

**UNIVERSITY OF BATH
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

A SCHOLARSHIP OF ENQUIRY

How can I account to you for my educative journey through the exploration, meanings and values created in questioning my living “I”, through the process of making explicit and validating my claims to know.

**Masters Dissertation
In
Education**

Je Kan Adler-Collins

March 2000

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Authors Declaration.

The author has not been registered for any other academic award during the period of registration for this study.

The material included in this dissertation has not been submitted wholly or in part for any other academic award.

Programme of advanced study of which this dissertation is part has consisted of the following modules:

Where material has been previously submitted as part of an assessment within these modules, it is identified.

Reverend Honourable Je Kan Adler-Collins

March 2000

Abstract.

This dissertation is a self-reflective action research enquiry where I examine forms of my knowing and my claims to know, through the methodology of a critical enquiry to my reflective story.

My story represents a journey of several inter-woven strands of my "I", those of soldier, nurse, Buddhist priest, teacher and researcher. This journey is held up to critical examination and reflection over a 5 year period of completing a Masters Degree in Education.

I have chosen the medium of story to make explicit my values to the reader and show how traumatic life events can be transcended, re-examined and turned to the positive through engaging with finding the values of my "I", in terms of creating my living educational theory.

I engage with the educational issues of the day, focusing around research methodology, claims to know, representing forms of knowledge and scholarship, its validation and the tensions these issues bring into my research and practice. As part of the process I struggle with finding a form of knowledge, which allows me to hold my fundamental values while seeking academic accreditation.

My story weaves a path of learning as I move into and out of phases of confusion and tension, towards a new understanding, changing and modifying my understanding of my "I" as a result of the learning and insights achieved.

The telling of this story is set within the changing shape and form of education policy and politics within academia, as it responds to the challenges presented by the new forms of knowledge represented by the evolving forms of new technology.

Contents

1.0 Introduction. Setting the scene and framing the enquiry stance.
Page 7.

2.0 Making explicit my value base.
Page 21.

3.0 Defining the aspects of self, challenging the facts or creating illusion
Page 52.

4.0 Engaging with concepts of knowledge.
Page 64.

Page 79.

Annex. Picture

Foreword.

I wish to share my journey, not from a position of expert or of a gateholder of knowledge, but as one human being sharing with others. Communicating through a series of events and experiences which have allowed me to progress from an angry, wounded individual, to one that holds a secure living truth that good does transcend evil. I am thinking of my journey from warrior to priest. I will try to communicate my living truth to you, as I travel my journey towards a completion of a cycle through transcending the shadow of pain and abuse through the gift of love.

1.0. Introduction. Setting the scene and framing the enquiry stance.

In search of an enquiry stance? Planning the dissertation to facilitate the response.

In my penultimate dissertation of my taught Masters in Education, the Faceting of the Diamond of Self (Adler-Collins 2000), I drew upon Boyer's (1992) distinctions between forms of scholarship.

These were:

The scholarship *of discovery*

The scholarship *of integration*

The scholarship *of application*

The scholarship *of teaching*

I agreed with this model as stated by Boyer, but feel that he is describing a process which can be transcended. This dissertation is a description and explanation of my process, putting forward the claim that there could be a fifth facet. By this I mean that in engaging with the four forms of scholarship and in transcending them by the integration of each strand into the practice of my own learning, I claim that this transition creates my *scholarship of educational enquiry*, in which the sum of my learning is greater than the whole, thus creating a fifth form of scholarship.

McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996 p.10) state that the aim of all research is that of advancing knowledge. In my making the above claim I understand and accept that the public arena, academia and my peers will hold up my claim to knowledge to validation and rigour.

In this dissertation I will engage with many issues which are fundamentally important to me as a teacher, and will underpin my research and practice, as I reflect on and hold in tension the question asked by Whitehead (1989). *How do I improve my practice?* These tensions are both internal and external, the internal being my engagement with my learning and values, the external being my engagement with the academy, the medical profession, their validation and ideas of knowledge.

As I evolve this dissertation in the form of my educative journey through a taught Masters' programme in education over a time span of five years, I place the journey both of my self and the reader against the backdrop of radical changes and tensions that are present in education today. These changes are challenges represented by the advent of new forms of representing knowledge such as the Internet, DVD, Digital technology, CDs etc.

These events create tensions both within the Academy and in the work place. Many of these tensions are rooted in the fear of change as a new form of society evolves in to the 21st Century. These issues are highlighted in current texts, for example, Gage (1989), Schon (1995), Donmoyer (1996) and Anderson and Herr (1999).

Many of these tensions are external in nature but there is a very real internal tension within Academia as it struggles to engage and adapt, or not, as the case

may be. The politics and power issues of education cannot be ignored by the modern day researcher as they have a direct bearing on the practitioner. All are touched by these issues and I believe that our participation in these issues and debates has never been more important as the very shape of education and knowledge is changing.

These changes are having a direct impact on education, not only on important questions on what education is or should be, but even the experience of education is changing in relationship to how or what we study. I feel that studying and/or teaching under these changes has the potential to destabilise as there appears to be a flux in the continuity of things as old and new are placed in confrontation.

I hope to convey the feelings of anticipation and excitement that I am feeling as both a teacher and a student living these changes. My rites of passage to offer an engagement with these issues being that I am who I am through the authority of my own being. These issues have a direct bearing on me, my understanding of my "I," my practice and my students.

MacIntyre (1990) refers to educational research in the west today having never been so subjected to such a public cry to change as it is now. The tensions and conflicts which preceded that change are in ample evidence in our journals and papers as new forms of expressing our knowledge come into serious contention with the University System. (See references on page 7). The gateholders are now being placed in a position where they are being called to make explicit their values as represented by time established buildings holding guardianship to the accreditation of knowledge.

The Internet, as a resource tool and source of information, with its ease of accessibility to scholars who have their own web-sites and homepages, make the exchange of information, knowledge and ideas so exciting, dynamic and accessible. For me education has come alive; it creates and recreates itself twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year. Often questions and responses can evolve and be answered in real time via chat rooms, discussion groups and via e-mail. There exists to the researcher of today, I believe, the most powerful research engines that mankind has ever had, enabling as never before unparalleled access to information.

Such access and generation of knowledge, ideas and concepts in themselves generate problems. These vital paradigm debates are going on in many areas of research affecting all manner of issues. These debates focus in the asking of fundamental questions of the nature; what is knowledge? How do we approach, engage, define and validate scholarship?

Setting the Scene

“ We are still novices in the art of thinking. Great discoveries in ourselves and in our cosmos at large will depend on the invention of new forms of thinking. You are what you think”

Henrick Skolimowsky (1994: p169)

In order to give the reader and myself a focus, it is necessary for me at this early stage to try and place a frame work around the dissertation. I need to make some sort of order out of the many strands and thoughts which are in my mind.

I shall examine and engage with the issues of Validity, Knowledge and Scholarship by interrogation of my texts submitted during the six taught Modules

of my Masters' programme. I shall show the synthesis and integration of the insights of my educative journey gained over a five year period and by completing this process will provide the evidence to support my claim that there exists a fifth form of scholarship, that of a scholarship of enquiry.

My submitted and graded texts consist of:

Action Research 1, Warrior to Priest, a Journey of Transition 1995

Educational Technology and Development 1. 1997

Educational Enquiry, Collaborative Enquiry 1997

Educational Enquiry, Into and out of My Abyss 1999

Educational Enquiry, The Faceting of the Diamond of Self 2000

Methods of Educational Enquiry. 2000.

At this point, I have several tensions within me and I can identify with the statement by McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996), that a:

"Living contradiction ...is to feel the discomfort of knowing that we are not acting in accordance with our values and beliefs". p.48.

This statement to my understanding suggests a degree of tension which needs to be resolved. Ghaye and Ghaye (1999) in their dissertation Teaching and Learning through Critical Reflective Practice state:

"That Living Educational Theory coheres around notions:

- 1 that teaching is a value laden activity
- 2 of the living 'I'
- 3 of the self existing as a living contradiction."

That I am a living contradiction seems like a good place to start on the focusing process. I am a Nurse, a Teacher and a Leader of a Buddhist Nursing Order.

In my nursing I am faced with issues of loving compassionate caring, against medical models of outcomes and interventions, costs of care with the scientific approach, conflicting with humanistic approaches to caring and the delivery of care models.

In my nurse teaching, I am faced with professional academic standards in terms of learning outcomes, training objectives and competencies of practice, the constant dilemma of balancing knowledge with caring. Nurse education is firmly placed in the domain of the University Academic Arena and profound contradictions exist between the tensions of education and delivery of care in terms of practice which are in a constant state of flux.

In my role as a Buddhist priest and religious leader, I am mindful of the transparency of existence. I question our role as human beings in a life affirming way and I question the tensions that exist between religious teachings and faith. I also question our methods of teaching, learning, our citizenship, and politics and of our social structures and systems relating to all aspects of our existence and community.

Ghaye and Ghaye (1999 p 51) write:

“ It is a too simplistic view to think that practice moves smoothly and unproblematically from values being negated in practice to a position where

they do live them out, moving forward and developing our practice may involve some kind of creative synthesis of previous contradictions”

I recognise that I am a product of my own educative journey, one in which reflective practice and researching my own understanding of my “I” are fundamental aspects of my own being. I struggle with trying to see the separate areas of me, the nurse, the teacher, the reflective practitioner and researcher as separate items or areas. For me they are all part of my whole understanding and existence, in fact they form my holistic concept of myself which is constantly evolving, as I seek understanding of **MY** “I” in my living educational theory.

There is a process to research. Stenhouse (1975) states that research was “a systematic enquiry made public.” Bassey (1995) distinguishes three categories of research:

Theoretical Research.

Theoretical researchers try to describe, interpret and explain events without making any judgements about them.

Evaluative Research.

Evaluative researchers describe, interpret and explain events so that they and others can make evaluative judgements about them.

Action Research.

Action researchers are intent on describing, interpreting and explaining events while they seek to change them for the better. According to McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996 p.13) the action research approach or the action enquiry is extended from Bassey (1995) Categories by inclusion of the following points:-

Systematic enquiry made public

Informed, committed, intentional action

Worthwhile purpose

In Buddhist teachings, it is as natural as breathing to reflect on the meaning of “I” as a form of enquiry to spiritual growth and understanding. The action research approach based on the “I” in this case relating to education, allows me to ask within a professional context, issues for which I am committed to finding a solution. McNiff et al., (1992) writes:

“Many writers add the adjective ‘educational’ before action research or enquiry to emphasise the point that the research/enquiry aims to bring about an improved situation through a careful evaluation of action. It should not be used as a manipulative device but as an educational means of bringing about good social order for all concerned.”

The approach that I will use in my dissertation will be that of an Action Researcher.

My reasoning for this approach, declaring my position

“All forms of research lead to knowledge, all forms of research provide evidence to support this knowledge, all forms of research make explicit process of enquiry through which knowledge emerges. All forms of research link new knowledge with existing knowledge. Action research differs because it requires action as an integral part of the research process itself; **it is focussed by the researcher’s professional values** rather than the methodological considerations. It is necessary insider research in the sense of practitioners researching their own professional actions.” McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996 p14)

In this dissertation I shall use the didactic process of self-reflection as described by Barrie Jones (1989:47-62) and McCarthy (1994:49). I use this as a means of asking and answering questions to myself around the core or focus of my enquiry. I refer and engage with text to support or clarify my question or even in the construction of another problem and or question.

As I engage with myself, my text and the text of others, my understanding of the format of the research evolves and in this process evolves my planning. This reflective process is in no shape or form a clear cut logical progress; it will touch embodied knowledge and intuition and generate new knowledge in the form of learning and understanding. By its very nature, the growth of knowledge can be confusing.

I will show process of finding the questions and formulating suitable planning strategies means that I accept, reject, plan and change my ideas and approach to the focus of my claim. However, if I were to produce a flow diagram of aims, objectives, actions, assessment, evaluation and reflection, it may give the impression that research is neat and logical.

One of the problems with research is establishing the discipline in the limiting the number of strands to a manageable size. In the writing up process, of reporting how theory was evolved in the test of practice, these nice neat “processes” are often turned on their head. A process aptly described by Griffiths (1990: 43).

There are however more inherent problems with doing an educational research enquiry under today’s agendas in education. When I first started engaging in research, it seemed a simple process of engaging and learning all the different approaches and methodologies associated with research. Selecting an appropriate format for my research within the constraints of the criterion for which

I was writing, e.g. FAETC Stage 1& 2, Cert. Ed, PGCE and now Masters.

However in this process of learning taught modules, I have been presented with information in a certain way and have been expected to reproduce that information in a certain style or not pass the assignment.

In the Masters' programme extensive reading is needed, not just engaging with the accepted text books but by engaging with up-to-date articles and publications, internet sites which are rich in the fundamental cutting edge issues of problems that teachers experience. There emerges a very different picture. Suddenly everything stops being so clear cut as presented in the neat taught modules and the student researcher has moved away from this imagery into the real world of educational research. It seems to have presented itself to me as a minefield of conflicting polarities pertaining to theories, methodology, the meaning of knowledge etc. often being represented in a quite aggressive language and scathing denunciation of the other's position, resulting in disagreement and disharmony.

Within educational circles this is known as the paradigm wars described by Gage (1989), Schon (1995) stated:-

“ Introduction of the new scholarship into institutions of higher education means becoming involved in an epistemological battle. It is a battle of snails, proceeding so slowly that you have to look very carefully in order to see it going on. But it happens none the less ”

Donmoyer (1996) writes:

“The fact that ours is a field characterised by paradigm proliferation and consequently, the sort of field in which there is little consensus about what research and scholarship are and what research reporting and scholarly discourse should look like”

Anderson and Herr (1999) investigate this issue in detail. All these issues do not fill me, the student, with confidence in the very system through which I have passed. Forms of knowledge, which were taught to me as facts, now turn out to be a positional stance, based on the viewpoint of the accrediting tutor and establishment. I call into question the validity and correctness of this process not only from a position of a student who funded his study by working part time and nights, but as a professional who questions the morality of this system. I am deeply conscious that I had a choice to enter this system and I honour the process of growth which has allowed me to even engage with these issues. I do however, also acknowledge that I am angry and frustrated, the system on the surface has encouraged me to think but now seems to control how I represent that thinking.

I gain some comfort from Bernstein (1993) entreating us not to thoughtlessly dismiss “what the other is saying as incoherent nonsense” (p. 66) To my understanding, he is defending the right of new forms of knowledge and representation to at least find a level field in relationship to their validation by academia.

I question myself at this point: does academia present a fair and impartial equal playing field for all forms of knowledge to stand with equal weighting in terms of judgement of scholarship and hence legitimacy?

Engaging with the texts

In the text of education today, the student is presented with a bewildering array of theories, all seeming to be in a state of flux. The debate which surrounds the questions of ***What is knowledge?, What is research? What is Scholarship?*** To name but a few issues, these, to me are fundamental questions, all of which

are hotly and passionately contested within the educational literatures I have already mentioned.

With the growth of the internet, traditional "Gateholders" of knowledge are placed in a position of defending and reinforcing their own forms of scholarship. Being a student who has been taught in these times of change I enjoy the vibrant excitement of old forms of knowing and knowledge being challenged. However, I am uneasy that in my embracing and engaging with these new frontiers and concepts there is growing within me a feeling or tension that a lot of the taught systems of education are being shown as a form of lottery, run by the "Gateholder" as to who and what is considered Scholarly.

The standard institutions of academia and the way they respond to forms of knowing that appear to threaten their legitimacy, is highlighted in a recent article by Anderson and Herr (1999). But there is little research that I can find which addresses the fears of a student engaging with these new concepts and issues but being constricted by criterion and attitudes that could, and perhaps should, be called into question.

I, as such a student, feel uneasy and sometimes isolated in my studies.

Why?

I am encouraged to learn and to question, to embrace new understandings and then I must restrict, I would say be controlled in the means and methods of my representation of my knowing. Eisner (1993) describes similar tensions in the conflict between meaning and forms of representation.

Perhaps it could be argued that the established accreditors of knowledge are falling far behind in their means to assess new forms of representation. Such as

multi media accounts represented in Film, Video, CD ROM, Internet and portfolio evidence of learning.

Bernstein, (1993,pp.65-66) reminds us:-

“ listen carefully, to use...linguistic, emotional, and cognitive imagination to grasp what is being said in “alien” traditions...[without] either facilely assimilating what others say to our own categories and language....or simply dismissing ... [it] as incoherent nonsense”

Donmoyer (1996, pp. 21), highlights this problem in another area of tension, the area of reviewing

“today there is as much variation among qualitative researchers as there is between qualitatively and quantitatively orientated scholars”

Does Academia actually encourage, nurture and support my process of learning?

The development of educational enquiry and what constitutes a “Legitimate” enquiry is not always clear. An enquiry can encompass multiple dynamics, multiple and partly over-lapping histories which are in constant motion. Even the criterion by which the academic institution applies its forms of legitimacy has to be questioned.

Apple M (1997) highlights this with his statement,

“Academic boundaries, themselves culturally produced and are often results of complex policies of policing actions by those who have the power to police and the power to enforce them”

As I embrace with the above issues, albeit in a slightly confused state, I need to engage further and assimilate some of the issues involved as to what even constitutes an educational enquiry

Through my personal learning, interaction and involvement with the myriads of often conflicting texts, questions, concerns have arisen of the many issues that engage me. Two come to the forefront of my mind which focus me into areas of personal concern with a direct bearing on my practice, both in the present and more importantly, the future. I now have the following concerns which have arisen from this introduction

How then do my beliefs, intrinsic and fundamental to the very fabric of who I am, stand up to the validation process of academia?

Who and how will my beliefs be validated and judged scholarly?

Can I make explicit my claims to care and to know in my practice and if I make them explicit, will they be then deemed scholarly?

2.0 Who am I? Making explicit my values and the birth of my research process.

I have highlighted the issues current to my concerns of my practice and that of education of as a whole. placing my focus and the reader in the now. I now wish to share some of my understanding of Who I am, my journey and the filters which have had an influencing effect on my development. Where appropriate I will insert text from my papers in support of a statement or question.

'Education is a social process ... Education is growth ... Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself.' John Dewey

I am thinking at this stage of my learning, my experiences as a soldier, my breakdown, my academic reading, my teaching as a Nurse in a School of Complementary Medical Studies and my loving relationships in my journey towards my ordination as a Buddhist Priest in Japan in December 1995.

My narrative can be seen as a claim to know my educational development and I am thus concerned with the issue of validity in legitimising a claim to knowledge. The two issues of representation and legitimisation are taken by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, pp.10-11) to be at the heart of the crisis of understanding the nature of qualitative and action research approaches to research.

To enable you to place my life and work in its historical, social and personal context I should say that my journey from warrior to priest has been profoundly influenced by various experiences. These are documented more fully as part of my journey in the autobiography of my learning, *Warrior to Priest* (Adler-Collins 1995) which was made into a BBC Documentary. (Pommeroy J. 1998,) *A Day*

That Changed my Life.

In this dissertation, which is being written under the criterion of a Masters Degree in Education, I have to acknowledge the tensions that I am feeling. I have felt constrained by the format and medium that I have had to use to be accepted by the academy. I must use an appropriate form for representing my learning, demonstrate my engagement with the relevant literature and justify my standards of judgement.

I have decided to represent my educational development as a critical reflective story. I think this is consistent with the ideas of Lomax and Parker (1995, pp301-304.) on accounting for ourselves in the problematic of representing action research.

“In trying to capture of the essence of what we are doing, there is a sense in which we could destroy the thing which uniquely characterises the kind of work..”...

“Story is another way of representing action research without constraining it within the traditional prepositional form there is no necessary logic of connectedness in story”....

Carter says that a story:

“ is a theory of something, what we tell and how we tell it is a revelation of what we believe.... (stories are) products of a fundamentally interpretative process that is shaped by the moralistic impulses of the author and by narrative forces or requirement.” (Carter, 1993, p.9)

To help the reader engage with the concept of who I am , I present my story as an autobiography of my own learning and extracted from this autobiography, in the journey below, those experiences from which I learnt something of

fundamental significance for my life and work.

I must now highlight a fundamental tension that was in me which caused me, at one point, to even consider giving up this process of achieving a higher degree.

My tensions exist around what I had experienced in my esoteric and spiritual training in my priesthood. The process I was seeing in my clinic where I worked with terminal patients and those who were manifesting “Mental Dis-ease”. Led me to ask myself how I could find a suitable way to make safe this knowledge to my reader at the same time seeking to achieve validation for this process through the academy.

In my work as a Nursing Priest, I observed that **recordable and repeatable** progress was being made in terms of their own healing by patients undergoing treatment. A process which completely confirmed to me the possibility of another approach to the treatment of disease, illness and the teaching of healthcare professionals. I evidenced these processes by the use of case studies, video, and interviews so that this data could be revisited and analysed in future research when the understanding becomes available.

My practice and approaches to healing were a direct result of my experiences and teaching.

The tensions I felt were, that there would be a problem of my making public the experiences and teachings I received, I refer mainly to a 100 day fast, which I completed in Japan in 1998. I was the first person to survive this and complete the training in thirty-seven years. It radically changed my life from the viewpoint of how I see my world as a human being and what was my role in this world.

I was torn between what I understood to be my knowing from the teachings of the fast, both on a practical level of my experiential doing (by this I mean I did the fast), and the spiritual aspects of the fast, its visions and teachings which could be open to ridicule if made public and my sincere belief that this experience and knowledge had been given to share with others.

How could I do this? I felt the responsibility of duty which faith placed on me lying like a heavy burden. In all that I had learned so far in the Masters Programme, I had yet to find the key to open the way of presenting my experiences in such a way that they could be accessed by others, without the religious overtones or incredulity that often accompanies these teachings.

During a recorded video tutorial session with my supervisor at Bath University where I was presenting the development of this dissertation, we discussed at length these tensions and I was encouraged to engage with the work of Carlos Castaneda.

I had found my key. Here was another individual exploring issues so close to my own. What I now needed to do was integrate these concepts into my text being forever mindful that I bring my reader with me in a safe and gentle manner. I can not express the feelings of joy which have arisen in me as I now move forward, I am excited , enthused and deeply humbled.

In this dissertation you will see many different aspects of my “I” being present, reshaped, examined and moved on. Allender (1991) address the issues of Multiple realities and refers to the work of Schutz (1945) and Berger (1970)) who considered that Multiple realities:

“were regarded as the source of perceptual rather than the differences in daily human experience”. Allender states that this experience is the heart of phenomenological starting point”. He continues “ another interpretation is necessary” p204.

Baron (1983), according to Allender (1991 p204) engages with the work of Castaneda's (1971) book, *A Separate Reality*, by showing how Castaneda's ideas about the strange world in which he lives with his teacher Don Juan, can make ordinary life experiences more understandable.

Castaneda in his works, *The teachings of Don Juan* (1968), *A Separate Reality* (1971), *The Power of Silence* (1987), *The Active Side of Infinity* (1998), *Magical Passes* (1998), describes the existence of phenomena that are closer to science fiction than documentary in appearance.

Baron (1983), by suspending judgement on their truthfulness, uses Castaneda's texts as a model for radically changing basic assumptions about every day life. The result he envisages, is that some of our everyday experience can be lived in a world we have not previously known to exist.

At this point, I must express the feelings of wonder and joy that are filling me, a great peace is once again in my heart for I have achieved a fundamental realisation which I will share,

In doing my fast, I placed my life at risk and I have suffered damage to my physical body that still may be the cause of my death. I held as a solid conviction a sense of the rightness of my truth in sense of I KNOW.

In holding this attachment to what I felt I knew, I was blinded through my own ego, pain, suffering and desire for this knowledge. I now understand and believe, that it is not important what I know or claim to know, by removing my claim to know the truth, I can release the experience to be examined for its teaching which is contained within the experience and the pictures I painted during my engagement with those experiences. The story of the journey becomes universal and accessible to all who wish to examine it, free from

attachments, agenda and claims of knowing. The journey becomes safe.

In the telling of my story, I am primarily thinking of those human qualities in loving relationships and love for oneself which enabled me to transcend painful experiences of abuse:

“Through a series of domestic situations I was placed into care and as a result was subjected to institutionalised abuse in the form of what I now know to be sexual abuse as the unwilling victim of a paedophile ring. (Annex B, Autobiography, pages 39 - 42). The patterning of this experience coloured my perception of women and love and over the ensuing years caused me to be dysfunctional as a giver and receiver of love; so I had therefore identified a very active, negative filter.” Warrior to Priest, p.7

“My school years were full of violence, abuse and rejection, of anger and humiliation; as time after time I was subjected to situation after situation which was part, I believe, of my learning process. In joining the Army, I had to my mind, found a new home where I had good clothes, good food, and money in my pocket: in reality I had exchanged one institution and form of abuse to another institution and in some ways, a different form of abuse.” Warrior to Priest, p.7

The violation of my integrity:

“These were empty times, these were strange times and for most of the time I felt frightened. I was in a children's home, my brother at that time, was not with me; my sister being the youngest and a girl was fostered out because people like young baby girls. They're not that keen on three year old boys. I will try to describe the home. Certain parts of it I recollect with an intensity that burns down to my soul. These places are the coal bunker, the locker room and the dark cupboards, for these are the places in which I was locked when I didn't conform

or I'd done something wrong, or at that stage because I was a Catholic I wasn't the same as the other boys and because my Mother had committed the original sin. I, the product of that sin, was to be punished." Warrior to priest, p.17

"There cried out in me at those times, anguish that I can hardly put into words. I found the only safety was inside, inside was warm, nobody could touch me inside; inside was safe. Inside was knowingness" Warrior to priest, p 17

and mental breakdown:

"I went into catatonic shock and I remember nothing but darkness. It was like someone had turned a switch off inside my head and the fragmented reality of my truth could no longer hold me in any form of framework and I ceased to be.

"IT was happy, IT was content, IT was darkness, soft silky, warm but total. IT stirred with a primeval concept that something was interfering with the nothingness, IT was aware that peripheral to its existence there was a bright light. This light disturbed ITs silence. The light was invading ITs darkness. IT felt fear and under no circumstances would IT look at the light. Then suddenly the light became central and the universe of darkness became flooded with the stars and light and colour flashing through the vortexes of time, space and dimension and I woke up.

I awoke with total awareness, what happened? Where was I? Had I been in an accident? My body felt as though it belonged to somebody else and as I slowly orientated myself to my reality I was surrounded by mad people. There were people talking and screaming, banging walls, old ladies muttering, where was I? In hell? No... I had awoken from my catatonic state in a psychiatric hospital. The shock of the realisation of where I was, was like a bolt of electricity, my nervous system was out of synch with my mind. My body wouldn't do as my brain instructed. Every person I looked at was surrounded by beautiful colours and the

vortex of rainbows would flash in and out of their bodies. I heard voices, music and could see translucent individuals of great beauty and great compassion. I felt that I had gone totally off my rocker!" Warrior to Priest p.p 45-46

In presenting my story I also want to show that I have integrated insights from the literature on action research into my account in a way which contributed to my learning.

I am hoping that my use of critical reflective story and the key to understanding it as referred to by Baron, enables me to show how my powers of synthesis enable me to retain a sense of my own integrity and wholeness as a human being. Whilst at the same time acknowledging the value of being able to analyse my experience and draw insights from a variety of academic sources.

I am a little unsure of how to justify the value of love and loving relationships as a standard of judgement in my claims to know my own educational development. The English language has only one descriptor for Love, however I feel I can bear witness to the power of love in my own learning as an important quality in helping me to transcend the painful experiences below. I can also use a cultural form of justification where there are many examples from religious (Skolimowski 1994) and humanistic texts (Fromm 1994) which acknowledge the value of love in improving the quality of human existence. Here then is my account of my own learning.

My Journey.

In my journey I have transcended some of the darkest issues of humanity that we, as citizens, can experience directly or more vicariously through trials such as that of Rosemary West. This journey is my journey and my truth, where I have had to seek understanding and where, at times, the concepts and filters of my reality would allow me no such understanding. This resulted in fragmentation of my mind and belief systems. I should perhaps say at this point how I am using

'truth' in my story:

My meaning of ***Living Truth***'

In a special issue of the Irish educational journal, Oideas, Andrew Burke (1992) analyses the knowledge base of teaching and has this to say about 'Living Truth':

Existentialists such as Gabriel Marcel (cf. Keen, 1966) distinguish between "spectator" truth and "living" truth. The former is generated by disciplines (e.g., experimental science, psychology, sociology) which rationalise reality and impose on it a framework which helps them to understand it but at the expense of oversimplifying it. Such general explanations can be achieved only by standing back from and "spectating" the human condition from a distance, as it were, and by concentrating on generalities and ignoring particularities which do not fit the picture. Whilst such a process is very valuable, it is also very limited because it is one step removed from reality. The "living" "authentic" truth of a situation can be fully understood only from within the situation though the picture that emerges will never be as clear-cut as that provided by "spectator" truth.

As I referred to in my foreword I wish to share my journey, not from a position of expert or of a gateholder of knowledge, but as one human being sharing with others. Communicating through a series of events and experiences which have allowed me to progress from an angry, wounded individual, to one that holds a secure living truth that good does transcend evil. I am thinking of my journey from warrior to priest. I will try to communicate my living truth to you, as I travel my journey towards a completion of a cycle through transcending the shadow of pain and abuse through the gift of love.

The warrior in me no longer feels the tiredness of combat and conflict and feels it is a safe time to sheath the sword of anger. For after the battle has been won on one level another challenge commences but this time the weapons used will be

the sword of understanding, the shield will be compassion and the cause will be love. As I become ready re make my vows to Buddha and enter another 100 day fast , I do so knowing that mankind is good and that while there is hope, love, generosity of spirit mankind will transcend to the higher levels of living and unite the spiritual in the practical world of living. For I believe that I do indeed create the world in which I live. I can be as rich or as poor as my heart allows. Heaven and Hell are attitudes of my mind which I inflict upon myself and project upon others.

I have mentioned a completion of a cycle of learning. This cycle of learning did not evolve overnight but slowly grew from a lifetime of experiences, some good, some not so good, which I have documented in the autobiography of my learning. I experience abuse in several forms from the position of victim, survivor through to teacher. Therefore in order to understand this cycle I wish to use the mediums of reflection and research to find what the values actually are that I hold as public truths. In order to do this I wish to paint a picture in the form of a story whereby engaging with the processes of action research and reflection, I can explore these concepts and by so doing, identify the areas of learning which have occurred along the path. In seeking the definition to my educative research, I needed to ask myself, "How do I understand myself as a spiritual being?"

This concern is a constant element within the very fabric of my being as I moved from warrior to priest. For through reflection, I have been able to use the frameworks of others and in particular the ideas of Skolimowski (1992,1993,1994) as a springboard to my own understanding of my spiritual growth.

I believe in my truth that I have explored through my own experiences of life and the circumstances that I have faced, a holistic approach to the learning process. A process by which an individual, who is going through, or has experienced, fundamental changes in their life to the point of fragmentation and beyond. Can

actually heal themselves back into a new whole.

I claim originality in my concept through my own authority of being, for my spirituality, truth and the very cosmology that I live by, are a direct result of my own experience. Through this process, by critical reflection, I seek to identify key aspects and areas of learning which have occurred. Through the reflection in action process, I will compare and overlay models, theories and concepts of learning and action research as expounded by, Lewin, Dewey, Piaget, Pollard & Tann, Elliott, McNiff, Schön, Stenhouse, Whitehead, Kolb and Skolimowski. I will show, through reflection, how I relate to particular models in the development of my own living truth in my spiritual being.

My living truth, I believe, is grounded in the practical running of a School of Complementary Medicine and a Health Clinic, where theory has to be born out in practice on a daily basis by the very nature of my work. I deal with real pain, disease and suffering, even dying and have found ways to bring joy, hope, love and understanding not just on a spiritual level but through the very art of practice to both my clients and myself. I intend to address this claim further in this dissertation.

Within the telling of this story, I will draw upon extracts of my autobiography, *Warrior to Priest*. Where, issues of fundamental importance to me were raised or experienced, and these issues, many of which have been transcended, will, I hope, give some understanding of the journey.

'Learning without thought is labour lost' Confucius

Reflecting, a process of learning

Reflecting for me is not always easy, and if applied honestly, can be painful. It has to be remembered that the end product of good reflection is positive action

towards improvement. *But where do I start? How do I reflect?*

This question moves me to other questions. Do I, by mere existence, have the ability to reflect? Where does this ability come from? Who taught me? How can my reflections be guided in such a way as to produce a learning process or a cycle for change? These questions indicate that I cannot continue this process from a position of isolation and by isolation I mean that I can be isolated from myself. **Who am I? What am I?** and what concepts or filters do I use to interact with my environment? What value basis do I hold and if I identify them, do they stand up to scrutiny? I turned to the action research literature to see if the ideas of others might help me in my inquiries.

The action research cycle indicates a spiral of events from reflection, planning, action, observation, reflection again, revision of plan and to new actions and new observations. Whitehead (1993) in his publication "The Growth of Educational Knowledge" introduces the concept of the "I" being central to this process. What does this mean? The "I"?

To me, this question of the "I" stopped me in my tracks, for in truth I did not really know who "I" was. This may seem a contradiction in terms and, indeed, it is and after several attempts at writing this dissertation, I was repeatedly brought back to the question of who "I" was. In a tutorial session I was asked to write my autobiography. I did not understand at the time the value of this exercise but I have come to look at the process as a journey of transition where I have re-visited the "I" and tried to make some sense of who and what has made me the person I am.

A lot of the literature talks of theories and frameworks and cycles but gives little direction into how you actually implement the process. In practical terms the living truth in which one finds oneself can indeed be a confusing mass of emotions and situations where one can easily find oneself adrift. In order to

focus on the issues my submitted texts, became a useful tool in the process of addressing my journey when view form and with the mind set that I possess now.

In the work above I used the word "truth", but what is truth? To me, truth is a fluid state of values which constantly changes through the interaction of the individual's spirituality and understanding with the environment and circumstances in which we find ourselves. I found the work of Skolimowski (1992,1993,1994), particularly useful in helping me to discuss my meaning of spirituality. For Skolimowski (1993) spirituality is, 'an articulated essence of the human condition at a given time' and he describes how different people articulated spirituality in different ways in Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Taoism.

Spirituality I feel, can be compared to the process of making steel. It starts with raw material; melt it down, bash it about, strip out the impurities and through this process the raw material slowly but surely changes into another state, and once again the cycle of melting down and being subjected to fire and force changes again until at the end of the cycle the raw iron ore has become steel. This steel can then be shaped into the sword of service, and it is this analogy that I use to express my understanding of my process. I can clearly identify where in my life I have been subjected to fire and to force; my earliest recollection is indeed that of fire when I was rescued from a house fire at the age of three.

This process related in my story of the formation of steel can easily be identified by the forces which were brought to bear of the formative years of my childhood, a time when I came up against the force and abuse of power in the form of religion and those in authority over me who were said to be responsible for my well being. The filter of parents and words such as "father" and "mother" were again ones which caused me considerable pain and disease (Warrior to Priest, pp 44 - 46).

My life has been full of violence, abuse and rejection, of anger and humiliation; as time after time I was subjected to situation after situation which was part, I believe, of my learning process. I believe that there exists within us a spark of universal truth and goodness and despite what the physical reality of our lives can present us with, in my case I was always searching for good, for hope and for love. I can clearly see from my early texts that perhaps some of the concepts and filters that were active in my understanding, were indeed dysfunctional, but I was driven by the one undermining principle that I would succeed.

I became a compulsive over-achiever; nothing I did was ever good enough; my intrinsic values of value and self-worth were practically non-existent. So how then could I change? This process of change, I believe, has to occur through understanding and learning but the question has to be "How does understanding and knowledge actually occur? Skolomowski (1994), in his book "The Participatory Mind", tells of the yoga of transformation – being,

*"The participatory research is the art of **empathy**
Is the art of **communion** with the object of enquiry
Is the art of learning to use **its** language
Is the art of **using** its language
Is the art of **talking** to the object of our enquiry
Is the art of penetrating from **within**
Is the art of **in-dwelling** in the other
Is the art of **imaginative communication**,
which leads to the art of identification
Is the art of **transformations of one's consciousness**, so that it becomes the
consciousness of the other."*

I am very comfortable with this statement for it sits well with my Buddhist beliefs which I will explore further at a later stage of this dissertation. I believe that understanding is indeed transformation, where one can move from negative

values and experiences using filters of love, forgiveness and compassion and in doing so, can release you from the prison of pain to the fullness and richness of true understanding. My transition occurred through several major incidents in my life where concepts and filters, which I had active and were the fabric of my reality, were challenged to the point of breaking and at one stage they did, indeed, break. (Warrior to Priest pages 81 - 84).

There is no greater teacher than personal experience, for it is in the doing that we actually retain learning. Theories, concepts and models are powerful as structures of thinking but prove incredibly difficult to implement in the act of doing. I look upon the breakdown of my mind not as a bad experience, but as the removal of a series of dysfunctional philosophies, ideology and experiences. It actually freed my mind to seek new foundations on which to build a new understanding.

I came to the realisation that there was more to me than pain and a physical body; the spark of goodness that I referred to was, for me the spark of my God, yet I also believe that:

"...we can uphold the unity of life while celebrating a variety of spiritualities, a variety of concepts of God, a variety of religions. Life flourishes in different forms; and so does spiritual life". Skolimowski, p. 65, 1993.

Allowing for a God to be in your life in Skolimowski's portrayal is not an easy process, for if you acknowledge that the God represents all that is good in man you soon find that you are in a state of conflict with the theory and the actual living practice.

In seeking my living practice I commenced a journey of discovery in which, much to my surprise, I found good people, good values and love. I cannot escape the word "love", for it is now a fundamental framework on which the whole cosmology

of my life exists. Love to me previously meant manipulation and abuse but through my process I made the personal vow that I would never violate the integrity of another human being or my own personal truth. By this statement I mean, I respect my self and the other as central tenet of being.

Holding these values meant that I looked at my world through different eyes, I was no longer blinded by my sight and could see beauty and peace whereas before I only saw suffering and pain. I was no longer deaf through hearing, but by not hearing I could feel the vibration that the words carried. My reality consists of beauty, light, colour and love and the transition was implemented through my finding the love of my wife. Through this love the angry individual was no longer valid or acceptable; the filters of judgement could no longer be sustained and I learnt the valuable lesson of discernment. Judgement indicates a personal attachment to the outcome, discernment allows that all has reason and value and it is perhaps our misunderstanding that forces us into the error of judgement.

To my understanding human beings need to find some justification for their being; for me this justification is my very existence. I see myself as a vessel which has been shaped like the steel through forces on and in my life. I live by the belief that it is not the vessel that is important, but the space that it creates. Once the space has been created, Buddha can fill that space with love and I have been allowed through my own experiences to heal myself through the gift of healing others.

As a teacher I believe that I have a responsibility in service not just to teach but in my own way use myself as a living instrument of truth that good, courage and love can transcend. I seek to transfer through my teaching some of the understandings and values that I hold dear. The Army taught me discipline, my religion teaches me faith and my life allows me to live my value of love.

This is a journey that never ends. Each day is filled with almost a childlike wonder of the uniqueness of humanity. The decision to become a priest in the Buddhist faith is easier than some may imagine for I am, indeed, blessed with the opportunity of conducting a living truth embraced by a universe of such complexity and wonder. I have become a good housewife and through the catharsis of writing my autobiography I have laid many ghosts to rest.

Engaging with the texts of action research gave me an exciting framework in which to explore. As Wexler (1995) concludes his text:

"...it is the collectively creative in gathering of the fragmentary, holy sparks from their current exile and dispersion. What that entails at every level - from the body that is not docile but enlivened, through a reformed re cultured structure of discipline of being, to the possibility of an institutional collective life that is vital and creative - is what we shall now begin to address".

The value of action research and the reflective models outlined depends on the usage envisaged for each 'tool' as perceived by the user (Kolb 1984). Each model has strengths and weaknesses, and each has been written to develop or espouse the theory/rationale of the writer. But theory is indeed just theory, it takes people, courage, perseverance and open-mindedness to turn theory into living fact.

Kolb (1984) writes "We are all psychologists, historians and atomic physicists, it is just that some of our theories are more crude and incorrect than others".

Reflective practice as a tool to understand the process of reflection and research, lends to another aspect of possible interpretation of a very complex subjective issue. I think that the diverse practices are not just frameworks to educate one to reflect and research, but mirror a larger political, social agenda.

For me the value of the work of others is being able to use their work as a model as a temporary active concept or filter, and observe, analyse my feelings. I find it exciting to identify the impact of the different models on sociological metamorphosis around education at the time the model was written and I can identify my own journey of enquiry with Wexler's (1995) work on the development of a new age social theory in education.

One of the most exciting aspects of this journey is the new learning that I am achieving with understanding. Reflecting on the different models, theories, I can clearly identify key issues, questions and points in my own development.

Fourteen years of my professional development were in the Army. In hindsight, I can clearly see from an altered perception, the teaching strategies and methods which were used. I recognise the dichotomy in me from an early age, and the over-riding feeling was one of rage and anger. The Army took this anger and used it. I willingly imitated my role models of '*tradition, honour and routine*', as stated by John Dewey (1933). The training was dictatorial, accommodating and totally autocratic, undermined by fear and held up and supported by the use of competition and reward.

I can clearly see how, using Piaget's (1960) model of learning and Kolb's '*The Process of Experimental Learning*' how I have evolved through cycles of tension between both accommodating and assimilation. I can also see why soldiers are not encouraged to think. They respond, which helps me to understand some of the actions I have seen. Reflection was not encouraged, in fact, it was actively discouraged. You were moulded to respond within a very narrow field.

The positive side of this accommodation-education is that I learnt to analyse quickly and break down into component points, issues. I also learnt discipline and taking risks. The negative side was that this was at the price of my 'play' side. Emotions and feelings were never developed. A large part of my mind was

not engaged, and a feeling of unbalance was always niggling at the subconscious.

This imbalance was addressed through the later stages of my development as previously outlined, by working in the assimilation areas of learning, dealing with abstract and unconventional theory and through Complementary Medicine and spiritual growth.

The value of reflection and research to me, has been more than just becoming a better teacher. Reflection and research has allowed the shackles to be removed from my mind. It has allowed me to see all the experiences as learning, and to see a bit clearer, the limits of both accommodation and assimilation. Reflection allows the practitioner to achieve balance and a holistic over view, research allows the validation of the individuals reflection so that actions towards improvement may be more effective. My professional development continues daily with new instruction from the university of life with new ideas and direction. My life is a constant flux of changing perceptions and perspectives. The pain, anger and darkness are being replaced with understanding, richness, fun and love.

'Learning without thought is labour lost'

Confucius

Reflection for me as a professional is not always easy, and if applied honestly, can be painful. It has to be remembered that the end product of good reflection is positive action to improvement. But where do I start? How do I as the professional I claim to be reflect?

To address this question, I examined the characteristics of reflective action as laid out by Pollard and Tann (1987).

- 1) ***The professional needs an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency.***
- 2) ***The professional needs to combine skills of enquiry and implementation with attitudes of open- mindedness, responsibility and whole-heartedness.***
- 3) ***The professional would apply a cyclical process in which teachers continually monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice.***
- 4) ***Is based on teacher judgements, informed by self-reflection, and insights from education disciplines (research).***

In order for the professional to reflect, there is an assumption with which teachers are concerned:

(Pollard & Tann)

AIMS
VALUES
REFLECTION
SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES
FORMULATION OF POLICY

It is essential that the reflective professional practitioner has and is competent with the following skill areas:

- 1) ***Empirical Skills: Collection of data, and describing process***

- 2) ***Analytical Skills: Interpreting data within a framework***
- 3) ***Evaluation Skills: Making judgements about educational consequences***
- 4) ***Strategic Skills: Planning for action, and anticipating implementation***
- 5) ***Practical Skills: Linking analysis and practice***
- 6) ***Communication Skills: Discuss ideas and communicate***

(Pollard & Tann 1987)

It is therefore fair to suggest that constructive reflection is a high order skill which encompasses a complex range of academic, psychological and social skills, and I would also suggest spiritual skills and understanding need to be included. The individual practitioner will bring their unique filters of perception to the process of reflection and research. This, by default, would make the reflection process subjective, and would not lend itself to easy cognitive interpretation. My question would be:

Who actually trains the teacher in these skills? Or do we just hope or assume that teachers have, by default of position and presumed experience, competent skills in the area of constructive reflection and research?

This I feel is an important question, for John Elliott (1991), at the first world congress on Action Research and Process Management, as part of his argument, tabled the view that:

"Competence based teacher education was in effect applying pressure on school

teachers who disliked the idea of appraisal on the basis that teaching cannot be defined, it has indefinable qualities, however, may be intuitively discerned by experienced and trusted peers".

Elliott J Action Research Practical Competence and Professional Knowledge.
(p.26)

The above statement actually eludes to the position of crisis that exists within Action Research and Reflection and that crisis is of the trying to define the paradigm, the concept of the theory and practice, with a valid value base of judgement. Whose values are they?, and who actually validates them?. My values as a Priest are an integral part of my being and they are completely different values to those I held as a soldier. I therefore suggest that we have to exercise caution in the process of judgement of values, for is it not safe to say that truth is fluid and in a constant state of flux as new values are considered and either integrated into a new whole as a truth or rejected? If truth stands still it then is no longer a truth but a teaching of dogma and Education has mountains of evidence of dogmas in the form of accepted educational theory!!

The action research cycle is based on a concept of action, observation, reflection, plan, leading on to revised plan, action, observation and reflection. It would, therefore, seem that reflected practice as described by Pollard and Tann, is indeed a different process to action research. For the crucial factor missing in Pollard and Tann (1994) is the concept of revised plan leading on to new action implying new observations, giving rise to new reflections. Pollard and Tann's model of the reflective practitioner places reflection in the middle of its cycle.

Action research places the "I" as the fundamental cog grounded in the individual's personal practice within the wheel of the research and reflection cycles. This can, and often does, create tension in the practitioner and suggests that action research and reflection in practice are a unique balance between the

undefinable skills and qualities of feeling, integrity, truth and intent, combined with models of aims, values, policies and social consequences.

The action researcher, while following a course of reflection may well find themselves out of step not only with their peers and masters, but also with themselves. An interesting question that begs to be asked at this point is.... "What mechanisms or frameworks of teaching or support are available to both the teacher as an individual and/or the environment in which the teacher is engaged e.g. heads of departments, managers, to process this change? For action research is not about standing still in a vacuum and the theory of cause and effect does apply.

The work of John Dewey (1933) champions the theory that action is based on reflection, and impulsive action is blind. He emphasises the need to develop certain attitudes of open-mindedness and skills of thinking and reasoning in order to reflect.

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Dewey (1933) quotes open mindedness as an

'active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give heed to the facts from whatever source they come, to give full attention to alternative possibilities, to recognise the possibility of error, even in beliefs which are dearest to us'

This concept of open-mindedness is essential to the action researcher, for more often than not the motivation for the action research is something that we feel strongly about and have identified as a problem. If we have identified it as a personal issue we can then be in danger of losing objectivity and our very enquiry blinds us to input from others. How do others react to our open mindedness?

Skolimowski's ideas (1994) on "Participatory Research" which he entitles the Yoga of transformation: tell me that,

"Ascertaining a different universe requires a different methodology, a different spiral of understanding" (p. 160-161).

What happens when our adoption of different understanding, places us in conflict with those who have the power to police this understanding? This is problematic in itself, but becomes worrying when those who have the power to police are given the power to enforce their policing.

REASONABILITY

Dewey (1933) implies that there are consequences to our reflection and I quote

'to consider the consequences of a projected step; it means being able to adopt these consequences when they follow reasonably'.

I have yet to find evidence of the value base judgement Dewey uses to evidence the meaning of his use of the word reasonably? Does not action research by its very nature put us sometimes in direct confrontation with others and we may seem to be acting unreasonably but entirely correctly to our truth?

WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS

'A genuine enthusiasm is an attitude that operates as an intellectual force when a person is absorbed. The subject carries him on'. Dewey 1933.

Once again Dewey fails to mention that enthusiasm albeit whole heartedness, can indeed carry the researcher on, but is it manageable and in the right direction?

Through Dewey and the notes from Pollard & Tann, it appears that the skills of

the reflective professional are subjective and the use of the word skills suggests a process of specialist knowledge transfer. My understanding of teaching a skill, be it formal or informal, has always been that to transfer a skill you use the model/framework of:

Explanation, Demonstration, Imitation, Practice and Test, Reflect on Outcome

I can clearly identify where, in my military training, this model has been used to very good effect. I have, on reflection, found worryingly little evidence that the above model of teaching and assessing of skills transfer in my teaching experience to date. A rather worrying thought!

Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) states that a teacher acts as a researcher to his own practice, and develops the curriculum through practical enquiry through reflective techniques. This cycle of plan, make provisions, act, collect data, evaluate and reflect leads us to the paradigm of action research.

Other models include:

Carr and Kemmis 1986

Elliott 1991

McNiff 1992

The schema of all of the above imply that there are key issues and these key issues are applied cyclically.

Schön (1983) contrasted scientific professional work (1) such as laboratory research with caring professional work (2)

1. *High Hard Ground: Qualitative and objective evidence*

**2. Swampy Lowlands: Caring professional
Interpersonal areas
Qualitative issues**

This requires rigorous analysis, because they draw on a type of knowledge in action, knowledge that is inherent in professional action such as spontaneous and intuitive actions, tact and the intangible, yet it works!

Donald Schön (1983) argued the theory of reflection in terms of action where adjustments are made through direct experience. He also used the notion of reflection-in-action. The idea that the professionals engaged in reflective conversations with practical situations where they constantly frame and re frame a problem as they work on it, testing out interpretations and solutions. Is he not also describing action research.

When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context of the moment. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. This enquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends on prior agreement about ends. He does not keep means and ends separate, but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from action (Schön, 1983: p68).

The above model is one with which I totally concur as a concept but I can find once again little evidence of how Schön implements this theory in practice. Dewey implied in 1938 that the reflective practitioner is, in fact, his own researcher and as previously stated Schön (1983) reflected again as the practitioner or the "I" being the researcher of the moment. It is necessary to look at some of the background of action research between those dates in order to ascertain what processes occurred from the original outlines of Dewey moving

through and past Schön into the moment of the writings by Skolimowski, Whitehead, Lomax and McNiff.

In the 1940's the history of action research started in the United States of America. Through sociological studies on a scientific methodology of human behaviour and practice with the work of Collier (1933-45). Collier was convinced that the administrator and the layman must participate creatively in research "impelled as it is from their own area of need". This theme is not far removed from the theories of reflective practice presented by Dewey also around 1933 where by he tells of the reflective practitioner reflecting in the moment on areas of concern.

To my understanding Collier & Dewey are actually laying the foundation stones of the concepts of action research and that research and reflection are the corner stones of a process not divergent at all in concept but fit comfortable together as an emerging model. This theory is given more credence as Corey (1953) in his writing "Action research to Improve School Practices" engages with the theory that teachers, supervisors and administrators would make better decisions and engage in more effective practices if they were able and willing to conduct research as a basis of these decisions". Corey also stated through his comparison of traditional research in education and action research they are both alike in that each is difficult to do well!!

There seems to be a lull in material relating to action research from the 1950's to the early 70's which I have yet to fathom out why this occurred. Competency Based Teacher Education arrived on the education scene in the early 70's and became the buzz word of the period. Elliot (1990) refers to this period and the influence of Lawrence Stenhouse, in his paper Action Research, Practical Competence and Professional Knowledge, which he presented at the 1st World Congress on Action Research in 1990. Therefore, in order to track the action research movement I turned to the writings and work of Lawrence Stenhouse.

Stenhouse (1975) in his book *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* is a fascinating read and his opinions on "The Teacher as a Researcher" give rise to some of the underpinning methodology of action research today.

"If we get general acceptance of the proposition that all teachers should be learners and create a public research methodology and accepted professional ethic covering this situation, we would have a basis for observing the teaching of colleagues which greatly reduced element of threat in the situation". (p.106)

In moving forward through the published material there seems to be a thread of confusion and a polarisation on attitudes as to what action research is and who validates it on the one side, and a more entrenched position from the gatekeepers of knowledge in the positions of power, within institutionalised education on the other.

This is clearly reflected in the papers published during the Brisbane Symposium (1984) *Change, Action Research For Development*. The collection of papers in this book make exciting reading and state that research is not just for boffins but for real people on the ground at the cutting edge of their profession. In terms of real people with real issues the field of Action Research has moved from theory to actual practice. There are now publications which reflect the work of researchers in the modern context of practice.

Publications such as *Critical Times for Action Research* (Gibson 1985), *Breaking the grip of Print in Curriculum Research* (Walker 1986) *Action Research and the Politics of Educational Knowledge* (Whitehead and Lomax 1986) *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (McNiff 1988) *The growth of Educational Knowledge, Creating Your Own Living Educational Theory* (Whitehead 1993).

This hands-on approach in practical understandable terms by the above writers is refreshing and challenging and excites me as a student researcher. For as well as the above publications Henryk Skolimowski (1992, 1993, 1994) engages with a set of theories which I hold to be of great value, he lists ten principles of the Yoga of Transformation, which he believes constitutes an individual spiral of understanding.

The list given below contains action reflection cycles of expressing concerns, imagining action plans, acting, gathering evidence and evaluating and modification of concerns, plans and actions based on evaluations.

1. *Become aware of your conditioning*
2. *Become aware of deep assumption which you are subconsciously holding*
3. *Become aware of the most important values that underlie the basic structure of your being, and of your thinking*
4. *Become aware of how these assumptions and values guide and manipulate your behaviour, action, thinking.*
5. *Become aware which of these assumptions and values are desirable because they dwarf your horizons or arrest growth in one way or another*
6. *Watch and observe the instances of your actions and behaviour while they are manipulated by the undesirable assumptions/values. Identify the causes and effects.*
7. *Articulate alternative assumptions and values by which you like to be guided and inspired.*

8. *Imagine the forms of behaviour, actions and thinking that would follow from alternative assumptions/values.*

9. *Deliberately try to bring about forms of behaviour, thinking and action expressing the new assumptions/values. Implement your new assumptions in your daily life. Watch the progress. Repeat the process. Practice is important.*

10. *Reconstruct your being in the image of these assumptions; which is to say restructure your spiral of understanding.(P204-241)*

3.0. Defining the aspects of self, challenging the facts or creating illusions?

In continuing my journey of exploration and learning and keeping my story in the confines of an educational journey. I want to focus on MacLure's (1996) analysis of the narratives of becoming an action researcher. MacLure claims that her analysis shows that the concepts of 'singularity' and 'explanation' are fundamental to the narratives. She considers the possibility and desirability of moving into the 'abyss', by which I take her to mean moving into experiences of 'being' which call one's sense of identity into question to the point of abandonment.

Using these disciplines I examined my conceptual framework as a Shingon Buddhist Priest. I show how I transcended this framework by establishing a participatory enquiry with myself allowing me to engage lovingly and compassionately with the other aspects of my negative self which prevented my collaboration with myself and others. Identifying the separation that this was causing between my multiplicity of selves and others became part of the creation of my new living educational theory.

In action research there is a debate about the concept of 'validity'. Whilst Newman (1999) asks, "Validity: Does the construct have a place in action research?", I use the term in relation to what I consider to be valid. In holding up the description and explanation of my learning to public and peer group 'standards of judgement', I am seeking to test the validity of my account in Habermas' terms that it should be 'comprehensible', its propositional claims should be justified by evidence and the value-base is made explicit.

In the course of my journey I have been drawn to respond to issues raised above and to those raised by Wilson and Wilson (1998), in their analysis of the Subject-matter of Educational Research and the personal qualities of the educator.

In particular I am focusing on MacLure's (1996) questions concerning my willingness to explore my abyss in the 100 day fast I undertook in Japan during 1997. This was part of my spiritual learning through which I start to deconstruct my present ways of knowing through a Shingon Buddhist viewpoint.

At this point, I want to engage with the work of the Thai nurse and action researcher, Arphron Chuaprapaisilp (1991), whose enquiry into action research and Buddhism briefly focused on Satipatthana, a Buddhist term which means the foundation of mindfulness. Mindfulness is a state of mind with respect to full awareness of both actions and feelings. This state of the growth of mindfulness can be promoted through the contemplation of the body (the body in Buddhism has a wide meaning; it includes person and environment), feelings, mental states and mental events (Chuaprapaisilp, p. 62).

By grounding my enquiry in my experience of my practice, rather than accept Chuaprapaisilp's base in the literature on action research I intend to examine the scaffolding of the filters of my learning. By scaffolding I mean the conceptual frameworks placed around my "I" to give myself a value or sense of identity as I enter the abyss.

I moved into the abyss with my narrative as an action researcher, conforming to MacLure's views on "singularity" and "explanation". I identified a tension and risk in a 'mystery of transition' when I emerged from the abyss with my participatory consciousness of experiential doing, within which my values of love and compassion are embodied.

I agree with Wilson's & Wilson's (1998) view that:

"effective learning depends primarily on the personal quality of the educator: that should be the main area of subject-matter for research, and it requires a mixture of conceptual analysis and psychological insight".

They further state that a large part of educational research must take as its subject-matter the qualities of the educators themselves and to make sense of the descriptions of these qualities in order that at least we may identify them properly (Wilson and Wilson, 1998, p. 360-361).

In writing about these qualities I am aware that the spoken and often the written word, while sometimes adequate as a means of communication, carries a potential for misunderstanding. This can be encapsulated in the expression I use in my work *the spoken and written word is never the received word*. For the very words I use carry an agenda attached to my understanding of the chosen words and the agenda and attachments of the reader/receiver of these words. Robert Donmoyer (1996) in the Educational Researcher quotes Lather (1994) on this issue under ironic validity:

"Contrary to dominant validity practices where the rhetorical nature of scientific claims is masked with methodological assurances, a strategy of ironic validity proliferates forms, recognising that they are rhetorical and without foundation, postepistemic, lacking in epistemological support. The text is resituated as a representation of its failure to represent what it points toward but can never reach."... (Lather, 1994, p. 40--41).

I am aware that the medium of the written word can only act as a scaffolding to my truth whilst giving the reader a reference point to the essence of this feeling of truth. I have no wish to challenge the filters of truth of the reader, but I have every intention of challenging my own through the exploration of this enquiry into my learning.

In being willing to enter the 'Abyss', I am taking a risk of the kind I believe Winter (1989) describes as one of the characteristics of rigour in action research. What may be transformed (and thus in this sense at risk) are the researcher's:

- 1) provisional interpretations of the situation, which become merely resources alongside those of other members.
- 2) decisions as to the questions at issue, and thus concerning what is and what is not relevant.
- 3) anticipations of the sequence of events through which the investigation will pass. (p. 60)

Another element of the risk taking is highlighted by Donmoyer (1996) in his analysis of paradigm proliferation where he takes seriously Bernstein's ethical imperative:

"to listen carefully, to use.... linguistic, emotional, and cognitive imagination to grasp what is being expressed and said in "alien" traditions (without) either facilely assimilating what others are saying to our own categories and language..... or simply dismissing(it) as incoherent nonsense " (Donmoyer, 1996, p. 22).

I also share Winter's view of the theory emerging from action research being a kind of improvisatory self-realisation (Winter 1999). I intend to demonstrate the meaning I give to this phrase in the construction of my own living educational theory (Whitehead, 1993) below. I will relate this to MacLure's (1996) reflections on the fundamental concepts of "singularity" and "explanation" in the narratives of becoming an action researcher.

A tension exists in me at this moment as to the appropriateness of my risk taking through the spiritual discipline in my fast, and in my educational journey. I am tense because I am uncertain whether the risk (moving the reader to my abyss) will move the reader to share my process of deconstruction, transition and assimilation and then a reconstruction. It is almost a cyclic process, and the, art I feel, is knowing where to start on that cycle.

My entry point into this cycle is through the four Noble Truths of Buddhism. There are many disciplines and sects of Buddhism. The concepts of the four Truths below are Tibetan based and they provided me with a safe place to start. Through engaging with the concepts of the Four Noble Truths and being willing to risk entering the abyss I create my own yoga of participation with new insights into my self and my values.

So, for example, my commitment to a loving and compassionate self, emerged through the experience of humiliation and suffering; I transcended knowing and not-knowing, not by a theory in words but by knowing through doing;

In releasing myself from my craving for a particular kind of self-knowledge I engage in a process of improvisatory self-realisation (Winter, 1997); I evolve my living educational theory through my experiential doing.

1st Noble Truth - Humiliation and Suffering (Jp: KU-TAI)

In the Buddha's teachings of the first Noble Truth, there is an inevitability about our own humiliation and suffering. We are all subject to decay, old age, death, loss, disappointment or disease. As Kandy (1968) reports:

"Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, not to get what one desires is suffering."

From the grounding of my experience of humiliation and suffering documented in Action Research 1 and 2 and from the experience of my 100 day fast I reflected on the conceptual meanings of the first Noble Truth and asked myself, "How does self give itself value?" The truth I now try to embody came out of answering this question as I became conscious of the significance of loving and feeling compassionate towards myself and others. I have reached the understanding that the pain I feel is the pain I give myself. Part of me wants this pain, my negative learning experiences and conditioning from the Catholic Nuns, relating to my original sin installed a mind set of guilt and a feeling that I had to suffer to have God forgive me for my birth. In transcending this guilt by accepting who and what was the source, I can free myself, for I accept that I can live a life of Love and service and I need no longer feel the pain, and so it is gone and I can move on.

The 2nd Noble Truth - Thirst and Craving (Jp: JIT-TAI)

The arising of dukkha (pervasive unsatisfactoriness), with its theme that the cause of suffering is craving and thirst, of which the Buddha describes two types of craving. The first being craving for sense pleasures; the second being that of craving for existence and non existence. Perhaps in modern terms we can equate this with narcissistic craving, the thirst for a fixed image of self, either something or nothing. This would suggest that the Buddhist approach tells of a core existential insecurity that is beyond the content of any individual's story. We wish to know ourselves securely, to be sure of who and what we are, but we are frustrated from the beginning by one essential contradiction. We, as experiencing subject, can never know ourselves satisfactorily as object. We cannot experience ourselves indivisibly but must experience ourselves as either subjective or objective as a knower or as that which is known.

The Buddhist method of resolving this dilemma is to encourage states of Not Knowing. To me this is somewhat of a contradiction. I have doubts about myself

and my "I", for being the centre of my own universe in terms of consciousness. I feel that it is essential to discover if the truths and realities of my universe are really mine, or am I seeing through the illusion and acquired filters of others, i.e. parents, culture etc. I feel it is essential to go into doubt rather than away from it, almost purposefully disrupting existing structures rather than indulging them. This process was traumatic for me, as the experience of the 100 day fast is intended to be. A question I asked, with some concern for my sense of identity, was, if I were to remove the acquired filters of self from my Buddhist beliefs, then what is left?

"When asked the question, "What is the nature of self?" The Buddha replied; "there is neither self or non-self. The question itself is flawed, for it is being asked from a place that has already assumed that self was a entity."

My reflections about my thirst and craving for self-knowledge led me to the polar opposites of knowing and not-knowing. I have transcended these opposite polarities not by a theory in words but by the doing and through doing I transcend a conflict between knowing and doing into knowing through doing.

The 3rd Noble Truth - Release (Jp: MET-TAI)

Goldstein J and Kornfield J (1987) introduced me to a Buddhist idea of release through the translation of the Dhammapada, a poem of joy which the Buddha was said to have exclaimed on his realisation of enlightenment.

***"I wander through the rounds of countless births
seeking but not finding the builder of this house
sorrowful indeed is birth again and again
Oh house builder! You have now been seen.
You shall build the house no longer
all your rafters have been broken,***

Your ridgepole shattered.

My mind has attained to unconditional freedom achieved is the end of Craving."

Because of our cravings, the Buddha is saying that we want things to become understandable. We reduce, concretise or substantialise. I cannot accept the strand of Buddhism which stipulates that we are born into humanness through our sin, through the wheel of life. I choose to believe that I create my humanness through my love and service to others. I do, however, recognise that by exposing my cravings and needs and bringing them to my attention I release myself from following their demands unquestioningly.

My thirst for knowledge and understanding can also constrict rather than release me. I want things, including myself to be understandable, to explain myself to myself and others as a singularity in the way MacLure (1996) has characterised the narratives of becoming an action researcher. In the release from this craving for objective knowledge, which emerged from my entry into my Abyss of my 100 day fast, I no longer seek to be perfect and no longer measure myself against standards of perfection, assumed or implied in the external standards of judgements, used to test the validity of claims to knowledge.

In releasing myself from my craving for a particular kind of self-knowledge, I now see my self and my knowledge as part of a continuous process of tension and creation, as part of a process of improvisatory self-realisation (Winter, 1997). I create my own living theories in the sense, that I am creating my descriptions and explanations for my own learning, as I seek to improve my understanding and learning of my spirituality and educational practices. I believe my self-knowledge to be created through my fictions, my mirages, my shadows and my dreams. I also believe that I am a vessel of love and compassion and in service to the learning and healing of others where my "I" can transfer and transform into the "We" of loving collective community.

The 4th Noble Truth - The Path (Jp: DO-TAI)

The 4th Noble Truth dictates the pathway which one walks. This is based on the eight elements of:

1. Right Views (Jp: SHO-KEN);
2. Right Aspirations (Jp: SHO-SHIYUKI);
3. Right Speech (Jp: SHO-GO);
4. Right Actions (Jp: SHO-GO);
5. Right Livelihood (Jp: SHO-MYO);
6. Right Effort (Jp: SHO-SHOJIN);
7. Right Mindfulness (Jp: SHO-NEN);
8. Right Meditation (Jp: SHO-JO).

In essence the fourth Noble Truth is the construct of my living educational theory, for in order to walk my path I must continually self survey, self correct and self improve in the stories of my learning. The fundamental truth is that it is my journey and my truth, the answers lie within me. It is not a reinventing of myself or a making up of a form of self. I believe it is a discovery of a self which is already there and my separation from this is causal to my fragmentation.

At this point, I question and doubt my rationale for I cannot conceptualise an answer to the question that if I remove all the perceived filters of my "I" then do I cease to exist ? Perhaps I do? Perhaps I move beyond the cognitive ability to construct linguistic meanings into accepting another dimension of existence with its mysterious core of being (another risk!). Perhaps this is the true meaning of nothingness and the true abyss?

It is through finding, healing and releasing my own qualities of love and compassion I have transcended the experience of negative abandonment (Adler-Collins, 1996), in seeking to lead a loving productive life, to fulfil what is expected of myself by myself. This journey is a constant framing and re-framing of

consciousness. In Shingon we believe that we can achieve enlightenment in this lifetime which for me is an ultimate goal. I have concern about use of the word "right" and the fact that the attachments and values of right can be inflammatory to others. It poses the question of "Whose truth is it anyway?".

In my present understanding I hold in tension my belief that there are universal truths which are constant in the universe, such as the truth of love, compassion, tolerance, non-judgementalism and understanding. Together with my belief in my human truths, which are the shifting values and descriptors I use between my state of conscious now and that of my ultimate enlightenment.

By using the scaffolding of the structures of the Buddhist 4 Noble Truths and the framework of Skolimowski's (1994), Yoga of Transformation. I have evolved a living educational theory and union of ideas and concepts that have been integrated into my own consciousness, and become part of my new truth through my experiential doing. It is this transition where I make my own, the theories and models of others and my claim to knowing. In this claiming to know, I recognise the dialectical process between my own truths and universal values stated above. Laidlaw (1996) has as central to her doctoral thesis, the developmental nature of the standards of judgement by which she judges her own work in education.

As part of my commitment to use public criticism in 'validation' I submitted a draft to Psychiatric Nursing Mailist 1999. This is a list of individuals around the world working or having an interest in psychiatric nursing care, research, and education. This use of e-mail in validation is a recent development in action research. Lomax P, Evans M, Parker Z and Whitehead J (1999) in their paper, ***"Knowing ourselves as teacher educators: joint self-study through electronic mail."***, provide a critical assessment of the use of electronic mail within collaborative self study and critical insight into the tensions and dilemmas of collaboration as a strategy for self study.

I received 55 e-mails from the list. There were only three e-mails which challenged or disagreed with the posting, an example of one being Bob Dunning [SMTP:bob.dunning@dial.pipex.com.

"This is a theological essay so I don't understand why you want responses from this mailbase. By your own argument you have not fully deconstructed your beliefs as the interpretation of the events have been made in the context of your faith, hence there is no universality in the experience.

This surely is not action research, but a path of faith. In my profession I deal not in the idealised world of the faithful, whatever the faith, but the harsh real world of the patients. It may be that the Abyss is a construction of your own interpretation of your experience, and not a place that exists outside of the minds of those people that believe in it."

I responded:

" I also have a teaching experience of having entered a form of Mental Abyss which resulted in my hospitalisation in a Psychiatric Unit. I found this experience so traumatic that I made the vow to myself that I would never allow myself to be responsible for the care of others until I had claimed myself and made myself safe. I am talking about being safe on all levels, thought has a value. You are an energetic being, even if you choose not to recognise this! Many of your patients are entering their own form of Abysses, which can include being thrown into crisis of darkness, confusion and despair and not seeing any way out. Our patients are no different from us, we some times forget that we can be affected by mental disease if the circumstances are right at any time. Many of our patients are reflecting aspects of us that we may choose not to acknowledge and an "us" and them situation can develop in order to avoid our dealing with the learning the aspects of a patients dis-ease may cause us. Adler -Collins (1999b)

I believe that Dunning's (1999b) response below shows the potential value of Internet as a medium for the exchange of knowledge. After a series of exchanges he wrote the following:

"I do believe psychiatric nursing needs a belief and a direction, and maybe your essay is looking for that. I certainly find it very interesting. I do now see its relevance to this mailbase, but I stick to my statement that the essay is a theological one and not a nursing one."

What I have learnt from such exchanges, in my educational journey, is that it matters who is doing the judging and the values and perspectives they hold. As Hughes, Denley and Whitehead (1998) point out in their analysis of the process of legitimising action research accounts, it is important to understand the nature of the standards which are being used to judge the accounts as 'educational'.

I have focused on my learning as I entered my 'Abyss' and created my own living educational theory through my own yoga of transformation. Through which I moved from the 'singularity' studies in my action research modules, to a participatory viewpoint which will allow me a "safe" platform for engaging in the collective "We" of Loving community.

At this point, I wish to share the images of two Mandalas (see appendix 1) which I painted during my fast. Each one has an embodied story which is a journey unique to the viewer.

4.0 Engaging with Concepts of Scholarship.

In the preceding three chapters of my story, I have analysed my learning from Warrior to Priest my learning about how to represent my values as a nurse practitioner in complementary medicine and my educational journey into and out of my Abyss and presented 2 pictures for viewing.

In continuing my journey of I am mindful that it would be appropriate to focus my self and the reader on the need to define and make clear to myself the collation of different strands of the enquiry which had evolved to date, almost from Chaos.

I need to focus and make some sort of scholastic interpretation of them in order to form a presentation of my enquiry. I need to ask myself, does my narrative:

- a.) encapsulate the essence of the journey?
- b.) its teachings for me?
- c.) make sense for the reader?
- d.) mindful of the criteria of assessment as applied by the University?
- e.) fulfil the criteria of rigor?
- f.) legitimise my forms of knowing, and my claims to knowledge?
- g.) stand up in public forum?
- h.) be meaningful to me as a process of assessing my creation of my living truth and educational knowledge?

I believe that I have, engaged and lived through these issues and tensions that stemmed from this very act of abandonment of entering my abyss and made them explicit to my reader, I now ask:

Is there a limit to where self-deconstruction can reach a point of such instability that the very constructs of the perceived self no longer hold any form of truth and

value?

Another element of the risk taking is highlighted by Donmoyer (1996) in his analysis of paradigm proliferation where he takes seriously Bernstein's ethical imperative:

"to listen carefully, to use.... linguistic, emotional, and cognitive imagination to grasp what is being expressed and said in "alien" traditions (without) either facilely assimilating what others are saying to our own categories and language..... or simply dismissing(it) as incoherent nonsense "

(Donmoyer, 1996, p. 22.)

There were other tensions that had to be highlighted. In my risk taking, I have the right to make those choices myself, and by so doing accept the outcomes and consequences of these actions. My tutor, knowing that the possible outcome could be in the worst case scenario, my death, and the least, serious physical damage, had his reservations.

Elliot Eisner (1997) In his paper *'The Promises and Perils of Alternative Forms of Data Representation'* gives me greater insights, for while he states

"we are, in a sense, looking for new stars. We are also looking for new seas. We are, as I said earlier, exploring the edges. There is I think, no better place from which to see the stars and no better position from which to discover new seas than the view one gets from the edge."

My Tutor was engaging in an ethical issue from the viewpoint of his mentoring me through my educative journey.

Eisner (1997) finishes his paper with a poem by Apollinaire. The poem is:

"Come to the edge." he said.

They said, "We are afraid."

"Come to the edge," he said

They came.

He pushed them.

And they flew.

The above poem encapsulates the tensions I believe my Tutor was experiencing. In my quest to seek academic accreditation for the educative journey that I have taken, my Tutor seemed anxious that there was a clear definition between the role of Tutor and my freedom of choice as Winter describes "To take risks."

I would amend the penultimate line of the above poem from "He pushed them." to "I chose to jump." I choose to accept personal responsibility for my actions. No-one in education has the right to push another into an abyss from where they may not have the ability, means or strength to come out.

The empowerment of self is to accept full consequences of your actions. I chose to live on the edge, to see my new stars, to see my new seas, not only did I choose to see them but I chose to fly in my heavens and swim in my new seas. Through this I could celebrate the freedom of expressing my living educational theory in the living truth of my practice.

Elliot Eisner (1997) asks: How do I explain what I have learnt? What forms can I trust? What modes of representation of my learning and enquiry would stand the scrutiny of scholarship? How shall I know?

I wish to return to Boyer's (1992) distinctions between forms of scholarship.

These are:-

the scholarship *of discovery*,

the scholarship *of integration*,

the scholarship *of application*

the scholarship *of teaching*.

The selected abstracts will take the reader into a holistic representation of my learning and show that while as previously I agree with Boyer, I feel that I have transcended his process and claim that in so doing I am exploring the possibility of creating a fifth form of scholarship: *my scholarship of educational enquiry*.

In one of the last papers before his death Donald Schon (1995) builds on Boyer's work to advocate the development of an epistemology of practice through action research. Boyer says that in the scholarship of discovery:

"No tents in the academy are held in higher regard than the commitment to knowledge for its own sake, to freedom of inquiry and to following, in a disciplined fashion, an investigation wherever it may lead" (Boyer, p. 17, 1992)

Schön (1995) summarised Boyer's different forms of scholarship.

'The scholarship of integration gives meaning to isolated facts "putting them into perspective ... making connections across disciplines, spacing specialities in a larger complex, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non specialists too...'

*In the **scholarship of application**, the scholar asks how can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems. How can it be helpful to the individuals as well as institutions?*

*The **scholarship of teaching**, which begins with what the teacher knows means not only the transmitting of knowledge but transforming and extending it as well” (Schön, p. 27, 1995)*

I wish now to examine the above more closely through the evidence of my own journey.

My Scholarship of Discovery

In this dissertation I have shown my journey of discovery and framing of the different facets of "I" through the production and exploration of my conceptualised process of learning in a holistic sense. I have used the construction of a Mandala which I painted during a one hundred day fast in Japan. Through my experience of entering the abyss and allowing this process of abandonment to take place, I came to realise that there exists within me an essence or core that I like to equate to that of a diamond. It is interesting to draw the parallel within Shingon Buddhism that one of the major Mandalas used in its teaching by the Shingon Sect is called "The Diamond Mandala". In the construction and painting of this Mandala I had no real understanding, I just had to find some way of expressing what I could see and feel, having entered and I believe transcended, my own personal abyss,

I started to feel a tension building within me. As a nursing professional I have worked with people labelled as having mental disorders. I have survived my own

personal experience of a nervous breakdown, my incarceration and treatment.

I have engaged and lived through these issues and tensions which stemmed from this very act of abandonment.

Is there a limit to where self deconstruction can reach a point of such instability that the very constructs of the perceived self no longer hold any form of truth and value?

To all intents and purposes, at that moment of abandonment it could be argued that I cease to exist. I hit a wall of fear, which seems to be so black and so deep that the concept of the "I" of myself, spirals away into this mass of seething blackness. The fear is so physical. I felt paralysed perhaps in free fall to madness? Sickness and bile rushed up from the very depths of my being. Feelings of pure undiluted terror assaulted my consciousness, with every conceivable negative aspect of my very being presented and represented in a whirlpool of Chaos. Crashing like waves in a ferocious storm of doubt, whipping up my worthlessness and drenching me in unbelievable pain.

This pain is so intense it threatens to overpower and crush the very essence of my sanity. I experienced this in my 100 day fast, having reached that state I experienced some very fundamental questions about who and what I am as a human being. Even these questions which on the surface appear simple in seeking the answer, drawing me into a minefield of unexplored or unresolved questions and emotions.

I feel it is necessary to try to enquire further in order to explain and examine this point of abandonment because it was pivotal in a shift of consciousness which changed the whole course and direction of my life. A realisation started to take root in my consciousness in the form of an awareness which was very subtle,

almost tickling at my subconscious and this posed a new question to me,
"Where am I in my essence of humanness?"

The definition of abyss: the primal chaos, bowels of the earth, lower world, bottomless or deep chasm (Oxford Dictionary 1978) failed to describe to my satisfaction as to where I was in time and space.

Some would describe this abyss as a place of darkness, for me it was anything but dark. At that particular moment in time where I empowered myself by giving myself permission to enter a state of abandonment many of the constructs of who and what I supposed "I" was ceased to exist. Yet at the same time there seemed to be an inner core of me that was exposed by this very process of abandonment.

This intrigued me and forced me to re-examine my understanding of self.

Perhaps in my previous enquiries, I was being self-limiting in trying to find a medium to meanfully and lovingly represent my core values and at the same time explore the essence of me in relationship to the journey of my learning and ability to convey this learning to my students and peers?.

I am aware that the medium of the written word can only act as a scaffolding to my truth whilst giving the reader a reference point to the essence of this feeling of truth. I have no wish to challenge the filters of truth of the reader, but I have every intention of challenging my own through the exploration of this enquiry into my learning.

Warrior to Priest (Adler-Collins) 1996 p45 section 1

“I went into catatonic shock and I remember nothing but darkness. It was like someone had turned a switch off inside my head and the fragmented reality of my truth could no longer hold me in any form of framework and I ceased to be.

IT was happy, IT was content, IT was darkness, soft silky, warm but total. IT stirred with a primeval concept that something was interfering with the nothingness, IT was aware that peripheral to its existence there was a bright light. This light disturbed ITs silence. The light was invading ITs darkness. IT felt fear and under no circumstances would IT look at the light. Then suddenly the light became central and the universe of darkness became flooded with the stars and light and colour flashing through the vortexes of time, space and dimension and I woke up.”

Castaneda (1968) in his book, the teachings of Don Juan, describes his feelings after his first experience of meeting ‘Mescalilo’ a power entity with whom he achieved an experiential meeting with after taking a Yaquiway medicine plant,

“ my thoughts and feelings were a corollary of that awareness and the passing was smooth and clear but this soon changed, the awakening to a serious sober consciousness, was , genuinely shocking. I forgotten, I was a man, and the sadness of such an irreconcilable situation was so intense that I wept” p.44

Was I now experiencing some psychotic episode or a fragmentation of self? Had my enquiry tipped me into madness once again? Was I now engaging with the concept of schizophrenia, would I allow fear to close down this avenue of enquiry?

Don Juan’s words to Castaneda feel so wise when he said:

“That fears are natural; that all of us experience them, but on the other hand, no matter how frightening learning is, it is more terrible to think of a man without an ally, or without knowledge” p.55

By ally, Don Juan is referring to a spiritual helper in the form of a plant or element such as smoke.

Habermas (1976) states that in testing the validity of an account it should be comprehensible, its propositional claims should be justified by evidence and the value base is made explicit. How can I make such deep and personal insights comprehensible while at the same time struggling to form my own understanding and comprehension of these new insights. Where and how do I provide evidence of this process?

I had to deal with a very genuine fear, the old patternings of taught learning which had been given to me through my own experiences. In seeking to express my 'I' through the cognitive, as for example in my educational technology module, there seemed to be a very real danger of losing my sense of my being.

My Scholarship Of Application

Having travelled to this stage of my journey, what was I to do with this understanding? What applications would it have in my learning as a teacher of Nursing, Buddhism and of my self? I am using application in Boyer's sense:

New intellectual understandings can arise out of the very act of application – whether in medical diagnosis, serving clients in psychotherapy... In activities such as these theory and practice vitally interact and one renews the other.

(Boyer, p. 23, 1990).

My problem is that I wish to communicate the meanings of the values I use to explain my learning, without distorting their meanings through a technical-rational (Schon, 1995) form of representation.

Skolimowski 1994 in his yoga of transformation explains that "the participatory research:

Is the art of **transformations of one's consciousness**, so that it becomes the consciousness of the other". (Skolimowski, pp.160-161)

I was, once again, faced with a tension and living contradiction, How do I, as an educative researcher, express and communicate my values within a framework which is acceptable to the Academy. My experiences of the taught Masters programme gave me the confidence to question what I was being taught about appropriate forms of representation. Yet I still experienced the problems outlined by Eisner (1997) when writing of the problems and perils of alternative forms of data representation.

Lyotard (1979) speaks of terror and arrogance.

"countless scientists have seen their "move" ignored or repressed sometimes for decades because it too abruptly de-stabilises accepted positions, not only in the university and scientific hierarchy but also in the problematic". (Lyotard, p. 63, 1979)

Lyotard moves on to describe that when an institution of knowledge functions in

this manner it is acting like an ordinary power centre whose behaviour is governed by a principle of homeostasis. He describes such behaviour as that of the terrorist, he qualifies terror to mean the efficiency gained by eliminating or threatening to eliminate a player from the language game one shares with him. The player is silenced or consents, not because he has been refuted but because his ability to participate has been threatened.

I felt such a threat. The purpose of seeking a higher degree in education is to add the legitimisation that comes from attaining this degree to my work. The field of nurse education is based firmly in the medical model which is a hierarchical peer system based on evidence and outcomes in relationship to the delivery of care.

This evolution of my knowing has taken many shapes and forms. As an action researcher I subscribe to Wilson and Wilson (1998 page 360-361) statement that;

" the educational researcher must take its subject matter, the quality of the educators themselves in order that at least we may identify them properly. "

My Scholarship of Teaching

According to Boyer, teaching, at its best, means not only transmitting knowledge, but transforming and extending it as well, pushing the teacher in new creative directions:

"In the end, inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive."

In my case I am focusing on the joy of teaching myself in the context of a taught

Masters programme. The teaching I have in mind refers to my own learning in the sense of being self-taught. I am now seeing things with new eyes. It is an interesting question to ask whether a new self is emerging or the very process of understanding my own journey of education has acted like the jeweller faceting a gem. I have been faceted by the experiences of deconstruction.

More aptly, perhaps this period of deconstruction was one of intense engagement in learning. In my last paper (Adler-Collins, 1999) my educational enquiry "Into and out of my abyss" I had a tension within me where I asked the reader to share my process of deconstruction, transition and assimilation and then a re-construction. This tension still exists but it is tempered with a feeling of excitement and anticipation where I can gently introduce the reader to my world through the use of colour and pictures (and later, sound) as I construct this narrative of my educational journal in my dissertation .

My Scholarship of Integration

According to Boyer, the scholarship of integration means 'serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research'. The distinction Boyer draws between discovery and integration is that those engaged in discovery ask, 'what is to be known, what is yet to be found?' Those engaged in integration ask, 'What do the findings mean?'

Each individual section of this dissertation piece of text is a focused piece of writing with an outcome defined by the Masters programme. However, the dissertation, when you take each individual piece of writing and put them together produces something greater than the sum of the parts. Texts represent a snapshot at a time of learning. This dissertation becomes a living expression of an ongoing process which is greater than the text inside it, because it uses other representational forms which move beyond the text. It opens the possibilities of

representing each individual's living educational theory within the form of life of each individual.

In seeking to understand integration, all aspects of the process have to be identified, examined and understood from a positional view point of what actually is meant by Knowledge?

During the process of writing up this dissertation, I attended a seminar at Bath University on this very subject. The seminar focused on a paper by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2000) and their proposals about Relationships of Knowledge and Practice.

The debate on what is knowledge is highly contested within the technical literature of today's journals. This was reflected by the members of this seminar by the differing understandings and responses to the concept of their being a conceptualised framework to knowledge, and that knowledge could be "conceptualised" as Knowledge for Practice, Knowledge in Practice and Knowledge of Practice. The debate was highly cognitive and technical, I was starkly reminded of Don Juan's teachings of Knowledge to Castaneda (1968).

"A man goes to knowledge as he goes to war, wide awake, with fear, with respect and with absolute assurance. Going to knowledge or war in any other manner is a mistake; and who ever makes it will live to regret his steps" p.52

The differing representation and the positional stances of the members was a journey in to power.

It highlighted to me that there is no knowledge other than that we give legitimacy to by ourselves, this is indeed a Battle, but when we claim

knowing we in fact go to war in support of that claim.

Castaneda (1986) recites his teacher Don Juan talking about becoming a man of knowledge and states that to be a man of Knowledge we must defeat the four enemies,

The first being Fear. Fear holds us in defeat. If we have a fear and succumb to it we can never move to knowledge, If we engage with the fear and it represents itself again, then we have lost the battle with fear but not the war. If we defeat fear we can move on to the next enemy Clarity.

Don Juan states of Clarity:

He must defy his clarity and use it only to see and wait patiently and measure carefully before taking new steps, he must think above all, that his clarity is almost a mistake, at that moment he will see that clarity is only a point in front of his eyes” .. p .85

With clarity we defeat fear and can see all clearly, the enemy of clarity can blind us as we think that we know. To defeat clarity we must engage the next enemy, power.

“Power is the strongest of enemies”; “ a man at this stage hardly notices his third enemy closing on him. Suddenly, without knowing, he will have certainly lost the battle. His enemy will have turned him into a cruel and capricious man” p.86

The fourth enemy is Old Age,

“ When a man has no more fears, no more impatient clarity of mind- a time where his power is in check, but also at this time he has an unyielding desire to rest. If he gives in to this desire to lie down and forget, if he soothes his tiredness, he will have lost the last round.” p.87

Don Juan continues.

“ But , if the man sloughs off his tiredness, and lives his fate through, he can then be called a man of knowledge, if only for a brief moment when he succeeds in fighting of his last invincible enemy. The moment of clarity, power, and knowledge is enough.” p.87

In my dissertation I engage with the scholarship of discovery, application, teaching and integration. The scholarship of my educational enquiry means that I recognise the multiple facets of self, each having their own unique contribution to make. In my educational enquiries, I have formed myself in particular contexts, through my learning. When taken together in the multiplicity of my self an intriguing possibility emerges of a scholarship of educational enquiry. Whilst my enquiries have been bounded by a taught Masters programme, the sum of my learning is greater than the sum of my modules. In living with the tensions between ‘being taught’ the content of a curriculum and my self-teaching, I claim that am now living a scholarship of educational enquiry.

In relationship to my claims to know I have modified my position, for I no longer feel that I do know or that I can see as clearly as I assumed. I feel humbled by this process. My claims to know were ego based and illusory like shifting shadows of consciousness, ever evolving into different shapes and thoughts. I do however acknowledge that my understanding of my knowing is limited by own constructs of my truth. In sharing those truths, it is I who must decide. Do I engage in a war or fight my own battle? The whole learning for me in this process

is the ability and wonder just to be able to ask that question.

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