Chapter 5 The development of *inclusive* gifted and talented education from an *educational* perspective

Having introduced you to the notion of Living-Theory praxis and the evolution of my own, I now want to turn to how I use what I have learned to develop *inclusive* gifted and talented education from an *educational* perspective.

Lakoff (2004) shows that the language we use can embed metaphors of particular values systems and worldviews, which are brought more into being by the words we chose to communicate with. The words 'gifted and talented…' and 'gifts and talents' are exemplars. I understood how loaded these words are when I saw the stony faced response of an audience to my suggestion that Vlad the Impaler had a talent for art. There was no doubt that Vlad demonstrated highly developed artistic expertise but this was clearly not intended for the flourishing of humanity. I realised then that 'talent' is a values-laden word, and communicates values that are life-affirming and life-enhancing. 'Gifts' is similarly a values-laden word.

In my role leading the implementation of a local authority's policy on high-ability learning, I have learned to use 'talent' and 'gifts' as life-affirming and life-enhancing constructs. Through researching to evolve my living-theory praxis I have developed *inclusive* gifted and talented education from an *educational* perspective. *Inclusive* gifted and talented education developed from an *educational* perspective is concerned with researching educational relationships, space and opportunities which enhance each and all learners abilities to develop and offer freely; talents, expertise and knowledge, as life-affirming and life-enhancing gifts. I want to stress the notion of gifts freely offered. A child observed this is not necessarily a common understanding in our culture when she asked:

> 'Why do we expect someone to say "thank you" when we give them something? Shouldn't we give it to them for free? (Towan, 2004, aged 10, comment during a philosophical enquiry)' (Hymer, Whitehead and Huxtable, 2009, p. 1)

As in common parlance, 'gifts' and 'talents' have many different connotations in the literature. However, writers often use the words without reference to the frame they evoke. Clarifying the frames of the researcher and the research contribute to recognising and understanding the normative background of both, the importance of which Habermas's (1976) highlights.

In this chapter I will illustrate my concern and why I am concerned as I begin to clarify my meanings of inclusive gifted and talented education in living-boundaries, the frame I intend to evoke, and the normative background of my research. I will then describe what I have done to address my concerns by explaining why and how I adopt an educational perspective and explain why I believe engaging with 'gifts' and 'talents' as educationally influential concepts is important. This perspective includes

working to improve inclusive gifted and talented education in living-boundaries, and describes a rational basis for the evolution of my work.

I conclude this chapter with the implications for me, as a professional educator, of researching to create values-based explanations of how talents, expertise and knowledge can be developed and offered in living-boundaries by all learners, as gifts to themselves and others.

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5.1 What is my concern and why am I concerned?

5.1.1 Language and frames they evoke

The use of the words 'talents' and 'gifts' like 'education' are often divorced from their implicit values-based meanings, yet keeping that connection is fundamental to improving educatio*nal* theory, practice and provision as Crompton (2010) illustrates:

> '**… language doesn't stand alone. It is part and parcel of the institutions and policies that we live with and interact with. Deep frames (and therefore the values that these embody) are activated and strengthened through many aspects of our lived experience** – including our experience of living with particular public policies and social institutions.' (p. 12)

Crompton does not come from the field of education; he is writing on behalf of WWF-UK and four other organisations, 'to explore the central importance of cultural values in underpinning concern about the issues upon which we each work' (http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigning/strategies_for_change/. Bringing his work into the living-boundary between his world and that of education I can recognise the importance of what he says and the relevance to my own field. To do more than live passively within the dominant

institutions and policies of education, I believe that I need to be clear about the purposes I ascribe to education that embody my deep frames and develop a language that can help to realise them in practice. For example, Amirault and Branson (2006), clarify the purposes of education with respect to different understandings of 'expertise':

> 'We witness in the ancient context two unfolding views toward expertise, each vested in a philosophical view of the nature and purpose of education. If one subscribed to the notion that education held innate worth and that its goal was the development of the "inner man" (as did Socrates and Plato), then "expertise" could be seen as *the attainment of a general set of inner traits that made one wise, virtuous, and in harmony with truth*. If one subscribed to the value of applied skills development (as did the Sophists), then "expertise" could be viewed as the *attainment of a set of comprehensive practical abilities.'* (p. 72*)*

I believe it helpful to name these two unfolding views to make it clearer which are being talking about. Reading Crompton, and subsequently Lakoff (2004) who Crompton draws on, I can see this helps to clarify the frames evoked. I label the view concerned with expressions of wisdom, virtue, and harmony with truth, as talent, and expressions of abilities that may or may not be reflections of values, as expertise. All talents are expressions of expertise, but not all expertise is expressed as a talent.

There are currently (January 2012) concerns being expressed in the English national press about how much men leading banks are being paid. The argument being offered is that unless they are given huge amounts of money England will fail to attract the 'talent' needed. Using the word 'talent' evokes a frame that communicates a sense of a person of unique social worth. In practice these men have demonstrated considerable expertise in accumulating personal wealth rather than talent to improve banking for the common good, whereas Amadeo Giannini (Founder of the Bank of America) and Muhammad Yunus (Founder of the Grameen Bank) demonstrated a talent. So, using the term 'inclusive gifted and talented education' I intend to evoke a frame concerned with enhancing the life-chances of all children and young people judged by qualities of 'humanness' rather than simply 'economic' worth.

Maturana and Guiloff (1980) were concerned with a similar frame when they explored the biological question, 'What is intelligent behaviour as a phenomenon proper to living systems and how is it generated?' (p. 135). Maturana and Bunnell, (1999) summarised their enquiry two decades later by claiming:

> '… that from a biological point of view we humans are all equally intelligent, and this is the case because we live in language. The fundamental neuronal plasticity needed for living in language is so gigantic that we are fundamentally equally intelligent.'(p. 60)

In their paper Maturana and Bunnel also explore the implications in practice of that claim using evocative words such as love:

> 'If you want to achieve something that involves other people, you have to accept that we are all equally intelligent or you will not trust that the others will act competently. If you want autonomous and coherent behavior, you need only open a space of love, and intelligence appears there.' (p. 61)

Again, although they are working in a different field to mine the language they are using evokes a frame similar to the one I wish to evoke in developing a language of inclusive gifted and talented education. Other evocative words have more recently begun to enter the vocabulary of educational researchers, as illustrated by Fredrick's et al. (2010) paper on fostering passion in Gifted Child Quarterly. They were interested in, and explored the manifestation of, passion amongst a group of young people identified as 'gifted and talented' when younger, because the researchers believed, '…that developing a passion toward activities is one way to help counter youths' discontentment and alienation' (p.18). What I found of interest was that although they were researching, 'Developing and Fostering Passion in Academic and Nonacademic Domains', '… youth were not asked directly about passion. Instead, we inferred their level of passion from their interview responses' (p.27). The purpose and conclusions of the research reflect the researchers USA context, which, like the English context, is dominated by economic and technocratic rationalism and is inconsistent with the deep frame that 'passion' evokes.

I have previously referred to Biesta's (2006) identification of a need to develop a language of education, and Lakoff's (2004) point that language evokes deep frames. However, I can appreciate the reluctance of researchers and practitioners to develop through usage, educational language that reflects the intrinsic values-base of education. It can elicit a very emotional and aggressive response as illustrated by this extract from an email I received from a school governor, '… warm, fuzzy, nonsense which encourages people to feel good and to achieve nothing. I have to say I hope my children all grow up to write clear English, and never lapse into this sort of jargonized, feel-good, unfocussed clap-trap.' He was a parent governor with a high-status profession, which was unrelated to education. The distraction of a small, but vociferous minority, notwithstanding, words such as, 'passion', 'happiness', 'well-being', are beginning to enter the discourse in various fields. For instance, Sir Ken Robinson (2009), influential in government circles, has passion in the title of his book, 'The Element: How finding your passion changes everything'. Professor Seldon, Master of Wellington School, a prestigious, public (that is private) school, has introduced lessons in happiness and together with others, from various fields, such as Lord Richard Layard, has established 'Action for Happiness' (http://www.actionforhappiness.org/). Vallerand's (2007) presidential address to the Canadian Psychological Association was titled, 'On the Psychology of Passion: In Search of What Makes People's Lives Most Worth Living', and introduced his 'Dualistic notion of passion'.

Researchers who come within the broad field of positive psychology are growing and are bringing new language into being through usage, such as 'flow' by Csikszentmihalyi (2002).

Before exploring gifts and talents as educational concepts and developing *inclusive* gifted and talented education from an *educational* perspective, I want to clarify further the normative backgrounds of the gifted and talented education field and my own research.

5.1.2 Normative background

Sapon-Shevin (2003) expresses some of the implications of the frames evoked by the normative backgrounds of traditional work in the field in the USA and England:

> 'I argue that gifted education as it is currently defined and implemented in this country is elitist and meritocratic and constitutes a form of educational triage. Gifted programs are implemented for students for whom educational failure will not be tolerated (generally the children of White, privileged parents) and are enacted in ways that leave the general educational system untouched and immune to analysis and critique. Focusing our attention and energy on improving education for students identified as "gifted" removes our gaze from the need for more comprehensive, cohesive analysis, critique, and reform of the overall educational system.' (pp.128-129)

While Sapon-Shevin is challenging gifted education in the USA on the grounds that it elitist and meritocratic, there is no challenge to the theoretical base of identifying students as gifted. I think this important, as the identification is premised, implicitly, on three beliefs. Firstly, that there is a discrete group comprising 'gifted' children. Secondly, that these children need to be identified as they have the inherent potential to ascend the heights of achievement beyond the reach of the majority, if given the right instruction. There is a third assumption, but it is unclear as to whether it is that such children should be identified and educated accordingly for their own advancement, or because, in their advancement, they are thought to be capable of making a contribution which most people are inherently incapable of, to the well-being and well-becoming of all. Whichever your political leanings, given the first two beliefs, namely that there are people inherently more 'gifted', 'talented', 'intelligent' (the labels are often used interchangeably) and they can ascend to heights of achievement beyond the masses if only given the 'right' conditions, then society's gaze should be focussed on identifying and meeting the needs of such a group as an important contribution to developing a comprehensive educational system. However, I have yet to find a convincing theoretical basis for such beliefs.

These assumptions represent the notions of intelligence that have been expressed, with little variation, by politicians and educators since Galton first created the idea in 1865 (White, 2006) against a backdrop of a class-ridden, elitist society and a British empire. These notions of intelligence are not universal. I explored the roots of the dominating thinking in an English

context and in other cultures in a paper presented at the BERA 2008 conference (Huxtable, 2008b):

> ‘While White (2006) asserts that there are no solid grounds for innate differences in IQ or the traditional subject-based curriculum, which underpin the national gifted and talented strategy, and traces the roots of traditional notions of intelligence to Galton, whose theories reflect the values and beliefs of his 19th century world of empire and class, Freeman (2002) points out that the concepts are not universally accepted:
>
> > “The major cultural dichotomy affecting educational provision for the gifted and talented is between the largely Eastern perception - ‘all children have gifted potential’ - and the largely Western one - ‘only some children have gifted potential’. (p. 9)
>
> Sternberg (1998) in his observation about the different conception of intelligence and its relationship with wisdom also shows that a large part of the world already operates with a different way of thinking:
>
> > ‘Interestingly, the conception of wisdom proposed here is substantially closer to Chinese conceptions of intelligence than to many European and American conceptions of intelligence (Yang & Sternberg, 1997a, 1997b). Indeed, one of the words used in Chinese to characterize intelligence is the same as the word used to characterize wisdom.’ (p. 360)
>
> Professor Moira Laidlaw of Ningxia University, helped me with this further when she reflected on this quotation from Sternberg:
>
> > ‘Yes, it’s 智慧 with the first character meaning knowledge, but it’s put with 慧 which has connotations of feeling: this shape at the bottom: 心 literally means heart. In Chinese there are words like 想 that mean think and feel. In fact sometimes, Chinese have huge difficulties differentiating,’ Personal correspondence 11th August 2008
>
> While Eastern concepts of intelligence may be seen as expressing inclusive values they might also be seen to be expressing inclusional ways of being.
>
> *Inclusional gifted and talented education*
>
> Eastern logics and ways of being are similar to those that I have come to understand as inclusional. A living logic, while new to the Western Academy, is familiar to those coming from many Eastern traditions (Punia, 2004).’

Even in a Western context the normative background against which educational theory, practice and provision is developed varies. For instance, Sahlberg (2007) shows:

> 'The Finnish approach to improving learning and achievement of all students, by contrast, is based on a long- term vision and a set of basic values that have been accepted by Finnish society.' (p. 166)

Those values include intrinsic values concerned with equity and equal opportunities, cooperation, responsibility, trust, and democracy. It is curious that Finnish education is achieving success on the high-stakes tests it does not use in the manner advocated by England and the USA as to do so promotes competition and compliance. One argument is that Finland's education system is currently successful because it matches ends with means:

> 'Teaching is a profession that is typically driven by ethical motive or intrinsic desire, just as nursing, the performing arts and humanitarian services are routinely driven. Most teachers, therefore, expect to teach in congruence with their moral purpose, i.e. so that students would understand and learn to promote their personal development and growth, not only for favourable exam scores or other externally set conditions of progress.' (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 49)

Those working within the education system are accorded the same respect; responsibility and support, expected for children and young people and the standards, by which practice and provision are judged, are educational. As I want to contribute to bringing an inclusive, emancipated and egalitarian world into being I see that I can learn from the Finnish work, whereas I struggle with a lot of the research of England and the USA, which reflects the normative background of extrinsic values reflected, for instance, in the promotion of competition, self-interest and economic rationalism.

I accept that some people appear to develop some talents, expertise and knowledge faster and easier than other people. I do not know why this should make them as a person any more valued or valuable. There are some who challenge this notion of fast is best but 'I do not have time to think - I have too much to do' is a common cry from educators and in turn their students. Other cultures are not so preoccupied with activity as a standard of judgement. For instance, traditions of mañana and siestas, and the Buddhist notion of mindfulness and being fully present in the moment, point to the value in other cultures of a sense of well-being and living life well rather than simply fast.

I want to stay with this point just a little longer, as it points to a contradiction between the normative values of English society and my own. A purpose of traditional gifted and talented education is to promote rapid acquisition of skills and understandings and early performance by individuals. Success of the provision is judged by the advancement to wealth and status of the individuals identified. The purpose of *inclusive* gifted and talented education is to enhance the educational influence a

person has in their own learning and life, that of others and social formations. Success of the provision is judged by the advancement each and all individuals make towards becoming an educated person. An educated person is not simply someone who has and creates knowledge of the world. But someone who also recognises and values themselves and others, knows what it is that gives their life meaning and purpose and how to live a loving, satisfying, productive life that feels worth living. The effectiveness of inclusive gifted and talented education can in part be understood in the contribution made to children and young people developing their ability to emancipate themselves in their learning and life, to live the best life they can for themselves and others. I will come to this again in Chapter 6 where I deal with evaluation.

Fukuyama (1992) identifies a core drive within humans when he writes:

> 'Human beings seek recognition of their own worth, or of the people, things, or principles that they invest with worth. The desire for recognition, and the accompanying emotions of anger, shame and pride, are parts of the human personality critical to political life.'(p. xvii)

Status confers one form of recognition, and responsibility. I believe living a worthwhile life is concerned with feeling recognised and valued by self and others, and feeling the unique gifts we each and collectively create and offer are recognised and valued as making a valuable, worthwhile contribution to the common good as an expression of our educational responsibility.

A considerable amount of time and resource is allocated to teaching children how to live a productive life. Comparatively little attention is paid to educating children to live a loving, satisfying and worthwhile life. The implications for my practice of working with educational notions of gifts and talents are to develop relationships; space and opportunities, that enable each learner to develop their own values-based explanations and standards to judge their life as well lived. I am not neutral. I wish to influence children and young people to grow to be adults who contribute to a loving, inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society.

I believe the experiences of a child during their school years can have a profound life-long influence on their emotional, personal, social, intellectual and physical well-being. While the contribution an individual makes is not determined by early experiences, those experiences are often very influential, for better or for worse. Whereas 'success' or the 'value' of a person's contribution cannot be measured, I do believe that we can develop a better understanding of what we mean in using such words and phrases, and in so doing can improve the quality of the educational contexts we create. I will come back to this in Chapter 6.

Labelling an ability or skill as a talent and labelling an artefact or abstraction as a gift identifies them as socially desirable. In a neat, yet invisible move, the value is often then transferred from the skill, ability… to the person: that person is then seen as more talented, gifted… and more

valued as a consequence. If such a statement is part of the embodied belief system of an educator, then the way that such an educator will engage with their pupils or students is different in terms of the educational relationship space and opportunities they will create with and for children and young persons, than if they believe that only a few people are inherently intelligent or have the capacity to develop and offer talents, expertise and knowledge as valuable gifts. Dweck's (2006) work on the implications of self-theories of intelligence that an educator as well as a learner holds, gives testament to that assertion. Hymer (2011) further develops the implications in his paper, 'From Cohorts to Capabilities'. What I am concerned with is gifted and talented education. By that I mean educational relationships, space and opportunities that support the development of talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts by *all* children and young people.

Talent or gift is sometimes used to imply an aptitude. If I say I have an aptitude I mean I find something easy to develop. For instance, if I say I have a musical aptitude, I am taken to mean I find it easy to develop competency, skill and understanding in the field of music. I do not know why an individual should experience something as easy or difficult to learn or believe they have an aptitude, but these are interesting questions that individuals rarely research. It is often presumed that a person should work to develop their aptitude as a talent:

> 'Everyone has an aptitude for something. The trick is to recognize it, to honor it, to work with it.' (Shekerjian,1990, p. 1)

However, this is not invariably the case. What motivates some people to work at learning something may be a pleasure doing something they feel is easy. However it can be the effort required that generates, rather than requires, energy. I believe that educators should be sensitive to the possibility of mistaking something valued by school, such as good exam results, that a child appears to learn without effort, with what that person might want to devote time and energy to developing. Borland (2003) advocates:

> '… that we dispense with the concept of giftedness – and such attendant things as definitions, identification procedures, and, for the most part, pull-out programs – and focus on the goal of differentiating curriculum and instruction for all the diverse students in our schools.' (p. 118)
>
> 'Curriculum, I would argue, is what the field of gifted education is all about. Differentiated curriculum is the field's *raison d'etre.'* (p. 118)

However, I suggest that gifted education should not be concerned *only* with curriculum with predefined learning outcomes: a given curriculum, which is devised locally or nationally. In the English context I see the dominating influence of the given curriculum in the AfL[24]strategy. Clarke (2008)

[24] AfL - Assessment for Learning

exemplifies the practice being promulgated in her book, 'Active Learning through Formative Assessment'. The assessment made is for learning the prescribed curriculum, with the political and institutional drive to ensure that expected targets are reached. The consequences of this form of assessment contrasts with those focussed on an intent to enhance assessment for learning by means of a curriculum personalised by children and young people, who have identified that learning which is important to them. This notion of a personalised curriculum and assessment for the learning process it entails, is exemplified by the living-educational-theory research accounts by Clerkin (2009), 'How can I use Irish language e-portfolios in the assessment for learning approach in my primary classroom?' and Gjøtterud (2009) 'Love and critique in guiding student teachers'.

The curriculum of i*nclusive* gifted and talented education developed from an *educational* perspective is extended to include a personalised curriculum that is responsive to the learning of the child or young person in the process of developing talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts. The knowledge of the given curriculum is the content, skills or dispositions, predetermined by another, and/or by the social formations within which we live. The knowledge of the personal(ised) curriculum, is that created by the individual, in the process of developing and extending their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations.

I believe that as humans mature the sphere of the individual's educational influence and concern often moves from self to increasingly focus on more distanced and impersonal terrain, until they inclusively embrace self, other, social formations and the world in which they live. What do I mean by mature? A friend offers an excellent description of my meaning when she emailed and referred to a mutual friend:

> 'Maturity, I believe, is taking responsibility for one's self in the world. He does that all the time. He doesn't project. He doesn't take on stuff he can't follow through. He speaks the truth, whether it's easy or not. He commits to things he's chosen to commit to. He reasons rather than emotes. And so on. He knows what he is and what he's doing and he takes account of the effects he has in the world and on others as well as on himself.' (personal communication quoted in Balchin, Hymer and Matthews, 2009, p. 296)

I do not believe that maturing is simply a case of aging; I have met many 5-year-olds who in this matter are more mature than many 50-year-olds. I also do not believe maturing comprises a series of systematic developmental steps. For instance, some people seem to express a value of the world and yet not for themselves. Given those caveats I still feel:

> '…that one of the most important gifts an educator can create, value and offer their students is an educational space to mature. It is not a passive space. Wine maturing is not liquid doing nothing in vast vats in dark cellars for decades. There are very active transformational

> processes at work.' (Huxtable, 2009d in Balchin, Hymer, Matthews, p. 296)

During the fermentation process, the flow of energy in those dynamic processes can be explosive if confined to inert bottles!

Biesta (2006) said that:

> '… education is not just about the transmission of knowledge, skills and values, but is concerned with the individuality, subjectivity, or personhood of the student, with their "coming into the world" as unique, singular beings.' (p. 27)

Gifted and talented education should also be concerned with enabling people to come into their own presence as fully as possible and learn to be wise as Ackoff and Greenberg (2008) point out:

> 'When all is said and done, it is wisdom that we seek more than anything else and that we wish our fellow citizens to possess. We want them to be able to make value judgements, to know the consequences of their (and others') actions, and to learn from their mistakes.
>
> The only way to develop values and judgement about one's actions is to be able to exercise judgment and apply values in everyday life, in a way that is meaningful and relevant to you. Wisdom is not something that one teaches in a course (or even through the lectures of a person we acknowledge to be wise). If we honestly seek out the sources of wisdom of a person we admire, we absorb some of the experience and attitude that inform that person's life. But to be wise is to own wisdom, as yours, not as someone else's, and to do that one must constantly be faced with situations that call forth the practice and application of wisdom – in school, at work, and throughout life.' (pp. 21-22)

Learning to live wisely contributes to the evolution of the social formations we live in. Some aspects of the knowledge base of social formations constitute the given curriculum. This knowledge is not often offered as a gift inviting creative responses, but rather is imposed with an expectation of learning being concerned with acquisition and replication. This seems to be common across cultures: the given curriculum delivered by the powerful to ensure that the young and less powerful adults accept culturally determined knowledge. The resulting tensions can also be experienced in the work place. For instance, when the demands and constraints imposed by an organisation, or its managers, dominate. In my experience, most people enjoy a sense of well-being when they are enabled to develop and contribute their unique talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts. Gifts that are valued and improve the well-being of the organisation that employs them, and/or the world and the social formations in which they live. Educators do not appear to be an exception. I wonder if there is something about performativity that is disconnected from a delight and pleasure in the loving

humanity we can enjoy through developing and offering our unique talents and knowledge as gifts to make the world a better place to be.

For ability to be recognised as outstanding it often has to be within the accepted norms of those dominating the field. The quality of the gifts offered by pioneers who lead the field are often not valued at first and the pioneer can be ostracised and even eliminated from the field of enquiry. In bygone ages unorthodox thinkers were shown the instruments of torture in appreciation of their originality, now they are shown the prospect of no promotion or even unemployment. Should a child or young person challenge the received wisdoms they risk failing examinations and getting a poor reference, which can have a deleterious effect on their career. Educators need to be prepared to work with the challenge of their pupils' creativity and hold a space for learning open. In contexts dominated by high-stakes testing that is not easy. Support needs to be developed for educators at every level of the system to feel able to take learning risks to develop their talents, expertise and knowledge as educational gifts for the learners they have a direct and indirect responsibility towards. White (2007), as an established, influential academic, offers such support when he says:

> 'It is not enough for curriculum authorities like QCA to present what is called a 'big picture' of the curriculum, where this is a one-page mapping of aims, sub-aims, outcomes, learning approaches, curriculum subjects principles of assessment and accountability (http://www.qca.org.uk/17180.html). This is a helpful device, certainly, but not enough. One needs a 'big picture' in another sense of the term to make this intelligible – an account of how the aims fit together in a coherent way, the values on which they rest and a defence of those values.' (p. 23)

Gifts and talents are not neutral words nor is education, but few educators or academics contextualise their theory, practice and research by articulating their own educational values and beliefs or the purpose they ascribe to education. However, it is the articulation of those values and beliefs that help me understand what the writer is offering, and how I can engage with it productively to enhance my own theorised educational practice.

Heng (2003) expresses her values and beliefs clearly, and the implications for developing educational practice and provision:

> 'If, indeed, school is to be beyond grades and is to transcend instrumental ends, we must ask the big questions. Do our children have an inner compass? Do they have a sense of purposeful direction and mission that stems from a deep understanding of self as learner as well as self in relations to society at large? Answers to these questions may begin to unfold if educators are encouraged to listen to the inner voices of academically able learners and all learners, to help them bring to consciousness the tacit and to guide them in their search for a gestalt in making meaning of their lives. Only then, perhaps, as Csikszentmilhalyi (1993) envisions, can we liberate our

> children from mindless competition, narrowly utilitarian pursuits, impoverished lives, and opportunities missed and guide them toward the freedom to discover life themes, to shape, by rational choice and experience, meaningful and authentic life goals.' (pp. 59-60)

My only puzzlement with this is why educators should not be encouraged to listen to the inner voice of *all* their pupils, not just those who attain well in the given curriculum. Putting that to one side, I think that Heng shows how posing such questions brings the researcher and practitioner to clarify the educational purpose of school and the values that underpin their research and practice as illustrated by her writing:

> 'If school is to be about meaningful rather than merely instrumental ends, educators must help children engage in the constant reexamination and reshaping of self. To be true to the best one is capable of, children must engage in a continual search for self and meaning. The process of soul-searching has never been easy. On the contrary, the process is long and uncertain, and very often fraught with tension, as one contemplates the arrays of the value of one good against that of an equally compelling, valuable good. In the greater scheme of things that looks toward helping children discover and create their life themes as opposed to living life scripted by society, however, it is perhaps timely to consider it a moral responsibility, on our part, to guide children in their first steps as they journey pluralistic paths of excellence that begin and emanate not so much from without, but from within the individual.'(p. 57)

Heng undertook her research in Singapore. My doctoral research programme was undertaken while I was employed within an English local authority to direct a programme to develop gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision, and thereby contribute to the implementation of my employer's inclusive vision:

> 'We want all Children and Young People to do better in life than they ever thought they could. We will give children and young people the help that they need to do this.' (B&NES, 2005)

and its policy on high ability, which aims:

> '…to increase the opportunities for individual pupils to explore and develop areas of ability to their own and society's benefit…'

In that role, I have been faced with expectations from those I work with, such as Head teachers, pressures emanating from National Strategies to promote popular quick-fix packages, and the tacit impositions of the dominating theories of our culture, and the need to comply with the notions of traditional social scientists. I recognise the expectations, pressures and dominating theories can be internally contradictory, mutually conflicting, and/or at odds with my own values, beliefs and theories. However, rather than ignore them, or succumb to tradition or the latest initiative or fashion, I seek to develop a values-based response that is generative and

transformational, which brings me to the next phase of an action reflection cycle.

5.2 What can I do?

I began using the words 'gifts' and 'talents' and the term 'gifted and talented education', because of the imposition of a government strategy – it was expedient: by engaging creatively from my values-base it gave an energy and a legitimization to what I was doing in developing APEX. At the same time I was uncomfortable. I felt that the terms confirmed an elitist approach in education to which I do not subscribe, and promoted practices that are not educational. For instance, the National Strategy emphasised teachers identifying students as 'gifted' and/or 'talented'. I have concerns with labelling people, whether by others or self, for what purports to be educational purposes. Dweck (2000), in her work on self-theories, gives examples of the type of explanatory stories people can tell themselves as a result of their labelling, and these stories can blight or enhance their lives and those of others. Berne (1964) in his work on transactional analysis offers other examples. I also felt a tension when expected to promote the identification of a few children and young people as worthy of special attention, as I see each as worthy of personalised attention. However, gifts and talents are amongst the few values-laden words used in National Strategies or policies. I have come to believe that this offers an opportunity for educators to develop and spread the influence of values-based theory and practice to enhance the educational experience of *all* children and young people. I have taken this as an opportunity by developing *inclusive* gifted and talented education from an *educational* perspective in the form of theory, practice and provision under the umbrella of APEX.

There are many definitions and ideas of gifts and talents and gifted and talented education, as I have indicated above. Many that are influential in schools have not arisen from educational concerns. Instead they have often developed from folklore, and as responses to questions of interest to academic psychologists and researchers working within the dominant traditions of the social sciences. They have subsequently been appropriated by those tasked with ensuring that politically-driven policy is implemented in education. I do not intend giving a review or an analysis of the multitude of publications in the field of gifted and talented education. Rather, I want to show that an educator can develop inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision, by engaging from an educational perspective, where values and educational responsibility are foregrounded.

First I want to clarify what I mean by 'theory'. I find Coleman's (2003) notion of what constitutes 'good' theory helpful:

> 'Theory is neither *the* truth, nor the final word. It is not static, not an end point, but a place along the road toward greater understanding…
>
> Theories that fire our imagination and push us to think deeply and clearly are good theories, as are theories that generate new questions

> that are a basis for long-range inquiry (in my opinion, the highest form of theory is one that has heuristic value and leads to increased understanding about a phenomenon). Moreover, good theory in the social sciences leads to good practice. Or as Lewin remarked, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory."' (pp. 62-.63)

Despite his clear statement that theory is not '*the* truth, nor the final word', it often seems a theory takes a hop from being the best explanation a person can offer of reality at a point in time, to being conceived of as reality itself, and a reality which is unchanging. The main point is what Coleman says about what a good theory should *do*. A good theory should not only offer a rational and reasonable explanation of what is being researched, but it should also contribute to the development of even better theory and practice. To do that, the normative background, the basis from which a theory is offered, accepted and worked with, has to be considered if the theory and the contribution it could make to improving educational practice is to be understood and worked with.

When I explore the ever-increasing number of titles in the field of 'gifted and talented education' I am struck by how few of these have a theoretical base or any rationale. I am not alone. Coleman (2003) comments on the dearth of theory in the field of gifted and talented education:

> 'My hunch that little theoretically based scholarship was being produced was confirmed, although I found a range of papers that supposedly had a theoretical bent. In addition it became clear that no unanimity exists about what a theory is.' (p. 64)

Remember, I take a theory to be an explanation that is not only rational but is also reasonable in relation to my values. For instance, theories of race and intelligence presented by Eysenck and Jensen in the 1970s were considered reasonable by proponents of eugenics, but not to those committed to developing an egalitarian and inclusive society. The theories in which I am interested, are those produced to explain educational influences in the learning of children and young people, to create and offer talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts intended to enhance well-being and well-becoming of all.

Coleman (ibid) offers a metaphor of:

> '… "theory as tool", which advances the idea that theory should function as a tool not as a goal, for organising disciplined inquiry (Marx, 1963), a tool that may come in different forms.' (p. 67)

My living-theory is a tool in so far as it offers generative and transformational possibilities, which emerge and are clarified in the process of researching to improve my educational practice. I have in the process of evolving my living-theory praxis developed Living-Theory TASC to help me organise my disciplined, relationally dynamic and multidimensional, enquiry. As I employ this 'tool' I critically engage in the living-boundary between different worlds, with, for instance, psychological theories of

learning and intelligence generated by academics and knowledge of practice generated in the classrooms. My purpose is to bring knowledge from different worlds/fields into the living-boundary between academic, practitioner and politician, and in that space to work with it co-creatively to improve educational theory and practice. I am not concerned with asking, "Is this a 'good' psychological, neurological, sociological… theory?" or "Does this help me implement the latest government strategy?" Rather I am concerned with questions such as, "What do these ideas offer me as an educator researching to improve the educational experience of children and young people coming to know themselves and the person they wish to be?" and, "How does this theory help me extend or challenge my living-theory praxis?"

How can I begin to recognise, amongst the uncountable grains of sand of gifted and talented education, those golden nuggets that I might profitably explore from an educational perspective? I am attracted to nuggets offered by those with whom I feel an empathetic resonance (Whitehead, 2010c). However, at the risk of mixing too many metaphors, sometimes it is the grit that creates the pearl. Dealing with the grit is a good reminder that emotions and the viscera, as well as the head, are involved in learning and it takes a great deal of conscious effort to engage, with equanimity, with work that evokes frames that are the antithesis to mine. Emotions and viscera are also involved when engaging with golden nuggets and can equally override the head but such bias is not necessarily so obvious. Kahneman (2011) labels such fast, intuitive, impulsive thinking as System 1 and slower, effortful, controlled thinking as System 2. This is reminiscent of Claxton's (1998), 'Hare Brain Tortoise Mind'. Claxton (Claxton and Lucas 2004) later illustrates how effortful and controlled thinking perversely requires openness and a relaxed focus, activities associated with creative thinking. Subotnik and Rickoff (2010) make a distinction with reference to the application of 'Big-C creativity' to expertise in order to develop talent:

> 'According to Kaufman and Beghetto (2009), those who exhibit little-c creativity use "unconventionality, inquisitiveness, imagination, and freedom" (p. 3) throughout their daily lives. While not achieving breakthroughs in professional domains, "small-c creatives" concern themselves with linking new knowledge to old knowledge.
>
> In contrast, Big-C Creativity generates path-breaking ideas that lead to international acclaim and recognition, even posthumously.' (p. 385)

Talent, for me, implies expertise expressed with aspects of small-c and Big-C creativity, creating links between new and old knowledge and generating new ideas. However, these new ideas may or may not be recognised as 'path-breaking' and the expression of talent in creating and offering knowledge may or may not lead to international acclaim. Acclaim usually reflects the social, political and historical cultural moment and place that a person is in, as much if not more than, the 'path-breaking' quality of their ideas, even with respect to something as prosaic as the vacuum cleaner. The

invention of the vacuum cleaner made a major contributed to the change in women's lives in 20th century England and hence to the change in the political landscape of a 21st century world. Do you know who invented it? It was not Hoover. The invention of modern soap has arguably made the greatest contribution to improving the physical health of human beings in the modern world. Do you know who invented it? It is far harder to give you examples of the contribution of 'path-breaking' ideas that challenge those with power to bury them. This is one who survived to tell the tale:

> 'The recent Nobel prize in chemistry was won by an Israeli - Dan Schechtman for his discovery of quasi-periodic crystals. When he "noticed" this first - about 30 years ago - he couldn't believe it, and when he announced his work, Linus Pauling - who had by then won TWO Nobel prizes, in different fields - essentially called him a fool and a charlatan. And he was then asked to leave the research group in which he had been working. But he was convinced he was right, and persevered - and the rest is history. Thomas Kuhn wrote that paradigms change, not when others realise they were wrong and change their minds, but when they die (out).' (Personal email from Michael Neugarten, 4th January 2012)

Despite the lack of recognition, such 'path-leading' ideas can contribute to the possibility of something better emerging when the context is less hostile. It is also to be born in mind that no one person can make a difference, no matter how big or small their influence may appear to be to be in a particular time or setting. For soap to make a difference to the wellbeing of all it took a great deal of little- c creativity and Big-C creativity by many people for it to be widely available and used. As the Dalai Lama XIV says, 'If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito' (widely quoted, for instance on http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/show/7777). I don't think that Big-C creativity necessarily leads to, 'international acclaim and recognition' but whether that should be a goal of gifted and talented education is a question that connects with the arguments about the language, frames and normative background of research and practice.

I accept that some people develop talents to a level that is described by an appreciative and discerning audience as outstanding – they literally stand out – and that some gifts are more valued in this society than others. Being more valued does not necessarily mean that one gift is more valuable than another. Newton is reputed to have said, 'If I have seen further than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.' However, those standing on them often render those giants invisible. Shakespeare illustrates that something apparently inconsequential, such as a nail, can be momentous in its contribution to the development or otherwise of something more obviously notable, such as a kingdom. So, one implication of working with educational notions of 'gifts' and 'talents' is to focus on supporting learners to develop talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts that help them to find an follow their own stars, no matter how small and insignificant they might initially appear.

In English schools in 2012 there is pressure to take every child onto a predetermine life-journey valued by their potential 'earning power'. Working with educational notions of 'gifts' and 'talents' is not easy for educators in such circumstances where they experience their values negated. However, it is not impossible and I hope that the framework and research method I have developed in evolving my living-theory praxis demonstrates this.

To develop expertise and talents to a high level, which may become 'path-leading', requires a considerable amount of dedicated application of time, energy, resources and thought. The work of Ericsson, Roring and Kiruthiga (2007) and others suggests that in the order of 10,000 hours 'dedicated practice' over 10 years is needed to get to the foothills of what we currently consider the paths towards the peaks of extraordinary achievement. To devote so much time and energy requires a clear and strong personal commitment. Motivation may come from without, as Gardner (Gardner et al., 1996) points out:

> '… even seasoned professionals may have a hard time continuing to work, in the absence of at least an occasional acknowledgement or evidence of appreciation. Nonetheless, sustained mastery is a time-consuming and demanding process. Unless the individual gains personal satisfaction that is not integrally tied to some regular public recognition, he or she is unlikely to persevere.' (pp. 258-259)

However, a crucial point is that it is the worth that a person themselves attaches to what they do that is needed to keep them going in the face of what might at times, appear to be overwhelming difficulties. That worth can be concerned with the expression of a person's values and recognising what they love to do: the area of endeavour where they gain an aesthetic pleasure creating, enhancing and offering their talents, expertise and knowledge freely as gifts. That worth can also come from enculturation of the educator and learner. Subotnik and Rickoff (2010) ask a very important question concerned with that normative background that is rarely raised in the field of gifted and talented education:

> 'As researchers and policy makers, should we focus primarily on serving gifted students' present needs for challenge in the classroom and/or should we develop their giftedness with a goal of attaining outstanding innovation in adulthood?' (p. 359)

I have not found work that convinces me that it is possible to predict whether an individual will create and offer 'world leading' gifts based on definitions and identification. I therefore believe the search for 'better' definitions and identification procedures by educators is misconceived. However I do find evidence that strategies, such as personalised and mastery learning, which have been developed in the field of gifted and talented education, can make a difference to the educational experience of children and young people. It is clarifying the purpose served by such strategies that leads me to appreciate Subotnik and Rickoff's question, which throws into relief the question as to the long and short term goals that

researchers developing gifted and talented education are intending to address. It is important as teaching for System 1, hare brain, tends to be more concerned with short-term goals of classroom and performance on the given curriculum, while System 2, tortoise mind, tends to be more associated with long-term goals of life-long learning. Teaching for one can be at the expense of the other. I have tried to bring these together in the framework I initially set out in Chapter 1 (pages 20-50) and 4 (pages 119-153) and which I further develop for my work later in this chapter. The goals of the classroom are met by developing Renzulli's (Renzulli and Reis, 1997) Type 2 learning opportunities, what I would term 'objectives-led learning', and the goals of life-long learning met by the development of Renzulli's Type 1 and 3 learning opportunities, which I would term playful enquiry and passion-led research respectively.

Subotnik and Rickoff also raise the issue as to whose needs are to be served, the individual and/or society. White (2007) raised similar questions about the aims of the English curriculum. How each country asks and answers such questions informs what their educational perspective is for developing gifted and talented education and how their research can be understood. Subotnik and Rickoff in the USA illustrate the point I am making:

> '… England's national program for gifted and talented education seeks
>
> "to improve pupil outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged, in attainment, aspirations, motivation and self-esteem; to improve the quality of identification, teaching and support in all schools and classrooms; and to improve the quality of out-of- school learning opportunities and support for pupils, and support for parents, educators and schools at local, regional and national levels" (Department for Children, Schools & Families, United Kingdom, 2008)…
>
> In contrast, the Singapore Ministry of Education describes its aim for gifted education through an emphasis on "nurturing gifted individuals to their full potential for the fulfillment of self and the betterment of society" (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2008). This "betterment of society" implies that the country not only concerns itself with maximizing student potential, but also focuses on how this potential will contribute to the nation in the future.' (p. 359)

Traditional research in gifted and talented education in England comes from a focus on improving the performance of individuals on the given curriculum and in life, while Singapore appears to hold those concerns together with a focus on enabling individuals to contribute through life-long learning to their own betterment and that of others.

Maturana and Bunnell (1999) in the introduction to their paper, 'The Biology of Business: Love Expands Intelligence', express a similar aspiration and resolution:

> ‘There is something peculiar about human beings: We are loving animals. I know that we kill each other and do all those horrible things, but if you look at any story of corporate transformation where everything begins to go well, innovations appear, and people are happy to be there, you will see that it is a story of love. Most problems in companies are not solved through competition, not through fighting, not through authority. They are solved through the only emotion that expands intelligent behavior. They are solved through the only emotion that expands creativity, as in this emotion there is freedom for creativity. This emotion is love. Love expands intelligence and enables creativity. Love returns autonomy and, as it returns autonomy, it returns responsibility and the experience of freedom.’ (p. 58)

The purpose of developing inclusive gifted and talented education from an educational perspective is not to improve an individual or collective ability to compete more successfully than others in a global market. It is to enhance the evolution of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society, which is sustainable. In such a society, each person is appreciated as able to create and offer gifts, which are valued and recognised as valuable contributions to the flourishing of humanity in general and the individual in particular.

I recognise that motivations vary. Some people are driven by a lust for power and control, a desire to accumulate resources such as money, land, goods… motives where people are simply acquisitive, egocentric and self-serving with no concern for anyone else’s well-being or well-becoming. Crompton (2010) draws on Schwartz to distinguish between what he calls:

> ‘… intrinsic or self-transcendent values, and extrinsic or self-enhancing values (Section 2.1 and Appendix 1). Intrinsic values include the value placed on a sense of community, affiliation to friends and family, and self-development. Extrinsic values, on the other hand, are values that are contingent upon the perceptions of others – they relate to envy of ‘higher’ social strata, admiration of material wealth, or power.’ (p. 10)

It is important to me that I encourage motivations that reflect intrinsic values and a passion for learning to live a loving life well for others as well as self. I was therefore particularly pleased to read of Deci’s (1996) work on intrinsic rewards, which was brought to popular attention by Pink (2010). Deci, Pink and others contend that people work to satisfy psychological needs for autonomy (self-directed application of their creativity, expertise and talents to what they are doing), mastery (developing and enhancing expertise and talent) and purpose (making a valued contribution to the common good). In getting these psychological needs met, it is postulated that people experience pleasure and fulfilment in what they do.

I wonder whether Self Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000) helps to explain the energy some people devote to an endeavour, which might be described as their vocation. Reading biographies and talking to people who have made outstanding contributions to their field of choice, it seems that

they commonly develop a passion, which they relentlessly enquire into throughout their lives to develop talents, expertise and knowledge. Sayed (2010) provides an excellent example of what I mean. He was a world-class table-tennis player, and explains his success with reference to a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) and cognitively-engaged practice (Ericsson et al., 2007), driven by a continual desire to improve as a table-tennis player. I believe that for some people, their desire to offer as gifts, the talents, expertise and knowledge they develop, gives them a sense of vocation. Their vocation adds to the energy need for high achievement that Deci and Pink describe and Covey elegantly expresses:

> 'When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds. Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world.' The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali quoted in Covey (2004, p. 9)

This is very reminiscent of harmonious passion, rather than obsessive passion that Vallerand (2007) describes in his Dualistic Model of Passion. There is a pleasure in producing something of quality, whether a thought, an artefact, or a way of being, which becomes an expression of you – you are the artist, philosopher, psychologist, farmer, craftsman, lover, parent, friend… which is further enjoyed in the pleasure it brings as a gift to yourself and others. Engaging in passion-led research is often not equated with work. We often dismiss it as 'play'. In this English society, with its puritanical history, if you enjoy doing something then it cannot be good, and you should not be doing it, or as one manager put it, "no laughing in this office – you are here to work!" I see young children, as yet untainted by cultural expectations, totally absorbed in their work, which arises from their passion for learning, and their pleasure in offering the gift they have created. I experience this looking at the photograph of the child offering Belle Wallace her gift that I referred to in Chapter 3 (pages 86-118) when I clarified my ontological and social values iteratively through visual, text and multimedia narratives.

Figure 19 Photo of child by Belle Wallace

It is not just the artefact or idea she is offering, it is a bit of herself, imbued in the gift. I wonder whether as adults we do not realise how much of our

selves become woven into what we do, and how much we want our self to be recognised with love. When Samantha Etheridge talked about her values at one of the Masters group sessions what she said resonated deeply:

Video 17 Loving what you do (1min 59secs)

http://tinyurl.com/3vxo3zr

'I just love being happy I think. My Dad had his own little business and we hardly saw him as kids. When we got a bit older he quit that and just took a little low paid job. He said to us never work for money if you have the choice. Never work for money because you spend the majority of your life at work and if you do not enjoy it and you are only there to earn the cash the life that you have out of your work you'll never be able to spend the cash you earn so you will never be happy.

If you ever have the choice work for the love of it and so I took his advice and went to work for the health service. I loved it. It was great after I graduated. I've always taken that road - I want to be happy and I think everyone should have the right to be happy in what they do and it shouldn't be something you are ashamed of, loving what you.

When I worked in the Psyche Unit we had to have psychotherapy. We were obliged to be offered it but not to take it but we had this great guy called Neville and we always used to say that the nursing staff had a go at us because we always laugh when we are working and they say that it is detrimental because it shows we are larking about and not concentrating.

But he said that it shows great confidence in who you are and what you do if you can laugh as you are working and maybe it was your own insecurity if you couldn't laugh at work. So I've always thought it was OK to laugh at work at any given point.

So loving what I do being happy and excited being allowed to be creative being encouraged to be creative all those things that's why I get up and come to work.'

I feel that Sam's Dad and Sam are saying something important for me: that adults able to work with love and good humour for what they were doing, are able to enjoy, to have a sense of pleasure and well-being, through doing

something they value, with the possibility of being valued by others as they live and earn a living. That is what I want for all, not just for a privileged and lucky few.

Sam communicates through the video her sense of self-knowledge and affirmation that cannot be fully appreciated by simply reading the transcript I have provided. She shows an active and creative self-appreciation of the unique qualities of self, and what a person can create that is valued and valuable if they are prepared to commit time and energy. I like the word 'passion' as it carries with it a sense of life-affirming and life-enhancing energy. Treffinger et al. (2004) put it as (although I use the word 'gifts' in place of 'talent'):

> 'Talent [gifts] emerges from aptitudes and/or from sustained involvement in areas of strong interest or passion.'(p. 2)

I contend that aptitude (what I appear to find easy to learn) can go nowhere without energy, whatever the source of that passionate energy, be it consuming curiosity, dedication to an ideal, family, love… so explanations of educational influence must include explanations that include energy (Vasilyuk,1991). I also concede that the energy for some people – such as greed - may not be from a life-enhancing and life-affirming source. By using the words 'gifts' and 'talents', I want to maintain a clear connection between learning and education as a life-affirming and life-enhancing values-based activity.

Freeman (2000) observed that if you want to know what a young person will succeed in later in life, look at what they do *out* of school, and where they choose to spend their time and effort. This leads me to engage with the field of gifted and talented education with research questions from an educational perspective: questions such as, "how do I help learners find their passions in learning?" "how can I enable children and young people develop the talents they want to develop", and "how do I enable young people to recognise how their passions and interests might help them develop and pursue what might become a vocation?"

Curiously, even the most ardent proponent of Galtonian notions of intelligence would generally agree that cognitive engagement and task commitment are major determinants of the quality of the gift that an individual eventually creates. Ericsson et al. (2007) provide examples of how we can better understand conditions that contribute to individuals developing high levels of expertise and world-leading talents.

I have come to view the literature created by academics, educational professionals and others, as the gifts they offer in a living-boundary between them and me. Creatively accepting in part or whole what they offer does not mean I have to be drawn onto their territory and agree or ascribe to their values, theories or practices. Rather than entering into the world of the person who has created and offered their theorising, I view it as a gift placed in the living-boundary between us. There, I feel I can value what they offer

without obligation. I can engage creatively with the tool they have fashioned to see how it might help me enhance my own gift.

For instance, I do not dismiss the theories of intelligence offered by academic psychologists, philosophers or others, simply because they are not educational researchers. I have taken much from the work of academics in various disciplines, particularly psychology. What is incumbent on me is to engage creatively and critically with the knowledge created with their best intent. I do not wish to violate or misappropriate their knowledge. My intention is to look for the generative and transformational possibilities they offer; to focus on the embers that are hopeful rather than what might be blighting in my context if amplified.

I will illustrate what I mean with respect to Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, which is popular in England. Starting with Gardner's (1999) own words:

> 'I now conceptualize an intelligence as *a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture*. This modest change in wording is important because it suggests that intelligences are not things that can be seen or counted. Instead, they are potentials – presumably, neural ones – that will or will not be activated depending upon the values of a particular culture, the opportunities available in that culture, and the personal decisions made by individuals and/or their families, schoolteachers, and others.' (pp. 33-34)

I have no way of testing the validity of Gardner's assertion of a 'biopsychological potential' and my usual inclination is to focus on analysing and criticising work on the basis of such inconsistencies and claims which can not be substantiated. However, I want to try to look beyond what irritates me, to view, with a loving recognition of Gardner as someone who wants to make this a better world for us all, and to accept as his gift, his ideas about multiple intelligences, to then see what generative and transformational possibilities emerge. I find this easiest when I sense an empathetic resonance (Whitehead, 2010a and 2010b) with values and beliefs, as for instance, when Gardner (1999) writes:

> '… I would happily send my children to a school that takes differences among children seriously, that shares knowledge about differences with children and parents, that encourages children to assume responsibility for their own learning, and that presents materials in such a way that each child has the maximum opportunity to master those materials and to show others and themselves what they have learned and understood.
>
> … I cherish an educational setting in which discussions and applications of MI theory have catalyzed a more fundamental consideration of schooling – its overarching purposes, its conception of a productive life in the future, its pedagogical methods, and its

> educational outcomes, particularly in the context of a community's values.' (pp. 91- 92)

Gardner's notion of creativity with respect to intelligences offers interesting possibilities. He seems to have a notion of intelligences with creativity that is akin to what I understand by talent development for the creation and offering of life-enhancing gifts and concerns small-c creativity and Big-C Creativity referred to earlier:

> 'My definition of *creativity* has revealing parallels with, and differences from, my definition of *intelligence.* …The acid test of creativity is simple: In the wake of a putatively creative work, has the domain subsequently been changed?
>
> Let me underscore the relationship between my definitions of intelligence and creativity. Both involve solving problems and creative products. Creativity includes the additional category of asking new questions – something that is not expected of someone who is "merely" intelligent, in my terms. Creativity differs from intelligence in two additional respects. First, the creative person is always operating in a domain or discipline or craft. One is not creative or noncreative in general.... Most creators stand out in one domain or, at most, in two. Second, the creative individual does something that is initially novel, but the contribution does not end with novelty… the acid test of creativity is its documented effect on the relevant domain or domains.' (Gardner, 1999, pp. 116-117)

This is also reminiscent of the criteria for a doctorate – making an original and significant contribution to a field of knowledge, and the tensions created in engaging with the gifts of knowledge of others, as illustrated by Pomson (2010):

> 'As doctoral candidates will recognize, most advanced research programs today expect the production of work that is both "scholarly and original." …
>
> Intriguingly, this dual responsibility of scholarship and originality can be both a burden and a blessing. Literary theorist Harold Bloom has invoked the problem of "belatedness." He suggests that the more we know about our creative forebears, the more difficult is the challenge of contributing anything genuinely original to their art (Bloom, 1997). By contrast, economist Thorstein Veblen conceived the "advantage of the latecomer." In his view, coming after others not only relieves us of the costs of starting from scratch, it makes it possible to overtake and move beyond those who came before (Veblen, 1915/1945).' (p. 97)

To return to Gardner:

> 'Intelligence may reflect what is valued in a community, but ultimately it entails the smooth and skilled operation of one or more

> "computers" in the mind or brain of the individual. Creativity is different. It is obviously desirable to have a well-designed and well-performed cognitive computer (or two or more such neural machines). However, even the best designed computer does not promise creativity.' (p. 118)

I think there are similarities between Gardner's ideas that I have just referred to, Sternberg's (1997) ideas of 'Successful Intelligence' and Renzulli's (1998) 'Three Ring Conception of Giftedness' and Freeman's (1998) 'Sports Approach'. Each acknowledges to a greater or lesser extent that high achievement requires an ability to think analytically and creatively, a dedicated long-term commitment to developing knowledge and products within a particular domain that is valued by the 'host' culture, and the courage to 'be different'.

To summarise, in the field of 'gifted and talented education' many educators, and those involved with implementing policy in education, take and apply theories and practices from other worlds, such as academic psychology, without distinguishing between what might be useful to inform the development of educatio*nal* theory, practice and provision. Through researching to evolve my living-theory praxis in the living-boundary between the field and my practice, I have developed a notion of inclusive gifted and talented education from an educational perspective. Having outlined what I can do I will now address some of the implications in practice.

5.3 Developing inclusive gifted and talented education from an educational perspective in practice

In Chapter 1 (pages 20- 50) I introduced the framework I have used for planning and describing my work. In Chapter 4 (pages 119-154) I showed how the activities that constituted APEX were developed in the course of the evolution of my living-theory praxis. In the last section of this chapter I brought theory and practice together to clarify my meanings of *inclusive* gifted and talented education developed from an *educational* perspective that informs the work of APEX as I bring it to a conclusion. In this section I use examples of activities from APEX; past, present and those planned but yet to be enacted, to illustrate the development of inclusive gifted and talented education from an educational perspective, in practice.

The purpose of APEX has been to enhance each child and young person's ability to learn to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life for themselves and others. My ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness, educational responsibility, and values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society, form my explanatory principles and living standards of judgement. The development of theory, practice and provision has been concerned with supporting children, young people and educators to develop and offer talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts to enhance their own well-being and well-becoming and that of others. The context of my work has been primarily in the living-boundaries

between the contexts of school and community for children and young persons as learners; between schools, the local authority and government departments as social formations; and between the world of teachers and other educational professionals and the world of the Academy.

The complex ecology within which APEX was established and developed has changed significantly. Governments and legislation have changed, there are no longer local education authorities, changes in public services are now (January, 21012) being driven by a market-place ideology, and managerialism and marketisation characterises education policy much as Sachs (1999) described earlier in Australia. As a consequence the funding for APEX ends August 2012. However, in this section I do not wish merely to showcase activities, like butterflies pinned under glass in a museum. I wish to use the activities from the past, present and those planned for the last few months of APEX, as concrete examples of how inclusive gifted and talented education can be developed from an educational perspective in practice. In doing so I want the creation of this thesis to contribute to the beginnings of a living legacy. Teachers, Heads, parents, children and young people, and others who have been involved with different aspects of APEX over many years, felt that much of value has been created and this could be lost without developing some form of legacy. A 'legacy' tends to imply that there is something fixed that is transmitted and imposed. I have used the phrase 'living legacy' in an effort to communicate a more dynamic, co-creative and values-based notion.

It is not possible to give a neat account of the discrete contribution that any particular theory, practice, reflection, question or person has made to what I do now. However, I do recognise the significant contribution that some particular individuals and ideas have made to the development of the structure I use to plan and coordinate the development of APEX and the evolution of my theories, beliefs and practice, which underpin it. For instance: Wallace and TASC (Wallace and Chandler, 1993); Freeman and her Sports Approach (Freeman, 1998); Renzulli's (Renzuli and Reis, 1997), School Wide Enrichment Model, Sternberg's (1996) 'Successful Intelligence'; Dweck's (2000) notion of self-theories and fixed and growth mindset; Hymer (2007) and his notion of gift creation, (Whitehead (1989a) and his notion of Living-Educational-Theory; White's (2006) 'ideological roots of intelligence', and Rayner's (2005) notion of inclusionality.

I have given a detailed rationale for developing APEX in a number of papers, publications and presentations. See, for instance; 'The Elasticated Learner: beyond curriculum learning opportunities in a local authority' (Huxtable, 2003), 'Everyone a Winner - Towards Exceptional Achievement of All' (Huxtable, 2005), and 'Making public my embodied knowledge as an educational psychologist in the enquiry, How can (do) I improve my practice as a Senior Educational Psychologist?' (Huxtable, 2006b).

Henry Ford is reputed to have said, 'If you believe you can, or you believe you can't you are probably right'. However, how do you develop an idea of what you can do that may lie beyond your experience? Also, to believe is one thing, but action is needed to give substance to that belief and for the

best intent of a person to be realised. What moves a person to action? What contributes to a person's ability to develop and sustain their learning journeys to the peaks they aspire to? Those peaks are the standards by which they may come to judge their life. As I am concerned with enabling children and young people to live a loving life that is satisfying, productive and worthwhile, those standards of judgment should be informed by the knowledge an individual develops of themselves and themselves in and of the world. This has led me to develop educational relationships, space and opportunities for children and young people to recognise their best intent and find support to give substance to it as they experience the pleasure of:

- Working productively over time in an area of personal interest, enthusiasm or passion
- Recognising, valuing and developing talents, expertise and knowledge as highly as possible
- Creating and offering knowledge they value as a gift to themselves and others
- Recognising, valuing and co-creatively engaging with gifts they and others offer

In Chapter 1 and 4 I outlined the framework I have used to develop activities that I have supported, encouraged and provided to exemplify the approach I have evolved to develop and co-ordinate APEX. Here I want to show through describing in more detail the organising 'categories' I have used in practice working with inclusive and educational notions of gifts and talents. The purpose of 'categories' is not to categorise but to get a sense where I might give more or less focus in developing activities that constitute APEX. Most activities serve many functions, but for simplicity's sake, and this being a text-based thesis, I describe example activities under only one heading each. As you read on, please bear in mind what I have been saying about a multidimensional and relationally-dynamic approach to research and developing practice. No one section is more important than another, and the order in which the concepts are introduced should not be taken to imply a hierarchy or systematic progression from one to another.

Drawing on Renzulli's (Renzulli and Reis, 1998) notion of three types of learning opportunities I have organised relationships, space and opportunities for playful enquiry, objectives-led learning and passion-led research.

5.3.1 Playful enquiry: experiences, 'playgrounds', information, ideas etc to open minds and extend possibilities.

These are opportunities to broaden experience, bump into and play with ideas, concepts, imaginative possibilities, and even to experiment with different personas and ways of doing things, all of which add to the palette of social, personal, emotional, physical, intellectual and cognitive experiences to draw on when creating knowledge. These are opportunities to have learning adventures. While some of these learning opportunities may have preconceived outcomes, the outcomes are intended to be a guide

to providers and participants as to the nature of the 'playground for adventure and experimental journeys' offered.

The APEX Saturday workshops provide an example of this type of learning opportunity. Children and young people were offered opportunities to intellectually, socially, emotionally, personally, and physically, venture beyond their comfort zone, and see where a path outside of the given school curriculum takes them.

How do you know what you want to do unless you know 'it' exists and you could see yourself doing 'it'? Ask a child or young person what they want to do when they leave school, and they will often tell you about an occupation that is commonly visible, such as hairdresser, footballer, teacher, doctor… or one informed by a family member, a friend of the family, or chance acquaintance. Another response, which is becoming more common, is the name of a qualification they believe they can gain. They are often doing what they have been told to do, rather than looking towards continuing education for the satisfaction of developing talents or creating knowledge they value and have a passion for, to offer as educational gifts to themselves or others.

In running the APEX Saturday workshops I wanted to offer an opportunity for children and young people to bump into other possibilities and in the process to learn more about themselves: their values, what it is that gives their life meaning and purpose, talents they might wish to develop, talents they might not have realised they have developed and find a pleasure in offering. The workshops allowed them to explore interests, enthusiasms and passions for learning, to experience the pleasure of meeting and working collaboratively with a variety of peers and adults learning to offer, as well as to accept, talents and knowledge as gifts. The meetings were an opportunity for them to learn more about what how they want to be in and of the world in the living-boundary between school and the 'real' world. While this may sound rather ambitious, it is nevertheless an ambition I wanted to realise.

Some of the authority-wide courses I have run for adults also make this form of learning opportunity available in the living-boundary between 'school' and academia. My intention in offering this form of learning opportunity was to extend the 'palette' teachers have to draw on in developing and researching to improve their practice, and to afford them a space to play with new and established ideas. Courses and workshops for teachers are increasingly limited to those directly-concerned with delivering the given curriculum, prescribed methods of teaching and behaviour management. Rarely are teachers given the opportunity to enjoy learning as an adventure, to step off-piste. My concern is that their fear of venturing into the unknown is subsequently communicated to their pupils.

5.3.2 Objectives-led learning: courses and masterclasses to develop and enhance skills, understandings

These are courses, workshops, seminars and the like, with a focus on learners deepening their knowledge of a field, to develop and hone specific

skills, abilities and expertise. The National Curriculum is the prime example of this sort of learning opportunity.

An example of APEX work here would be the collaborative, creative enquiry days we have held/offered. Many have been run with various experts. One example was that led by Andrew Henon (a socially-engaged artist) for children and adults to collaboratively experience themselves as artists developing their expertise as artists (Henon, 2009). Another example is a TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) Day such as that run by Rob Sandal in Camerton School (Sandal, 2010) where the children were able to develop their abilities as researchers. Another example is the P4C (Philosophy for Children), SAPERE course with Barry Hymer, for teachers developing their ability to facilitate and lead a community engaging in a philosophical enquiry. While opportunities may be characterised by planned learning outcomes, the nature of the teaching can vary depending on what the purpose is.

Remember, I am not concerned with setting up categories, but rather to develop a structure that helps me deciding where to focus my energies. So, for instance, being required to teach something to someone else can be a learning opportunity for the provider to improve his or her own skills and understandings, and as such may be the outcome of the learning opportunity to create knowledge which we come to now. The outcome of one of the collaborative, creative enquiry workshops introducing Research to Make a Difference, by Jack Whitehead offers an example. After one of the workshops pupils from one school introduced what they had learned to the rest of their class and they were allowed half a day a week for a term to develop their passion-led research and make a presentation to children and parents in an assembly. Two years later and those children supported a teacher to introduce another class of children to passion-led research.

5.3.3 Passion-led research: support for knowledge creating enquiries

These are opportunities to enquire as an expert, to create and offer talents, expertise and valued knowledge through disciplined enquiry, within a time frame, and driven by personal interest.

I became increasingly aware as I developed APEX, that there were few opportunities that supported learners as knowledge creators. Yet the literature on ‘gifted and talented’ highlighted that those who develop early beyond the expectations of their age behave as ‘experts’ and thrive where they are supported and encouraged to do so. There were similarly few opportunities for adults to extend their own abilities as knowledge creators through disciplined enquiry.

Sally Cartwright’s (2008) work with AS Extended Project students stands out as a beacon in this regard. This is not something that can be accomplished as a quick fix, but requires deep and profound learning. West Burnham (2010) gives a description of the distinction and what is entailed, in his work on learning to lead:

> ‘Shallow learning about the process of change would result in a formulaic presentation of the various academic models, the ability to describe personal experiences of change, engagement in the process because of external imperatives and an uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of the process.
>
> Deep learning in this context is manifested in the ability to develop a personal model of the change process which is a synthesis of a range of sources and the ability to translate that model into action. Experience is mediated through reflection, which allows for personal interpretation and a sense of autonomy. Profound learning however results in the creation of personal meaning, integrating principle, values and practice so that behaviour is intuitive and the response to change is creative, challenging, ethically driven and integrative.’ (pp. 2-3)

Many people take a considerable amount of time to develop their knowledge-creating enquiry through passion-led research. They draw on experiences from ‘playground’ learning opportunities, the skills they develop from workshops and courses with planned learning outcomes, and their diverse experiences in living. Their enquiry develops organically not sequentially. As learners research to create and offer knowledge of the world as a gift, they also create knowledge of self. Between the person’s enquiries is a boundary in which knowledge of self in and of the world can be created. In creating and offering a living-theory account, I am suggesting that a learner creates and offers an educational gift to themselves and others, as they extend themselves a loving recognition, open respectful channels of connectedness and expressing an educational responsibility. I will return to this in Chapter 7 (page) on ‘Living-Theory TASC’.

5.3.4 A supportive culture

We live and learn in a complex ecology. My intention in developing APEX has been to contribute to a culture consistent with my ontological values of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility and values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society. My intention has also to be to contribute to the development of a learning community that enables and supports people of all ages as learners and co-learners to:

- Ask and answer ‘good’ questions
- Make links between the apparently unrelated
- Go beyond the given
- Search for and construct meaning
- Interact meaningfully with society
- Contribute to and benefit from their own learning and that of others
- Know themselves, make personal choices and research personal passions
- Do things differently

By encouraging and supporting educators and learners to make public the knowledge they are creating, I believe that I am able to help develop an inclusive, cooperative culture of learning. Examples can be found in the Masters writings of the educators with whom I have worked, which can be accessed on http://www.actionresearch.net. Mounter's (2006) work is an exemplar of the development of knowledge-creating learning community with primary-age children, as is Bogna's in Croatia (Bogna and Zovko, 2010).

Rarely are educators prepared to share the early stages of developing educational relationships, space and opportunities in the process of their emergence. However, it is work in progress that may offer the most learning for others. To this ends I have established a Living Values Improving Practice Cooperatively: An international Action Research CPD project with Jack Whitehead. This community supports professional educators from diverse contexts researching their practice to improve it. Some are registered with Liverpool Hope University through the Center for the Child, Family and Society so their work can be accredited at Masters level. Details can be accessed from http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/huxtable/LLCCPD/Home.html. The group is also supporting doctoral and postdoctoral research.

Schools have been continually exhorted by the National Gifted and Talented Strategy to identify students to place on a 'gifted and talented' register. I have set out earlier why I believe that this is at best irrelevant, and at worst damaging both to individuals and to the context and culture in which they learn. Some schools chose to ignore, others to comply, with the expectation, but neither response offers generative or transformational possibilities. I have struggled with the conundrum of how to help schools develop a response that could contribute to the development of a supportive educational context and culture, while being politically prudent, and came to a notion of an inclusive and educational register of gifts and talents.

To develop an inclusive educational register of those talents that the children are developing and want to develop and would like to offer as gifts, is consistent with the development of personal(ised) curricula and inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian education. Developing such a register contributes to a culture where each learner is recognised as having a valued and valuable contribution to their own learning and that of others. To populate such a register requires that a teacher expresses their educational responsibility for themselves, and towards the learner, by seeking to recognise the child or young person's best intent and afford them a loving recognition through a conversation with each pupil about what is important to them, what talents they want to develop, what talents they have been developing, what talents they want to offer as gifts to others. In the process, every child and young person has an opportunity to experience the pleasure of developing, and offering their talents and knowledge as gifts to themselves and others and enjoy the affirmation of having their gifts appreciatively engaged with.

In the process of developing and offering talents and knowledge as gifts, learners may deepen their knowledge of their values, passions and the self they are and want to be in and of the world. In making public their work in the progress and learning collaboratively and creatively with others, they may also contribute to an inclusive, emancipating, egalitarian culture of learning. A further example of how this translates into practice is offered by the www.livinglearning.org.uk website.

5.4 Summary of APEX

In the previous section I have tried to show how inclusive gifted and talented education can be developed from an educational perspective in practice. I realise that I might not have communicated sufficiently the scope of the work so I conclude this chapter with a report prepared in June 2011 for the Schools Forum, which managed the funds that paid for APEX.

Introduction to the service:
APEX delivers the Local Authority policy for high ability and contributes to the realisation of the evolving educational vision and policy by the Authority and the Heads.

One full time senior educational psychologist with .3 projects manager work with teachers, schools, governors, Local Authority staff and other partners to support and stimulate the development, research and delivery of inclusive, personalised gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision in the Bath and North East Somerset learning community. Other personnel and services are contracted as and when necessary.

Over the years teachers and children from every school in the authority have been involved with APEX. The influence of APEX activities is monitored, evaluated and evolved through questionnaires, unsolicited responses, SEFs, discussions with Heads, teachers, parents, children, Children's Services staff, collection of statistical data and the development of new forms of educational evidence such as multi-media narratives.

Resourcing
Schools forum allocated £138,431 to APEX for the financial year 2011-2012. This will pay for the coordination, management, administration, development, and delivery of activities such as

- Saturday workshops and Summer Opportunities for children and young people
- School based support
- INSET/ CPD
- Learning opportunities for adults, children and young people, e.g., collaborative, creative enquiries
- Web-based access to information, resources and opportunities to develop co-operative learning
- Access to and involvement in local, national and international research communities and networks

In addition the local authority provides the management, administration and infrastructures in which APEX sits such as:
- Management and support for the APEX coordinator
- Finance, payroll, HR and insurance
- IT network and office space
- Integration of support for schools delivered by other departments and services in the Local Authority working with local and national agendas e.g. inclusion, Healthy Schools, lifelong learning, Every Child a Writer, personalisation of learning…

On-going changes to CRB, safeguarding, self-employed and other directives and procedures have increased costs and administration beyond the year on year increase of the budget. These, together with the current changes introduced by the government, will have significant implications for future APEX activity. In previous years it has been possible to generate income and make other resources and funds accessible to schools and teachers through for instance, running courses and conferences, making links locally, regionally, nationally and internationally with universities and organisations, developing partnerships and reciprocal agreements. Changes in funding and government policy are making it increasingly difficult to generate additional funding. The projected activity for the academic year 2011-2012 will be reduced to ensure the programme is delivered within the budget provided by the School Forum. However, it is hoped that during the year creative possibilities will enable the programme to exceed the forecast.

APEX in context, overview of indicative developments and indication of impact

1. The first course for teachers was offered by APEX in 1997. Since then conferences and courses have been offered locally with nationally and internationally recognised speakers, such as Professor Guy Claxton (Building Learning Power), Professor Robert Fisher (Thinking Skills), Belle Wallace (TASC, Thinking Actively in a Social Context), Dr Barry Hymer (P4C, Philosophy for Children), Professor Jack Whitehead (Living Theory Action Research). Schools across the authority have continued to use, integrate and develop over years, ideas introduced by APEX, to raise standards and improve the quality of the educational experience of all their pupils developing talents and gifts.

2. In 1998 the pilot of the Saturday Workshops was launched. It arose from cross service links with the aims of extending the opportunities for pupils to develop their talents, expertise and aspirations in a range of different contexts with peers who share their enthusiasms and to work with experts from various professions and disciplines. Satisfaction from students and parents is high with repeat enrolments and increasing applications. Teachers and parents have consistently reported the enthusiasm of children to communicate what they have been doing and to continue to participate. Demand continues to rise and schools integrate APEX opportunities into their policies. In the academic year 2010-2011 140 workshops offered 3,242 places to KS1-4. 7,564 applications were received. 35% of places were allocated to vulnerable children and young people identified as 'harder to reach' at risk of underachieving. To extend and enrich the programme new partnerships and ways to enable young people and adults to offer their talents and knowledge as gifts are being explored.

3 The Summer Opportunity was launched in 2000 to provide opportunities for children and young people to enhance and offer as gifts their talents, expertise and knowledge. The 2010 Summer Opportunity comprised 9, four-day workshops running in parallel for Y4/5, Y6/7 and KS3/4. 178 children and young people from 8 secondary and 28 primary schools from across the authority participated. 34 participants were from the group identified by 'harder to reach' indicators. The APEX Summer Opportunity 2011 is providing 8 modules for 200 Y4/5, and Y6/7 pupils

4. A Young People Working-group was initiated this year to inform the development of the 2011 Summer Opportunity for secondary age students. Young people from 5 schools responded to the invitation and informed the development of the Living Learning 2011 Conference for 100 students together with 8 APEX Saturday Research Workshops with 120 places available for young people from across B&NES. Further ways to involve Young People are being explored.

5. In 2004 the first collaborative, creative enquiry opportunity was offered for teachers and their pupils/students to develop their expertise and talents as co-learners with a field expert. This work has developed to provide exciting opportunities for educators, children and young people to co-learn as writers, mathematicians, choreographers, scientists, and most recently as action researchers. This academic year 70 adults and young people from 6 secondary schools and a college have participated as co-learners developing their talents

and expertise as researchers, with Prof Jack Whitehead. This experience contributed to the development of successful learning by students on accredited courses such as the AS Extended Project. This work is being extended through the CPD project and the APEX Saturday Research Workshops.

6. 2004 P.A.S.S. (Pupils Attitude to Self and School) was introduced to the schools in the authority through APEX. Schools are using it according to their own need e.g. to improve transition, target interventions with individuals, amplify and evidence Pupil Voice, evaluated Healthy Schools interventions etc. P.AS.S. was purchased by the TAHMS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools) project for 20 schools as an evaluation tool this year .

7. 2005 a Masters program was first offered by Professor Jack Whitehead to support teachers developing their talents and knowledge to improve the quality of inclusive, personalised gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision in school and contribute to the knowledge-base for schools and the profession. Many accounts accredited through the University of Bath and Bath Spa University can be accessed from http://www.actionresearch.net A Living Values Improving Practice Co-operatively: An Action Research Project has just been launched in co-operation with The Centre for the Child and Family, Liverpool Hope University. Participants can submit accounts of their work for accreditation at Masters level (£250 for 2x30 credit modules).

8. Support for governors has been developed in the form of workshops and contributions to the newsletter. This year 16 governors from 11 schools participated in a workshop and a contribution has been made to each newsletter.

9. Opportunities have been made available through the South West Gifted and Talented Education Network, for instance 30 places for KS4/5 students on the regional Interconnected Learning Conference at University of Bath.

Anticipated activity academic year 2011- 2012
- Develop and deliver within budget:
- APEX Saturday workshops offering 2,200 places
- APEX Summer Opportunity 2012 offering 175 places
- Living Learning 2012 Young People Conference offering 100 places
- Working group and opportunities to improve the voice of children and young people in the development and implementation of APEX
- CPD through the Living Values Improving Practice Co-operatively: An - -- Action Research Project in association with the Centre for the Child and Family, Liverpool Hope University
- School based support and INSET
- Workshop for governors and contributions to the governors newsletter
- Web-based access to information, resources and opportunities to develop co-operative learning
- Access to and involvement of schools, educators, children and young people in local, national and international research communities and networks
- To extend APEX within allocated budget explore/develop:
- Volunteer programme for young people and adults to offer their talents and knowledge to extend the APEX Saturday workshop
- Reciprocal agreements
- Partnerships
- Relationships with new Academies and private schools
- Funding agencies and sponsorships

5.5 Postscript

Inclusive gifted and talented education developed from an educational perspective comprises theory, practice and provision underpinned by a values-based rationale. The language developed through usage is consistent with the intrinsic-values based frame/s evoked. The contradictions between the normative background of the context and the ontological values of the researcher/practitioner are identified and the educator works to resolve them as an expression of their best intent and educational responsibility towards each and all children and young persons.

I have clarified why my living-theory praxis is concerned with gifts and talents as educationally influential concepts and the importance I place on enabling a child and young person to come fully into their own presence. I have also demonstrated the implications of working to improve inclusive gifted and talented education in living-boundaries, and described a rational base to developing my work that has evolved. I have provided examples of how I have developed relationships, space and opportunities for teachers and learners to explore new possibilities, develop and enhance skills and understandings, engage in knowledge-creating enquiry and contribute to and benefit from the development of an inclusive, collaborative and creative culture of learning.

I have dealt with ‘what are my concerns’, ‘why I am concerned’, imagined possibilities and what I have done. In the next chapter, I will deal with the data I collect and how I evaluate what I do. I will show the creative mode of multimedia narratives in researching the meanings of values in living-boundaries, and developing generative and transformational forms of educational evaluation and accountability.