

Chapter 8: Standing, looking back

This section of the enquiry allows me to reflect and make meaning from what has occurred, and also to respond to the key questions that I asked at the beginning of this enquiry. I ask alongside this if the methodology that I have employed (as principal narrator of this *living* enquiry) has allowed the enquiry to respond and develop in a way that is worthy of sharing.

I see this section as space in which to reflect upon the significance of what has occurred. I consider how shared living standards of judgment in the personal carry life-affirming energy that motivate in the professional. I consider how my shared living standard of recognizing the other, shared with my husband, has led to support the development of intergenerational student-led research as a way of recognizing the contribution that students can make to the school. I ask how this enquiry is significant in its contribution to original knowledge and how others including researchers, students, practitioners and schools, may gain from it. Only if this significance is clear to the reader of this text have I succeeded in my role as narrator of this enquiry.

8.1 Evolving living educational standards of judgment

I still remember vividly the journey into my new school in September 2003. On that day, as on all days, I carried the strength and motivation afforded me by the loving shared standards of judgments that I hold with my husband. I wanted to be worthy of the trust that he placed in me through *being the best that I could be* in my new role. I looked to *recognize the other* and the *contribution that they make*. I looked to recognize *work well done*. I wanted to draw upon our shared commitment to embrace and enjoy professional life:

“From (the student’s) comments it seems that my values are being drawn out: my sense of enjoyment of education; my sense of democratic approaches to education; my sense of wanting to get the best from education for people; my sense of raising expectations; my sense of valuing the student voice.” (Riding, S., 2008, p.30)

The interconnectivity between energy in the personal and professional has been profound for me. To ignore the effect of one upon the other would form an obscured picture of the life that we lead. Simon and I believe that we have the right to enjoy the workplace and the shared professional relationships of which we are a part. Senge

(1990) quotes the president of Herman Miller, Ed Simon, as one person who embraces this concept of *enjoying* the professional:

“Why can’t work be one of those wonderful things in life? Why can’t we cherish and praise it, versus seeing work as a necessity? Why can’t it be a cornerstone in people’s lifelong process of developing ethics, values, and in expressing humanities and the arts? Why can’t people learn through the process that there’s something about the beauties of design, of building something to last, something of value? I believe that this is inherent in work, more so than in many other places” (Senge, 1990, p.144)

My husband arrives home each evening both energised and exhausted by his working day. The kitchen becomes the arena for a discussion of his achievements and frustrations. He needs this time to celebrate what he has chosen to do in his professional life and to recognize his passion for his work. Successes to celebrate and challenges to creatively work with reinforce this view.

I have learned through Simon to embrace the enjoyment of the professional life that I lead. I acknowledge my own value of learning and how educational practice affords me this opportunity. I acknowledge that after eight hours teaching foreign languages in a classroom, I wish to return home to continue learning the languages that I teach: to hold onto the enjoyment that this brings to me.

I therefore demand much from my workplace. I demand that it is a place where I can learn and where I can develop. I demand that it is a place of enjoyment for those sharing space within it. In this way, I sit within the space created by intergenerational student research and seek enjoyment through the shared learning that takes place.

Amongst the student researchers, there is a strong sentiment of wanting to enjoy their work as researchers. Earlier I quoted the words of these researchers as they shared their enjoyment of leading the student learning forum and in receiving the Headteacher’s commendation of their work. On several occasions one of these researchers has stated how the presentation of their research is *“the best bit”* of the enquiry they undertake, for it is a time when they are recognised by the school.

At the end of a school day, my hope is that other practitioners feel as I do: reviewing the day’s events whilst considering *“How do I improve what I am doing?”* (Whitehead,

1995) This improvement does not however stem from a deficit model, but rather from an energised model of ongoing improvement. I enjoy improvement. Whitehead's question reflects the standard that Simon and I hold together of asking other to be the best that (s)he can be in improving educational practice. I hope to inspire others to embrace this same value as others working within the field of student research have inspired me. Jean Ruddock is such a person, whose work in this field has been inspirational. I feel I connect very much with her views on the role of students within schools as active and vibrant members of the community. In her recent obituary published in the Guardian, the following appeared:

"She argued for the necessity of teachers letting students know what they were trying to do and why, rather than simply doing something very differently, however imaginative and potentially liberating it might be... Teachers and students needed to be encouraged to move towards a commitment to the mutuality of joint exploration, described by the teacher Ted Aoki, in a phrase she quoted regularly, as "a communal venturing forth".

Second young people's perspectives on learning and teaching, combined with their holistic experiences of schooling, contain important messages about these matters that could contribute significantly to school improvement at both an organisational level and on a day-to-day basis in the classroom.

Third, some dialogic relationships and a much more open partnership between teachers and students are both possible and necessary if student perspectives are to be honest, accessible and productive of real change.

We will miss Jean's fierce integrity, her sense of fun, her kindness, her modesty, and her resolute belief in the beauty of life and the necessity of young people's contribution to a "new order of experience". (Fielding, 2007, p.1)

Jack Whitehead would refer to Ruddock as leading a "*productive educational life*" (Whitehead, 2005, p.2). I hope to have the same passion in my own work, asking that this work is the *best that it can be*. Simon reflects on how the Westwood St. Thomas in-house teacher-researcher group held this standard between them:

“Our meeting was once a week. Twelve members of staff who wouldn’t normally talk to one another talking about how you can improve your practice in school. What can I do better? You think of the theoretical side from the University, ‘Well actually this is what theory says about this...’ Mix all these together and you come up with lots of ideas and you can then go away and try to improve. What was important, was that every member of staff who went to those meetings accepted they could do their job better and I think that is one of the hardest things for teachers to admit... that we can do it “better”.” (Riding. S., 2008, p.30)

Having the space to question and reflect was fundamental in the group’s success. When both Simon and I left the school and hence this shared space, we retained this standard between us and sought to live this out in our new schools.

In this way, within the student-researcher group, individuals have challenged the students to improve what they are doing. The intergenerational student researchers, alongside the H.E. Researcher and I, have asked the group to improve in an energising way. We share the value that the research must be *the best that it can be* in order to convince the school of the true value of intergenerational student-led research.

I refer now to Shane’s (first generation researcher) comments made during the students’ initial enquiry, as he worked with the students of the second generation:

“At Westwood St. Thomas, we didn’t really own what was going on..we were asked about our opinions by various teachers instead. I felt quite empty about being asked but having no ownership over the research myself. Here (referring to my current school) not only are you (to the students) aware of what is going on, you are also in charge of it. You decide what the focus is, how you research into it and where you are going. This is my understanding of what action research is. It is being in charge, knowing where you are going and how you’re going to do it! It’s also about changing your plans as well when you need to.” (March 2006, during a student researchers’ meeting)

Simon, in his work developing practitioner-led enquiry, asked the emerging practitioner-researchers to reflect upon their enquiry and to improve what they were doing as a result:

“If we move onto the importance of the group, as a school we are starting to see that each of the research projects has filtered into the whole school improvement. Now, looking at the different enquiries, we are starting to ask “How can we make use of these?” we are starting to use the skills that people have more. People have got good research skills; those who have actually thought it through know how to do action research. And that is useful in terms of improving what is going on in classrooms.” (Riding, S., 2008, p.60)

The standards lived out within my personal and professional life form part of my emergent *living educational theory*:

“I believe that a systematic reflection provides insights into the nature of the descriptions and explanations which we would accept as valid accounts of our educational development. I claim that a living educational theory will be produced by such accounts.” (Whitehead, p.67, 1993)

The creation of a shared living educational theory has allowed me to consider the *“knowledge-making capacity”* (DeLong, 2002) of the research, in that it truly reflects what has taken place and invites the other in:

“Throughout this text I am attempting to recognise the other within it: through my educative value of living through others I am attempting to live through the experiences of the other in order to try and improve their educational experiences as well as my own.” (Riding, S., 2006, p.107)

I believe that *through* my work *with* the student researchers, the co-creation of knowledge has occurred between us. The in-house practitioner-researcher group at my husband’s school is creating knowledge through inter-relational enquiry that allows each enquirer to see through different eyes. As these practitioner-researchers (and student researchers) live together in enquiry, my husband and I are living *with* and *through* each other to understand the significance of this work. The intergenerational nature of the enquiry taking place at both schools also becomes clear. At Simon’s school, the Newly Qualified Teacher enquires alongside the classroom practitioner of twenty years. At my school, the first generation enquires alongside the third.

This research has allowed me to recognise the evolving nature of the living educational values that Simon and I hold. I believe that through our contact with others, shared meanings of values evolve that reflect and define our ongoing *productive educational life* (Whitehead, 2005, p.2). In this way, my engagement with students has seen the value of student research grow for me. This value has seen a transformation from teachers working with students as active participants in research, to teachers becoming active participants in student-led research. Simon and I both look to creatively challenge the system within which we work, in order that it may accept a new way of learning about itself through student or practitioner-led research. We both view *learning as an improvement* (Biesta, 2006) that is the journey of any school:

“The journey seemed possible, and better than throwing myself over the cliff. But still, it did not seem a very exciting or useful way to travel, with so much landscape to explore on either side of the narrow track, and so many ways to explore apart from following his single step. And how would I carry with me all the garlands, sarongs, shells, and songs of previous journeys, if I was not allowed to offer them and share them on the way?” (Spiro, 2006, p.1)

This creative path has seen the value of enquiry evolve alongside Simon’s work. This path has seen him move from being a teacher-researcher within the group at Westwood St. Thomas to creating the space for such a group at his new school. Although Simon is working with teachers and I with students, the space we look to create invites teachers and students alike to become a part of the process.

Alongside the emergent living educational values that we share in our marriage, so our enquiries begin to merge at various points. We both look to examine the impact of the relational within our enquiries. We both seek to give voice to the enquiry participants in a dialogic way. We both seek to fulfil our values in the workplace. This mergence can no better be demonstrated than through bringing our enquiries together within this space. The first point at which the values shared between us, is through embracing the pleasure our educational life brings to us. In this way:

“For me the classroom is a safe place to live. It is a place of fun and enjoyment. It is a place of possibilities...Every day I smile. Every day I laugh. Every day I build relationships and enjoy what I do.” (Riding, S., 2008, p.60)

“Through this writing, I hope to show how teachers can learn from students and most importantly embrace the often forgotten word of enjoyment in this process.”

(Riding, K., 2008, p.157)

Simon and I also share the importance of recognising the *voice of the other* within our enquiries, and seek to examine the nature of influence that these significant others have:

“This thesis addresses the vastly important influence of relationships within education and explores how these relationships impact on my practice as an educator. The text incorporates and captures these relationships through enabling these others to speak through their own voice.” (Riding, S., abstract, 2008)

“This thesis is centred on how relationships allow us to realise our dream of learning as we live and create together... I aim to share with you a dialogic approach that recognises we as the participants of the research. These participants read and engage with my writing, and challenge or support the claims to know that I make on our behalf.” (notes from my own journal, May 2006)

We both look to create space in which practitioner-researcher or student-researcher can emerge and subsequently be valued by the school:

“This thesis essentially explores how I was able to create the shared space necessary to enable teacher-research to occur and flourish... This thesis reflects on the potential impact of enabling teachers to engage as teacher-researchers within their own school and accounts for the process I went through in order to make this happen.” (Riding, S., 2008, abstract)

“I have been able to gain much pleasure from working with these individuals in our shared space, asking that student-led research be promoted and accepted by the school.” (notes from my own journal, March 2007)

Our tutor, Jack Whitehead, makes the following comments about the living dynamic that Simon and I share:

“I believe that the way you are developing your 'relational' account, with your relationally dynamic standards of judgement is most significant. I'm sensing you both

developing a relational ontology, through your loving relationship and socio-cultural identification as being husband and wife and mother and father as well as educators and educational researchers. I've this strong feeling, with evidence in your writing that you are clarifying the meanings of your relational ontologies in the course of your lives and forming new living epistemological standards of educational judgement as your produce your theses.” (e-mail communication, February.2007)

The merging of our enquiries at various points shows our increasing influence upon the other in our life of enquiry. The process of writing and reflection that this allows has brought about the recognition of relational ontologies that emerge through our lives. We have moved from two researchers fiercely protective of our individual research, to an inclusional way of enquiring. We have matured in our approach as we have matured in our roles as husband and wife. We have become co-enquirers, going so far as to work with each other in our current schools and opening up our enquiry to critique. We are supportive of the other, hoping that our support will allow each other to improve as a result. The permeable boundaries between our enquiries have evolved so that this space is now held between us. This is evident in the development of living *epistemological* standards of judgement held between us. I believe that this indicates our *shared love for enquiry as pursuit of new knowledge together* (Cho, 2005) into the world alongside the traditional love between man and wife, mother and father. This space is described by Farren (2005) as our “*web of betweenness*”:

“My values have been transformed into living standards of judgement that include a 'web of betweenness' and a 'pedagogy of the unique'. The 'web of betweenness' refers to how we learn in relation to one another. I see it as a way of expressing my understanding of education as 'power with', rather than 'power over', others. It is this 'power with' that I have tried to embrace as I attempt to create a learning environment in which I, and participants (this is how I describe students on the postgraduate programmes), can grow personally and professionally. A 'pedagogy of the unique' respects the unique constellation of values that each practitioner-researcher contributes to a knowledge base of practice.” (Farren, 2005, p.1)

This “*web of betweenness*” grows and evolves as we learn through the other and as we bring with us the learning that we share with significant others. In the space that we have created for practitioner and student-led research, we each seek to enable the individuals in this space, giving them the time and resources needed to develop

their own sense of enquiry. This space embraces *living* action research as a way of learning between its participants, in which boundaries with others are permeable so that they may learn alongside and make meaning of what has been and what is yet to come:

“Living theory and living action research is the process by which I make sense of the world, how I put my (o)ntological experience into practice and then into words. I can do this because of the relational, loving community in which my learning has been nurtured. I have come to know my truths through knowing, being part of, and being understood within this community. That does not mean that I expect my explanations of my learning to be understood by others outside, but that by being part of this community, I am more able to develop explanations that make sense to others.”
(Farren, 2005, p.1)

The traditional power relations between teacher and student have evolved through this enquiry, as students now ask teachers to work alongside them in their research. Similarly Simon removes his mask as Senior Leader within the practitioner-researcher group and becomes a co-enquirer within it.

The *pedagogy of the unique* (Farren, 2005) that Simon and I hold as individuals stems from our *web of betweenness* (Farren, 2005): contact with significant others that has asked us to consider new values and ways of working. Naidoo stated in 2005 that: *I am because we are* and I believe that Simon and I exemplify this way of living. As time has progressed and we have each moved onto new schools, we still carry within us the values that we shared with other practitioner-researchers from Westwood St. Thomas School. The lifeblood of these values remains and forms part of our epistemology, meaning in turn that our uniqueness as individuals comes about as a result of the shared life we have led.

8.2 Permeable and impermeable boundaries between us

Church (2005) states:

“Threads join us together through the knots of our joint activity. It is the relational, engaged in the creational, which creates this structure. The threads tie together in knots and create the strength to hold us. The coordinator or secretariat is the artisan.

Keeps the nets in good order, knows which knots are best for what, notices the breaks and fraying and seeks to rejoin them.” (Church, 2005, p.87)

The joint activity that Church describes is my participation in student-led enquiry. It is the shared dynamic standards shared between this group alongside those between my husband and I. The “knots” between these participants are fluid and evolve over time. New knots are formed as new researchers arrive, eager to take up the challenge. In my role as teacher-advocate for the student researchers, I do not seek to repair all the frays, but instead acknowledge that some students need to move on. The roles of participants also evolves, with those once leading content to listen and those who were once silent finding their own voice.

Church (2005) draws upon the shared purpose of networks in the following way:

“Through this process I enquire with others into the nature of networks, and their potential for supporting us in lightly-held communities which liberate us to be dynamic, diverse and creative individuals working together for a common purpose. I tentatively conclude that networks have the potential to increase my and our capacity for love.” (Church, 2005, abstract)

I agree wholeheartedly with Church’s description of a network as being “*lightly held together*”. This for me embraces the evolving nature of boundaries between individuals that is essential for real collaboration to take place. I feel that all are transient members of a particular network and that as some leave and others join there is a continuous renewal process. The student-researcher group is held together by a core purpose of a shared love for research and what results it can bring. There is still a need for one or more persons to hold all the balloons together to celebrate success and to give the group roots. This has been my role; learning to let the balloons go when their time has come. Roles have however merged, altered and evolved within the network of the student researchers. I have coordinated and I have listened, I have been active and passive within the network, listening to learn and voicing my thoughts.

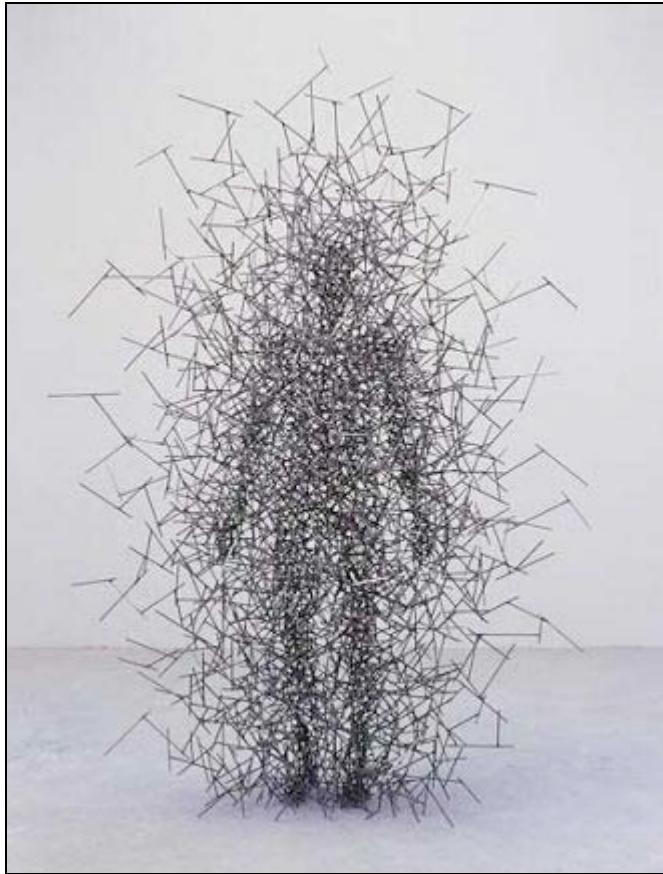


Figure 29 Gormley's Quantum Cloud XV (2000)

Gormley's cloud reflects the evolving nature of the researcher group, in which members leave and others join in an intergenerational capacity. Keeping the group together is the core purpose of shared enquiry; the shared living and human standard of love in the pursuit of knowledge into the world. The shape of the group is dynamic; a living quality responding to its environment whilst seeking to improve it at the same time. Of this period of his work, Gormley states:

*"It was important that it was through the repeated action of touching, forming, placing apart from the body and making conscious, that each person found their own form. The extraordinary thing was the distinctiveness of the forms that were found."
(Gormley, 2000, p.1)*

This quality of distinctiveness I see reflected in the student researchers' group. The group exists for a unique purpose within the school. The individuals who form the group are distinct, giving the group its own distinct qualities. I ask where the group would be if it were not for the input of the generations of researchers coming together in their common purpose, each participant adding to the group in a unique way.

Recognising the nature of the boundaries between individuals has been a learning curve within this enquiry. I have tested the boundaries that I share with others, in order to see how permeable they are. Where relationships of mutual trust have formed between myself and others, these boundaries are exciting places. They represent the coming together of ideas and of learning, and evolve as collaboration takes place.

On the other side, I have also needed to learn where boundaries once permeable have become impermeable and where the journey between me and another is at an end. This has indeed been the case with the work between the H.E. Researcher within this enquiry and me. Where once the boundaries we shared were malleable and exciting places to be, our shared living values began to fragment after six years of shared work. The boundaries have grown dense and impermeable as our values have ceased to be shared and our ongoing enquiries take us in opposing directions. This leaves me with a sense of sadness that this journey is one at an end, yet I still retain the learning and energy from our shared work with the student researchers. Recognising that for some individuals their shared path must end, is important in giving those involved an opportunity to invest their energy elsewhere. Where continuing along the same path would have been most damaging, a full stop has been put in place which has allowed both of us to move on.

8.3 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations that I make within this enquiry come from an emergent way of working between teacher and student. These considerations have emerged from experiences shared between individuals that have asked them to consider how they relate to and respect each other. The guidance provided by both the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1981) have supported the research group in developing a set of living ethical principles that it adheres to its life of enquiry. The BERA guidelines allow me to focus upon research undertaken with young people, whilst the Kemmis et al. (1981) guidelines provide generic principles.

As this enquiry is focussed to a great degree on enquiry undertaken with young people, I felt again that the ethical procedures offered by BERA warranted separate consideration. I need to be convinced that I have acted ethically as an adult researcher in a position of responsibility, and with it, power. The consideration of

others' frameworks has supported the living theory approach taken by this enquiry, through the need to develop a participatory method of ethical considerations that takes into account both adult and child. As principle narrator of this enquiry, I needed to respect the others participating within it and their own knowledge.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) states that:

"The Association considers that all educational research should be conducted with an ethic of respect for:

- *The person*
- *Knowledge*
- *Democratic values*
- *The Quality of Educational Research*
- *Academic freedom" (2004, p. 5)*

I believe that I have undertaken this enquiry and the representation of this enquiry in an inclusive way. This recognises the participants within the research, how their knowledge contributes to this enquiry and the democratic values that determine their right to choose their level and nature of participation. These *participants* are defined as:

"...the active or passive subjects of this enquiry and its observations." (BERA, 2004, p.5)

In this definition I include all those who have shared the boundaries of this enquiry, both those researching alongside the enquiry group and those affected directly or indirectly by the research undertaken. I believe that I have operated within an *ethic of respect* (BERA, 2004) that has asked me as a researcher to act in a responsible, moral and responsive way towards these significant others. Kemmis & McTaggart (1981) address the need for others who have a stake in the improvement to shape and form the work. I believe that I have listened to the comments made by participants in this enquiry. I have included within the account their ideas and wishes. This has included both supportive comments and challenges to my own representation of events. In part has led to significant amendment of the enquiry presented here. An example is Appendix 1, in which I outline the significance of my relationship with Graham as a co-researcher in this enquiry. Graham, in response to my writing, asked for several amendments. In his words:

"I'm not saying that I didn't say that or didn't think in that way, it's just that the way it's represented just doesn't sound like it's coming from me." (July 2004 in response to Appendix 1)

Part of this ongoing connection with the enquiry participants has been the systematic sharing of the enquiry as it has emerged. Kemmis et al. (1981) refer to this principle as *"keeping the work visible"* in terms of the written enquiry. I believe that this is significant in allowing participants a more immediate way of responding to the enquiry than simply by presenting a *fait accompli* at the end of my writing. The immediacy of the events described is also retained in much richer detail by the participants through this approach.

Part of my responsibility as principle narrator of the text has been to ask the participants for their informed consent prior to the research commencing:

"The Association takes voluntary informed consent to be the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway." (BERA, 2004, p.6)

"Observe protocol: Take care to ensure that the relevant persons, committees, and authorities have been consulted, informed and that the necessary permission and approval has been obtained." (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1981, p.150)

In the case of the young people who have undertaken student-led intergenerational research in this enquiry, I needed therefore to seek permission from a parent or guardian. Each student participant involved therefore had a letter sent home to parents asking for their consent for their son's images, audio-visual inclusions and quotations to be referred to explicitly, at the start of the research process. This letter stated clearly that any participant had the right to withdraw their consent at any time and also to review and respond to the way in which their participation was represented in the enquiry.

This however seemed to bypass the principle participants however, and I proceed alongside this to directly ask the students themselves for their informed consent at the outset of the research process. I stated that I felt it was important for both their parents *and* their own consent to be obtained, and that the individual's right to

withdraw their permission would always remain intact. I felt that I needed to respond to their evolving views of the enquiry as the student researchers matured in their research experience. I needed to recognise that the 14 year old researcher may have a different or more developed viewpoint to that of his 11 year former self; that his view or reflection upon an event would alter over time.

As stated above, I explained directly to the enquiry participants that I would systematically share with them the account that I was producing, so that they could respond to and challenge interpretations that I had made. The BERA ethical framework (2004) refers to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (1989), concluding that the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration of any educational research and that children should be granted the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them. I believe here to have gone beyond BERA's guidance that the enquiry only be shared with participants upon its conclusion:

"The Association considers it good practice for researchers to debrief participants at the conclusion of the research and to provide them with copies of any reports or other publications arising from their participation" (BERA, 2004, p.10)

I consistently reinforced the message that the inclusion of their words and image would be anonymized and that their permission could be withdrawn at any given point. Each student however stated clearly that they felt it was their right to have their work acknowledged in the enquiry and indeed expressed anger at being left without a voice in their own enquiry:

"In some contexts it will be the expectation of participants to be identified." (BERA, 2004, p.9)

"Accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality (or for naming participants.)" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1981, p.150)

This decision to name student participants in this enquiry has come from the feelings of injustice that the first generation of student researchers felt at not being named in previous research that I had undertaken. I have discussed their feelings of anger within this enquiry (Chapter 4) and this has made me aware that the student researchers have the right to be named if they so wish. This has been a way of

working that has been agreed between the student researcher group and me. As some student researchers have left the group I felt it important to continue to share my writing via the school website so that the ongoing enquiry remained visible to those involved. This was particularly the case when the first generation left the school to go onto University.

The student researchers' inclusions within this enquiry remain unaltered where included, as I wished for these inclusions to an authentic representation of their voices. The BERA guidelines however state that:

"In the case of participants whose age ...may limit the extent to which they can be expected to understand...researchers must fully explore alternative ways in which they can be enabled to make authentic responses." (BERA, 2004, p.7)

An authentic response I view as a response that comes directly from the child without modification. If a school is to truly learn from intergenerational student-led research, a shared language needs to emerge that allows both sides to have their authentic responses understood. If an adult researcher asks the children involved to enter their arena of research, therefore restricting the research terms used to those accepted and recognised within educational research, then the quality and purpose of the children's involvement is compromised. Each generation of researchers has their own language and understanding that they bring with them into the enquiry. This enriches the enquiry space and opens up new ways of thinking and new concepts. This is a position supported by Bernstein:

"Our task is to assume the responsibility to listen carefully, to use our linguistic, emotional and cognitive imagination to grasp what is being said in "alien" traditions. We must do this in a way where we resist the dual temptation of either facilely assimilating what others are saying in our own categories and language without doing justice to what is genuinely different and may be incommensurable or simply dismissing what the "other" is saying as incoherent nonsense." (Bernstein, 1991, pp. 65-66)

This enquiry has sought to embrace this diversity and not to limit it. The key has been to involve all participants, adult and child, in these learning conversations so that all perspectives are considered. An eleven year-old researcher brings a unique perspective to an enquiry as does a student researcher about to leave for Higher

Education. Each is an expert in his own right with regards the knowledge that he holds about learning. The intergenerational approach here has sought to evolve boundaries between generations of students and researchers so that authentic perspectives are considered which are rich and embrace the social spectrum of the school.

As each new generation of researchers has joined the process, part of the initial work undertaken by the established student researchers and me has been to explain how their participation will be represented. This has been a shared discussion in which the established norms of the group are extended to involve this new group of young people. Parental consent was sought at each initial point of a further generation joining the group.

This way of working, in which the enquiry has been shared with participants as it has emerged, has been a vital ethical consideration that has remained constant. When one participant subsequently withdrew her permission for her inclusions to be named, I sought to make these anonymous to respect her wishes. I did not, as the BERA guidelines suggest, attempt to ask her to give her consent again. I felt that this process would have been more harmful than good, and I choose instead to respect her wishes as they stood. I am supported by Kemmis & McTaggart (1981) in choosing to still include this participant's inclusions in this enquiry in retaining my academic freedom. Kemmis & McTaggart (1981) state that researchers should maintain the right to report their work provided that the accounts do not necessarily expose or embarrass those involved. This I feel is indeed the case here.

In its final consideration of ethical guidelines with regards researching with children, the BERA framework states:

“Researchers must recognize concerns relating to the bureaucratic burden of much research, and must seek to minimize the impact of their research on the normal working and workloads of their participants.” (BERA, 2004, p. 8)

Within the student-led enquiry undertaken here, the intergenerational nature of the group has reduced and shared the bureaucratic burden of the research between participants. The physical process and time needed to conduct their enquiries has been undertaken voluntarily outside of their own commitments and academic studies.

Such wide-ranging or comprehensive enquiries would not have been possible without the range of participants being so wide.

On the other hand, student-led enquiry has taken the burden of undertaking enquiry away from teacher-researchers working within the school. I myself do not have the time within my professional day to undertake the enquiries proposed. The school has a new way of learning about itself that employs the resources already available to it. The benefits of this approach come full circle as the students see their ideas and conclusions brought into the classroom as a result of enquiries into good learning practice.

These ethical principles shared between the group and me have evolved to become part of the shared living standards of judgment that the group live by. *Recognising the other and the contribution that they make* have been two foundational values that are reflected within the ethical way of working undertaken by the group. They have emerged through dialogue and they have emerged through practice. They are based upon the best way of working that the group has developed through experience. They are living ethical principles that evolve as new challenges are met (such as the case highlighted above) and as new experiences are undergone. They are reflective of the dialogic quality of relationship shared between the group.

Buber (1957) places importance on this dialogic quality of relationship. This idea is for me central to the ethical consideration of this enquiry, emerging out of a relationship in which each participant has learned to acknowledge the other.

I connect in this way with Rogers (1995) as he talks of a *person-centred approach*. The ethical considerations here have emerged from people recognising each other and the contribution that they can make. Ethics is about people and how they seek to relate and respect to one another. Both Buber and Rogers view the role of an educator as recognising the other in the students with which one works; establishing trust together and communicating with each other in a mutually intelligible dialogue:

“The relation in education is one of pure dialogue.....Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists – that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists, meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth. Because this human being exists, in

the darkness the light lies hidden, in fear salvation, and in the callousness of one's fellow-men the great Love." (Buber, 1961, pp.124-125)

Throughout this enquiry, I have highlighted the importance of trust. I believe that trust needs to be established between individuals before they can begin to learn and truly communicate together. I also consider here how students can initiate this dialogue about trust, as I myself have been shown in my role as teacher-advocate for student-led research. I also recognise that the role of educator is not pre-defined as synonymous with teacher, for the students have shown me how they too are educators in their own right. A recognition of the other which is founded in trust must ethically consider both teacher and student.

Hodes (1972) talks of Buber living out his own view of an educator. I strongly connect here with the view of not wanting students to follow the educator docilely, but to take their own individual paths. Buber talks of posing questions that forces pupils to find their own answers. Within this enquiry, I have been honest with the student researchers from the outset that the research path ahead was not pre-defined and that they would be creating this enquiry themselves. This for me was a founding ethical principle of the research, in my honesty of the unknown path to be created ahead. However, as Buber talks of pupils' own paths possibly challenging the teacher, I have demonstrated within this enquiry how the student researchers have creatively worked *with* the school to widen and sustain the impact of their research. They have met challenges from teachers and have looked at these challenges as a way of strengthening the integrity of their work.

As the students have faced these challenges together in an intergenerational way, they have lived humanely together in society (Hodes, 1972, pp.136-7). Living educational space has been created between teacher-student and student-student in which confidence has been won and both have been accepted as a person (Hodes, 1972, pp.136-7). Buber (1957) talks of the importance of winning the confidence of pupils; of trust between student and teacher so that students feel ready to ask. I talk within this enquiry of the importance of earning trust before either student or teacher can begin to share the space of enquiry together. I also talk of the importance of dialogue shared and owned by all members of the enquiry group, so that communication can be made and understood on an equal footing between student and adult researchers.

Buber, in relation to an educator, states:

“You do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them.” (Buber, 1957, p.13)

The building of a shared language and the living out of shared standards of judgment between members of the research group has led to an *aliveness* shared between us. This energy is shared through both verbal and non-verbal gestures: conversations, glances and smiles. Yet the power of the communication between us is affirmed through these gestures, and allows me to feel wholly alive in the pleasure of the shared work undertaken. It is this energy that allows each of the participants in the group to continue. I have talked in this enquiry of the ebbs and flows of energy in life cycles, and of the need for people to either take or contribute to this energy at given points. Simon, on his transition to Senior Leadership, needed to take energy from our shared living standards, whilst I needed to do the same two years previously.

The ethical considerations of this research framework have been built through a dialogue about what is important. As stated above, recognising the other and the contribution that s/he makes are assumptions that have underpinned the research work undertaken. In wishing to act in a humane way towards each other, it has been important to retain these living standards of judgment as part of the ethical assumptions of the enquiry group. Therefore, when relating to the Buber-Rogers (1957) dialogue, I connect strongly with Buber’s statement of the importance of an *I-Thou* relationship:

“The one-sided inclusion of teaching can become an I-Thou relationship when it is grounded in a common situation, mutuality and trust.” (Rogers, 1995, p.191)

I refer to the living out of shared values between me as teacher-advocate for student-led research and students as student researchers. I remain a teacher and an educator, yet the students have also taught me the value of recognising them as human beings. I learn from them as they learn from me, but more importantly, we learn from each other. It is this element of learning that I feel is not represented in Buber’s statement of an *I-Thou* relationship. I have grown in my understanding as a person, in terms of the value of student-led intergenerational research to the school community. This has been a journey of understanding undertaken by

intergenerational researchers working within the school: both adult and child. Together we have grown as a group through sharing these standards:

“I am no longer simply talking about psychotherapy, but about a point of view, a philosophy, an approach to life, a way of being, which fits any situation in which growth-of a person, a group or a community-is part of the goal.” (Rogers, 1995, p.17)

The learning space that the group has created has allowed both teacher and student researcher to grow. I have come to understand that my classroom work allows students to progress and enjoy their learning, whilst the students have seen the value of their work to the school. Natural curiosity about the other side of teaching and learning has come from both sides. I have not unlocked the students’ curiosity in my role as teacher advocate; moreover they have unlocked my own.

“(I urge) that teaching focus on the whole person, that a learning environment of acceptance, genuineness and empathic understanding be created.. that efforts be made to build self-esteem in the student and to unlock natural curiosity.” (Rogers, 1995, p.10)

Through the student researchers’ work, they have connected to a greater extent with the educational community of which they have been a part. This was noted by Harry (2) as he stated:

“Before I used to think that teachers would just turn up...I didn’t realise so much planning was involved.” (2004, in conversation)

Similarly, when referring to the role of psychologists in schools, Rogers urged them:

“.. not to content themselves with treating students damaged by an obsolete and irrelevant educational system, but to change the system, to participate in designing an educational experience that would liberate the students’ curiosity and enhance the joy of learning.” (Rogers, 1995, p.8)

At every stage of the research, the ethical considerations shared between the group have emerged as shared living standards of judgment between us. I cannot separate

the ethical dimension of this enquiry from these living standards for they share the same qualities: recognising the other and the contribution that s/he can make, asking the other to be the best that s/he can be. I believe that this intertwining goes beyond adhering to an ethical framework, in that the enquiry lives alongside these principles that are grounded in dialogue and experiences shared together. These principles evolve as new experiences and challenges are encountered; not to lessen their importance but to take into account situations that the group had not previously encountered. The anger of the first generation student researchers at not being named within my own previous research and the decision of one researcher to have her contributions made anonymous are cases in point. The living theory approach to this enquiry has allowed these ethical principles to emerge in a responsive and responsible way to the enquiry participants. It allows the living nature of shared enquiry to be represented in a similar way.

8.4 The role of literature within this enquiry

The internal reader who has responded to this enquiry made the following comment:

“I think your work would benefit from deeper and wider engagement with literature and being explicit about the role of literature in your research. Which bodies of research did you (and might you further) engage with, why?” (Barrett, 2007, p.8)

This leads me to consider what has been the role of literature within this enquiry and how engagement with literature has allowed this enquiry to progress.

The main concern I have with the literature considered here is that such engagement is never a *fait accompli*. There is always another key text, another key researcher whose work I have not yet encountered. Webspaces have opened up the possibilities to access others' work, for example through online journals. These provide a wealth of resources with which to engage, yet not all research is available through this medium.

Literature within this enquiry has lived out several roles, bringing challenge and critique to the enquiry alongside support through the ideas of others. It has opened up this enquiry to other possibilities and other ways of thinking. Crucially it has also given me motivation to take the enquiry in new directions and allowed me to make sense from non-sense.

Engaging with other's ideas is an infinite process that continues over a lifetime. I will always encounter new ways of thinking that challenge me to continue in a different way. The nature of this enquiry is that the account itself must have an endpoint. I believe to have engaged with the literature that has fulfilled the roles exemplified above. The difficulty lies in where to stop with regards to creating the written text whilst my knowledge evolves through further engagement with new ideas and new authors. Even when I stop officially writing, the enquiry with the student researchers has continued, my understanding of the living and loving standards that I share with others evolve and my engagement with literature takes me in new directions. One of the learning curves of my role as researcher is therefore to know at what point I draw a line under a written text and allow myself to be satisfied. Within a living theory paradigm this is even more difficult, as my own life as a researcher continues and my own understanding evolves alongside it.

Within this space of engagement with other's ideas, I have found it difficult to encounter the authentic voices of other intergenerational student researchers. Schon (1995) calls for the emergence of a new epistemology for educational knowledge with the expression and clarification of new living standards of judgment that can contribute to enhancing educational space. I believe that one of the ways in which to achieve this is to provide webspace for student researchers to explicate their work and the development of their shared living values in their work as researchers. As on my school's website, where space is devoted to this development, I am calling for student researchers to share their research stories in a wider context so that others may learn from them. I believe that the research community should not ask student researchers to fit into existing forms of publishable research criteria, but instead recognise the shared language of enquiry between their school and themselves. This language moves from *them and us* to *we* as a research community learning together, bringing H.E. Researchers, practitioner-researchers, student researchers and the school together. Farrell and Rosenkranz (2007) talk similarly of building "learning in community" through inquiry and collaboration:

"Teachers at all levels are increasingly called upon to engage in professional development that enhances their knowledge. Professional development is a requirement of educational practice, yet teachers are challenged to find opportunities to engage in learning that increases their impact on their students' learning, while augmenting continuous growth. Structured professional development that immerses

teachers in higher-order teaching strategies, while allowing for “learning in community” through inquiry, collaboration, and critical conversation about practice, must be considered (Wenger, 1998).” (Farrell & Rosenkranz, 2007, p.1)

Farrell et al. do not acknowledge here the impact of learning from students that can provide a wealth of professional development opportunities for teachers. Within their paper, I see no evidence of learning in community with students. This I believe fails to recognise the students’ own influence over teachers in supporting them in understanding their professional learning.

“As we work to cultivate our living theory through our collaborative self-study, we will continue to document and validate our educational influence on the learning of our students (the teachers we are working with), while engaging them as researchers of their own learning.” (Farrell & Rosenkranz, 2007, p.4)

Farrell et al. acknowledge here the role of students as being engaged as researchers in their own right, yet still the conversations resulting from both teacher and student led research seem to be separated rather than emerging from research undertaken together. I emphasize the importance, within this inquiry, of a shared dialogue owned by all involved in “learning in community”.

Having considered in this Chapter the significance of my shared living values as motivation to enquire alongside how the ethical assumptions of the enquiry have been underpinned by literature, I now turn to look outwards in the final Chapter. I look to the significance of this enquiry in offering an original contribution to knowledge and in allowing me to understand my living educational theory.