- Establishing a distance from the first situation, turning it into a metaphor, or a symbol. The people inside it are not only themselves, but they represent others too.

- At the same time, I am establishing multiple relevance. I am seeing that the smallest incident, memory or glimpse, is after all relevant to this situation. It has helped to build up the cycle of cause and effect, or to generate the unique 'patina' of the situation.

- Making the situation travel: where will it go next?   What will happen next? Pushing the situation away from its starting point and on to a new destination, in which everything is changed.

- Visualising the changed situation: where I would like it, ideally, to go, and the stages it will need to pass through in order to get there. In the visualised version, all the ingredients I started with have changed their allignments, even if these are tiny, subtle, and imperceptible.

Further 'crossover' strategies emerged from my examples of music as metaphor at the end of this dissertation. The principles learnt, transformed into sound and transferred into other contexts, include:

- Being capable of perpetual adaptability to constant changes:
- Whilst being adaptable, remaining with one's 'part'
- Being in a state of constant 'hearing': so one is prepared to review goals and their viability, reflect on beliefs and their value in action
- Hearing the parts in relation to the whole:
- Hearing self in relation to other
- Living what has been learnt, and taking risks in order to continue learning

12.4 Clarifying values and resolving paradox

It also explores how values can be clarified in the course of their emergence and formed into living standards of judgment.

In Chapter One I suggested paradoxes or polarities within each of the four roles threaded through this dissertation. In practice, it has been necessary to find a position in response to each of these polarities, and to confront core values which drive each choice. These core values were explained in Section 1.4, as: **wellbeing, empathy, connection, empowerment** and **authenticity.**

Resolving paradox through understanding values
The creative writer

Chapter One suggested the following polarities: writer as *creative commentator deriving inspiration from the world* alongside writer as *dreamer, whose inspiration and outcomes are disconnected with the 'real world'.*

To position myself between these polarities is to make the following core values explicit:

connection: connection between past and present, the specific and the universal, I and Thou/self and other. To connect has also required the capacity to understand connections - what I have identified for myself as **empathy:** travelling outside the ego and entering into the social, cultural, and psychological realities of others. As a writer, my own positioning becomes clear: I write in order to engage with or interpret the real world. I write in order to connect with others. I write in order to travel outside my own ego and empathetically *become* 'they'. My alternative universe IS a reaching out to and inclusion of the world as I see it.

The educator

I identified in Chapter One the following polarities in the educator role: *educator as mentor, guide, facilitator* alongside *educator as assessor, judge, and authority*. My discussions in Chapters Eight and Nine have sought to claim the position: there is no paradox between educator as mentor/facilitator, and educator as assessor. Assessment can and should be a process of learning and facilitation, and it is the educator's responsibility to make it so. In this, I am expressing my core value of **empowerment**: *My role as educator is to provide a rich environment that empowers learners to find and express their own voice*. The assessment instruments I have described work towards forming a bridge between the voice of the learner and external objectives of success: to make this bridge, both the learners are transformed, and the assessment instrument which judges them.

The team leader/manager

Again, Chapter One suggested the following polarity in the manager's role:
one who facilitates and enhances the professional self-esteem and effectiveness of others, one who priorities **where we are going** alongside one *who controls and manages the local, current: one who prioritises* **where we are now**.
My experience as team leader has enabled me to arrive at the following position:

Where we are now needs to serve and lead to *where we are going*. Small and local changes need to serve the larger picture of individual and team growth. In this is included my own learning as team leader. For this to come about, I need to preserve my own **wellbeing** as a human being, and be **authentic** to my own beliefs as an educator.

The educational researcher

Chapter One suggested the following paradox: the educational researcher *places I at the centre of enquiry* alongside the researcher who *places **they** at the centre of enquiry, and seeks objectivity by distancing from self,*

My own position has been explored at several points in this chapter, but can be summarised as follows: the educational researcher places I at the centre in terms of authenticity and confrontation with self: whilst striving at the same time to interpret and connect, and to articulate insights in a way that is meaningful and accountable to others.

12.5 Have I fulfilled my own criteria for success? If so, why is this of significance?

Section 1.7 offered three specific criteria by which I wished to be judged. In returning to these criteria I shall reformulate them as claims to significance.

Has my creative writer/educator/manager role generated actual change?

The dissertation has aimed to show that the interweaving of creative writer/educator/manager roles has generated actual change. Creative writer knowledge has led to teaching activities, resources, assessments, revised curriculum on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Similarly the educator/team leader roles have informed one another such that my team and individuals within it record specific experiences of positive change. Since these processes of change are theorised and have led to generative principles, I offer these to the academy as a contribution to the search for good practice.

In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, do they form a coherent and meaningful picture?

Chapter Twelve
 Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as a living theory

 In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, my hope is that they form a coherent and meaningful picture of transformation through deep learning: and in so doing, contribute to definitions of deep learning. My own position is that "deep learning leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt" and I have attempted to demonstrate this both through my own examples of transformation, and those of learners, teacher students and colleagues within a team.

Does the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerge as embodied, lived, practiced and tested?
In the course of arriving at this theory, have I improved my practice?
I have attempted to reveal *knowledge transformation* as embodied, lived, practiced and tested, by exploring its validity in a wide number of contexts.   I have also arrived at the insight that perpetual self-improvement has been for me an aspect of what it is to be creative. This self-improvement can now be crystallised in the following understanding; that to improve one's practice is to transform experience into something new, and to engage continually in an exploration both of the experience itself and its capacity to transform.

I feel that such a theory is significant because it connects educational strategies and life strategies, and explores the congruity between them. It is also significant because it questions the assertions often made in the name of educational validity, and claims a connection between

- education and deep learning (Bloom 1956)
- education and creativity (Pope 2005)
- education and the capacity for change (Abbs 2003)
- education and life skills (Creative Partnerships 2007)
- education and core beliefs (Rogers 1990, Johnston 2003)

Finally, I believe my study is significant because it offers evidence of the life-changing potential of learning when connected with creativity, or *making something new.*