## Section A The sources of belief

*What are the sources of belief that shape my practice as an educator?*
*How do these form the foundation for my concept of knowledge transformation?*

# Chapter One Introduction: story sources and starting points

## 1.1 What are my concerns in this thesis?

My aim in this thesis is to tell the story/stories of how I arrived at a living theory of creativity which I shall call 'knowledge transformation'. I explore this theory through story, as a methodology that connects both the creative writer and action researcher, and raises questions about self, reflective process and voice that are central to my enquiry. I have chosen action research as the paradigm which offers me most opportunity, because "what is special about action research is that it allows people the flexibility to make up their own story as they go along ---- Each one of us is free to choose the song that we sing and how we sing it" (McNiff with Whitehead and Laidlaw 1992: 7). My song/story derives from four roles as writer, teacher, educational manager and researcher. The specific understandings I am searching for through these stories are:

- What does it mean to be creative across these varied roles?
- How is my own practice improved and enhanced, by understanding these connections?
- What theory emerges as a result of this enquiry and how do I know that this theory is lived, experienced, and meaningful to others as well as myself?

The research is driven by my belief that these roles do indeed powerfully and positively inform one another, even though institutions and educational environments often try to separate them. I arrive at, and offer as my contribution to knowledge, a theory of learning called *knowledge transformation.* This theory poses the idea that learning which is 'educational' and 'creative' leads to change of both the learner and what is learnt. My premise is that 'education' informed by this view of learning, involves the capacity to respond to challenge, self and other: and leads to positive change, spiritual, intellectual, practical or experiential. My belief is that when learning *transforms* knowledge, it extends well beyond the specific context of learning and transfers into other life roles and skills. In this I am informed by my experience of the four roles/personae, and the ways in which my own learning in one role has led to

empowerment and guidance in the others. My enquiry asks: why, how, when and with what potential has this taken place?

The songs/stories, which form the ground of my enquiry, include these:

- The story of being a researcher and making journeys through and with one's own practice
- The story of personal history, and how these inform and offer threads into the present
- The story of storywriting: how *living* story and *created* story interlock
- The story of working and developing as a writer and as an educator in higher education
- The stories of my teaching community – language learners, student teachers, in-service teachers, and members of my teaching team
- Sharing the storywriting process with teachers and students
- The story of critical incidents in my own career as an educator
- The story of writing this dissertation

My claim to originality is that I arrive at a 'living' concept of 'knowledge transformation' through multidimensional reflection; as a teacher who is a learner, as a learner who is a teacher, as a manager who has been one of a subclass, as an employee who has been a manager, as a creative writer who has lived in an imaginative world and as a teacher/manager who has interfaced with institutional, national and international policy and educational change. I am my own informant into different perspectives, and am able through these personae to have dialogue between several positions and arrive at a concept that is tested and lived from several perspectives.

## 1.2 Why am I concerned?

My research question emerged first as the experience of fragmentation and disconnection, "an attempt to recognize and reintegrate as a result of disintegration" (Biesta 2006: 27). This dis-integration was the experience of two energies and capacities, driven apart by the nature of learning within the institutions where I had been a learner and teacher: the capacity to create as a poet, storyteller and musician "not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and (not) judged according to a determining judgement" but rather, as an artist "working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done" (Lyotard 1984: 81) . In contrast, success as learner and teacher required the capacity to conform to and absorb systems and rules, pass exams and follow the scripts of others (McNiff 1992:3). In a sense, this dis-integration arose from two different notions of the nature of learning: learning as the capacity to transform knowledge and make of it 'something new', and learning as the capacity to absorb and synthesise knowledge. My thesis as response, locates itself within current debates that reclaim creativity as an educational goal, central to the curriculum, to the training of teachers, and to a definition of learning. Three voices in recent 'conversation' represent where I too stand, in this debate.

> It is a pity that the notion of 'creativity' in education has to be fought for or reclaimed, as it should be a central feature of teaching and learning. It is the crucial element in each generation's renewal and enhancement of itself. Without it society would roll backwards. Human imagination and spirit are what drove civilisation forward. (Wragg 2005: 2)

> I ask you to consider the inner life of the student who sits, often reluctantly, before you. Your task is to take that particular person into the living field of your discipline and in some way to change him by so doing.
> No transformation, no education! (Abbs 2003: 10)

> Creativity develops the capacity to imagine the world differently We all need an ability not just to cope with change, but also to positively thrive on it and engineer it for ourselves. (Creative Partnerships 2003 - 2007 http://www.creative-partnerships.com.aboutcp)

As an educator over a 25-year career in different educational settings, I have been concerned for the student experience in that 'freedom to change' has become increasingly constrained by the demands of assessment and prescribed curriculum. I have been

concerned that the teacher capacity to 'be themselves' as educators and creators of the learning experience, has been minimised by institutional demands: to meet league tables which in themselves record only what is quantifiable and mainstream, and to match nationally given objectives and benchmarks. Finally, I celebrate the re-emergence of creativity in the rhetoric of education (Buckingham 2003, Buckingham and Jones 2001, CAPE 2004, QCA 2001, Robinson 2006 (NACCE), Creative Partnerships 2007, DES 2004) , but am concerned that its practice be guided by the insights of both creative practitioner and educator, rather than be reduced to further categories for measurement and judgement, separating teachers from their own autonomy and creative power.

The educators I have quoted above echo my own concerns, in the following specific ways. They suggest that the capacity to be 'creative' – or in my sense, to generate positive change – is essential to our progress as a community of fellow human beings. (Wragg 2005). Indeed, creativity

> is essential, not only for science, but for the whole of life. If you get stuck in a mechanical repetitious order, then you will degenerate. That is one of the problems that has grounded every civilisation. (Bohm 1998: 16)

Thus to limit opportunity in educational contexts is a matter of urgent concern. Pope suggests that creativity is a component of the healthy and balanced individual; the capacity to initiate and own change is part of what it is to be 'sane' in a community that increasingly appears to forgo emotional health for other values (Pope 2005). Secondly, for us to be educators, we need to be aware of our responsibility in this debate, and to consider our role in empowering learners to change, so that learning really makes a difference, both to the learner and to the knowledge base itself (Abbs 2003). Thirdly, creative learning goes far beyond specifically educational contexts; it is a capacity to live in the modern world and respond to its challenges and changes (Creative Partnerships 2007).

This dissertation will aim to make its own contribution to the debate, by exploring what *being creative* has meant for me in practice, how it has enhanced my own identity as

writer, educator and manager, and why and how I have been committed to sharing its transformative potential with students, trainee teachers, and my teaching team. As a creative writer I knew there were strategies and skills which had led me towards experiences of excitement and fulfilment which had not been replicated through my educational opportunities. As an educator in further and higher education settings, my efforts to bring these opportunities into classrooms for my learners were marginalised or subversive to the expectations of my role. I strongly believed that the one could and did inform the other, and the opportunity to do so would be, and was, enriching both for myself and my learners.

## 1.3 What is my methodology and why have I chosen it?

In a number of searches early in my career, I attempted to bring these two intelligences together using research methodologies that offered me distance and criticality, but placed my own experience outside the enquiry. All the searches, (MPhil Warburg Institute 1979, MA University of Reading 1986, PhD University of Bath 2007) asked at their heart the same question: what is the nature of creative intelligence and what conditions can make it develop and flower? Yet each approached the question from entirely different perspectives. In 1979 I approached my question as a humanities student using a social science paradigm; in 1986 I approached it again as an applied linguist using an empirical science paradigm. In 2008 the action research paradigm at last liberated me to focus on self as storyteller, rather than on the story of others (McNiff et al 1992: 7).

My first research (MPhil University of London) was a library-based one that gathered together poets' testimonies about their own practice, and from this extrapolated a theory of the balance between individual inspiration and disciplined craft. The dissertation firmly located itself within an epistemology that saw knowledge as a non-negotiable truth awaiting discovery, and was reached by the amassing of information extrinsic to self. .

> It considers how far the poet was emerging in the sixteenth century as an individual freed from enslavement to the disciplines of theology and moral philosophy. His poetic faculties were coming to be equated, not with the mystical or irrational, but with reason and intellectual control.
>
> (Spiro MPhil Warburg Institute 1978: Abstract)

Through publicly validated poets, I sought to explore what 'learning' had meant to them, how they had honed their craft, how they had combined reason and discipline with creative spontaneity. In reality, the study was a search for self legitimised through study of the other, removed in both time, place and gender. Throughout, the poets I studied were male and 'he' was the generic pronoun I used to describe the artist. My goal was "to describe, interpret or explain --without inducing any change" (Bassey 1992: 3), and the desired outcome was to offer the poet's sense of self as further evidence of the Renaissance shift in world view. I wished this contribution to be deemed valid, objectively evidenced, and generalisable to other contemporary writer testimonies.

Several years later, and now with 5 years experience as a teacher in primary, further and higher education, I addressed the issue of creative practice again. This time I approached my question as an Applied Linguist through a Science paradigm, and with a focus on creativity as a stimulus to language development. My project involved recording children between 6 and 7 telling stories, both nursery tales and stories about their friends, pets, and home life and comparing specific linguistic and discourse patterns. This time I had a 'testable hypothesis' that children use linguistic patterns in stereotype story that go beyond their linguistic range in non-story contexts.

> The study explores the influence of the narrative genre on the child's command of language. The hypothesis is that children narrating stereotype nursery tales will display a more adult mastery of reference than in spontaneous narrative. ----the specific features studied are definite articles, pronouns and proper nouns. ---- The view is considered that differences in mastery of linguistic items may be due to the formal features of storytelling, unconsciously acquired by the child.
>
> (Spiro MA University of Reading 1986: Abstract)

This project, compared to the other, came nearer to 'lived' experience; yet still, the requirement to fix, measure and test limited what I wanted to understand, and instead of uncovering the richness of the creative self, diminished it to a set of graphs and pi-charts showing the use of definite articles, pronouns and proper nouns (*given* versus *new* information) inside and outside story contexts.

The dissertations met expected criteria for scholarship and knowledge contribution, since both passed successfully through the Exam Boards; but whether I had really arrived at the answers, or the questions I wished to ask, remained in doubt. Some central engagement was missing, uneasy questions voiced by McNiff remained: "Are we living to fulfil other people's expectations or our own? Is someone else writing the script or are we? Who creates our identities and for what purposes?" (McNiff 2002: 53). Was I really asking my own central question or taking account of my own experience and perceptions? The search for answers to these questions through documentation, texts, data collection and analysis, proved to offer certain insights but to be ultimately unsatisfactory in asking my own overarching question: why is creative practice important and how is this manifested in the role of writer, and the role of educator? In other words, something more than external data needed to be added to the mix: my own core values, the 'slippery' nature of experience and practice, my evolving response to these, and the formulation of my own theory emerging from lived practice.

The action research paradigm offered the possibility of understanding the processes deeply from the ground of my own experience and values, bringing together creative and educational roles explicitly, in a theorised way. The action research model searches in the way I consider truly important: because it is grounded in experience (Eisner 1988; Johnson and Golombek 2005); because it leads to explicit and meaningful change (McNiff, Whitehead and Laidlaw 1992); because it permits the generation of personal theory rather than being moulded by the theory of others; and because it offers the opportunity to bring together personal voice and the voice of the academic community (Atweh, Kemmis and Weeks 1998, Carson and Sumara 1997, Coghlan and Brannick 2000, McNiff 2002, Stringer 2003, Zuber-Skerrit 1996).

In the process my career has moved towards extraordinary new challenges in response to this change in self and self-esteem. In 2002 I was a language teacher and educator working in a Language Centre that was peripheral to the academic life of a University; in 2004 I was promoted to Head of Applied Linguistics, and in 2007, promoted again to

Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator in Education, with a specific remit for developing partnerships between schools and creative practitioners. The question of how to bring together the roles of creative writer, creative educator, manager and researcher, has been profoundly lived and experienced through the five year process of writing this dissertation, and is a testimony to the nature of action research as an agent for change, empowerment and democratisation.

**What action research can claim to do**

This thesis is able to make a number of claims, which are characteristic of the action research paradigm.

It can claim to be an agent of change.

It can claim to be a testimony of lived and living practice.

It can claim to connect theory and practice in a way that is not derivative of others.

It can claim to work from the local and specific, and to derive meaning and implication from these.

It can claim to connect *I* and *we* (McNiff 1992: 56) – how my own practice interfaces with the learning and teaching of others.

It can claim to be trustworthy on its own terms and to offer insights into the specific which the reader will be free to connect with or not. (Bassey 2001)

**What action research cannot claim to do**

It cannot claim to offer final truths or completed stories.

It cannot claim to offer data that is valid in terms of quantity, or objectivity, or watertight inviolability.

It cannot claim to provide insights which can be reliably generalised to other contexts or settings.

It cannot claim to provide watertight explanations of 'they' or 'other'.

It cannot claim that knowledge is fully achievable, or separate from interpretation and researcher response.

Research into creativity as a process, phenomena and skill, has claimed some of this territory. Objective studies have:

- identified different stages of learner progression towards creative independence based on observation of child development (Cropley 2001, Craft 2000, Boden 1990) (social science paradigm)
- identified neurophysical and cognitive activity in the brain of children deemed to be gifted and creative, and measured these comparative to other activity (Geake 2007, 2006, Carruthers 2002) (science paradigm)
- identified the link between rewards and standards of creative productivity amongst 7 – 10 year olds (Birdwhistell 2000) (social science paradigm)
- identified criteria for clines of literariness, based on reader evaluations of text types and their evaluation of its creative qualities (Carter 2006) (arts/humanities paradigm)
- identified the broad range of interpretations of the term 'creative' in sciences, arts and social sciences, based on documentation and texts (Pope 2005) (arts/humanities paradigm)

In contrast, my own thesis does not claim to present data that would be replicable by or generalisable to other writers, readers or educators. To claim this would be an absurdity, since the nature of my data is its specificity. As a creative writer exploring my own process, it is clear that any insights I might arrive at based on experience, are likely to be true only for themselves and generalisable only as far as the reader is prepared to make the compassionate leap. To attempt the 'generalisable' might also be to attempt the bland, the depersonalised and the non-specific, and to dumb down the unique and idiosyncratic. Bassey questions the idea of 'generalisablity' as a notion that limits and deadens the learning that derives from the specific (Bassey 1993). His notion of 'fuzzy generalisability' suggests instead a 'best estimate of trustworthiness' that makes claims simply for a place within the study of the human condition. Ethnography talks of the value of 'thick data' which pays attention to the mundane and ordinary as characteristics of the whole. (Morrison 2007). In my explorations as both researcher and writer, I have found the local and specific, to be the features which have most *compassionate* meaning - to create the capacity for identification, rather than for generalisation, the capacity for

infinite interpretation rather than for objectivity. For example, the tightly delineated character, deeply embedded in time or place, will be more likely to 'make sense' to the reader, and be 'meaningful' in a deep sense, than the bland and broad character that seeks to have global relevance. So rich is this 'story-like' information for the researcher, that the ethnographer Geertz described himself as a "novelist manque" and added "I've often been accused of making anthropology just into literature, but I don't believe I'm doing that. Anthropology is also field research and so on, but writing is central to it" (Olson interview of Geertz 2006: 3). History is more fully understood, not through the broad generalisation, nor 'the telling of one unified story by one-who-knows, but an accumulation of multiple stories, told by people themselves' (McNiff 2002: 3).

**What is my data and how did I arrive at it?**

My data, then, derives from *I*, not *they*. It claims variety and complexity, rather than statistical quantity. It celebrates subjectivity, in that it derives from my own perceptions of key moments in my writing/teaching pathway. It also claims connection between *I* and *we*, in that the voices of readers, students, trainee teachers, colleagues, are included in the journey. It includes:

> autobiographical data such as diaries, childhood poems and stories, and commentaries on critical incidents, which provide evidence of the transformation from 'lived' to 'created' story, from concurrent experience to retrospective reflection. (Chapters 3 - 6, Chapters 10 and 11)
>
> novel, poems and plays, writings melded into educational projects including short stories written in controlled language for language learners, television programmes on interfaith issues for Carlton television, plays written as part of a museum education programme,. (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) (**Appendix Readings Section 1: Creative writer: storymaking and Audio-Visual files 2 and 3**)
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> educational outcomes including teacher resources, assessment cycles, programme development, student evaluations, recorded workshops, and two books for

teachers written and published during the PhD writing process. (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) (**Appendix Readings Section 2: Creative educator: teacher resources and student voices and Audio-Visual files 1 and 5**).

articles published and shared within the academy, on assessment, story, language teaching methodology, teacher narratives and the interlocking of creativity and criticism (Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 11) (**Appendix Readings Section 3: Talking to the academy**)

the testimonies of students, trainee teachers, colleagues and team members (Chapters 7, 8,9 and 11) (**Audio-Visual files 4 and Appendix Readings Section 3)**

In presenting this as data, as the source and resource of understanding, I am claiming a place within the third culture described by Geertz:

> when critics divide the world into real scientists and real (or "unreal," usually) humanists and decide that this gulf is an absolute-the two-cultures notion-I think that all of what I do and a good deal of what other people in the social sciences do just drops through the cracks because it's a *third* culture, a *different* sort of thing. (Olson interview with Geertz 2006: 12).

I present the data in this thesis as an 'ongoing negotiation' (Clifford and Marcus 1986) because I return to history/story several times from different perspectives, with a child and an adult's insight, with a fiction-writer, a researcher and a teacher's voice. The data is 'slippery' and 'soft', what Geertz as novelist-anthropologist calls 'fictitious constructions --- not inviolable unassailable statements of "a scientific truth' (Geertz 2006: 12). Without this capacity for revisiting and reinterpretation, the profound insights that the data has allowed me to find, and the change this has generated, would not have taken place.

## 1.4 What are the core values which inform my practice?

In the sections above, I have suggested the importance of seeing connections between my roles as creative writer, educator, manager and educational researcher. The section that follows affirms the values which connect these roles and which have helped me to navigate the paradoxes between and within them. These values have emerged in the course of interfacing with a career in higher education, and have been honed, tested and made explicit through engagement with its challenges.

**Well being**

1) I have a responsibility to preserve my own well-being, so my actions are fuelled by an energy which is capable of recharging itself, rather than by a negative and draining energy. It is only in this way, that creative responses can continue to be sustained.

   In this, I am aware of notions of wellbeing beginning to emerge in school curriculum (OfSTED 2005, Baylis and Morris 2007, Ecclestone 2007), and of wellbeing as an emerging principle in economics and social policy (ESRC 2005, Deneulin and Townsend 2006).

**Connection**

2) I have a responsibility to derive lessons from all aspects of past experience, whether positive or negative: and to be inclusional in my revisiting of this experience, rather than selecting only what illustrates a theory or fits a paradigm.
3) I strongly believe in the notion of the global citizen who is not defined by nationality or religion, and who does not define others in this way.
4) However, I am aware of the specificity of the individual in time and place, and the specificity of individual experience. Thus whilst we tell the single story of the human condition, we tell a million stories and each are uniquely different and enriching.
5) Whilst being fully present in the moment and able to respond to the detail of what forms the moment, part of this mindfulness is understanding the many threads that lead from past to present and shape where we are now. It is possible to honour our personal and collective history whilst living fully in the present.

**Empathy**

6) I am energised through interaction and empathy with others, and this interaction is a major source of learning. In this, I am inspired by others who recognise the interface of I and other, and in particular, Buber's notion of 'I and thou' (Buber 1998) and Magonet's notion of 'talking to the other' (Magonet 2003) .
7) I empathise with others, by briefly travelling outside my own ego: in other words, by learning not to hear only what I know already, wish to hear, or would be convenient to hear. This is my goal and I am continually learning from others as to whether it is being achieved.
8) I also empathise with others, by seeing my own connection with them, however far they have travelled from my own position. In this, I am inspired by Mandela (1994) whose view of the liberation of South Africa included empathy for his oppressors and the desire for their liberation too.
9) I also empathise with others, by recognising the patterns which they and I are part of historically and socially.
10) It is also my belief that this empathy only makes sense through transformation in the real and material world: and that we fulfil this, in a way that is unique and specific to our abilities, skills and beliefs. In this, I am inspired by examples of empathy manifested through transformational action, as in the notion of 'microlending' developed by the Nobel Prizewinner Mohammed Yunus (Brown 2002).

**Empowerment**.

11) My role as educator is to provide a rich environment that empowers learners to find and express their own voice.
12) My own pursuit is to find the fullest expression of my own voice as it evolves.

**Authenticity**

13) I am only prepared to act through these beliefs, rather than through desire for power, status, recognition, or fashion. I regard my own authenticity as acting always in congruence with these beliefs , and wherever they are compromised or threatened I will seek repair and resolution, however hard-earned these might be.

For me, the qualities of the spirit, and the complexity of values and beliefs through which these are realised, are only truly brought into being when tested in the material world. The place where I stand is most truly tested through interface with the four roles I play in the academic world.

## 1.5 The four personae: inner and outer paradoxes

I represent these as different personae, because at many stages in an academic career they have appeared to be, not merely in conflict with one another, but internally problematic and paradoxical too. Inside these roles, we may be driven by a sense of purpose, self-esteem and idealism: yet outsiders such as non-educators, the consumers of education, and policy-makers, often view these same roles with hostility or contempt. Living with this paradox is part of what every educator will do; but even more so will this be the case, when the educator attempts to bring in to their practice other roles and ideologies which are not traditionally valued or visible within the academy. Johnston (2003) describes the wide discrepancy between English language teachers' sense of their own professional identity, and that of their institutions. In his interviews with English teachers, a key source of stress was the experience of being regarded as a 'commodity' by their institutions, whilst experiencing for themselves a high degree of dedication and professionalism. Munro (1998) describes the paradoxical self-images of women teachers, who value their teaching experience highly whilst feeling they are perceived as unimportant and unskilled.

The descriptions below summarise my own experiences of paradox in the four roles germaine to this thesis:

***the creative writer***

creative commentator deriving inspiration from the world in its complexity and specificity, who highlights, subverts and reinvents systems and whose creative outcomes are socially engaged

alongside

the dreamer, whose inspiration and outcomes are disconnected with the 'real world', absorbed in a fictional universe, an anarchist unprepared to conform to institutions, regulations and constricting protocol

In this I am influenced by the range of questions addressed in the literature about creativity, and summarised by Banerji, Burn and Buckingham (2006) and Pope (2005), and writers' testimonies of their own identities: (Sartre 1964, Pamuk 2006, Conrad 1920, Allende 2007, Updike 2007, Cocteau 1952).

***the educator***

a mentor, guide, facilitator, one who empowers, offers opportunities, gives others voice, opens doorways, changes lives

alongside

an assessor, judge, authoritarian, rule-bound, concerned with outcomes and not with processes, with uniformity and conformity.

In this, I am influenced by Marshall (1999) who describes the different positions of the academic within the institution, from conformity to 'tempered radical', and the educator who chooses to effect change from within.

***the manager***

one who facilitates and enhances the professional self-esteem and effectiveness of others, a team-builder, mentor, facilitator, visionary, problem-solver for self and others, as role-model, guide and critical friend, able to prioritise, support, inspire, think positively, lead and drive forward: one who priorities *where we are going*

alongside

one who controls and manages detail and complexity: local, current, 'on the ground' , one who prioritises *where we are now*

In this I am influenced by the distinction between 'leader' and 'manager' described by Kotter (2001) and Senge (2000). I am also mindful of much research which reinforces

my own experience of alienation as a woman from certain, traditionally 'masculine' management styles. (Thomas 1995, Pagano 1990, Marshall 1984, Tannen 2001).

***the educational researcher***

one who places *I* at the centre of enquiry, records experience concurrent to its evolution and recognises its primacy as a resource for learning and development (Eisner 1998, Whitehead and McNiff 2006)

alongside

one who places *they* at the centre of enquiry, and seeks objectivity by distancing from self, and by attempting interpretation of data which is value-free

Another way in which I may define myself in the academy, is through a series of metaphors and dichotomies or polarities:

- teacher as releaser and midwife (Abbs 2003: 15)
- teacher as co-ordinator, conductor and democrat
- teacher as cultural guardian and initiator into symbolic life
- teaching as positive identity development (Stables 2003)
- teacher as demonstrating wellbeing, or responsibility to self
- teacher as demonstrating empathy, or responsibility to other
- teaching as an ushering in of opportunity
- justice versus caring
- solidarity versus authority
- tolerance and compassion versus zero tolerance of uncollegiality
- flexibility versus decisiveness
- transparency versus discretion
- impartiality versus emotional congruity and engagement
- loyalty to one's employer versus loyalty towards one's peers

(Johnston 2003)

It is in experiencing and attempting to resolve these dichotomies that my own ideology and belief system have been made apparent. I offer these as polarities rather than

paradoxes, in that for me they represent a continuum along which educators need to locate themselves in continuous fine-tuned response to each situation. This does not mean that myself in particular, or the principled educator in general, is simply blown by the winds of each situation. What has determined my own response in each case, is congruence with core beliefs and fully lived theories.

The section below shows how the thesis as a whole tells the story of these core values. It demonstrates how they have been expressed through a career in higher education, and how, through researching their impact on my practice, the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerges.

## 1.6 The journey towards 'knowledge transformation'

**Section A The framework: the sources of belief**

***Connection:*** Section A lays the foundation for this dissertation by deconstructing its central concepts: story, creativity and knowledge transformation. These are explored as concepts clarified through my own practice as a reader, writer and researcher.

**Chapter 1** presents the central aims of the dissertation, and shows how core values, experience and research questions connect with one another.

**Chapter 2** offers a rationale for story as the connecting principle in this dissertation, and explores its meaning as methodology and as resource. It describes the ways in which other voices form the ground and stimulus for my own, and have been 'transformed' into my own knowledge.

**Chapter 3 Weaving stories** explores the meaning of the term 'creative' and arrives at a statement of my own meanings for this term, and a rationale for my use of it through this dissertation. It also shows how lived story became created stories between the ages of 6 to 12, and explores what is revealed about emerging beliefs and creative processes through these early childhood writings.

**Section B I as creative writer**

***Connection and Empathy***: Section B explores the way in which empathy for others can be, and is, a creative resource, an essential component of the fiction-writer's capacity to make story explore and comment on life.

**Chapter 4 Writing as finding a voice** explores the ways in which the process of creative writing, and specifically the writing of my novel, led me away from personal experience and towards a 'voice' that was both more my own, and more 'universal'. In so doing, the process of 'transformation' of experience from lived to created story is further explored. *I empathise with others by travelling outside my own ego, by seeing my connection with others, and by recognising the patterns which they and I are part of historically and socially.*

**Chapter 5 Writing for audience** shares the process of developing stories for language learners, by submitting to the constraints of word lists, structure lists and sentence counts; specifically with reference to 4 volumes of stories written or reissued during the writing of this dissertation. *Empathy only makes sense through transformation in the real and material world.*

**Chapter 6 Writing for performance** considers the development of 6 interfaith television programmes and a 2-hour theatre reading, conceived, researched and presented by me, in which practitioners of different faiths share and compare their attitude to prayer, rest, life rituals and cultural history. *I strongly believe in the notion of the global citizen, while also being aware of the specificity of the individual in time and place.*

**Section C I as creative educator**

***Empowerment:*** Section C explores the ways in which I as educator have seen my role as the facilitator of learners' voices, providing a rich environment for these to flourish, and how this environment has been adaptable, measurable and accountable within the academy.

**Chapter 7 Learning to change** demonstrates the ways in which I have guided learners towards expressing and making public their voices, scaffolding the process of creativity

so this journey is achievable in a second or foreign language and for students who have never before found their voice creatively

**Chapter 8 Making our stories accountable in the academy** explores the way in which the process of 'transformation' can be expressed precisely through educational objectives, and the issues and dilemmas which emerge in assessing and measuring it.

**Chapter 9 Teaching to change** demonstrates the ways in which I have guided teachers to examine and develop their own practice, locating this process within the academy and within its constraints and expectations; specifically with reference to two projects with language teachers.

**Section D I as creative manager**

***Wellbeing and authenticity*** **:** Section D explores the struggle to retain wellbeing and authenticity to these guiding principles, within the pressures and conflicting values of the higher academy. It also explores the process of providing a ground for wellbeing in my own practice, and of managing this for others as Head of Department.

**Chapter 10 Story as crisis** explores the experience of redundancy in the higher academy as critical incident. It reflects on the strategies deployed for preserving self and self-esteem, and using trauma as self-development and a stepping stone for a deeper understanding of positive management.

**Chapter 11 Management as transformation** explores the ways in which my career projectory led eventually to promotion as Head of Applied Linguistics, and the ways in which I have used creative principles in this role to manage conflict and develop a positive and professional team spirit in my academic group.

**Section E Knowledge transformation and the academy**

**Chapter 12 Threading stories together: knowledge transformation as living theory** summarises the ways in which all the examples above connect and demonstrate 'deep learning' , arriving eventually at a notion of *knowledge transformation*, validated by students, colleagues, managers and writers, and being my contribution to current knowledge and to the academy.

## 1.7 By what criteria do I wish to be judged?

In defining the criteria by which I wish to be judged, I am influenced by Furlong and Oancea in their enterprise of 'defin(ing) what good quality is in educational research'. (Furlong and Oancea 2005: 4) . These are the criteria to which I choose to be answerable:

**Methodological and theoretical robustness and rigour**

- **Trustworthiness**: "We must provide reasons why others should trust our findings." (Feldman 2003: 7). Bassey (2001) defines reasons to trust research, in terms of "who may use it – and how useful it may be to them" (2001:1). In the case of this dissertation, my claim to trust is that other educators may recognise aspects of themselves here, and that the insights that have improved my practice may offer insights for their practice too.
- **Contribution to knowledge:** 'research should build on what is known and contribute to it' (Furlong and Oancea 2005: 12). Here I claim to locate my research within current knowledge and debates and to contribute something new to our collective understandings and in full knowledge of these.
- **Explicitness in designing and reporting:** Habermas (1976) emphasises the importance of choosing "a comprehensible expression so that speaker and hearer can understand one another" (Habermas 1976: 2-3). My claim is to make my strategies explicit for my reader so that connections and messages can be heard clearly.
- **Connection between theory and practice:** my claim is to explore the interdependence of theory and practice**,** as **"**complementary phases of the change process:----- theory, being based in practice, (and) transformed by the transformations of practice.' (Winter 1989: Chap. 4)

**Value for use**

- **Specificity and accessibility:** Is my discussion focused, specific and concrete enough to be meaningful to other practitioners?

- **Impact of research:** Have I shown that the research has had an impact on my profession and effected change in some way that has enriched students and other practitioners in my field?

**Capacity building or value for people**

- **Reflection and criticality:** Have I demonstrated the capacity to reflect rigorously and honestly on self and others, and to exercise critical judgement in my observations of self and others? Do I have clear criteria for judgement which I stand by?
- **Receptivity:** Have I been open to the responses and experiences of others and the ways they might impact on my own?
- **Stimulating personal growth:** Have I demonstrated that genuine personal change and development has taken place through this 'living theory', for both myself and others.

In addition to these, I would like to add criteria of my own, specific to the enquiries in this dissertation.

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- Has my creative writer/educator/manager role generated actual change? curriculum change, change in my own workplace, change in the professional community as a whole: and if so, how?
- In threading all the multiple stories of this dissertation together, do they form a coherent and meaningful picture?
- Does the theory of *knowledge transformation* emerge as embodied, lived, practiced and tested?

My task and goal is no less than one of transformation, and it is according to this that I wish to judge and be judged.

## 1.8 Towards a notion of knowledge transformation

The term 'knowledge transformation' is not new in educational literature. Welchmann (2001) uses the term to describe the 'decolonising' of pedagogies for indigenous Oceanic communities, such that they are empowered to write and publish in their own local and native languages. Desforges (2001) uses it in a very different sense, to describe learning strategies which "represent old knowledge as well as acquisition of new knowledge" (Desforges 2001: Abstract). English Language teachers use the term 'knowledge transformation' broadly to describe listening and reading tasks in which the learner 'changes' the information heard or read into a new form: for example, a text into words in a chart, or labels for a diagram.

These uses touch on, but are no more than starting points for the living theory I aim to expound in this dissertation. My 'living theory' places change at the centre. Knowledge transformation reveals itself when the 'knowledge' or skill communicated between educator and learner, is actually transformed by the learner and becomes something new. In the process of making this change, personalising the knowledge and making it into something new, the learner her/himself is also changed. The change may be expressed as an expansion in understanding, in self confidence, in independence, in self discovery, in motivation to do or say something new, in the shape and scope of knowledge itself in the learner's mind and what the learner can then do with this.

Chapter One has explored the questions and the values that are central to this dissertation and that guide its form and shape. It has also suggested the notion of *knowledge transformation* as a living theory emerging from multiple roles. The chapter has also begun to explore the sources of belief and the experiences from which they derive. The chapters that follow will explore these sources in more detail, from the perspective of ***connection.*** Chapter Two explores my reading history, and how the stories and histories of others have helped to shape my own. Chapter Three considers the connection between childhood stories as they are remembered now in adulthood and for the purposes of self-study; and childhood writings which offer a window into the evolution of values and the process of creativity.