

to learn through this chapter the reasons behind what I do and how these significant relationships support me in clarifying this motivation and passion to enquire. It was only possible to explore this after considering each of the relationships in turn: how the parts are more than the sum of the whole.

In the final Chapters (8 and 9) I look at the significance of this enquiry in proposing shared living educational standards of judgement as energising. I focus upon what I believe these standards to be and how this is significant to others outside of the research participants themselves. This allows me to stand back and make sense of what has occurred. It also allows me to reflect back upon the methodological framework that I outline in Chapter 2 and to outline this enquiry's original contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 Methodology: Why I have chosen to enquire as I have

I refer in this section to the methodology that I have employed in sharing the enquiry with its intended audience. In Chapter 6, I then turn to examine the methodology employed by the student researchers in their enquiry. This distinction was necessary as both methodological approaches have distinct purposes, yet I also focus on where the boundaries between the two are shared.

2.1 Living theory as an unlimiting methodological paradigm

This thesis stands within the research paradigm of living action theory. This is a conscious choice that I make as a researcher, knowing that this is the most appropriate way to allow me to communicate the meanings of this enquiry to my reader and to myself. I do not look as a researcher to dismiss other research paradigms as I state this. I seek instead to open myself up to the possibilities of what other paradigms can bring to this enquiry, in order to develop a *living* methodology that is responsive to the needs of the enquiry. Within this Chapter I seek to justify this choice and to explore how other paradigms strengthen the account presented alongside their limitations.

The importance of the methodological choices I undertake to present this enquiry are highlighted by Whitehead in the following way:

“(To) emphasize the importance of the uniqueness of each individual’s living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) and their methodological inventiveness (Dadds & Hart, 2000) in asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’” (Whitehead, 2008, p.1)

I claim to be both limited and unlimited by my experience as a researcher in considering different research paradigms. I am limited because there are approaches that I do not yet know and may never know; approaches that could excite and engage me as a researcher. Yet I am unlimited because I choose a methodology that is fit for the purpose of the enquiry that I am undertaking. I have the capacity to develop a responsive methodology that enhances the legitimacy of the claims to knowledge made. This is my unique *methodological inventiveness* (Dadds & Hart 2000); a living methodology that allows me to produce an enquiry in the most appropriate way.

“Traditional empirical research (is) just one of the viable and valid methodologies available to practitioners, alongside many others which have already been created and others which will, inevitably, be created.” (Dadds & Hart, 2000, p.167)

Ferguson reminds me of the importance of being unlimited in my approach:

“It takes courage and open-mindedness for people accustomed to and trained in “traditional” research processes to consider and even embrace alternative ways of researching and of presenting that research.” (Ferguson, 2008, p.25)

I write consciously from a position of I. The methodology that I employ embraces this choice and responds by living and breathing alongside the account. I take responsibility for this account and for my actions in choosing to share it as principal narrator.

I begin within a position of considering my self and the shared living standards of judgment that I hold with my husband as a motivational force for my professional life. This position is unique as I am unique. I demand much of my methodology; that it can support me in coming to understand why this is so.

“I see living educational theories being grounded in the conscious lived experience of individuals who are intentional and imaginative with creative capabilities.” (Whitehead, 2008, p.14)

As I seek to live out these shared living standards in the professional, I look to improve the quality of the educational life that I lead and ask that I can live out these standards within it. My life is enriched by others: it is these individuals who allow me to consider the values that are important to me and who open new perspectives to me. These shared living standards as part of my participatory life and the account needs to reflect this participation.

“The context for the study is relationally dynamic. What I mean by this is that it has been influenced by changes in the relationships between the economics, politics, ecology and sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts that have affected my work and the evolutionary transformations in my thinking.” (Whitehead, 2008, p.1)

Whitehead (2008) states that an enquiry begins from a desire to improve. My desire to improve is not born from a deficit model, but from an energised model that brings the energy and motivation from my shared life into the professional. This energy asks me to be the best that I can be. I cannot always claim to know what this best feels like or what it looks like. My husband opens my eyes and communicates with me the potential that I possess to do good and to improve the lives of the educational electorate with whom I live, love and enquire.

This living theory paradigm allows me to explore the living nature of the shared standards that I hold. *Living* I refer to as being lived out in my life as well as evolving alongside my life. The research paradigm within which I choose to work, needs to have the capacity to recognise this evolvment and allow me to explore this emerging understanding.

In stating that this thesis is a living theory thesis, I do not discount other research paradigms as inappropriate. Rather I remain open to other possibilities that could connect with this enquiry and take it in new directions. I am not *limited by an overarching set of principals* (Whitehead, 2008); rather I am unlimited in my approach. In this way, other research methodologies such as narrative, case study, grounded theory and action research contribute to the emergent and responsive methodology represented within this enquiry. The living theory emerges in the creative space between these paradigms. I will discuss how in this Chapter.

Whitehead acknowledges however that there are distinguishing qualities of a living theory methodology:

“...that include ‘I’ as a living contradiction, the use of action reflection cycles, the use of procedures of personal and social validation and the inclusion of a life-affirming energy with values as explanatory principals of educational influence.”
(Whitehead, 2008, p.9)

My emergent living theory shares these principles. It uses procedures of personal and social validation to validate the accounts represented through systematically sharing these with those involved. Validation is also undertaken through considering events from a multimedia perspective, through seeing and hearing the same event through a different eye and voice. I highlight reflection on previous events as opportunities to learn and move forward from, rather than mistakes that evoke guilt. This learning leads me to act in a different way; in a way that is more responsive to those with whom I share my life.

“(Living theory accounts) are grounded in the relational dynamics of everyday life and explain the receptively responsive educational influences of individuals in their own lives. They are unique.” (Whitehead, 2008, p.14)

As I live, love and enquire, I find the explanatory accounts of my educational life become fuller. As boundaries open to those around me in relationships of trust, so new meaning is made. The relational dynamics shared here with others challenge me to work creatively with seemingly opposing views and excite me to new possibilities. I am who I am because of the life that I have led and lead.

I approach this enquiry from the position of a living contradiction. Through the transition period into my new position as Middle Leader, I share a time when I was unable to live out my shared values with others as relationships of trust had not yet formed. I am a being energised by the shared life that I lead, seeking to live out these same energising standards with others. This enquiry explores the transition that I believe to have made from living contradiction to inclusion of this life-affirming and motivational energy with those in my professional life. The use of multimedia narratives to connect these concepts with my reader is essential, as text alone is limited in communicating this transition:

“I think that one of my original contributions to educational knowledge is my use of multi-media narratives to communicate the explanatory power of flows of life-affirming energy in explanations of educational influence. We cannot do anything without energy, yet representations of the energy are not emphasised in explanations of educational influences in learning.” (Whitehead, 2008, p.13)

As I seek to share the life-affirming energy that I hold through this account, Vasilyuk (1991) talks of the difficulty in explicating the relationship between energy and motivation, meaning and values:

“Equally problematic are the conceptual links between energy and motivation, energy and meaning, energy and value, although it is obvious that in fact there are certain links.” (Vasilyuk, 1991, pp.63-64)

I believe, as Whitehead believes, that the links between these concepts can best be represented through multimedia narratives. Within these, movements, gestures, words and looks communicate more than the written word alone. This is a view supported by Laidlaw (2008):

“As you see, I write my description of the end of a lesson, but I feel that it is not as powerful as watching the video itself! I believe that more information is carried in the video than can be conveyed in words.” (Laidlaw, p.16, 2008)

Crucial however to the representation of multimedia within this enquiry is how these are included and reflected upon, so that what is communicated to me can also be understood by my reader. I believe that, if I am successful in this approach, it is these multimedia inclusions that will be remembered by my reader alongside parts of the written text.

“(Embracing) alternative ways of presenting research will validate forms of research that can convey knowledge not easily encapsulated just within pages of written text.” (Ferguson, 2008, p.25)

“In such complex work we need different ways of representing what we know and video has become a crucial avenue to the realisation of our endeavours.” (Laidlaw, 2008, p.16)

The energy and motivation given to me by my shared living standards of judgment can scarce be communicated through text alone. In Figure 2 for example, I share a video clip that communicates the energy shared between my husband and me as we live out our shared standard of recognising the other. It is through this medium that I feel the flow of energy between us and new knowledge about myself as an educator comes to light. Video clips allow me to connect again with this event:

“...where time and space have no separation and the past becomes the present as I allow the knowing to flow into my practice.” (Adler-Collins, 2008, p.18)

The standards that I hope to communicate in this enquiry are living in their nature. They evolve alongside my life as I live, love and enquire with others. In this living theory enquiry, the emergence of knowledge is supported through this multimedia dimension as a living witness to this ongoing life:

“In my doctoral thesis (Laidlaw, 1996) I made the case for our values being not static, but in fact living and developing as we do. If this contention is seen as valid and it is taken on by others in the development of their own educational research, then this has ramifications for what might be perceived as appropriate ways to represent the educational value of research processes and outcomes.” (Laidlaw, 2008, p.16)

I now turn towards those research paradigms that have influenced me in choosing to produce this account in a responsive and living way.

2.2 Considering how narrative influences this enquiry

This study is grounded within my life. I consider how I live out this life and with whom. I therefore look to include narratives of events that are significant in coming to understand the motivation for my professional life. Creswell (2007) offers “useful” markings of narrative research in considering the example offered by Angrosino (1994):

- The author tells the story of a single individual as a central focus for the study
- The data collection consists of “conversations” or stories: the reconstruction of life experiences through researcher participant observations
- The individual recalls a special event of his life, an epiphany

- The author reports detailed information about setting of a context, thus situating the epiphany within a social context
- The author was present within the study, reflecting on his own experiences and acknowledging the way that the study was his interpretation of (its) meaning. (Creswell, 2007, p.87)

My own enquiry shares some of these characteristics, such as the reconstruction of life experiences through conversations and stories. Significantly in Chapter 4, I offer two narratives that focus upon my first year in a difficult new post. These I see as epiphanies, representing key points in my life from which to learn and grow. I ground these narratives within the social context of the school in which they took place. I also acknowledge to have interpreted them myself in an emerged participatory way.

The inclusion of dialogue between the research participants has been of fundamental importance. These allow another viewpoint of the same event. They allow the voice of the participant to emerge and to challenge or support my own interpretation. I therefore see this enquiry as being a participatory narrative that allows participants in an event to be immersed in the narrative itself. It is this approach, I believe, that allows this enquiry to consider the views of all involved, so that the narratives included here have been validated.

The limitations of the Angrosino (1994) example offered by Creswell (2007) is the re-telling of a narrative through text alone. Whitehead (2006) argues that:

“I believe that the meanings of these (living) values cannot be carried solely by propositional statements. I am suggesting that visual narratives containing explanations of educational influences in learning are needed to communicate the meanings of the living standards of judgement/discernment for practitioner-research.”
(Whitehead, 2006, p.1)

Narratives are living events that are seen, heard and acted out. In offering multimedia narrative as part of this enquiry, I aim to share these events in a living way with my reader. The importance of gestures and physical expression is therefore captured within the text and allows the embodiment of the living standards of judgment that I seek to understand here; to be lived out through the enquiry.

Validating each narrative included has been undertaken in a responsive way, in which an appropriate way of responding has been developed for each. It is my wish that each narrative inclusion (text, image and video) is allowed to be fully appreciated in what it offers the enquiry. What is appropriate for one may not be for another. If I had stated a systematic way for dealing with each narrative, then I would be limiting their potential instead of unlimiting it.

In this way, you will see that Figure 24 (three successive images of my husband as he begins a challenging new post) have been responded to individually and then collectively by myself as I was the loving eye involved in producing these. These images I believe to show the loss of motivational energy over time. Meanwhile a video clip of the student researchers' first unsuccessful interview (included within the multimedia) was responded to through the student researchers' voice, through an observer's voice and through my own voice. As this video involved several participants within the room at the time, a plurality of response to the clip was crucial.

Evans supports the inclusion of narratives within educational enquiry:

"My excitement at the possibility of using story in a creative way was related to my strong feeling that I would like teacher knowledge to be more widely shared in schools, to be accessible in its language, and to be captivating for its audience."
(Evans, 1995, p.5)

Within this account of the shared learning that has taken place through this enquiry, I have included narratives sharing both the professional and the personal. The inclusion of such narratives is an emergent methodology that I have embraced through reading others' accounts and seeing how narrative added to the enquiry rather than subtracted from it. I however take into account Gabriel's view that:

"The main disadvantage of eliciting stories is that the researcher risks imposing his or her definitions of what is important, meaningful or enjoyable." (Gabriel, 2000, p.137)

For something to be important, meaningful or enjoyable there must be an author and recipient of such feelings. The story carries importance to the individuals involved within it. The story is seen as meaningful to those individuals and as something worth sharing in a wider context. In re-telling shared accounts I am checking their importance and meaning with those involved. Looking to elicit stories within this

enquiry has been part of the maturation process that I have undergone as a researcher, learning that these stories add to the account and bring ownership and responsibility with it. In previous research I remained outside of the account, *accounting for* yet not *engaging with* the learning taking place. Including these has allowed me to express my core values more fully alongside the pleasure I have felt in living these out with others. Gabriel continues:

“We shall argue that researchers who want to use stories as a research instrument must be prepared to sacrifice at least temporarily some of the core values of their craft and adopt instead a rather alien attitude towards their subjects and their texts. They must rid themselves of the assumption that quality data must be objective, reliable, accurate etc. and must be prepared to engage personally with the emotions and the meanings that reside within the text.” (Gabriel, 2000, p.135)

Within this enquiry I seek to understand my core values, transformed into shared living standards of judgment in my life. These stories are therefore part of the rich data source that I can draw upon to begin to understand these values as motivation for my professional life. I seek to embrace the meanings expressed by these stories in terms of the values expressed within them.

My husband has shown me, through the powerful narratives included within his own enquiry, how these can communicate not only with the reader of the text, but also how they serve to reconnect with the events recreated themselves. He writes:

“Within the narrative framework of this dissertation, I want to explore my belief that the future I can create is embedded within the narrative past that I have come from: it is the sharing of these narratives, through working with others that will allow me to understand my present and future. I believe that through taking stock of these past narratives, my own future may well be better.” (Riding, S., 2003, pp.7-8)

To him I respond:

When I first read your account of how your father’s illness had affected you as a person and educator, tears filled my eyes. It allowed me to comprehend the importance of your family in giving you the fundamental values of truth and integrity that you uphold today. I believe that through being the person that you are, you are

giving something back to these people who have given so much to you. Through this narrative you communicate these values so clearly.

Including the use of such narratives within this research has allowed me to gain new meaning from events that have occurred. This medium has allowed me to reflect upon my own and others' actions and to relive them. They have allowed me to maintain an open door between these events and myself through which I continue to connect with them. I have wanted to increase the pleasure and empathy connected to this research through these narratives, and I hope these offer my reader the position of a *fellow-traveller* (Gabriel, 2000, p.136) alongside me in this journey.

As principal narrator I however acknowledge my influence on what events have been re-told to the exclusion of others. I have made these decisions, and accept that I may have done so with an objective *inside, looking out* (Rayner, 2005) view. This I see as a limitation of narrative enquiry, in that it offers only a selective retelling of the events that have occurred. To re-tell every event would however be unrealistic. I therefore believe to have considered events that have some significance in demonstrating the energy that I derive from the shared living standards of judgment that I hold. These events may challenge this assumption or they may support it, but each has a knowledge-generating capacity. I seek out the narratives that support me in answering the questions posed at the start of this enquiry.

In placing narrative enquiry within the living theory paradigm, I believe that the selecting of narratives by the researcher is most significant. Each event adds to the researcher's emerging knowledge about his/her own living theory. I believe that it is those events that resonate deep within me that are most significant to re-tell; those events that are replayed often within my mind that carry the possibility of supporting my claims to know.

Naidoo (2005) embraces narrative as a way of making sense from what has occurred. She looks to write with a specific audience in mind, although I believe that my audience is pre-determined: it is the participants of the enquiry itself with whom my narrative needs to connect:

"I may find it easier if I had someone in mind who I was writing for. This opened the door for me and enabled me to use my craft, the craft of storytelling, to tell the story of my learning. What is exciting about storytelling is that it is uncertain and

unpredictable but essentially people centred. Telling the story of my learning in this way has enabled me to capture complex problems more easily and has helped me to make sense of complex situations” (Naidoo, 2005, p.12)

2.3 Considering how case study influences this enquiry

I now turn to the paradigm of case study as a further paradigm that I have drawn upon to construct my living theory methodology. I seek to understand the dynamic that my professional life represents. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2001) describe a case study as:

“...a specific instance that is freely designed to illustrate a more general principal..a bounded system. It provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principals. ...case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p.181)

In this way I look to draw out a way of understanding about the motivation in my professional life. This involves considering my boundaries and shared space with others. It involves understanding the complex interactions between me and others and how these can provide me with ways of knowing. These are living interactions that allow meaning to unfold, which I see as linking the living theory and case study paradigms.

I offer generalization through this thesis of how student-led intergenerational research can be undertaken in other educational contexts. I also offer an understanding of where the motivation for this work emerges from, in considering shared living standards of judgment as motivational and energizing.

One of the ways in which this generalization has emerged has been through the consideration of significant events through which this understanding has emerged. For example in Chapter 4 I offer key narratives that offer me insight into the real dynamics between my colleagues and I in my first difficult year in post. This intertwining of narrative accounts within this case study has been part of my emergent living methodology. I have undertaken this both from the position of participant observer and through the accounts and words of others of the same

events. It has been significant that I have considered this case study from both an *outside, looking in* (Rayner, 2005) and an *inside, looking out* (Rayner, 2005) perspective.

Including participants' voices and observations within this enquiry has allowed a participatory account to be produced. Significant here has been the validation of the enquiry through the same participants; enabling them to check the representation of the enquiry. This has been a way in which to offer reliability throughout the account. I offer also a reflexive approach in which words and images have been altered as a result of respondent requests. In Appendix 1, in which I describe a significant relationship with a co-researcher, I consider how I have altered the text in consideration of Graham's wishes. In my initial writing, he felt that the language employed did not seem appropriate to convey his actions and words.

Participant inclusion has also allowed the data represented here to be triangulated through the consideration of the same event from a first, second and third person viewpoint. I include image and video here as methods that allow a further living consideration of the same event. Each participant was asked to consider how they wanted their inclusions to appear in the enquiry. For instance, if they wished to be acknowledged or anonymous within the text and if they gave permission for their participation to extend to image and video. This was considered at the outset of their involvement, yet also adapted to their ongoing wishes. This has been significant with the participation of the H.E. researcher involved in the group, who moved from a position of wanting to be acknowledged to that of preferring anonymity. Secondly with the second generation of student researchers, who after considering their original anonymous participation, then wanted to be named and acknowledged individually for their involvement.

Habermas (1976) shares how a participatory account can enhance validity of the claims to knowledge made. This is through relationships of trust and agreed ways of communicating together. It has been essential in this account to build trust between the participants represented here. They need to feel that I can produce a just account of their involvement and that I communicate this in a mutually comprehensible and fulfilling way. A living theory approach accepts that their participation will evolve as the enquiry continues, and that they are able to trust me as principal narrator to respect their wishes.

“The speaker must choose an utterance that is right so that the hearer can accept the utterance and speaker and hearer can agree with one another in the utterance with respect to a recognized normative background.” (Habermas, 1976, pp.2-3)

Working in this participatory and reflexive way has allowed knowledge to emerge rather than considering a hypothesis from the outset of this enquiry. Although Sturman (1997) places on a set of continua the methods of data collection, types and analysis techniques in case study research, I see this as limiting the quality of the enquiry produced. If I were to have planned these rigidly in advance, the account could not respond or evolve as events occurred. The reflexive capacity of the account would have been compromised and the richness of data that a living methodology provides would have been narrowed.

A case study is also defined as being within a bounded system, yet I see this enquiry as challenging this bounded system and moving beyond the boundaries of what already exists. I state within the abstract of this enquiry that boundaries between participants are both fluid and dynamic; they are *living*. It is this key element that moves the enquiry beyond definition of a case study.

2.4 Considering how grounded theory influences this enquiry

I talk of the capacity of this enquiry to generate knowledge. This knowledge is about the motivation for a professional life being rooted in the energy gained from shared living standards of judgment. This generative knowledge-making capacity is shared by a grounded theory approach, as considered by Creswell (2007), from which theory can be constructed. The grounded theory construct however looks to undertake a systematic procedure with a scientific and objective language that uses a construct-orientated approach.

This approach does not therefore allow the participant-researcher to be immersed within the enquiry, or to consider how their subjectivity contributes to the enquiry itself. It asks that the enquiry is pre-set to undertake data collection in a conditioned way instead of responding to the needs of the enquiry as they evolve.

This enquiry therefore, whilst sharing the same aim of research in the generation of knowledge with a grounded theory approach, needs to live outside of the restrictions that this would impose upon it. To produce an account in a systematic way would be

to deny the emergence of knowledge that a living theory approach has allowed me to embrace. This is reflected in Adler-Collins' (2006) enquiry:

"I also had covert standards of judgement in play; ones which I was not consciously aware of.....My living standards of judgement, in Jack (Whitehead's) understanding emerged through the heuristic reflective process of researching and writing my thesis. Such emergence was not anticipated as I thought that any values would be educational ones related to my development, management and teaching of a new curriculum in nursing." (Adler-Collins, 2006, p.2)

Working within a living theory paradigm also allows me as a researcher to enjoy the emerging knowledge from the enquiry. I can be delighted by the unexpected that a systematic approach would deny me:

"I find the idea of knowing that I do not know very empowering for I am freed from buying into the passion for knowledge claims. If my judgements can remain flexible and fluid then they will empower me to be inclusional in my life and my work. If they become solid and concrete they solidify my boundaries and become dogma. Such a process is insidious and the road to dogma is deceptively easy. . I choose now to be immersed in the process of knowing with the eyes and wonder of a child." (Adler-Collins, 2006, p.4)

Within the living theory paradigm I need to respect the responsibility for the enquiry that I present. The detached, objective approach offered by grounded theory does not, in my opinion, allow for involved educational responsibility on the part of the researcher for creating a valid explanation of their educational influence in their own learning and in the learning of others. It is my choice to research into and present this enquiry and I need to do so with integrity as an honest and trustworthy researcher. I therefore share Laidlaw's (2006) view of the responsibility of a living theory educator to manage the empowerment afforded to him/her:

"I also stressed my belief that I am also responsible (because my title contains the word 'educational') for the development of something for the good of society and individuals and groups within that society... .The important idea here, I think, is the necessity of education being a dynamic between at least two people. That education occurs when the people involved in the processes are engaged in learning something of value – for themselves and their society. The learner connects what is being learnt

with their inner landscape in such a way that they are empowered by the knowledge and begin the process of being able to manage that empowerment.” (Laidlow, 2006, p.1)

In the past it has been so much easier for me to write avoiding the “I”. I stood involved as narrator yet detached as participant. In 2003 I wrote:

“Throughout the work you are about to read, the “I” is a shadow, someone who ultimately is the reason and the driving force behind the mentoring that I describe. In identifying myself as a leader, as a Mentor of Mentors within the programme, I prefer not to lead from the front; instead preferring to lead through the programme, taking tentative steps to ensure that my fellow mentors are fulfilled. I am living through the others within the programme, identifying with their values and their difficulties as I experience these myself.

I feel however that it is an imposition to talk of myself as a teacher and a mentor, for there is a strong feeling that the research is here for others, to improve the experience of others with whom I come into contact.”

(Collins, 2003, p.1)

These disowned and unloved pieces of writing did not allow engagement with the author; did not allow the experiences and learning undergone to be shared. A whole part of the text that engages both reader and author was left aside. The result was a sterile text which does not share the joy of the process itself. I feel that grounded theory offers neither the author nor the reader to relive the joy of knowledge creation undertaken through the enquiry. I believe that the inclusion of my own voice supports me in exploring my professional motivation and pleasure. It allows me to draw upon and give a voice to the thoughts and feelings that I have and that we have; the “we” in this sense being those with whom I love and enquire. Eisner (1998) also looks towards a “we” that is specific and relates to the personal self:

“Consider how we discuss our research efforts. We talk about our findings, implying somehow that we discover the world rather than construe it. We say in our discussion, “it turns out that...,” implying that how things are in nothing for which we have any responsibility. We write and talk in a voice void of any hint that there is a personal self behind the words we utter: “the author”, “the subject”, “the researcher”,

or miraculously, we somehow multiply our individuality and write about what “we” have found.” (Eisner, 1988, p.18)

My choice to base this enquiry within the living theory paradigm is one born from experience. Through the learning that I have undergone as a researcher-practitioner, I have looked to develop a way of working that is both suited and suitable to my enquiry. I have moved from a detached perspective to an immersed one. This way of working has emerged as a response to my consideration here of my shared life and motivation. I stand immersed within the enquiry and need a methodological approach that can identify and accept this position as I take responsibility for the representation of this research. I want to be charged with its ownership and stamp my identity upon it. I do not want to hide behind a passive voice anymore. To do so would be to weaken the claims that I am making. To do so would be not to credit the role of others in my own work and to devalue their voices. Whitehead (1993) supports the immersed first-person enquiry:

“The idea that a new form of educational theory is being constituted by the descriptions and explanations which individual learners are producing for their own educational development from their action research, means that practitioner-researchers must speak for themselves and make claims to know their own educational development.” (Whitehead, 1993, p.105)

Whilst both grounded theory and living theory offer knowledge creation, one seeks to communicate the feelings and motivation of the participants in the enquiry whilst the other leaves me and the reader with a sense of emptiness and detachment.

I think that this difference is due to the aim of grounded theory to produce theory in the form of relationships between propositions that by their nature have lost connection with the experiences of individual human beings. This is one of the limitations of all traditional theories that are communicated through propositional theories. Living theories are grounded in the conscious lived experiences of individuals and do not lose this connection. Hence my attachment to living theory.

2.5 Considering how ethnography influences this enquiry

As I consider within this enquiry shared living standards and how these influence my professional life, I share an aim with ethnography to reveal a culture-sharing group. I do not look however to describe this culture-sharing group, but rather to live alongside its evolvment and understand the motivation and energy that it possesses.

My aim in doing this is to understand from where this energy is derived. I advance the theme that this comes through relationships of trust and the opening of boundaries between participants, allowing creative space to open up and pleasure between participants to emerge through shared enquiry.

I am immersed within this shared space and act as both participant and observer at varying points. I live both on the *outside, looking-in* (Rayner, 2005) as observer yet also on the *inside, looking-out* (Rayner, 2005) as participant. I consider events that are epiphanies in the life of this enquiry alongside the everyday interactions between the participants of this enquiry. I believe that both types of events are necessary to understand how living standards emerge from shared lives.

I site the enquiry within the social formation of the school at the outset of this research. I look to ground the research in its location as a way of contextualising the enquiry for my reader. These are some of the principles that this enquiry shares with ethnography. However, in contrast to the ethnographic paradigm, this enquiry seeks to understand how the participant group challenges the culture within which it is sited. It looks to creatively challenge it so that the participants are recognised and valued by that culture. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2001), when referring to the ethnographic notion of “indexicality” state:

“Indexicality refers to the ways in which actions and statements are related to the social contexts producing them; and to the way their meanings are shared by participants but not necessarily stated explicitly.” (Cohen et al, 2001, p.25)

Within this enquiry, actions are produced, not in reaction to their social context, but rather as a result of their shared social context. This is a context that is constantly evolving and driven by the research participants themselves. They are the lifeblood and energy behind this evolution. I seek here explicitly to explore the meanings

shared by these participants as a way of understanding this motivational energy. The participants in the enquiry are seeking to create their own jigsaw in terms of their social context rather than fit into the pre-existing context.

The contrast between my own enquiry and an ethnomethodological perspective is further highlighted by Cohen et al. (2001) as they state:

“Social ethnomethodologists cast their view over a wide range of social activity and seek to understand the ways in which people negotiate the social contexts in which they find themselves. They are concerned to understand how people make sense of and order their environment.” (Cohen et al., 2001, p.25)

In this enquiry, participants are not looking to negotiate their social context but rather to transform it. They have ownership over their social context and have an emerging understanding about their place within it as co-creators.

Through this enquiry, based within a living theory paradigm, my relational epistemology has emerged. I am creating my own living theory that can rationalise how I am motivated and energised in my professional life. This is in contrast with ethnography, where Cohen et al. (2001) admit that:

“..related issues of ontology, epistemology and the nature of human beings have received less attention than perhaps they deserve.” (Cohen et al., 2001, p.25)

Therefore, although ethnography offers principles to this enquiry, it fails to recognise the evolvment of a group creatively with its environment. This evolvment is a lived-out experience considered from an immersed perspective. A living epistemology emerges from this experience that is grounded in day-to-day living. Each day brings about events, small and large, that ask the group to evolve.

2.6 Considering Living Action Research

“During the Action Research enquiry, I have seen the transformation in the way that teachers think about themselves, and to believe that they have the support of their colleagues to enable them to try out new ideas. The sharing of thoughts and feelings in the Action Research group has enabled people to know that they can rethink their values, develop new concepts of teaching and that they will be helped and supported

throughout the process. This has given them an excitement about their teaching and learning which has increased their motivation for teaching, and is infectious.” (Evans, 2003, p 46)

This action enquiry approach has allowed me to plan, act, observe and reflect using an approach that has been defined as a cycle from as early as the work of John Collier and Kurt Lewin in the 1940s:

“One of the founding figures of action research, Kurt Lewin (1948) remarked that research which produced nothing but books is inadequate.” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p.226)

It has allowed me to work in stages, allowing me the space to critically reflect on what has just occurred as advocated by Stenhouse (1979). Crucially it also promotes research for a practical reason; namely the improvement of education practice by those engaged in this field:

“Stenhouse (1979) suggests that action research should contribute not only to practice but to a theory of education and teaching which is accessible to other teachers, making practice more reflective.” (Cohen et al, 2001, p.227)

I do not believe that this enquiry takes one action research (AR) approach as wholesale, but rather adheres to some of the key principals as suggested by Kemmis & McTaggart (1992, pp.22-25) which support the enquiry in improving education by changing it, being participatory and in bring collaborative. Through this approach I believe to contribute to a theory of education about where practitioners find their motivation through *shared* living standards of judgement, as well as exploring how an intergenerational approach to student-led research can improve the school.

In addition, Kemmis et al. (1992) suggest that AR involves keeping records of what has occurred and analyzing our own judgements, reactions and impressions of the research. This enquiry stands as a record and analysis of what has occurred alongside the implications of this research for others. Whilst Kemmis et al. (1992) however stress the importance of the action research cycle; I can only use this term loosely to describe the processes that I have undertaken. If you today asked me to draw and describe to you the cycle of action research that I have undertaken, I would stare at that piece of paper and deliberate for a long time. This *cycle* has however

allowed me to plan, act and reflect simultaneously. The boundaries between these terms merge. The process of action research is not a smooth one, yet the founding principles of the action-reflection cycle as advocated by McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (2000) in their description of *living action research* hold firm to my belief of how I can best live as a researcher. *Living* action research allows the research process to bend and adapt to the needs of the enquiry: to breathe alongside it.

“The essence of action research is that although an inquiry may have an individual initiator with a specific provisional focus, this focus can change as soon as the inquiry is under way and as other participants contribute crucial insights. Also: action research follows a developing situation over time. For both these reasons the later phases of an action research inquiry will need to take into account theory which was not envisaged at the outset.” (Winter, 1998, p.8)

Action research has given me inspiration in my research life as a way to enquire. Learning through enquiry, acting upon it and responding to it have allowed me as a researcher to grow and emerge. I see action research as living with its agent(s) and being responsive in supporting the enquiry. The usual distinguishing characteristics of action research in action reflection cycles are only loosely connected to my own methodology. I believe that responsive and relationally dynamic ontological values can be clarified and formed into living standards of judgment which would be unnecessarily constrained by linear AR cycles. These traditional linear forms of AR cycles are too limiting as a methodology in the generation of my own living theory, yet support the development of educational theory by a practitioner within education as suggested by Winter (1989) and Stenhouse (1979). Winter talks of the importance of the lived practical experience of practitioners that undertake change within their organisation:

“What is specific to action research as a form of inquiry is that it uses the experience of being committed to trying to improve some practical aspect of a practical situation as a means of developing our understanding of it. It is research conceived and carried out mainly by “insiders”, by those engaged in and committed to the situation, not by “outsiders”, not by “spectators”.” (Winter, 1989, p.1)

“Action research raises key questions about the actual experience of taking responsibility for attempting to initiate change. It is about the possibilities and limits

for responsibility and creativity within the lived experience of highly problematic organisational political conditions.” (Winter, 1989, p.10)

I agree with the description of action research as personal commitment by the researcher to his/her research. It is the action of taking responsibility for representing the change that has taken place and which continues to evolve. The living action research paradigm I see as living alongside the researcher’s life: conversations with colleagues in corridors, teaching and learning alongside students in the classroom and meetings within the school day. Making sense of these events is the action-reflection process itself. Practitioner-researchers do not need to be at a computer or in a meeting to allow reflection to take place. Reflection is continuous: on the drive home from work, walking through empty classrooms at the end of the school day, conversations with our partners. All these events allow us to process what has occurred, to make sense of it and to move forward.

This is where I see action research and living theory as sharing boundaries. As action-reflection lives alongside the researcher’s life, it allows meaning to be made through conscious reflection of what has occurred and what is yet to come. This integration of researching and living is intuitive and creative on the part of the researcher:

“As one becomes more experienced, more “expert”, this process (systematically applying theory to experience) ceases to be “systematic” and becomes instead intuitive, creative, elliptical.” (Winter, 1989, p.6)

The creative and intuitive aspects are in line with the call for *methodological inventiveness* (Dadds and Hart, 2001). It is true that through my own learning as an action researcher, I began by embracing theory and by holding the idea that for my own research findings to be valid, they would need to adhere to established theory (i.e. someone else’s) for the claims I was making to be valid. As I grow as a researcher, I have come to see others’ ideas as exciting and challenging. If I ignored the creation of theory around me, it would be easy for me to become stilted in my own research methods and beliefs. I need the fresh engagement that academic, practitioner and student research *by others* brings to me. It allows me a perspective outside of the school, outside of my own research and allows me to develop continuously as a researcher. Although I embrace the validity of my own claims, I still need the engagement of other researchers around me. It is the combination of

practice-based and academic-research, I believe, that affords us the most fundamental learning:

“For this dialogue to be an informed dialogue, research must contribute. Some of that research should come from people who have been given special privileged and responsibility to study issues: university researchers. Some of that research might come from other members of the community. Some of that research might be dialogic research.” (Coulter, 1999, p.12)

“What is needed rather is an account of how professional workers use the knowledge they either already possess or can easily acquire, and how engaging in an action research enquiry creates a process which is genuinely “theoretical”.” (Winter, 1998, p.8)

2.7 Data collection and analysis

I now consider the methods of data collection employed in this enquiry. These are the methods that have enabled me to understand the shared living standards of judgment that I hold, which transform into motivational energy in my professional life. As with the methodology described above, I have developed these methods in a responsive and *inventive* (Dadds & Hart, 2000) way. These were not pre-set at the beginning of the enquiry, but rather have evolved in response to the needs of the enquiry; living alongside it. Each account, multimedia clip and observation has been responded to therefore in an appropriate and unsystematic way. This is in order to fulfil the potential of each piece of data and not to restrict it to a pre-conceived list of criteria. Again, I look here to unlimit its potential. I have not rejected certain methods of data collection; rather I consider data collection as being an intrinsic part of my ongoing life. I do not come out of this life at various points to specifically collect data. Instead the collection of data is an ongoing and living process.

The methods of data collection that I use also come from my experience as a researcher and my knowledge of the different methods with which I have previously engaged. Having undertaken through my masters' enquiries specific modules on methods of educational enquiry, I carry with me the experience of utilising specific methods and methodology in practice. As I have grown as a researcher to embrace living theory as the most appropriate methodological paradigm for this enquiry, so I

bring to this enquiry the methods of data collection that best fit the purpose of this account.

Fundamentally, as stated above, the data collected in this living theory thesis has been part of my ongoing life. I am immersed within this data as participant observer. In order to create my own living theory I have needed to view my life as a data source: both in my actions alone and with others. In accounts that I use, I take an *inside, looking out* (Rayner, 2005) perspective. In observations that I undertake, I am being observed by other members of the group in their accounts and I am the observer in my own account. In images and video that I use, I am looking at these through a loving eye. I am connecting directly with the participants involved.

The main types of data collection and analysis that have emerged as part of this living theory methodology have been threefold. Through accounts, observation and multimedia I believe to have captured events in a triangulated way. Each of these considers a different perspective and is a different way of looking at the same event. This has allowed validation of the enquiry represented here through both personal and social validation. Both I and other participants have reflected together and apart at significant points in the enquiry.

I turn firstly to consider accounts in which I have acted as a participant-observer. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) state that these strive:

"...to view situations through the eyes of the participants, to catch their intentionality and their interpretations of frequently complex situations, their meaning systems and the dynamics of the interaction as it unfolds." (Cohen et al., 2001, p.293)

Also:

"Although each of us sees the world from our own point of view, we have a way of speaking about our experiences which we share with those around us." (Cohen et al., 2001, p.293)

The accounts represented in this enquiry have, for the vast majority, involved several participants. It has been crucial to include accounts from different participants about the same event and not solely from my own perspective. This has allowed meaning

to be made about the significance of the account, with each perspective immersed within the original event:

“One can detect the researcher’s attempts to get below the surface data and to search for the deeper, hidden patterns that are only revealed when attention is directed to the ways that group members interpret the flow of events in their lives.”
(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p.300)

As I experience an event and account for it from one perspective, so other eyes look to do the same. This I believe is a living theory approach to accounts, in which the ongoing cross-referencing of accounts is shared between participants in an enquiry. This has allowed a systematic validation process to be undertaken as the different accounts are shared between the original participants and commented upon.

“Kitwood calls for cross-checking between researchers as a precaution against consistent but unrecognised bias in the accounts themselves.” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p.297)

Alongside the written accounts presented here, I also offer visual and video accounts of events that go beyond the understanding offered through text alone. I hope to communicate the importance of that visual and/or moving account to him/her. I believe that 15 seconds of a video account can communicate more than words can hope to about the relational meanings of my values and the energy that flows with them. A strength of this enquiry has been to combine both living accounts with written accounts related to the same event. This has allowed a diverse perspective of that event and has allowed the interpretation of the account to be validated.

The limitation however of using video and still images is that neither method runs constantly alongside the enquiry. A conscious choice must be made to capture an image or film a certain event. The richness of data lost is therefore significant and the evidence presented is fragmented as a data source. This is where written accounts carry strength as they can be produced after the event from the details retained within a participant’s mind. I believe that the choice to include some narratives and not others comes as a result of their perceived significance to the enquiry. Some accounts may be of epiphanies occurring in the enquiry, such as the *“What’s this all for?”* account I share with you in Chapter 6.4 of the student researchers’ first whole-school presentation. Others are located in the everyday, yet still stand out as

significant, such as my account of my after-school experiences in Chapter 5.1. The fact that they are retained so clearly in my own mind or my participants' minds means that they are worthy of consideration. I look towards accounts that aid me in answering the questions posed at the beginning of this enquiry.

I turn secondly to observation as a principal method of data collection that has been used consistently in this enquiry. Observation notes have accompanied accounts within this enquiry and they occurred separated from accounts; both account and observation offering a way of validating an interpretation of a specific event. Observations undertaken have allowed me to connect meaning to events. It has given me a tool for reflection, so that I consciously come to understand what may otherwise be subconsciously missed. Cohen et al (2001) say the following of observations:

“This enables researchers to understand the context of programmes, to be open-ended and inductive, to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things participants might not freely talk about..and to access personal knowledge.” (Cohen et al., 2001, p.305)

In this enquiry, observation has often been a subconscious and continuous act. It may record an event over a prolonged period of time such as a formal meeting, or it may record the briefest of encounters between participants. In all these circumstances I have acted as participant-observer of official meetings between participants and of chance meetings between them. In this way I have recorded observations of chance encounters between participants in Chapter 6.4 as a rich data source. These observations are not simply recorded as words; but as gestures, actions and the way in which participants interact with each other. My eyes and ears have acted as a *living* way of recording this data when neither video nor still camera has been available. I live out my role as observer continuously instead of choosing consciously the observations that I wish to make in advance. This has allowed me to be receptive to the observational data intertwined into my personal and professional life. The approach has unlimited this data source rather than limiting it through pre-selection of what and when to observe.

I record each observation in an unstructured way through my writing; replaying the observation in my mind before seeking to record its meaning for this enquiry. This unstructured approach has been significant in allowing me to capture the richness of

each observation made. I have not looked to categorize data, but instead to consider “thick descriptions” which lend themselves to accurate explanations and interpretations of events over time. Significantly, I have acted as participant-observer in the student researchers’ work over a sustained period of seven years. I acknowledge my subjectivity in this role. This supports me in understanding the energy and motivation shared between participants. A detached observer could not hope to capture the richness of this data captured through “*Mitfüh*”⁴. I have checked my personal interpretations through social validation by the participants involved in the observations themselves. This has been important to temper and validate my own acknowledged subjectivity.

Cohen et al. recognise the criticism aimed at participant observation studies:

“The accounts that typically emerge from participant observations echo the criticisms of qualitative data outlined earlier, being described as subjective, biased, impressionable, idiosyncratic and lacking in the precise quantifiable measures that are the hallmark of survey research and experimentation” (Cohen et al., 2001, p.313)

In seeking here to develop methods of data collection that can respond to the needs of the enquiry, I state that the subjective, biased and impressionable data supplied by observations of the research participants has been invaluable. I talk of motivational energy in the professional emerging from shared living standards of judgment. I can only hope to understand this through such data sources. The participants are immersed in their relationship together; they hold a shared bias about their life of enquiry together that has emerged through their work. Each has left an impression on the other in terms of the values that he/she holds. This is a rich data source that quantifiable measures could not hope to capture or understand. Quantifiable measures do not allow me to understand energising standards of judgment as a motivational force.

I feel that through this participatory validation of the observations undertaken here, I do not become blind to the peculiarities that I am supposed to be investigating (Cohen et al., 2001). Rather my eyes are open to the importance of these peculiarities in offering evidence of the shared living standards of judgment held between the group. The use of narratives by participants in this enquiry and the

⁴ A German noun expressing a feeling that is lived out by another

recording of conversations held have allowed me to embrace the importance of the unusual.

Both observational and account data have utilised multimedia alongside them. I believe that through combining observation, account and multimedia, the data sources within this enquiry are triangulated more fully. Multimedia is entwined into both observation and account. It serves as a living witness that records the events undertaken from an alternative viewpoint. I believe that multimedia serves both myself as principle author of this text and is a more inclusional way for my reader to engage with this text. The images and moving images allow my reader to share an event in a participatory way instead of solely connecting with text. They connect with my reader in a multisensory way. The use of audio-visual data is supported by Farren as she states:

“The visual record of the verbal and non-verbal communications is necessary to the communication of meanings. Without the visual record, significant meanings cannot be communicated through text alone.” (Farren, 2006, p.11)

Farren refers to a video clip in which Jack Whitehead and Jackie Delong share humour together in their roles as supervisor and research student. I believe that this clip demonstrates the way in which the audio-visual can connect with others in the values that are held between people. The web address is:

<http://people.bath.ac.uk/edsajw/multimedia//jimenomov/ajwjdwis.mov>

Multimedia also allows re-engagement with an event to a much greater level. Instead of the richness of that event fading as time passes, the immediacy of connection is retained. As I look now at the images and review the video included, I can live alongside that event again. The values that were expressed at that point in time between participants come to life again. This view is connected in Farren’s words as follows:

“I believe that the visual narratives of our own educational practices show what is possible in our different contexts to live values that we identify for ourselves as giving meaning and purpose to our lives and that carry our hopes for the future of humanity.” (Farren, 2006, p.18)

Cohen et al. (2001) and Whitehead (2006b) also support the use of audio-visual data in the following way:

“Audio-visual data has the capacity for completeness of material, reducing both the dependence on prior interpretations by the researcher, and the possibility again of only recording events which happen frequently.” (Cohen et al., 2001, p.313)

“On viewing the video-tape I experience and see myself expressing the life-affirming energy that I associate with the expression of loving what I do. What I am doing is communicating something I value to a group of educators in a way that is advocating enquiry into a process that I believe carries hope for the future of humanity. I am connecting the values of ubuntu to this hope. In the context of this workshop I am advocating an action research process of enquiring into living these values more fully in our practice and of sharing our accounts of our learning. This is what I am doing myself in the production of this video narrative.” (Whitehead, 2006b, p.1)

The use of the video and still camera within this enquiry has emerged over time. It has moved from a static position at the edge of an event to becoming immersed in the event itself. It has moved from tripod to hand and more importantly, eye, of a participant. I believe therefore that the events have been recorded through a loving eye of a participant that has the capacity to recognise and record the energy shared between participants. A true case in point is the recording of the humour shared between the Westwood St. Thomas in-house teacher-researcher group in Figure 14. This emergence has come about through my first experiences of the static camera being seen as an invader of the group’s privacy. It violated the space that was shared and participants felt that they could not interact between each other in a naturalistic way. As the camera was subsequently held and operated by a member of the group (predominantly the first generation of student researchers) the warmth and humour shared between the group could emerge on-screen.

The use of audio-visual data is strengthened by the written accounts and observations included here. As stated previously, the limitation of audio-visual methods is that they are limited in their capacity to record events spontaneously. These methods will never be as unlimiting or have the immediacy of response of the human eye. The strength of the methods of data collection presented here has therefore been the combination of account, observation and multimedia alongside each other. I have sought each time to employ the most appropriate method to

collect the richness of data produced throughout the enquiry. I have acted in a responsive way to the *lived out* enquiry, showing my *methodological inventiveness* (Dadds & Hart, 2001) through this approach. I believe that it is this responsive nature to data collection that best fits the needs of the enquiry and that allows me to respond to the questions posed at the beginning of this text. I therefore choose to present the visual and audio media embedded within the text, so that my reader can connect with these in a fluid way as he/she engages with the enquiry. It is this fluidity of data resource that is crucial. If these clips and images were placed in an Appendix, then the immediacy is lost that is the strength of this multimedia e-enquiry.

2.8 Assessing the quality of this practitioner-based account

Furlong & Oancea (2005) propose a framework for assessing quality in practitioner-based accounts. I wish now to consider the quality of this enquiry through this framework as a way of relating my work to the current debate in this area.

In the first of four dimensions, Furlong et al. (2005) consider the epistemic dimension of the research. They ask if the research is *trustworthy* and *authentic* in its undertaking and if the research provides an original contribution to knowledge. In response, I argue that the I-enquiry perspective of a living theory account brings ownership to the research process and responsibility to the outcomes that it provides. I have responsibility as a researcher to present a valid account that does justice to the learning emerging through the enquiry. I hold myself responsible for the enquiry as do the participants. Undertaking systematic social validation of this enquiry with the enquiry participants allows a more authentic account to be presented. I am not relying solely on my own reflections; I am asking participants to include their own voice through their own accounts and reflections. I am asking that they comment upon the way in which events have been represented here, in order to ensure the authenticity of data presented.

Brock-Utne (1996) states that qualitative research strives to record the multiple interpretations of events. He states that the notion of reliability is defined here as dependability. One of the dependability checks undertaken here has been, as stated above, respondent validation to the enquiry. It should also be noted the prolonged engagement with these participants in the field and the triangulation of observation, account and audio-visual data. Brock-Utne (1996) cites these elements as increasing the dependability of an enquiry. I see this participatory dependability as allowing the

enquiry to be authentic in its representation and crucially as holding meaning to the respondents.

With regards their second qualitative dimension, value for use, Furlong & Oancea state:

“If we are to appraise a piece of research on its value for use, we need to concentrate not on its actual impact – something that would be almost impossible to assess in the short term - but on its potential value and on the openings that it provides to realise that potential.” (Furlong and Oancea, 2005, pp.12-13)

This enquiry I believe offers two areas of potential value: firstly recognising that professional motivation stems from energising shared living standards of judgment and secondly that intergenerational student-led research brings about a sustainable dialogue for students and schools to work together.

This enquiry serves to show the *possible becoming probable* (Whitehead, Joan, 2004) as different generations of researchers work together to provide meaningful outcomes for their school. The journey illustrated here is not the reason for producing this narrative; more the hope that through this narrative others will consider the value of working in this way. Through this enquiry, an understanding has emerged about the interconnectivity between values and energy. I offer this to the academy in order that others can also realise the potential of their shared standards of judgment as an energising force.

I believe that the *value for use* and *epistemic* dimensions proposed by Furlong and Oancea (2005) share the same fundamental property. They both ask that the research reaches beyond its immediate sphere of influence and challenges others to consider new ways of working in the present and in the future.

In Furlong et al.'s third dimension for quality, *value for people and capacity building*, I argue that people are the motivation for this educational research and the lifeblood of the research itself. This enquiry seeks to understand the motivation for participants to engage with the research. It asks how the research has allowed the participants to grow and to learn as a result of their engagement with each other. I believe that this consideration of shared living standards of judgment held between intergenerational researchers holds hope for the future of humanity:

“Human beings learn many things, some of which are educational in the sense that the learning carries hope for the future of humanity.” (Whitehead, 2007, p.8)

This hope is expressed as a shared dialogue between teacher and student that values and recognises the other. This research has created opportunities for collaboration between people that were limited beforehand: between teachers and students, students and students and researchers and practitioners. This emphasis on learning together has been fundamental to the success of this enquiry.

In the final dimension for quality proposed by Furlong et al., the *economic* dimension of the research, I believe that this enquiry engages the resources already at the school’s disposal. Educational research must ultimately have value for the school and its students. In this enquiry students have been placed in the role of learning providers. Through engaging in research, they are giving something back to the school that invests in them. Through dialogue together, talking about learning is understood and shared between teacher, student and the school.

Summary of this Chapter

In this Chapter I have described my methodological approach for the enquiry which now unfolds. I have explicated how the living theory approach offered here unlimits me as a researcher and allows me to draw upon other research paradigms as appropriate. Dadds & Hart (2001) reminds us that *methodological inventiveness* allows a methodological approach to be responsive to the needs of the enquiry undertaken. Similarly, Ferguson (2008) states that:

“It takes courage and open-mindedness to consider and embrace alternative ways of researching and presenting that research.” (Ferguson, 2008, p.213)

I believe that this courage comes as a result of experience gained through the life of a researcher. It is through this engagement with other methodological paradigms that a researcher is able to come to an understanding of what best fits the needs of a particular enquiry. I have come to choose living theory methodology through my seven years experience as a practitioner-researcher, as I know that this methodological approach allows me to work in a reflexive and responsive way; placing *I* at the forefront of the enquiry.

I look, not to fit into a particular methodological approach, but instead to select approaches in order to build a personalised jigsaw that can truly support the needs of this enquiry. I believe that living theory supports a researcher in making appropriate choices and in being responsive to their enquiry needs. Each researcher engaged within a living theory paradigm is able to build an appropriate methodological profile. This profile is grounded in the methodological choices and approaches that the researcher has previously considered, yet it also seeks to take these approaches further through experience and to develop new ways of working alongside these. Living theory is an *unlimiting* methodological paradigm that allows a researcher to produce an enquiry from an *I* perspective that takes his/her recognition of the self as a living contradiction further. It gives him/her the courage to be and to seek to live out his/her values more fully.

This approach is however an inclusional approach that recognises and respects the participants that form part of the enquiry. This is because the researcher is immersed in the *I* enquiry and in his/her life lived out with others. A living theory perspective allows the researcher to take educational space shared between participants and to consider how this evolves alongside the enquiry. It is a reflexive and responsive way of working that responds to the needs of the participants and the space shared together.

I now go on to ground the account in the location in which it has taken place and with the participants who come together to form this account, in which the methodological approach that I have described to you is lived out.