

Improving Practice And Knowledge Through Time And Space With Complex Ecologies And Action Research.

**A paper to be presented at the 2010 Annual Conference of the American
Educational Research Association in Denver, USA with the theme of
Understanding Complex Ecologies In A Changing World.
Saturday 1st May 2.15-3.45 Colorado Convention Center, Room 703.**

**Professor Jack Whitehead
Liverpool Hope University
Liverpool UK**

Email jack@actionresearch.net

Abstract

Action researchers have been generating educational knowledge from enquiries into improving their professional practices for over 60 years. Educational Researchers are now in a position to evaluate these contributions to a new epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility. This presentation sets out the units of appraisal, standards of judgment and living logics of the new epistemology. The units are the explanations produced by individuals for their own educational influences in learning. The standards of judgment are important in relation to the theme of the conference. They are expressed as a form of inclusionality in which people explain their educational influences in learning across time, places and space. The standards of judgment are shown to be recognizable in an ecology of mind that uses them to evaluate the validity of knowledge-claims between different cultural contexts. An understanding of complex ecologies in a changing world is presented within the generation of living educational theories in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

Introduction

My 36 year old educational research programme has focused on the generation by individuals, of explanations for their educational influences in learning in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' I have called such explanations living educational theories to distinguish them from the explanations derived from the conceptual abstractions and relationships of the theories of traditional disciplines of education. It is my belief that sharing such living theories contributes to making the world a better place to be. It does this by including in the explanatory principles the energy-flowing values used by practitioner researchers to give meaning and purpose to their lives in ways that carry hope for the future of humanity and for their own.

Because of the influence of the Academy (the global collection of Higher Education Institutions) in deciding what counts as valid knowledge, I want to contribute to the generation and academic legitimation of educational theories that produce valid explanations of educational influences in learning. I want to do this because of my belief that such explanations can help to improve practice in the sense of living values and understandings more fully in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

The primary focus of this paper is on evaluating the validity of an epistemology for educational knowledge, with educational responsibility, that has emerged from my research programme and the research programmes of others. The paper sets out the units of appraisal, standards of judgment and living logics of this educational epistemology. The units of appraisal are the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in learning.

The standards of judgment are important in relation to the theme of the conference on understanding complex ecologies in a complex world. This understanding emerges through the generation of living educational theories. In other words the understandings of complex ecologies in a complex world is offered as an emergent understanding through the generation of living educational theories in which individuals are seeking to improve their practice and to generate educational knowledge. The standards of judgment are shown to be recognizable in an ecology of mind (Bateson, 2000) that is informed by the relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries of inclusionality (Rayner, 2010). In this awareness individuals can understand themselves as existing within a mutual influence of space, place, energy and others.

The living logics of the educational epistemology are important because these are the modes of thought that individuals use as appropriate for comprehending reality as rational (Marcuse, 1964, p. 105). These living logics include insights from propositional, dialectical and inclusional logics. The significance of the living logics is that they are not oppositional to propositional or dialectical logics, or exclude the rationality of each other, but acknowledge the truths of each.

In organizing the presentation I have used the headings of the AERA template and successful proposal of Purposes; Theoretical Frameworks; Research Methods; Data Sources and Evidence; Substantiated Conclusions; Scientific and Scholarly Contributions.

Purposes

There has been much discussion in AERA about the nature of appropriate standards of judgment for evaluating the quality and validity of the educational knowledge generated by practitioner-researchers in different cultural settings. Schön (1995) called for the development of a new epistemology for the scholarship of teaching and Snow (2001) called for the development of methodologies for making public the professional knowledge of teachers. In the 2010 AERA call for papers there is an ecological focus on the conceptual,

methodological, and practical challenges and opportunities inherent in understanding how and what people learn.

The purpose of this presentation is to answer the following questions in relation to the focus on understanding complex ecologies in a changing world within emerging epistemologies and methodologies of educational research, knowledge and theory:

i) Have the explanations produced by individual action researchers to explain their educational influences in learning within complex ecologies generated a new epistemology for educational knowledge?

ii) Can a living theory methodology, using visual narratives with empathetic resonance and validity, help to make public the professional knowledge of teachers in different cultural settings?

iii) What are the logics of the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations in complex ecologies?

iv) Which living standards of judgment can be used to evaluate the validity of explanations of educational influences in learning?

Have the explanations produced by individual action researchers to explain their educational influences in learning within complex ecologies generated a new epistemology for educational knowledge?

Contributions to answers to this question were presented in a keynote symposium of the 2009 British Educational Research Association Annual Conference on '*Explicating A New Epistemology For Educational Knowledge With Educational Responsibility*' (BERA 2009). Dialogues concerning epistemology and educational theory have also been sustained in the Open Dialogue section of Research Intelligence, the newsletter of the British Educational Research Association. Here are some extracts from my latest submission to the dialogue (Whitehead, 2010). They draw on complex ecologies from South Africa and the UK.

My claim that the explanations of educational influences in learning have generated a new epistemology for educational knowledge is grounded in the data base of living theories in doctoral theses and masters dissertations at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

and

<http://www.jeanmcniff.com/reports.html>

At the heart of this epistemology are the energy-flowing and values-laden, living

standards of judgment that the individuals use to evaluate the validity of their contributions to educational knowledge in their living theories.

From my educational research programme at the University of Bath into the nature of educational theory and living standards of judgment, I feel confident that I can offer an evidence-based understanding of the energy-flowing and values-laden practical principles that are necessary to explanations of educational influences in learning. When these practical principles are used to evaluate the validity of a contribution to educational I understand these principles as living standards of judgment. In extending the cognitive range and concerns in my living standards of judgment I shall show that my evidence-based explanations of educational influence include understandings of complex ecologies in a changing world. The theme of the 2010 AERA Conference focused my attention on developing my understandings of complex ecologies in a changing world. I want to emphasise that this developing understanding is grounded in the generation of educational knowledge.

The evidence below begins with visual data of my educational practice in which I am expressing educational responsibility through my understanding of the African way of being of Ubuntu in a workshop in South Africa in 2006. It is the kind of evidence that cannot yet appear in the present issues of Educational Researcher because they are not yet open to the same possibilities of the e-version of Research Intelligence for the presentation of multi-media narratives.

The 3.20 minute clip below, was taken in a workshop in the University of the Free State where I am seeking to express the values of Ubuntu. I do this on page 9 of the 2009 BERA visual narrative presentation at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/187849.pdf>. At 2.37 minutes into the clip I explicitly draw attention to my embodied expression of the life-affirming energy I see myself living in my educational practice with educational responsibility in the workshop. You can access the clip from YouTube from the url under the image below.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkKyeT0osz8>

I am claiming that such embodied expressions of life-affirming energy with values, such as an Ubuntu way of being and including educational responsibility, together with their representations in the accounts of educational researchers, are necessary for the generation of educational theories that can explain educational influences in learning with complex ecologies.

I am suggesting that an e-version of Educational Researcher could hold the key to communicating an epistemological transformation of educational knowledge

through the generation of living educational theories. This is because an e-version could make accessible multi-media narratives with energy-flowing and values-laden explanatory principles for explaining educational influences in learning. Such narratives offer educational researchers opportunities for generating educational theories with educational responsibility. I am thinking here of the responsibility of an educational researcher to make public their explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we are living and working. In saying this I am agreeing with Biesta, Allan and Edwards (2009, p. 18) that '*One of the defining characteristics of educational research is that it aims to contribute to the improvement of educational practice*'.

In developing my understanding of the relational dynamic of energy-flowing values with complex ecologies that are necessary to explanatory educational principles, I was pleased to read Rayner's agreement about the importance of 'educational' research in relation to 'education' research in his point about a natural inclusional approach to living educational theory:

I wish to agree with Whitehead by saying that, if anything, the relation between 'educational' and 'education' research should be viewed the other way around, i.e. with 'educational' being regarded as more general in both its philosophical approach and practical implications. I do this on the basis of a contrast between the kind of generalization that follows from abstract rationality, which currently underpins most conventional education research, and that which flows from what Whitehead recognises as the more comprehensive 'natural inclusional' approach (see Rayner, 2006) of 'living' educational theory. (Rayner, 2010, 26)

A point I stressed in my Presidential Address to BERA in 1988, about the nature of living educational theories, might be worth restating because of its relevance to educational research that includes understanding complex ecologies in a changing world:

Let me be clear about the relationships between explanatory texts and present practice, in constructing a living theory. The texts are historical accounts. They describe and explain past activities. They also have a proactive function in that the evaluation of these accounts prompts a vision of the future in an imagined possibility of how present practice might be improved. We can thus make sense of the living practice through understanding the relationship between the account of the past and the vision of the future. Hence educational theory is, for me, a living theory in that the explanation contains evidence of an evaluation of past practice, evidence of an intention to produce something not yet in existence and evidence of the present practice through which the intention is being realised in action (Whitehead, 1985a).

I hope that you can now see why I characterise the approach as a living approach to educational theory. It is to distinguish it from a linguistic approach which is contained within propositional relationships and captured in texts on library shelves. In contrast to this I am proposing an organic view of educational theory which is living in the public conversations of those constituting professional practice. It is thus growing in the living relationship between teachers, pupils and

professional researchers and embodied within their forms of life. (Whitehead, 1989, p. 6)

It isn't a major technological innovation to open Educational Researcher to multi-media narratives. Without such narratives, AERA publications are imposing unnecessary restrictions on the forms of representation that can be used by educational researchers to communicate valid explanations of educational influences in learning within complex ecologies.

Questions of epistemology are often association with questions of methodology in relation to contributions to knowledge. Hence my second questions is focused a question of methodology.

Can a living theory methodology, using visual narratives with empathetic resonance and validity, help to make public the professional knowledge of teachers in different cultural settings?

In generating a living theory using a living theory methodology an individual relies on their methodological inventiveness in the sense described by Dadds and Hart (2001):

" The importance of methodological inventiveness

Perhaps the most important new insight for both of us has been awareness that, for some practitioner researchers, creating their own unique way through their research may be as important as their self-chosen research focus. We had understood for many years that substantive choice was fundamental to the motivation and effectiveness of practitioner research (Dadds 1995); that what practitioners chose to research was important to their sense of engagement and purpose. But we had understood far less well that how practitioners chose to research, and their sense of control over this, could be equally important to their motivation, their sense of identity within the research and their research outcomes." (p. 166)

With the emergence and rapid spread of digital technology, including digital video, it has been possible for researchers to study themselves in their educational practices with the help of visual data. They can presence themselves to themselves in new ways as they can see themselves as others see them in the visual data. Making sense of such visual data can include energy-flowing values in being receptively responsive to what one is seeing. I have been developing an approach to analyzing visual data in terms of empathetic resonance and validity in visual narratives. Here are some recent thoughts on the use of this approach in communicating meanings of a passion for compassion and loving what we are doing. I am suggesting that enhancing the influence of these two values, amongst others holds the key to making the world a better place to be.

**Meanings of Empathetic Resonance and Validity in Visual Narratives:
A passion for compassion and loving what we are doing.**

I am aware of a difference in communication between my experience of the meanings of embodied expressions of energy and values that I and others use to explain why we do what we do in our educational relationships, and the meanings of explanatory principles of educational influences in learning, in pages of printed text. The difference is important because of my belief that the explanations in pages of printed text are distorting, masking or omitting the sharing of vitally important understandings which we embody in what we do. I am claiming below that the ideas of empathetic resonance (Sardello, 2008) and validity (Polanyi, 1958; Habermas, 1976; Dadds, 2008) can help to prevent such distortions, maskings or omissions with the inclusion of visual data in the communication of meanings of energy flowing values in explanations of educational influence. Hence the question I am seeking to answer is:

Are ideas of 'Empathetic Resonance' and 'Validity' helpful in communicating meanings of embodied expressions of life-affirming energy and values? I am thinking of energy flowing values of compassion, love and learning in explanations of educational influences in learning.

a) Empathetic Resonance

I first encountered the idea of empathetic resonance in the writings of Sardello (2008). For Sardello, *empathetic resonance*, is the resonance of the individual soul coming into resonance with the Soul of the World (p. 13). Sardellos' meaning carries a religious commitment. I am using *empathetic resonance* from my humanistic perspective to communicate a feeling of the immediate presence of the other in expressing the living values that the other experiences as giving meaning and purpose to their life.

Because I felt empathetic resonance as I watched a video-clip, taken by Marian Naidoo in her doctoral enquiry with a wife and husband, Marion and Charlie, where Charlie was caring for Marion as they lived with Marion's dementia, I want to see if I can communicate this feeling of resonance by reenacting the scene where I experienced it.

This is how Naidoo sets the scene in her doctoral thesis for the second of two video-clips:

“Shortly after meeting Charlie and Marion we were given the opportunity to make a documentary about dementia for a medical series. The Director asked if any of the patients and/or carers would like to make a contribution to the film. I asked Charlie and Marion if they would like to be involved and they agreed to help us. I felt it was very important for the filmmakers to meet them both before the filming in order to develop a relationship with them and to put them at their ease. Charlie and Marion handled the whole event with confidence and dignity. The account of their lives together and their love for each other was very moving. The director asked them at one point how they like to spend their day. Charlie replied that they just enjoy each other's company and sometimes they just sit together on the sofa, quietly, and hold each other's hand. As he spoke he was holding his wife's hand, and although she now finds language very difficult,

with her other hand she gently touched his face. As we packed up all the filming equipment the director, who was still very moved by the interview said to me, ***“Today I experienced real unconditional love for the first time and that image of Charlie and Marion will stay with me for ever.”***



Marian goes on to write:

“You can share some of Charlie and Marion’s experience of living with and caring for someone with dementia in DVD chapter 2, ***“Breaking down the walls of silence.”*** I have included the first clip of Charlie and Marion in their home in conversation with me. In this first clip I have tried to show the life affirming energy of this couple who engaged in a warm loving and trusting relationship with me as they talked about living with dementia. I have included the second clip of Charlie reading from a letter he had prepared for me because he wanted to make sure he was able to communicate his feelings clearly. As I was filming and listening to Charlie I was becoming anxious about Marion who seemed to be drifting away and becoming excluded from what was happening. There follows which is for me a very beautiful and significant moment where Marion, who is now unable to use very much language found another way to communicate. In this moment she catches my eye and gestures behind Charlie’s back in a very comical way that she thinks he is being big headed. I have included this clip because I believe it shows that I am being inclusional and responsive in my engagement with Marion and Charlie. I also believe it shows how the relationship I had developed with them both was one of mutual trust and respect.” (see Naidoo, 2005) pages 188-190

Here is the second clip Naidoo describes above.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxJluUVE0qA>

The clip is 1:03 seconds and the moments described by Marian can be seen clearly at 54 seconds in this image:



Naidoo's thesis brings an energy-flowing value of a passion for compassion into the Academy as a living standard of judgment. As I watch the 1:03 video-clip above and read Marian's words I am aware that both are necessary in the visual narrative to evoke my empathetic resonance with an embodied expression of a passion for compassion.

Following Naidoo (2005) I want to ground 'bearing witness to this resonance' in claims to educational knowledge that are both scholarly and can gain academic legitimacy within the Academy. To do this I need to face the issue of the validity of any claim to know that I might make that includes such resonance.

b) Validity

In judging the validity of claims to know something about educational influences in learning I draw on insights from both Polanyi (1958, p. 327) and Habermas (1976, p. 1-2). I accept Polanyi's point about making a decision to understand the world from my point of view as a person claiming originality and exercising judgment, responsibly with universal intent. At the heart of my understanding of validity is this personal ('I') commitment to take responsibility for the validity of my own beliefs and claims to knowledge. In recognising that the validity of

knowledge-claims is influenced by the social contexts in which they are made, I draw insights from Habermas' four criteria of social validity. By this I mean that I seek to strengthen the validity of explanations of educational influences in learning by submitting the explanations to a democratic processes of evaluation. I ask validation groups of peers to respond to the explanations in terms of their comprehensibility, the evidence used to justify assertions, the awareness of the influence in my explanations of the normative backgrounds of my writings and their authenticity in the sense of showing over time and interaction that the individual is sustaining their commitment to live their values as fully as they can.

In focusing on the evidence that can be used to validate claims to knowledge that are grounded in empathetic resonance, I draw insights from Dadds' idea of empathetic validity. Dadds sees this validity as the potential of practitioner research in its processes and outcomes to transform the emotional dispositions of people towards each other, such that greater empathy and regard are created. Dadds distinguishes between internal and external empathetic validity. Dadds sees internal empathetic validity in terms of that which changes the practitioner researcher and research beneficiaries. She sees external empathetic validity as that which influences audiences with whom the practitioner research is shared. (Dadds, 2008, p. 279).

My interest in explaining educational influences in learning is concerned with spreading the influence of values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity and my own. I include in these values a passion for compassion as I seek to enhance internal and external empathetic validity. I also include in these values 'loving what we are doing' in explaining educational influences in learning.

c) Explaining educational influences in learning with a grounding in empathetic resonance in loving what we are doing.

My visual narrative of an explanation of educational influences in learning is grounded in Sally Cartwright's educational relationships with her students, with her writings and with my tutoring. Sally is an educator in a secondary school near Bath, UK. The images and video clip are from the beginning of an evening of presentations of extended projects on the 16th March 2010 with Sally's 17 year old students, at the University of Bath. The extended projects are part of advanced level courses in which the students can enquire into a topic of their choice. My visual narrative includes the still images below, an 11 second video clip and Sally's writings for her masters degree, on *How can I enable the gifts and talents of my students to be in the driving seat of their own learning?*

Whilst Sally's account is focused on 'How' she does something I am also interested in explanations of educational influence that can answer 'Why' questions. I am interested in the explanatory principles that are used in explanations of educational influence. I am thinking of explanatory principles that include energy-flowing values that carry hope for the future of humanity and my own, such as loving what we do.

Here are three images and an 11 second video clip that evoke a response of empathetic resonance from me. I expressed some meanings for me of this resonance in an e-mail to Cartwright in terms of her loving what she does:

On 20 Mar 2010, at 14:51, Jack Whitehead wrote:

I've said many times Sally that you express a quality of receptive and responsive engagement with others that communicates a love for what you do, a love of humanity and a valuing of the other. I've said that you express this quality through an awareness of space and boundaries in the places I see you working and living. I think these 11 seconds show you expressing this quality.

I'm hoping that you will share your responses to the images and video (I'd turn the sound down or off) in relation to Dadds' ideas of internal and external empathetic validity. It is my belief that spreading the influence of such empathetic resonance in loving what we are doing is part of making the world a better place to be.





Here is the 11 second video to show the relational dynamic of Sally's presence and for you to evaluate the validity of my belief that such visual data can communicate, through empathetic resonance, the meanings of energy-flowing values in explanatory principles such as 'loving what we are doing'.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra5RAgflNXk>

Sally's writings include an answer to her question *How can I enable the gifts and talents of my students to be in the driving seat of their own learning?* (Cartwright, 2008) (You can access this from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/scgandtnov08.pdf>)

In this paper Sally explains the 'How' of her influence in enabling the gifts and talents of her students to be in the driving seat of their own learning.

The following suggestion is intended for all practitioner-researchers who are exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

The suggestion is that we will enhance the spread of the influence of values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity, by including in our visual narratives explanatory principles with energy-flowing values such as a passion for compassion and loving what we are doing. I am thinking here of the explanatory principles used in answering 'Why' questions as well as our 'How' questions in researching our educational influences with our students. I am thinking of research that focuses both on improving practice and on generating educational knowledge in our living educational theories that can help to enhance the flow of values and understandings in our present practices. I am thinking of practices that can carry our hopes and intentions for the future with our learning from our histories.

Closely related to issues of the validity of contributions to educational knowledge are issues of the logics that are appropriate for comprehending the explanations derived from established theories or produced as living theories.

What are the logics of the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations in complex ecologies?

An answer to this question has been provided by Whitehead and Rayner (2009) in their writings on *'From Dialectics to Inclusionality. A naturally inclusive approach to educational accountability'* in which we claim that:

"The last 2,500 years have seen an unresolved conflict between propositional and dialectical logicians. Here, whilst acknowledging the partial validity of their views, we trace the confrontation between these logicians to an unrealistic premise that both paradoxically share: the supposition that nature is completely definable into discrete, mutually exclusive categories of subject and object. This exclusion of the middle ground is deeply embedded in orthodox theories and practices of science, theology, education and governance as well as in our mathematics and language. Whereas it leads propositional logicians, following Aristotle, to accept one statement about or perceived entity in reality as necessarily 'true' or 'present' and to reject the other as 'false' or 'absent', it leads dialectical thinkers to accept contradictory statements as the nucleus of an inherently ambiguous and pluralistic

Nature. In this paper we illustrate the reciprocity of an educational conversation in which we are seeking to clarify and communicate our meanings, through the natural logic of inclusionality, where each flows responsively in the others' receptive influence."

You can access the full text of the paper from:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/arjwdialtoIncl061109.pdf>

Evaluating the validity of living educational theories, including their logics, as contributions to educational knowledge, requires an understanding of appropriate living standards of judgment.

Which living standards of judgment can be used to evaluate the validity of explanations of educational influences in learning?

I was introduced to the idea of living standards of judgment by Moira Laidlaw (1996) in her doctoral research programme. During the supervision of this programme I had been stressing the importance of clarifying the meanings of embodied values in standards of judging the course of their emergence in practice. I was holding a static idea of standards of judgment in my thinking that this was solely a matter of clarifying meanings. Moira pointed out that the standards themselves were living and evolving in the course of their emergence so that it was more than clarification. It was a matter of appreciating this living nature of the standards of judgment. Hence my recognition of this insight in the idea of living standards of judgment.

In my supervision of over 30 doctoral research programmes I have learnt that the constellations of explanatory principles and living standards of judgment, in the explanations that individuals productive for their educational influences in learning, are unique. This does not mean that they cannot be comprehended by another or that the explanations cannot be evaluated for their validity. It means that whoever is doing the judging has a responsibility to recognise this uniqueness and to ensure that they are using standards of judgment that are appropriate for evaluating the contribution of the contribution to knowledge.

An experience of a doctoral viva highlights the importance of this point to me. The candidate wished to open the viva by drawing attention to some video evidence of the significance of her loving relationships in her thesis. The internal examiner refused to permit the showing of this video-evidence and the external examiner concurred. The candidate passed with some minor modifications but the memory of this violation remains with us both.

Each individual, in generating their living educational theory, clarifies and communicates the living standards of judgment that they believe to be appropriate for evaluating the validity of their contributions to knowledge. Lohr (2006) for example uses 'Love at Work', Naidoo (2005) uses 'Passion for Compassion', Charles (2007) uses guiltless recognition and societal re-identification. Each living theorist identifies their own living standards of

judgment in the Abstracts of their thesis. You can access these at <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

In clarifying the standards of judgment that are appropriate for evaluating the validity of the claims to knowledge each individual engages critically with the ideas of others. I stress in my supervision the importance of engaging with the most advanced social theories of the day to enhance enquiries into improving practice and generating knowledge. By 'engaging with', I do not mean 'applying' in the sense of having a primary purpose in contributing to or in testing the validity of these theories, although this might be a byproduct of the generation of the living theory. I mean 'engaging with' in the sense of drawing insights from the theories into the generation of a living theory and acknowledging their use.

Theoretical frameworks

As you may imagine I have encountered many theories that have influenced my own over the course of the 36 years of my research programme. I recognise that the length of any account of the influence of the theories of others may make you 'lose the will to live' as one my readers put it having responded to an earlier draft! Hence my decision to move the substantive content of this section to the Appendix. However, I want to stress the importance of the Appendix because of the significance of these theories in the development of my own living theory and because I think that it is important in establishing the academic legitimacy of living theories that they include such engagements with the ideas of others.

Practitioner-researchers are faced with a Smörgåsbord of theories in the sense of a choice from a buffet of multiple dishes of various foods on a table.

I like the way Joan Conolly distinguishes her engagement with 'established' theory in her use of living theory methodologies:

Which raises another point which worries me frequently. When I am required – as I am so frequently in the academy – to frame my research in 'established theory', am I not prejudging and prejudicing my research with this expectation? I fear that I am, and in so doing, I am blinding and deafening myself to what is really there, not only what pops out in the last seconds, but what is there from the beginning which I cannot see and hear because I am using an inappropriate perspective and lens. And this brings me back to my enthusiasm for living theories methodologies which allow me to look at things as I experience them, to articulate this understanding of mine, and make the connections with the understandings of others later. And in turn to look at the experience of others from THEIR perspective and through THEIR lens, and make connections with MY understanding later ... and then, even later, the understandings of others. Actually of course, it does not happen in slices like this at all, but I find that I do have to remind myself to consider the perspective and the lens constantly, so that I draw conclusions about things with due respect for the appropriate perspective and lens. I hope that that is making sense. (Conolly, 2010)

In acknowledging the influence of the 'established theories' of others in the Appendix, I want to emphasise that I am not 'applying' these theories in my own practice. The meanings I take from the theories of others are influenced by the context of their use and hence given my unique meanings in the generation of a living educational theory. My purpose is not to test the validity of the established theories. It is to offer a living educational theory for validation whilst acknowledging my creative and critical use of the ideas of others. In the generation of such living theories it is important to use appropriate methods for exploring the implications of asking question of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

Research methods

The appropriateness of the action reflection cycles used in the generation and development of living educational theories rests in showing their usefulness in clarifying the meanings of ontological values in educational relationships and in forming these values into living epistemological standards of judgment. The educational relationships are contextualized as inclusional (Rayner, 2009) in relation to the mixed methods research. A living theory approach to visual narratives is used in multi-media explanations of educational influences in learning.

The methods for enhancing the robustness of the validity and rigour of the explanations include the use of Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity and Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigour. Lather's (1991) catalytic validity is used to justify claims about the educational influence of the ideas generated in one context for individuals working and researching in different contexts in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Croatia, India, China, Japan and South Africa (see the Educational Journal of Living Theories, the Living Theory Section and the What's New section of <http://www.actionresearch.net>).

A method developed from Sardello's, (2008) idea of empathetic resonance, together with visual narratives and the approach to validity described above, is used to develop a shared understanding of energy-flowing values in explanations of educational influences in different cultural settings.

Data sources and Evidence

The data and evidential sources include 32 living theory doctoral theses legitimated in the Academy over the past 14 years from research carried out in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Canada, the USA and Japan. (See the living theory section of <http://www.actionresearch.net> and <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/reports.html>)

The data sources are focused on the explanations that individual action researchers have produced to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in

which they live and work.

It is argued that the evidence from these data sources is sufficient to establish standards of judgment for legitimating educational knowledge that can be comprehended and agreed across a range of cultural boundaries. The agreement rests on a process of empathetic resonance in which visual data is used to establish a shared recognition of energy-flowing values from different cultural contexts. These energy-flowing values constitute the explanatory principles that individuals use to explain their educational influences in learning.

Substantiated conclusions

Each of the 32 living theory, action research doctoral theses has been judged as an original contribution to knowledge in demonstrating originality of mind and critical judgment. The conclusions of each thesis have been judged by examiners as justified in relation to the evidence produced. What is original in the above analysis is the evidence-based claim that a new epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility has been established by this legitimated knowledge-base for education. The standards of judgment in this epistemology include an ecological focus on *the conceptual, methodological, and practical challenges and opportunities inherent in understanding how and what people learn across time and space.*

The substantiated conclusions also focus on the nature of the practical principles that can be used to explain educational influences in learning. The meanings of these practical principles, including a passion for compassion and loving what we are doing, are clarified in the course of their emergence through action reflection cycles as the individual asks, researches and answers questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

The conclusions include the evidence that visual narratives can be used to develop a shared recognition of the meanings of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence.

Scientific and scholarly contributions

The contributions to educational knowledge of the presentation are focused on:

- 1) The generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge. This includes; the units of appraisal of the explanations produced by individuals for their educational influences in learning; the energy-flowing values in explanatory principles and living standards of judgment; the living logics of the living theories that include propositional, dialectical and inclusional logics.
- 2) The explication of a living theory methodology for making public the embodied knowledge of professional practitioners.

3) Understanding complex ecologies in a changing world within an understanding of educational theory as the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in learning. In relation to the theme of the conference this can be seen as understanding complex ecologies in a changing world within the generation of living educational theories.

4) The use of an original approach to empathetic resonance using visual narrative for the communication of shared meanings of practical principles in explanations of educational influence.

References

- Adler-Collins, J. (2000) A Scholarship Of Enquiry. MA Dissertation, University of Bath.
- Bateson, G. (2000) Steps To An Ecology Of Mind. Chicago; University of Chicago.
- Bernstein, B (2000) Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- BERA (2009) Explicating A New Epistemology For Educational Knowledge With Educational Responsibility. Keynote Symposium of the 2009 British Educational Research Association Annual Conference. Retrieved 2 April 2010 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bera/educationlinebera09keynote.pdf>
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2006) Beyond Learning; Democratic Education For A Human Future. Boulder; Paradigm Publishers.
- Biesta, G., Allan, J. & Edwards, R. (2009) Theorising Education: The Laboratory for Educational Theory. *Research Intelligence*, 109; 18-19.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) The Logic Of Practice. Stanford CA; Stanford University Press.
- Buber, M. I and Thou. (1958) Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Buber, M. (1947) Between Man and Man. London; Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.
- Cartwright, S. (2008) How can I enable the gifts and talents of my students to be in the driving seat of their own learning? MA Unit, University of Bath. Retrieved on 25th March 2010 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/scgandtnov08.pdf>
- Charles, E. (2007) How Do I Improve My Practice? Creating A Decolonising Living Educational Theory That Embraces And Extends Our Humanity Into New Relationships That Carry Hope For Humanity. Ph.D. thesis, University of Bath.
- Clandinin, J. (Ed.) (2007) Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping Methodology, Thousand Islands, London, New Dehli; Sage.
- Conolly, J. (2010) Educational Influence and Interview Children. E-mail to the practitioner-researcher e-seminar on the 28th March 2008.
- Dadds, M. (2008) Empathetic Validity in Practitioner-Research. *Educational Action Research*, 16(2), 279-290.
- DeLong, J. (2002) How Can I Improve My Practice As A Superintendent Of Schools And Create My Own Living Educational Theory? Ph.D. thesis, University of Bath.

- Farren, M. (2005) *Creating My Pedagogy Of The Unique Through A Web Of Betweenness*. University of Bath, PhD thesis, University of Bath.
- Fromm, E. (1947) *Man for Himself, An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*. London; Routledge.
- Fromm, E. (1955) *The Sane Society*. New York: Rinehart.
- Fromm, E. (1956) *The Art of Loving*. London; Harper Row.
- Fromm, E. (1960) *The Fear of Freedom*. London; Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Fromm, E. (1968) *The Revolution of Hope*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Fromm, E. (1976) *To Have or to Be*. London; Continuum.
- Guattari, F. (2000) *The Three Ecologies*. London; Athlone.
- Hymer, B. (2007) *How Do I Understand And Communicate My Values And Beliefs In My Work As An Educator In The Field Of Giftedness?* D. Ed. Psy. Thesis, University of Newcastle.
- Habermas, J. (2002) *The Inclusion Of The Other: Studies In Political Theory*. Oxford; Polity.
- Habermas, J. (1987) *The Theory Of Communicative Action Volume Two: The Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Oxford; Polity.
- Habermas, J. (1976) *Communication And The Evolution Of Society*. London : Heinemann.
- Henon, A. (Ed.) (2009) *Creativity|Works*. Radstock; NESA publications.
- Huxtable, M. (2009) *How do we contribute to an educational knowledge base? A response to Whitehead and a challenge to BERJ*. *Research Intelligence*, 107, 25-26.
- Ilyenkov, E. (1977) *Dialectical Logic*. Moscow; Progress Publishers.
- Kok, P. (1991) *Action Research: The Art of an Educational Inquirer* Peggy graduated in 1991, M.Ed. Dissertation, University of Bath. Retrieved 30 March 2010 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/peggy.shtml>
- Laidlaw, M. (1996) *How Can I Create My Own Living Educational Theory As I Offer You An Account Of My Own Educational Development*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting Smart: Feminist Research And Pedagogy With/In The Postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Lohr, E. (2006) *What Is My Lived Experience Of Love And How May I Become An Instrument Of Love's Purpose*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath
- McNiff, J. (2007) *My Story Is My Living Educational Theory*, in Clandinin, J. (Ed.) (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. London, New York; Sage.
- Naidoo, M. (2005) *I am because we are (A never ending story)*. The emergence of a living theory of inclusional and responsive practice. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved 11 March 2009 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/naidoo.shtml>
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1972) *Phenomenology Of Perception*. London; Routledge.
- Polanyi, M. (1958) *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. London; Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Popper, K. (1975) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London; Hutchinson & Co.
- Rayner, A. (2010) *The Inclusional Nature of Living Educational Theory: A Receptive Response to Whitehead*. *Research Intelligence* 109: 26-27. Retrieved 17th February 2010 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/alanraynerR110926-27opt.pdf>.
- Rayner, A. (2009) *What is Inclusionality*. Retrieved 12 July 2009 from http://www.inclusionality.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id

[=1&Itemid=2](#)

- Rayner, A. (2006) Essays And Talks About 'Inclusionality' by Alan Rayner. Retrieved 11 January 2008 from <http://people.bath.ac.uk/bssadmr/inclusionality>
- Rayner, A. (2005) Space, Dust and the Co-evolutionary Context of 'His Dark Materials'. Retrieved 2 August 2006 from <http://people.bath.ac.uk/bssadmr/inclusionality/HisDarkMaterials.htm>
- Sardello, R. (2008) Silence: The Mystery of Wholeness. Beerkeley; Goldenstone Press.
- Schön, D. (1995) The New Scholarship Requires a New Epistemology. *Change*, Nov./Dec. 1995 27 (6) pp. 27-34
- Snow, C. E. (2001) Knowing What We Know: Children, Teachers, Researchers. Presidential Address to AERA, 2001, in Seattle, in *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 30, No.7, pp.3-9.
- Vasilyuk, F. (1991) The Psychology Of Experiencing: The Resolution Of Life's Critical Situations. Hemel Hempstead; Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Whitehead, J. (1989a) How do we Improve Research-based Professionalism in Education? A question which includes action research, educational theory and the politics of educational knowledge. 1988 Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association. *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 15, No.1, pp. 3-17, 1989. Retrieved 8 March 2010 from http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/presidentialaddresses/Whitehead_1988.pdf
- Whitehead, J. (1989b) Creating A Living Educational Theory From Questions Of The Kind, "How Do I Improve My Practice?" *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 19, No.1, pp. 41-52.
- Whitehead, J. (1993) The Growth of Educational Knowledge: Creating your own living educational theories. Bournemouth; Hyde.
- Whitehead, J. (2001) Review of Hocking, Brent; Haskell, Johnna; and Linds, Warren. (Eds.) (2001) *Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility Through Education*, Volume Three of the Foundations of Holistic Education Series. Brandon, VT: Psychology Press/Holistic Education Press.
- Whitehead, J. (2006) Living Inclusional Values In Educational Standards Of Practice And Judgement, *Ontario Action Researcher*, Vol. 8.2.1. Retrieved 12 January 2007 from http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/new_issue-V821E.htm
- Whitehead, J. (2008a) Increasing Inclusion In Educational Research: A Response To Pip Bruce Ferguson. *Research Intelligence*, 103, 16-17.
- Whitehead, J. (2008b) An Epistemological Transformation in what counts as Educational Knowledge: Responses to Laidlaw and Adler-Collins. *Research Intelligence*, 105, 28-29.
- Whitehead, J. (2008c) Using A Living Theory Methodology In Improving Practice And Generating Educational Knowledge in Living Theories. *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp 104-126 . Retrieved 22 March 2010 from <http://ejolts.net/node/80>
- Whitehead, J. & McNiff, J. (2006) Action Research Living Theory. London; Sage.
- Whitehead, J. & Rayner, A. (2009) From Dialectics to Inclusionality: A naturally inclusive approach to educational accountability. Retrieved on 28th March 2010 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/arjwdialtoIncl061109.pdf>
- Winter, R. (1989) Learning from Experience. London; Falmer.

Appendix on Theoretical Frameworks

Propositional and Dialectical Theories

Here are some of the analytic frames I use in the generation of my living educational theories. They include established theories for understanding complex ecologies in a changing world. These are of course a unique constellation and you will have your own in the generation of your living theory.

One of the analytic frames that has influenced significantly my understandings is that of Erich Fromm. I first encountered Fromm's writings in *Man For Himself* (1947) and *The Fear of Freedom* (1960) during my initial teacher education course in 1966-7. His insights about two personality orientations have remained with me. Fromm distinguishes between the marketing and the productive orientation. The marketing orientation conforms to the pressure of the capitalist relations of the market. Fromm's analysis of the damaging influences of social relations organized to maximize profit, from his critical theory perspective, continues to inform my understandings. In the productive orientation an individual faces the truth without panic and realizes that there is no purpose to life than the one he or she gives to their own life though their loving relationships and productive work (Fromm, 1960, p. 18).

Fromm developed his humanistic psychology throughout his working life in his works on *The Sane Society* (1955) with its focus on the importance of small face-to-face groups in social evolution, on *The Revolution of Hope* (1968), *The Art of Loving* (1956) and to *Have or to Be* (1997). I continue to focus on values of hope, love and being as carrying hope for the future of humanity and my own.

I also encountered the ideas of Martin Buber on my initial teacher education course (Buber's sole use of the male gender jars because it could appear to eliminate the female) The following insights remain with me in creating my own living educational theory.. I am thinking particularly of the humility of the educator as described by Buber in subordinating one's own 'hierarchical' recognition to the life and particular being of the pupils:

"If this educator should ever believe that for the sake of education he has to practise selection and arrangement, then he will be guided by another criterion than that of inclination, however legitimate this may be in its own sphere; he will be guided by the recognition of values which is in his glance as an educator. But even then his selection remains suspended, under constant correction by the special humility of the educator for whom the life and particular being of all his pupils is the decisive factor to which his 'hierarchical' recognition is subordinated." (Buber, 1947, p. 122)

I am also thinking of the emphasis placed by Buber on dialogue and trust:

“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.” (pp. 124-125)

One of my original contributions to educational theory is the idea that living educational theories can be produced by individuals to explain their educational influences in learning in enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ At the heart of a living educational theory is the individual ‘I’. My understanding of ‘I’ continues to be influenced by Buber’s understanding of the ‘I’ lived in that relation to man which is embodied in conversation and his abhorrence of ‘the severed I, wallowing in the capital letter, uncovering the shame of the world spirit that has been debased....’

“How much of a person a man is depends on how strong the I of the basic word I-You is in the human duality of his I.

The way he says I - what he means when he says I - decides where a man belongs and where he goes. The word "I" is the true shibboleth of humanity.

Listen to it!

How dissonant the I of the ego sounds! When it issues from tragic lips, tense with some self-contradiction that they try to hold back, it can move us to great pity. When it issues from chaotic lips that savagely, heedlessly, unconsciously represent contradiction, it can make us shudder. When the lips are vain and smooth, it sounds embarrassing or disgusting.

Those who pronounce the severed I, wallowing in the capital letter, uncover the shame of the world spirit that has been debased to mere spirituality.

But how beautiful and legitimate the vivid and emphatic I of Socrates sounds! It is the I of infinite conversation, and the air of conversation is present on all its ways, even before his judges, even in the final hour in prison. This I lived in that relation to man which is embodied in conversation. It believed in the actuality of men and went out toward them. Thus it stood together with them in actuality and is never severed from it. Even solitude cannot spell forsakenness, and when the human world falls silent for him, he hears his daimonion say You.

How beautiful and legitimate the full I of Goethe sounds! It is the I of pure intercourse with nature. Nature yields to it and speaks ceaselessly with it; she reveals her mysteries to it and yet does not betray her mystery. It believes in her and says to the rose: "So it is You" - and at once shares the same actuality with the rose. Hence, when it returns to itself, the spirit of actuality stays with it; the vision of the sun clings to the blessed eye that recalls its own likeness to the sun, and the friendship of the elements accompanies man into the calm of dying and rebirth.

Thus the "adequate, true, and pure" I-saying of the representatives of association, the Socratic and the Goethean persons, resounds through the ages.” (1970, p. 117).

The theories of others continue to influence the evolution of my own, especially in relation to the meanings and significance of energy-flowing values in explanations of educational influences in learning. For example, I have been influenced by Sardello's (2008) idea of empathetic resonance in communicating the meanings of energy-flowing values as I explained in section 2 above. I have found Vasilyuk's (1996) points about energy and values in his psychology of experiencing most helpful in reinforcing the significance of my focus on expressing and communicating the meanings of energy-flowing values in explanations of educational influence. I am thinking particularly of his points that we know how 'energetically' a person can act when positively motivated but that we have very little idea of how to link up into one whole the physiological theory of activation, the psychology of motivation, and the ideas of energy (p.63-64). Biesta's (2006) points about the importance of the responsibility of the educational researcher have also served to reinforce my emphasis on educational responsibility in the generation of educational theories. I am thinking particularly of Biesta's points that educational responsibility is not only a responsibility for the coming into the world of unique and singular beings; it is also a responsibility for the world as a world of plurality and difference (p. 117-118).

In section 3 above I focused on the significance of logics in explanations of educational influence. Because of the significance of Ilyenkov's (1977) dialectical logic in my own thinking I should like to acknowledge my use of his ideas on contradiction and on writing logic in developing the 'essence of the matter'.

I follow Ilyenkov in believing that contradiction as the concrete unity of mutually exclusive opposites is the real nucleus of dialectics, its central category. I also agree with Ilyenkov about the difficulty of 'subjective dialectics', on dialectics as the logic of thinking. Ilyenkov poses this difficulty as questions, 'If any object is a living contradiction, what must the thought (statement about the object) be that expresses it?' Can and should an objective contradiction find reflection in thought? And if so, in what form? In other words, can there be a contradiction in true, correct thought? (p. 313).

In exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering the question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' I experience myself, my 'I' as a living contradiction in the sense of holding together mutually exclusive opposites. In the sense of exploring the implications of my 'I' as a living contradiction I see myself as a dialectician.

I agree with Ilyenkov that a full description cannot by any means be given by a 'definition' but only by 'developing the essence of the matter'. However, I differ from Ilyenkov who believes that to define the concept of thought fully, i.e. concretely then I must 'write' Logic. I believe that developing the essence of the matter cannot be expressed fully in writing logic. I believe that a living logic can only be comprehending through exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Hence my emphasis on visual narratives to help with the expression of

the embodied knowledge and energy-flowing values of educators in their explanations of living logics of their educational influences in learning.

In evolving my living logics I have been influenced by Rayner's (2005, 2006) idea of inclusionality as a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as connective, continuous, reflective and co-creative (Whitehead and Rayner, 2009).

In relation to some of the most advanced social theories of the day I have been influenced by Bernstein's (2000) idea of mythological discourse, Sen's (1999) distinction between an economic theory of human capital and an economic theory of human capability, Bourdieu's (1999) notion of the 'habitus' , Habermas' (1976, 1987 and 2002) ideas of social validity, learning and private and civic autonomy, as well as the philosopher Popper's (1975) ideas on objectivity and subjectivity and Guattari's (2000) three ecologies.

Bernstein's (2000) idea of mythological discourse helps to prevent me from doing what Kierkegaard warned against and that was creating a unity in my imagination that loses connection with practical life. Bernstein uses the idea of mythological discourse to describe the way the school disconnects the hierarchy of success internal to the school from social class hierarchies external to the school. He believes that this disconnection takes place through what he calls horizontal solidarities among their staff and students, irrespective of the political ideology and social arrangement of the society. He says that this mythological discourse consists of two pairs of elements which, although having different functions, combine to reinforce each other.

"One pair celebrates and attempts to produce a united, integrated, apparently common national consciousness; the other pair work together to disconnect hierarchies within the school from a causal relation with social hierarchies outside the school." (p. xxiii).

In the creation of a living theory that explains educational influences in learning I try to avoid such a mythological discourse by including explanations of educational influences in the social formations that influence life and work.

Economic relationships influence constraints and possibilities in what we can do. I use Sen's (1999) economic theory of human capability to emphasise the importance of understanding both the direct and indirect consequences of human abilities. Sen distinguishes between an economic theory of human capital and an economic theory of human capability. He says that at the risk of some oversimplification, it can be said that the literature on human capital tends to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting production possibilities whilst the perspective of human capability focuses on the ability-the substantive freedom-of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have. He believes that the two perspectives are related, since both are concerned with the role of human beings. But the yardstick of assessment concentrates on different achievements related to what he calls direct or indirect valuations.

Given a person's characteristics, social background, economic circumstances and so on, Sen believes that a person has the ability to be or to do certain things that he or she has reason to value. He says that the reason for valuation can be *direct* in the sense that the functioning involved may directly enrich the person's life, such as being well-nourished or being healthy. It can be *indirect* in the sense that the functioning involved may contribute to further production, or command a price in the market. Sen says that the human capital perspective can, in principle, be defined very broadly to cover both types of valuation, but it is typically defined-by convention-primarily in terms of indirect value: human qualities that can be employed as "capital" in *production, in the way physical capital is. In this sense, the narrower view of the human capital approach fits into the more inclusive perspective of human capability, which can cover both direct and indirect consequences of human abilities.* (p. 293)

I accept Sen's point about the more inclusive perspective of human capability as I include understandings of complex ecologies in a changing world within the formation and evolution of living educational theories. In the generation of these theories I look for engagements with the learning of social formations. In doing this I bear Bourdieu's (1990) point in mind about a relationship between analyzing social formations and what he calls the 'habitus'.

For Bourdieu the habitus is embodied history that is internalized as a second nature and forgotten as history. It is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. For Bourdieu the habitus is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. He says that it is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories. (p. 56). I continue to bear in mind Bourdieu's point that social science makes greatest use of the language of rules in cases where it is inadequate in analysing social formations. He says that because of the constancy of the objective conditions over time, rules have a particularly small part to play in the determination of practices, which is largely entrusted to the automatisms of the habitus (p.145). I am most acutely aware of this point, about the constancy of objective conditions over time, in relation to Guattari's (2000) analysis of the role of 'The Three Ecologies' in confronting the damage done by Integrated World Capitalism (IWC)

Guattari believes that there will have to be a massive reconstruction of social mechanisms if we are to confront the damage caused by IWC. I agree with Guattari that this will not come about through focusing on centralized reform, through laws, decrees and bureaucratic programmes. I work with Guattari's belief that this reconstruction requires the promotion of innovatory practices, the expansion of alternative experiences centered around a respect for singularity, and through the continuous production of an autonomizing subjectivity that can articulate itself appropriately in relation to the rest of society (p. 59).

In Guattari's ecosophical perspective his three ecologies do not totally exclude a definition of unifying objectives, such as the struggle against world hunger, an end to deforestation or to the blind proliferation of the nuclear industries; but, he says that it will no longer be a question of depending on reductionist, stereotypical order- words which only expropriate other more singular problematics and lead to the promotion of charismatic leaders. (p. 18). Guattari's first ecosophic problematic is that of the production of human existence itself in new historical contexts.

His second problematic is social. Social ecosophy consists in developing specific practices that will modify and reinvent the ways in which we live as couples or in the family, in an urban context or at work. It focuses on reconstructing the modalities of 'group-being' not only through 'communicational' interventions but through existential mutations driven by the motor of subjectivity. Instead of linking to general recommendations he recommends implementing effective practices of experimentation, as much on a microsocial level as on a larger institutional scale.

His third problematic is mental. Mental ecosophy requires a reinvention of the relation of the subject to the body, to the passage of time, to the 'mysteries' of life and death. He believes that this will lead us to search for antidotes to mass-media and telematic standardization, the conformism of fashion and the manipulation of opinion by advertising, surveys, etc. He says that its ways of operating will be more like those of an artist, rather than of professional psychiatrists who are always haunted by an outmoded ideal of scientificity. (p. 20)

In relation to comprehending complex ecologies in a changing world in the generation of living educational theories, I use Guattari's three ecologies in recognizing that the problematic is one of the production of human existence itself. It includes a focus on effective practices of experimentation in microsocial contexts and the ways of the artist in recognizing that individuals are giving a form to their lives in enquiries that focus on living their ontological values as fully as they can.

In saying this I also recognise the influence of Habermas' ideas, from his theory of communicative action, in focusing on learning, on social validity in communicational interventions and in strengthening both private and civic autonomy.

In his theory of communicative action Habermas (1987) focused on freeing historical materialism from what he called its 'philosophical ballast'. He emphasized the importance of two abstractions in doing this. The first was to abstract the development of the cognitive structures from the historical dynamic of events. The second was to abstract the evolution of society from the historical concretion of forms of life.

Habermas claimed that a theory developed using these two abstractions can no longer start by examining concrete ideals immanent in traditional forms of life. His recognition of the importance of learning is consistent with my own view of

theory when he says that it must orient itself to the range of learning processes that is opened up at a given time by a historically attained level of learning (p. 383).

In his work on communication and the evolution of society (1976) Habermas puts forward four criteria of social validity that he believes are involved in individuals reaching an understanding with each other.

He believes that the speaker must choose a comprehensible expression so that speaker and hearer can understand one another. The speaker must have the intention of communicating a true proposition so that the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker. The speaker must want to express his intentions truthfully so that the hearer can believe the utterance of the speaker in the sense of trusting the speaker. Finally, 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. (pp. 2-3).

I use these ideas in validation groups of peers to assist in strengthening the validity of living educational theories. As the theories are being generated I encourage their submission to validation groups in which the following questions are answered.

- i) Is the explanation comprehensible to the reader? What could be done to enhance its comprehensibility?
- ii) Is there sufficient evidence in the account to justify the claims being made? What could be done to strengthen the evidential base of the claims.
- iii) Does the account show an awareness of the normative influences of the cultural form within which it is being produced? What could be done to deepen and extend this awareness.
- iv) Does the account show the authenticity of the researcher in the sense of a sustained commitment to live ontological values as fully as possible. What could be done to enhance the authenticity of the account?

Including the 'I' in research accounts can sometimes lead to criticisms in terms of an account being 'anecdotal', subjective or lacking in objectivity. As Popper says (1975) the words 'objective' and 'subjective' are philosophical terms heavily burdened with a heritage of contradictory usages and of inclusive and interminable discussions. I use Popper's idea that the objectivity of scientific statements lies in the fact that they can be inter-subjectively tested and his more general formulation that for inter-subjective *testing* is merely a very important aspect of the more general idea of inter-subjective *criticism*, or in other words, of the idea of mutual rational control by critical discussion. (p.44).

Hence my use of Habermas' four criteria of social validity in expressing the mutual rational controls by critical discussion in validation groups to enhance the validity of living theory accounts.

In enhancing the validity of living theories I also use the six principles distinguished by Winter (1989) for enhancing the rigor of action research accounts. I find that his six principles of dialectical and reflexive critique, risk, plural structure, multiple resource and theory practice transformation most useful in helping to enhance the validity of living theory accounts. Peggy Kok (1991) used these principles in this way in her masters dissertation on the art of an educational enquirer and I continue to emphasise the importance of these principles.

In stressing the importance of engaging with educational influences in the learning of social formations I also take account of Habermas' assertion that the dispute between the two received paradigms - whether the autonomy of legal persons is better secured through individual liberties for private competition or through publicly guaranteed entitlements for clients of welfare bureaucracies - is superseded by a proceduralist concept of law. According to Habermas' conception of a proceduralist concept of law the democratic process must secure private and public autonomy at the same time. I work with his point that the private autonomy of equally entitled citizens can only be secured only insofar as citizens actively exercise their civic autonomy (p.264). I express the commitment in seeking to enhance the influence of Andrew Henon's (2009) work in 'Creativity Works'. Henon, as a socially engaged artist, demonstrates how to support, represent and communicate the bringing together in community, of diverse individuals and groups, with the intention of enhancing the influence of values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

The reference to Andrew Henon's work provides a transition from the influence of 'established theories', in which explanations are **derived** from abstract generalizations and applied to particular 'cases', to the influence of locally generated living educational theories that are produced by individuals to explain their educational influences in learning. Insights from the following living theories continue to influence my own.

Living Theories

I use insight's from Adler-Collins (2000) living theory as he explains the development, implementation and evaluation of a curriculum for the healing nurse, initially developed within a UK context, within a Japanese University between the years 2003-7. His narrative provides insights into the growth of his educational knowledge in researching his unique position of being the only white, male nurse, foreign educator in a culture that is so completely different from that of his birth and early education. Through researching his practices as nurse, educator and Buddhist Priest, Adler-Collins helped to develop my understanding of the significance of a 'safe' space for learning, and of being open to differences and possibilities to understanding different cultural norms to those in one's own background.

This understanding has been deepened and extended by Charles' (2007) ideas of guiltless recognition and societal re-identification in responding to influences of colonialism. For Charles 'guiltless recognition' and 'societal re-identification'

emerge from a perception of self that is distinct within but not isolated in an awareness of 'inclusionalty'. They are intimately related concepts. *Guiltless recognition allows us to move beyond the guilt and blame that maintains separation and closes down possibility. It provides a basis for action and conception that moves us towards the imagined possibilities of societal re-identification with Ubuntu.* (Charles, 2007, Abstract).

From Charles I learnt to appreciate the influence of the colonizing history of the UK in the present day experiences of individuals who identify with empathy with colonized cultures. Charles demonstrates how guiltless recognition allows an individual to move beyond the guilt and blame that maintains separation and closes down possibility. He provides the evidence in his thesis to justify his claim that it gives a basis for action and conception that moves us towards the imagined possibilities of societal re-identification with Ubuntu. I accept his point that both 'guiltless recognition' and 'societal re-identification' embody strategic and epistemological practices that move away from severing, colonising thought, towards ways of being that open up new possibilities for people of African origin and for humanity generally.

My understanding of the influence of culture in the generation of living educational theories has also been extended in Delong's (2002) idea of a 'culture of inquiry'. Delong's thesis is most significant for understanding complex ecologies in a changing world in living educational theories. She was the first researcher to show me the importance of engaging with the development of a culture of inquiry for enhancing the influence of living educational theories.

Delong's originality is in the systematic way she transforms her embodied educational values into educational standards of practice and judgment in the creation of her living educational theory with a culture of inquiry. She expresses the meanings of her values and standards in terms of valuing the other in her professional practice, building a culture of inquiry, reflection and scholarship and creating knowledge.

In contrast with Delong's influence on my understanding of the significance of contributing to the development of cultures of inquiry, Farren's (2005) influence is focused on her understandings of a pedagogy of the unique, a web of betweenness and the use of information and communications technology (ICT). In Farren's writings the 'web of betweenness' refers to how we learn in relation to one another and also how ICT can enable us to get closer to communicating the meanings of our embodied values. She expresses her understandings of education as 'power with', rather than 'power over', others. A 'pedagogy of the unique' respects the unique constellation of values and standards of judgment that each practitioner-researcher contributes to a knowledge base of practice.

Hymer's (2007) idea of giftedness resonates with my own (Hymer, Whitehead & Huxtable, 2009) where the value of individual intellectual respect is a contributor to the creation of generative-transformational giftedness - i.e. giftedness which is co-constructed in a social, relationally respectful, activity-oriented, dialectical, tool-and-result (Vygotsky, 1978) manner and context.

Hymer presents an inclusional, non-dualistic alternative to the identification or discovery of an individual's gifts and talents. I accept his argument that activity- and development-centred, rather than knowing-centred environments, lead not to the identification of gifts and talents but to their creation.

Laidlaw (1996) expressed her talents for educational enquiry in her thesis where she shows what it means for a teacher-researcher to bring, amongst others, an aesthetic standard of judgement to bear on her educative relationships with Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Higher Degree education students and classroom pupils in the action enquiry: 'How do I help my students and pupils to improve the quality of their learning?' The gift she offered to me was the insight that standards of judgment are themselves living, hence my stress on the importance of living standards of judgment.

One of the most important living standards of judgment was expressed by Lohr (2006) as love at work. Lohr submitted her thesis as a first person action research account in which she immersed herself in her embodied experience of love. Her thesis shows how she realizes her aim of learning through love how her practice, as a Director in social housing, and as a teacher of yoga, might be improved by giving primacy to a value laden theorising of her lived experience.

Lohr's claim to originality of mind emerged from this subjective experience as she showed how she brought her ontological values of love into practice through a 'pedagogy of presence' that is integral to her action. Thanks to Lohr's influence my confidence has strengthened in highlighting the importance of love as a living standard of judgment in explanations of educational influence.

I have learnt much from Jean McNiff my friend and collaborator for over 27 years. From Jean I continue to learn about the importance of communicating ideas to others in ways that relate strongly to their experience and existing ways of making sense of the world. As I go back over my drafts of this paper I bear lessons from writing with Jean in mind. I try to speak directly to you, the reader, in ways that will captivate your imaginations and resonate with your values and passions. One of my favourite publications is Jean's 'My Story Is My Living Educational Theory' (McNiff, 2007). In this publication Jean shows the links between narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and action research. For Jean and I, narratives comprise descriptions and explanations of practice, which constitute living educational theories of practice (Whitehead, 1989). By offering these theories of practice, individuals are able to show how they hold themselves accountable for what they are doing and why they are doing it. (Clandinin, 2007 p. 308).

I have probably learnt most from my reflective engagements with my own experience and the ideas of others. I am thinking of this learning in terms of the emergence of the two original ideas of living educational theories and living theory methodology (Whitehead 1989, 2008a, b, c & 2009). Here is perhaps my most influential idea on the nature of living educational theories:

"Let me be clear about the relationships between explanatory texts and present

practice, in constructing a living theory. The texts are historical accounts. They describe and explain past activities. They also have a proactive function in that the evaluation of these accounts prompts a vision of the future in an imagined possibility of how present practice might be improved. We can thus make sense of the living practice through understanding the relationship between the account of the past and the vision of the future. Hence educational theory is, for me, a living theory in that the explanation contains evidence of an evaluation of past practice, evidence of an intention to produce something not yet in existence and evidence of the present practice through which the intention is being realised in action (Whitehead, 1985a).

I hope that you can now see why I characterise the approach as a living approach to educational theory. It is to distinguish it from a linguistic approach which is contained within propositional relationships and captured in texts on library shelves. In contrast to this I am proposing an organic view of educational theory which is living in the public conversations of those constituting professional practice. It is thus growing in the living relationship between teachers, pupils and professional researchers and embodied within their forms of life.” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 6) As individuals research their forms of life in enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ they often need to find or develop appropriate research methods.