

# **How Might We Enhance the Educational Value of our Research-base at the New University in Guyuan?**

## **Researching Stories for the Social Good.**

### **Inaugural Professorial Lecture by Moira Laidlaw**

**Ningxia Teachers University, 13 June 2006.**

First, this evening, I would like to thank President Zhang and members of the President's office for enabling this lecture to take place. I would also like to thank Dean Tian Fengjun and the Centre for Action Research for all their assistance in the preparation of this lecture for this evening's entertainment! Throughout this inaugural lecture, I would like us all to bear in mind Vice-Premier Huang Ju's comments at the 55<sup>th</sup> State Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 2004 that:

*We will continue...to achieve comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable economic and social development.* (Huang, 2004)

I will return to his comments later because they are key to an understanding of the purpose of our work here in Guyuan.

**Foreword:** I am going to be using some technical terms in this lecture, and have some information prepared to help you with them. One term, however, I want to explain before the lecture, because it's the most important one of all. Living Educational Theory Action Research. What does it mean?

Action Research is a term very commonly used in this university. It refers to a kind of educational research in which a researcher, or a group of researchers, forms a research question based on what is happening in an educational situation. Something like, 'How can I help my students improve their speaking?' The researcher collects data over time, and eventually writes a report about it to show others what has been improved. The work is *educational* because it seeks to improve something in society for the benefit of learners and groups. Why living? Well, the research never ends. Once you've found a solution to one problem and written about it, other problems become apparent. This work is dynamic. It is evolving all the time. It is based on change and development. So, there we have it. Living Educational Theory Action Research. I hope that's clear. O.K., let's start.

**Introduction:** I have spent the happiest five years of my life here in Guyuan, and it is because I love Guyuan so much, I want to spend a little time in saying what I think makes this place so special. In this specialness lies some of the answer to this lecture's question: how might we enhance the educational value of our research at the new

university in Guyuan? Researching Stories for the Social Good.

Most of you by now, I am sure, are acquainted with this picture:



which my colleagues Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff used recently in their lectures here. They left you with a comment last time: *These children know what it's all about.* I want to look at that comment and see its significance for building our research here educationally.

What do these children know? Look at those faces. See their smiles, their glee. Their delight. Their joy. Their innocence and ability to give themselves entirely to the

moment. Those children, typical of children in Guyuan, in China, in the world, are experiencing pleasure. I would suggest they are in harmony with themselves, with each other, with their environment and with their future, not that they're thinking about their future very much, I'll be bound! In this picture I see trust between them. I intuit trust in the background that has enabled this mutual joy to exist. They are so utterly relaxed and confident in their environment. It is a part of them as they are a part of it. Look at their clothes. These are not poverty-stricken children. They look well fed and rested. Healthy. And these children seem to believe they are doing something worthwhile. Now look at this new picture



What do you see? This woman was 82 years old on the day this was taken. It was at her birthday party, to which I was honoured to be invited. Look at her beautiful face. (And by the way I have gained permission from the people concerned to use these pictures here tonight.) She is healthy, fit, loves life, enjoys her great grandchildren, and is heavily involved with all family matters. Isn't this what we all want old age to be? Putting the two pictures together, and what is missing?



We are! We fill in the gaps. We grow out of being children. We grow up, get married, have jobs have children, and grow old. We hold those two opposites together in our lives, and in this lecture I want to talk about how we can use that *holding-together* as the very substance of our educational research.

So to recap about the qualities I hope we can all see in both pictures. There is joy. There is pleasure. There is sharing. There is trust. There is love. There is security. There is a harmonious environment. There is a vitality and a life-affirming energy. There is companionship. There is health and prosperity. Worthwhile pursuits. And perhaps most of all in China, there is the desire for harmonious community.

Look back at those comments again. Joy. Pleasure. Harmony. Trust. Love. Security. Vitality. Life-affirming energy. Health. Prosperity. Worthwhile pursuits. Harmonious community.

Doesn't that sound very attractive? Turn to your neighbour now. What would she or he add to that list to make a perfect life? Is there anything? Go on, ask each other.

Look at the picture again. Eric Fromm, a Jewish philosopher, in 'Fear of Freedom' said:

*There is nothing more meaningful in our lives than the meanings we give to it through loving relationships and productive work, (p.18).*

If the above qualities are really worthwhile for our lives as human beings on this planet together, then what could be more worthwhile than researching those qualities in order to improve the likelihood of such qualities in our lives? Let me say that again. If the above qualities are really worthwhile for our lives as human beings on this planet together, then what could be *more* worthwhile than researching those qualities in order to improve the likelihood of them in our lives? And I would add a further question, a kind of challenge really: Why *shouldn't* we research this as we improve the educational quality of our research base here at the new university? In fact, let me go further. Let me say that researching this *would be making* the research base here more educational. If education is about improvements in our lives as human beings, then what can be more educational than researching those qualities which make our lives better all round? (See the doctoral thesis 'Love at Work', Lohr, 2006)

I now want to look at something, which Jean McNiff talked about particularly in her joint lecture with Jack Whitehead last month.

### **Telling Stories:**

Telling stories is a significant aspect of being human. All people in all cultures throughout pre-history and history have told each other stories. When we explore caves from ancient times, we often find depictions of people in various activities. Doing what? Mending and making tools. Drawing pictures of large predators, in order to have power over them. And talking. Talking. That's what we human beings do. We talk. We tell stories everyday about our days. What we have done. What she said. What he said. I'm telling you a story now. This lecture is a part of my story. Maybe it's a part of yours too. If you use this lecture in subsequent work of your own, then this lecture is part of your story as well.

When I was young, my father would sometimes accuse me of telling stories because I was a naughty little girl! 'Telling stories' has a double-meaning in English, as I am sure you are aware. Telling stories can simply mean telling stories. However, it can mean to tell lies or to say something in order to get someone else into trouble. Children are apt to tell stories which aren't true, or to tell things about what their brothers and sisters shouldn't have done, in order to gain favour with parents and other adults. So, telling stories has a bad press!

However, when we talk about research stories (McNiff, 2006; Clandinin, 2006) we are talking about a very special kind of truth, not a very special kind of lie. In the Western academy, it hasn't been easy for traditional academic examiners to legitimate research stories, perhaps because they seem tinged with qualities not apparently suitable for research. But this is an error, we in Action Research believe, one which is increasingly being understood and countered (D'Arcy, 1998; Cunningham, 1999; Naidoo, 2005; Lohr, 2006). It is highly significant that Ph.D.s are now being legitimated, which concern themselves wholly with subject-matter considered even

ten years ago to be impossible to validate, subject-matter like love at work (Lohr, 2006), the development of spirituality in one's own life (Cunningham, 1999) and the significance and meanings of story itself (D'Arcy, 1998).

Telling stories, is, in research-terms, a highly skilled and exact science. As Jean explained in her lecture on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006, we move in our research from description to explanation and to interpretation and analysis (D'Arcy, 2006). Storytelling bridges the gap between them in ways which enable others to comprehend the significance of what we are doing.

The why, as well as the who, the what and the how! Put all those altogether, add rigour, validity, a new form of generalisability and reliability, and you have academic research stories. I will come back to those qualities (rigour, validity, generalisability and reliability) in a moment.

*(put list of words briefly on the screen)*

I now want to look at building strategies for research because research in a university isn't simply a matter of investigating what you're doing and reporting on it. If only it were that simple. It is, in fact, a complicated matter in any institution. Knowledge, as those of you working in Living Educational Theory Action Research already know, isn't a static entity, but is a developmental orientation to time, context, relationship and meaning. It's a matter of understanding and using the politics of knowledge (Whitehead, 1993) to understand *how* you can be successful in following the research you believe in, and which will bring you academic success and reputation.

**Building Strategies for Research:** When Professor Jean McNiff first came here in 2003 for the opening of our Action Research Centre, she said that we were doing far more than simply improving methodology and researching how we implement the New Curriculum. She said we were researching about life itself in order to improve it. I am sure she is right. The trick, it seems to me, is to see how we can continue this important work *and* have it validated by the Academy. We can talk until we're blue in the face (in other words, we can talk and talk and talk), we can write our stories and feel we are doing our realities justice, but if the leaders and powerful figures don't agree with us, then what can we do?

I believe there are a number of strategies that will convince those who need to be convinced, which I now want to take in turn.

- The first strategy deals with mastering some traditional concepts of educational research, by which we will be judged. However, we can know the rules of engagement and use them to our advantage.
- The second strategy is to do with personal and collective responsibility.



- The third is about building and consolidating our base with a reputation for excellence in both practice and theory along the lines that suit everyone's purposes.

First, then, let's look at some traditional concepts used to test the validity of educational research and see how they can relate academically to our Action Research here at Ningxia Teachers University.

**Rigour:** In AR, we use rigour as a measure of our diligence as researchers and developers of knowledge and theory. What is rigour? Richard Winter (1989) says there are six principles of rigour, which accord to an AR enquiry, and I ask you to refer to Li Peidong's work (2005), in which he outlines the parameters of rigour in detail. Put simply, rigour refers to the care taken in collecting data, sifting through the data to find evidence, and ensuring the reliability of the ensuing theory. Care over every detail is the key concept here.

- The use of triangulation (multiple sources of data-collection).
- The deliberate and purposeful search for evidence which agrees with, or contradicts, our basic hypothesis in the research programme.
- The scrupulous writing up of what happened, why it happened, what was done and what was the outcome with conclusions about the researcher's educational theory.

For example, let's say your AR question is: 'How can I help my students to build their vocabulary?' In order to be rigorous, the teacher would need to have this question in mind at all times, collecting data carefully from many different sources to see how the enquiry is going, talking to students, colleagues and others to check meanings and significance, asking observers to the class to give some feedback. Finally the teacher would need to write up the report as a research-story with ideas, knowledge, conclusions, and recommendations. That is to say - the researchers' living educational theory – in other words, the researcher's own best educational theory at this present time.

**Validity:** In all educational research, validity is a key-concept, because it refers to evidence of improvements in learning and theorizing. It also refers to the believability of the research for all those involved in it and its relevance to other interested parties. In other words, for educational research to be valid it has to show that something has improved which was lacking before. If education, as I mentioned earlier, refers to improvement in some form of social context, then for the research to be valid, it has to help something and be shown to help something. In Action Research, we aim to help students learn something of value, whilst developing our own educational theories about how improvements are made.

**Generalisability:** This is a common requirement of traditional research. In the

sciences, research is deemed valid (see above) when it shows transferability to other situations with the same conditions. In other words, if you do this in such-and-such a situation, the following will always result. This is problematic in Action Research, because, as you all know, we start from the premise (McNiff, 1993; Whitehead, 1993) that human beings and their uniqueness and situations surrounding and influencing them, are not directly transferable or replicable. So, what can we do to manage our research in ways which communicate the value of replication yet don't violate the uniqueness of human beings and their social, economic, ontological, and political contexts? In traditional scientific research, theories are refined in order to explain something. In human scientific experiments, individuals are seen as abnormal if they are not explained by the experiment. But surely, ladies and gentlemen, we are not rats in a laboratory (Skinner, 1968), being observed from on high, but individual human beings, whose differences are as large as our similarities. So how can we solve this problem? How can we generalize about anything involving human beings in processes (in education, in other words)?

In solving this dilemma, we are grateful to scholars like Bassey (1998) who gave us a useful way of thinking about such issues. He coined the term 'relatability' to solve this problem in Action Research and related qualitative educational research paradigms. Relatability refers to the values at the base of all AR enquiries. In our bid to improve something, we are implicitly revealing that we have particular values in our lives which motivate our actions and give those actions meaning and power. In our AR enquiries, we seek to make transparent our values, and use these values as the standards of judgement by which we judge the validity of our claims to knowledge.

In other words, if we want to improve students' abilities, say in speaking, perhaps it is because we believe that speaking helps people to learn more. Why do we want students to learn more? Perhaps we want them to pass examinations more easily. Perhaps as well because we want them to be able to lead more productive and worthwhile lives in the future. Why do we want them to lead more productive and worthwhile lives in the future? Perhaps because we believe that this will lead to a greater social stability and prosperity for many, many people. Perhaps we believe it will lead to greater happiness. Perhaps we believe that this happiness (show picture of children and Mrs. Ma) is one of the purposes of human existence. So, the values underlining a research question: 'How can I help my students to improve their speaking in English?' carries with it values, *which all of us can recognize* because we are human beings together - loving, living, and learning together. *That's* relatability. *That's* how our research becomes generalisable.

This is, probably, the most complex aspect of Action Research enquiries in terms of legitimation and validation by any Academy. The Academy all over the world is slow to recognize this, yet here at Ningxia Teachers University we have a unique chance to show how we are developing Living Educational Theory Action Research (LETAR) with Chinese characteristics, in other words LETAR with *relatable* characteristics,



particularly in China. This is an exciting potential to render our research truly original, groundbreaking and valid. More of that later.

This brings me to the final concept we need to deal with in terms of seeing how it relates to Action Research, and that's *reliability*.

**Reliability:** This refers to the idea that our research, in order to be *valid*, must be trustworthy (Kincheloe, 1991). We must *believe* in it. This means that the *rigour* of the research, together with its *relatability*, will lead us to conclude that this research is authentic. We trust the researcher's statements, descriptions and explanations in the research-stories s/he has created for us. This research is, therefore, valid.

All the above will be recognized by each one of you as having value in a research context. Rigour, validity, generalisability/relatability and reliability. Let's look now at the second idea I mentioned before about the strategies we need to adopt in order to strengthen our research base here at the University.

### **Personal and Collective Responsibility:**

China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching (CECEARFLT) has now consolidated a very firm basis here in the new university. We have conducted our LETAR enquiries, written reports, held validation meetings to check the rigour, reliability, validity and relatability of our accounts of our own learning ([www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/moira.shtml](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/moira.shtml) and [www.gytc.com.cn/wyx](http://www.gytc.com.cn/wyx)). We have published articles (Tian, 2003; Li 2005; ed. Tian and Laidlaw (2006)). Tian Fengjun has given a paper (Tian, 2005) at Bath University with the AR group in July 2005 and next year, Li Peidong and a colleague from the Hui Zhong, Ma Yangu, will go to England and talk about their Action Research enquiries.

But we need to do more. Individually and together, we need to do more. What does this mean? It means that individuals and groups in the AR Centre need to take personal and collective responsibility for the development of our AR. Tian Fengjun offers us outstanding leadership and inspiration – thank you, Dean Tian. One of the most impressive aspects of his AR leadership is that he is doing this work himself as well as facilitating others. He is writing about his management of LETAR, not just telling others to write about their experiences, which is very common amongst management in the world in my experience.

Li Peidong offers his valuable insights as a mediator between management and staff – thank you Li Peidong. All colleagues conducting their classroom enquiries have done a lot. Thank you all so much. But AR, as you will already know, isn't like traditional educational research. It relies on strong leadership and vision – we have that already, of course. It also relies on individual and collective initiative in instigating and following-through research from the first idea (What do I want to improve?) to research paper and possible publication.

*We're always at the beginning.* This is a phrase I have heard often here from different people at the Centre. I have sometimes said it myself too. However, I think we can understand our research here at the Centre in new ways by taking more responsibility for the direction, execution and theorizing in our research writing. AR requires us to use what the New Curriculum for the teaching of English calls critical thinking. This is the faculty of reason, which raises our insights about the world around us and helps us to communicate our ideas more effectively.

If we want our research centre to succeed and to point in new directions for research excellence and achieve status, respectability, and validity, then we have, each one of us, a responsibility to follow through from our classroom action research into writing and disseminating our ideas to others so that our ideas and others' ideas can be ways of improving our lives together. Together and individually, we can tell our research stories. We can enjoy each others' ideas and make the sharing of these ideas a standard of excellence for academic research everywhere. But we (I, Dean Tian, President Zhang, Li Peidong) we can't do it without YOU! *Your* intelligence, *your* creativity, *your* imaginations, *your* determination and flair, *your* knowledge of your contexts, families, society and country, we *need* your help, ladies and gentlemen. Because, at the end of the day it is *our* research-stories, *our* work, *our* lives. In every 'we' there are I's and in every I there are we's. Maybe *that* is AR with Chinese characteristics.

So, what does that mean practically? Well, it means that each one of you has to decide what you really care about, what your values are that you want to bring more fully into the world. The title of this lecture is something to do with the Social Good. Books have been written about that (McNiff, Whitehead & Laidlaw, 1992). Briefly here, by the social good, I am meaning that the activities we engage in as individuals and groups and collectives have the function to help something in our environment and larger society become better than it was; something was lacking and we want it to improve, so we decide what we are going to do about it, we do it, we study the effects of those actions, and then we evaluate the results with a view to the future. Our Action Plan, in other words. The social good refers to the most generalisable of our contexts within which we live and work everyday. Our work connects the smaller picture (our classrooms and places of work) to the bigger picture – our society, our country. Remember those pictures:

***(Puts the three pictures on the screen again)***

The children, the old lady, and what's in the middle. Our work connects all of those. Without high-quality, practical, educational research there is not enough social development. Without good-quality educational research, how can China gain an even better educational system? Without this research, how can we create a society for our

children and our grandparents to live in harmoniously. Don't we owe them this? Isn't this our responsibility as human beings?

Let's look back a moment at what I was talking about before – about values. That a 'simple' research question: how can I help my students to speak more in English classes? is underscored with many, many different values. Values to do with opportunity, love, happiness, worthwhile activities and a productive life. Well, these researchable values need researching! And in your AR enquiries, you can ask yourselves such questions, you can take those concerns into your classrooms, you can reflect about them, discuss them, explore them, describe and explain your ideas and actions, and then write them up so that others can benefit from your theorizing.

These accounts, strengthened through the ideas and theorizing of others, and published in articles, journals, books and on the internet, enable others to benefit from our work, and give us a chance to show the world what it is we can do. But we can't do it without all of you! We all share a responsibility here, personally and collectively to improve what we are doing for the benefit of as many people as possible.

### **Building and Consolidating a Research-based Centre:**

The third strategy we need to adopt in order to enhance the educational value of our research here at the new university is to build up our research base so that it achieves credibility and legitimacy. As a new university it will, I believe, be impossible for this new university to compete with established and respected universities like Beijing Normal, Qinghua or Wuhan universities in terms of traditional research. They have already done it and done it brilliantly (Beijing, 2006; Wuhan, 2006). We need to concentrate on something that will give us credibility and legitimacy in China as a whole through something distinctive, valid and having high status. Let's look at the qualities of credibility and legitimacy in detail:

**Credibility:** This refers to the quality of belief, which others have about what we are doing. We need to have people in Beijing saying about our university here in Guyuan:

*Have you heard about the research going on in Ningxia Teachers University on Action Research? It's exciting. I'd like to learn more.*

Or someone at Wuhan University saying:

*The papers coming out of NTU are showing us something new about research in China.*

That's a dream of mine. I think this dream is probably shared by everyone here tonight. I believe, however, that this is not an impossible dream. I believe we can make this research centre more credible in China by building on the work already so successful in terms of building links between Higher and Basic Education (Tian and

Laidlaw, 2006) and in implementing the New Curriculum for the teaching of English through our delivery of researched teaching methods for future and serving teachers (see websites earlier for details). Through publishing carefully in particularly-targeted Chinese and English-language journals nationally and internationally, we can help people to take our research seriously. This doesn't happen quickly, but the university has five years before it can confer its own Masters degrees, and during this initial period, the centre has to be seen to be publishing widely in its distinctive areas of interest, namely improving teaching, learning and educational theorizing. We have to gain credibility for offering something distinctive and new. We mustn't fall into the trap of trying to compete for what has already been achieved elsewhere.

**Legitimacy:** This refers to the idea of what is accepted by the wider academic validating bodies. In order for research to have influence and status, it requires legitimizing by publicly recognized bodies with the authority to confer that status and influence. Otherwise the research remains local and without much influence in the world. One of the best ways we can incur legitimacy is through the ability to conduct Masters and later doctoral research programmes. It is also decided often, certainly in the West, and I gather also in China, through the research activities and publications of individuals and groups within the organization. Publication in prestigious journals and through reputable publishers in the form of books and theses are a tried and tested way of accumulating the degree of credibility necessary to acquire universally-accepted legitimacy. Through various forms of representation (multi-media and writing, drama and role-play) we have a chance to raise the rigour, reliability, validity and relatability of our educational research. Thus members of the English department are currently studying for their Masters degrees, and there are plans afoot for a doctoral group to be inaugurated within the department, which would be researching, using Action Research, the stories of their professional lives as they seek to improve the quality of education in this university and beyond for the educational and social good. Such a doctoral programme would be highly influential in increasing the credibility and legitimacy of this university's status and validity.

**Conclusion:** In England there is a famous poet, T.S. Eliot who wrote: *In the end is my beginning*. In one of the most profound poems of the twentieth century written in English (in my opinion) Eliot says that life is an organic process of development, flux, change, uncertainty, but that there are values we can come back to again and again to help us strengthen our insights in a changing world. He writes similarly in another poem:

*I will not cease from exploration  
But the end of all my exploring  
Will be to arrive where I started  
And know the place for the first time.* (Little Gidding, 1934).

So I come back again to the beginning of this lecture

*(show pictures of giggling girls and Mrs. Ma)*

to remind us all what is the purpose of all this work. Why are we doing it? What is the social good here? Isn't it that we recognize such a childhood and such an old-age is what we want for ourselves and those we love? Isn't it that we care enough to want to make sure this happens? Isn't that why families in China devote themselves to building conditions for their children to have a better chance than they did? Isn't, therefore, the social good that which takes all those qualities and helps to improve them for all citizens for the benefit of everyone? Isn't *that* the social good? And isn't the work we are doing here, therefore, one of the ways of addressing how our research in the new university here in Guyuan can make a substantial contribution to knowledge, educational theory and the social good? In precisely the way that Huang Ju was anticipating in his presentation on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2004. He asked us to strive for social development. By working in this Living Educational Theory Action Research way at this new and exciting university, I think we are taking those steps, and as one famous Chinese philosopher said: every great journey begins with a single step.

We're on the way, ladies and gentlemen. We're on the way!

Thank you, and good night!

**Bibliography:**

- Bassey, M., (1998) Enhancing teaching through research, Professional Development Today, 1, 2, 39-46 (A shortened version was published in Research Intelligence, July 1997)
- Beijing Normal University (2006), 'About Us', at <http://www.bnuep.com/english/> Last retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2006.
- Clandinin, J. (2006), (Ed.) International Handbook of Narrative Inquiry. Thousand Island, Sage. (In preparation).
- Cunningham, B., (1999), 'How do I come to know my own spirituality as I create my own living educational theory?' Ph.D. at: [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/theses](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/theses)
- D'Arcy, P., (1998), 'The Whole Story', Ph.D. thesis accessible at: [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/theses](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/theses)
- D'Arcy, P., (2006), Personal email correspondence with Moira Laidlaw on an earlier draft of this address.
- Elliot, T. S., (1934), 'Little Gidding', from 'The Four Quartets', Oxford University Press.
- Fromm, E., (1960), 'Fear of Freedom', Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Huang, J., (2004), 'Address by Vice Premier Huang Ju of the State Council at the National Day Reception for Foreign Experts, 27<sup>th</sup> September. Translation.
- Kincheloe, J., (1991), 'Qualitative Research as a Path to Empowerment,' Falmer Press,

London, New York.

Li, P., (2005), 反思温特的反思思维批判原则, 外语教学 (核心期刊, 2005 专刊).

Li, P., & Laidlaw, M., (2006), 'Educational Change in rural China,' in *Action Researcher: an International Journal*, vol. 7., no. 3. in press.

Lohr, E., (2006), 'Love at Work', Ph.D. thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved 12 June 2006 from <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/lohr.shtml>

Ma, X., (2006), 'How can I help my students move from competence to performance in my classes?' paper in process, CECEARFLT, Ningxia Teachers University.

McNiff, J. (2006) My Story Is My Living Educational Theory, in Clandinin, J. (Ed) (2006) *International Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. Thousand Island, Sage. (In preparation)

McNiff, J., (1993), 'Teaching as Learning', Routledge Books, London.

McNiff, J., Whitehead, J., & Laidlaw, M., (1992), 'Action Research for a Good Social Order', Hyde Publications, Dorset.

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. accessible at: [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/theses](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/theses)

Skinner, B.F. (1968), 'The Technology of Teaching', B. F. Skinner Foundation, Cambridge M.A., USA.

Tian, F., (2005), 'How can I help my colleagues to become more collaborative and thus promote sustainable educational development?' paper given at an Action Research meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2005. At [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/moira.shtml](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/moira.shtml) Last retrieved May 25<sup>th</sup> 2006.

Tian, F., (2003), 'Educational Action Research and Creativity in Foreign Languages Teaching', in *Foreign Language Education*, Journal of Xi'an International Studies University, Vol. 24, no. 104, pp 63-67.

Tian, F., & Laidlaw, M., (2006), 'Action Research and the New Curriculum: case studies and reports in the teaching of English', Beijing Foreign Languages Research Press, in preparation.

Whitehead, J., (1993), 'The Growth of Educational Knowledge', Hyde Publications, Dorset.

Winter, R., (1989), 'Learning from Experience,' Falmer Press, New York, London.

Wuhan University, (2006), 'A surveying of Wuhan University', at <http://www.whu.edu.cn/en/about/> Last retrieved May 25<sup>th</sup> 2006.