Chapter 4 My living-educational-theory praxis

So far I have introduced my work and myself in Chapter 1, an argument concerning Living-Theory praxis in Chapter 2 and a clarification of my values in Chapter 3. These serve as the context for this chapter as a meta-narrative of my living-theory praxis. I do not want to confuse what I mean with Lyotard's (1984) notion of a meta-narrative as a sociological concept. Rather, I want to communicate a notion of a living, values-based explanation that connects my learning journeys, the various activities in the living-boundaries between the worlds that form the complex ecology of my practice and being, and my educational beliefs and theories.

I hold to the injunction, 'educator know yourself' as I recognise that my embodied, and often tacit, values, beliefs, theories and knowledge have consequences in my work. This narrative therefore includes some account of my journey of self-education. So, I begin this chapter with a brief résumé to contextualise the development of APEX, which I was employed to develop and coordinate as a senior educational psychologist. I then explore the development of some of my main activities, which evolved in response to questions that have been, for me, generative and transformational. Finally I offer evidence and explanation for the influence I claim to be having in researching my practice to improve what I do as I evolve my living-theory praxis.

Sections as signposts in this chapter

4.1 A brief résumé
4.2 How do I hold myself accountable to my employer and myself?
4.3 What can I do to enable more children and young people to learn to develop as lifelong successful learners?
4.4 How can I enable more children and young people to come to know their passions for learning?
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4.9 Postscript

4.1 A brief résumé

When I began this research programme in 2006, I knew in one sense what I was doing and how I was doing it, but could not give myself a satisfactory response as to 'why': I could not articulate the explanatory principles that underpinned my development of APEX and give a reasoned, reasonable and coherent explanation for why I do what I do. In that sense I could not say that I really knew what I was doing.

Furthermore, I could not give myself a satisfactory response to the question, "Is what I am doing making a difference that matters?" The forms of data available enabled me to monitor but not evaluate my work, and did not enable me to hold myself accountable to standards that were important to me. In the process of evolving my living-theory praxis I now believe I can do the following:

- Articulate what my practice was
- Give a reasonable and reasoned explanation of my educational influence in learning
- Provide a rationale that underpinned and informed the development of APEX
- Illustrate the dynamic creative relationship between my values, theory and practice
- Offer standards by which I can evaluate what I do and hold myself to account
- Provide a form of evidence by which I and others can judge the validity of my claims to be making a difference that matters

My practice is concerned with the creation of educational relationships, space and opportunities for the development of talents, expertise and knowledge as educational gifts. The knowledge with which I am particularly concerned is that created, recognised, valued, offered and worked with by learners of the world, themselves, and themselves in and of the world. With respect to educational gifts I focus on enhancing the educational influence each learner has in his or her own learning as thoughtful, thought-full people, knowing themselves, evolving informed aspirations, and developing the confidence and competences to pursue them and able to contribute to their own learning, well-being and well-becoming and that of others. This, I believe, is consistent with my ambition to contribute to each learner's ability to evolve responses for themselves to questions of the form, "How do I live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life?" My prime concern is with improving educational relationships, space and opportunities that benefit children and young people. However, I also have to be concerned with adults. It is they who are significant influences in the lives and learning of the young, and it is they who have the power to determine the intellectual, emotional, physical and social climate of the learning experience and to what relationships, space and opportunities children and young people have access.

I understand my contribution to the quality of that educational experience in terms of enhancing the possibility of each learner to extend them selves a

loving recognition, establish respectful connectedness and express their educational responsibility for themselves and towards others. I also accept a systemic responsibility to enable a supportive culture that is inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian.

I have provided ostensive definitions of these terms in the previous chapter. I remind you here of the simple lexical definitions I gave in Chapter 1 where I began to clarify the language of my research, practice and thesis (pages 35-40). By i**nclusive** I mean an educational context where each person is valued, and where there is an intention to enable all to benefit from, and contribute to, their own learning and that of others as fully as possible. By **emancipating** I mean that each person is respected as responsible for the educational influence they have in their own learning and life, that of others and society. By **egalitarian**, I mean a culture where there is an expressed belief in human equality and 'power' is expressed *with* rather than *over* other people to make this a better world for each and all.

This quotation, attributed to Nelson Boswell, explains succinctly the notion I have been developing of talents and gifts from an educational perspective:

> 'The difference between greatness and mediocrity is often how an individual views a mistake.'
> (http://quotationsbook.com/quote/26686/)

So, with aspirations of great educational learning I will endeavour to narrate my journey informed by my mistakes, and occasional successes and viewed for their generative and transformational possibilities.

I will bring into focus a few key activities that constituted my practice, leading APEX[20]. These relationally-dynamic activities are distinct but not discrete. In communicating the nature of the educational relationships, space and opportunities that I try to form within living-boundaries, in the complex ecology of my improving practice, I will clarify:

- My evolving living-theory praxis enabling individuals to know more of what they want to do during their life, and gain the confidence and develop and offer as gifts, the talents, expertise and knowledge which will enable them to live a life that is loving, satisfying, productive and worth living for themselves and others
- What I mean by developing in living-boundaries educational relationships, space and opportunities that flow with life-affirming and life-enhancing values
- How I live my ontological values of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility and contribute to the evolution of an egalitarian, inclusive and emancipating society, where education enables each learner to have a valued and valuable educational influence in learning and life.

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[20] APEX – (All are Able Pupils Extending Opportunities) the title of the work I was responsible for.

An overview of APEX contextualise the particular activities I will focus on in this chapter. I produced this summary for schools in 2011:

APEX is supporting and promoting the improvement of inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision to the benefit of all.

APEX rests on the beliefs are that each person is capable of:

- Valuing themselves as an expert able to develop their expertise in their own learning
- Developing and enhancing talents
- Creating, offering and accepting knowledge of the world, themselves and themselves in and of the world as a gift, to enhance their own well-being and well-becoming and that of others
- Coming to know and give living expression to the values that give their life meaning and purpose and create their own living-theory

The difference APEX is intending to make is one that enables children and young people to develop their passions for learning and knowledge creation, become emancipated in their learning and life and come to know what they want to do, which will enable them to live a life that they judge to be loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile living for themselves and others.

APEX contributes to the creation of educational relationships, space and opportunities for valued knowledge-creating enquiry in the physical and virtual worlds. The focus is on enhancing the educational influence each learner has in their own learning as thoughtful, thought-full people, knowing themselves, evolving informed aspirations, and developing the confidence and competences to pursue them and able to contribute to their own learning, well-being and well-becoming and that of others.

APEX contributes to improving a supportive culture, forms of educational evaluation and accountability and amplifies the influence of those life-affirming and life-enhancing values by working with educators, schools, FE and HE, communities, organisations and local authority services and departments.

Opportunities are being created with and for children, young people and educators to develop and offer as gifts their talents, expertise and knowledge to improve the educational influence they can have in their own learning, the learning of others and the organisations and communities they are part of, for instance: APEX Saturdays and Summer Learning Opportunities; Masters accredited educational research accounts of learning; the Living Learning Research Project; the Living Values Improving Practice Co-operatively CPD project ; Collaborative, Creative, Enquiries; Improving Practice Conversation Café; virtual researching communities…

Through the rest of this chapter I will focus on the questions that have emerged through my practice over time that form and inform practice, in

roughly chronological order. This will help you gain a sense of the evolution of my living-theory praxis and improving practice. I will repeat some details to remind you of the historical context so you can recognise the continuing influence of the past within the present.

I continue to find the picture I developed for keeping a balance in the development of activity useful, and the next sections make reference to this.

Figure 14 Framework for developing APEX

I wish to be clear that I am not intending to suggest that each activity is developed and then left behind, or the educational value of each can be understood in isolation. Rather, the activities and the continuing efforts I make to improve what I am doing, interweave and contribute to the complex ecology influencing the progression of my work. For instance, I continued these various activities as I explored the implications of researching those questions that the activities generate. This is not a start, stop, and begin again, process. Rather, it is a living process. I have expanded a little on the

nature of that research process in Chapter 2 (pages 51-85) on Living-Theory praxis and I do so more fully in Chapter 7 (pages 222-241) where I detail Living-Theory TASC.

I start with one of the earliest questions I asked as I began to develop what became known as APEX. I had asked a similar question as I worked as an educational psychologist in school psychology services.

4.2 How do I hold myself accountable to my employer and myself?

In holding myself accountable to my employer, a public service, I did so with regard to the values expressed in their vision statements, such as these on the Bath and North East Somerset website, 29August 2011:

> 'We want all Children and Young people to enjoy childhood and to be well prepared for adult life.'

> '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. - Our vision. Children's Services'

Although details changed with time, the underlying values expressed did not. With this in mind the key question, the one that underpinned all my activities, is of the form:

> How can I help children and young people learning to live loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile lives through my professional practice as a senior educational psychologist?

I held myself accountable to my employer with an appreciation of my educational responsibility, towards others and for myself, to have an educational influence in learning of individuals and the collectives they constitute. Through my living-theory research I sought to make the best contribution I could to improving the education of children and young people towards whom the local authority expressed the local community's responsibility. In holding myself accountable to my employer I also held myself accountable to living my ontological and social values as fully as I could by researching to improve my professional practice.

I believe you can see me holding myself accountable to my employer by my identifying a need, and subsequently the role I took in leading the creation and implementation of the policy adopted by the council in 1999, which has not so far (January 2012) been rescinded:

'Bath and North East Somerset LEA is committed to a partnership with schools, challenging and supporting them in improving standards and ensuring that all pupils have their abilities identified and promoted.

Bath and North East Somerset LEA is committed to a partnership with parents and the wider community.

It is recognised that many pupils have particular strengths in one or more areas of ability, endeavour or talent. Areas that have been identified include:

- Academic and Intellectual
- Expressive and Performing Arts
- Sports and Physical
- Social, Leadership and Organisation
- Visual, Spatial and Mechanical
- Design, Technology and ICT

Bath and North East Somerset LEA aims to increase the opportunities for individual pupils to explore and develop areas of ability to their own and society's benefit by:

- Increasing awareness of pupils with abilities and promoting a positive view of their needs by all those involved with children and young people including schools, colleges, the community, and parents
- Supporting schools in extending and developing a variety of responses to meeting the needs of pupils with abilities, improving standards and promoting a culture which seeks, applauds and promotes achievement
- Encouraging and facilitating communication and co-operation between personnel in all areas of the Council and beyond
- Establishing links and forming partnerships with parents, community groups, colleges and universities, businesses, other LEAs and national associations such as NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education)
- Promoting research, development and dissemination of information in the area of meeting the needs of pupils with abilities.'

The development of the questions and responses that follow shows how I continued to improve practice, evaluate my work and to hold myself to account to my employer and myself. I distinguish evaluation as the evidence that enables me to demonstrate the contribution I made to improve the educational experience of children and young people. This relates to my values as living standards of judgment and to the policy statement of my employer. I understand that to be accountable is to be able to give an account with respect to my values as explanatory principles of my practice and the values-based vision of my employer.

I want to repeat that the process of evolving my living-theory praxis is relationally-dynamic and multidimensional: as responses to one question develop they inform the development of each and other responses to other questions. Although the questions roughly reflect a chronology, the development of the activities weaves in and out of time and space. For instance, the policy arose from the work I had already been doing in response to the next question I come to. As the saying goes, 'The sum of the parts is greater than the whole'.

4.3 What can I do to enable more children and young people to learn to develop as lifelong successful learners?

I spent a great deal of time as an educational psychologist focussing on what children found difficult until, during the mid 1990s, I became interested in what enables people to grow to be adults able to live satisfying and productive lives making outstanding contributions to society. I began to explore what the field of 'high ability' had to offer to prepare children to live such futures. After a relentless and increasingly bureaucratic focus on 'special needs', many schools and teachers were also eager to refocus on how they might develop their pupils' 'strengths'. It was also at about that time the government of the day commissioned the Third Report of The House of Commons Education and Employment Select Committee on Highly Able Children (1999). I made a contribution to this report, which was included in the memorandum (Huxtable, 1998). The findings of the select committee were ignored for the most part by the Government, which went on to develop the Excellence in Cities venture and the National Gifted and Talented Strategy.

The more I explored the subject the more I came to the conclusion that the features of 'high ability', thinking, higher order learning, creativity, and successful learning were in essence the same, and were learnable rather than 'hard-wired'. I developed my own ideas on key features of 'successful learning' and the implications for teachers and schools, which I summarised in various papers such as an article entitled 'Everyone a winner - Towards exceptional achievement of ALL' (Huxtable, 2005), and in my contribution to, 'Creative and Philosophical Thinking in Primary Schools' (Huxtable, Hurford, and Mounter, 2009).

The way I can have the largest effect on improving the educational experience of the majority of young learners is to have an educational influence in the learning of the educators who have daily responsibility for those children and young people. I therefore spread and developed these ideas over the years by running events for teachers lead by leaders in the field, workshops and INSET and through offering to lead on developing and implementing the policy on high ability and related local strategies, such as developing 'Widening Learning', 'Thinking' and 'Action Research'. As well as running workshops and INSET sessions myself, I worked with schools and others, developing and implementing inclusive gifted and talented educational policy.

Do I have evidence that I have had any influence in the improvement of the educational experience of children and young people? Some schools are developing inclusive gifted and talented educational policy, practice and provision and others revisit these ideas when inclusion, personalisation of learning and education, rather than schooling, takes priority. Where did I fail to have as much influence, as I wanted? Notions arising from the 19th century (White, 2006) are still those that dominate thinking and practice in schools. This is compounded by the 'market' approach to developing education as a commodity (Sachs, 1999) promulgated by successive governments in England and elsewhere.

However, I am not a lone voice. I created the opportunity to amplify the voices of who have similar educational values to myself and offered events for educators to hear and work with leaders in the field. It was not my intention to provide a platform for charismatic speakers to provide edutainment. I wanted to offer inspiring sessions where educators might leave thinking of educational experiences to develop the abilities and life-chances of all their pupils.

Over the years I have invited many such field leaders to share their work, for instance, Belle Wallace (TASC), Robert Fisher (thinking skills), David Wray (Writing Frames), Barry Hymer (Philosophy for Children), Ted Wragg (questioning), Guy Claxton (learning dispositions) Jack Whitehead (Living-Theory Action Research) and many more. I wanted to add to the palette of teachers' thinking, the slow burn that transforms practice rather than the quick fix that papers over cracks. Using Renzulli's (1997) idea of different types of learning opportunity, (introduced on page 28 in figure 5) I conceptualised these as learning opportunities for educators to play with ideas and the knowledge being created by others, and reflect creatively on educational theory, practice and provision to imagine possibilities of improving their own.

The success of my venture can be seen in those schools where there is evidence of the deep and profound learning (West Burnham, 2006) that occurred stimulated by these events, often passed on from people who attended years previously. However, I failed to develop my influence with as many Head-teachers as I would have wished. As CPD became a part of national strategies, the less teachers and schools took the opportunity to explore what is not prescribed, and the more they bought into packages promising to quickly and easily improve results.

School-based practice and provision is only one aspect of the educational experience of children and young people. Freeman (2002) shows that people mostly find their passions for lifelong learning outside of school. Pursuing passions for learning often seems to lead to a person living not only a more productive life but also a more satisfying one. Which led to the next question...

4.4 How can I enable more children and young people to come to know their passions for learning?

When I thought about people I knew who had found their passions for learning, they pursued them with a relentless commitment and often made a significant contribution to their own lives and that of others in the process. They often seemed to be introduced to what became a passion, by family, friends of family, a chance meeting, or, occasionally a teacher. I began to think, "what about children who do not know about the possibilities that might be their inspirations for a satisfying and productive vocation because they do not have a family member or teacher who offers them the connections or excites their interest?", "How can I expand their palette of experiences to draw on which might enable them to come to know their

passions for learning?" In 1998, as I developed learning opportunities for teachers and schools, I added APEX Saturday workshops for children and young people in response to my question, "How do I know what I want to do if I do not know what I want to do?" I wanted to give children and young people a taste of themselves as forensic scientist, artist, juggler, engineer… and to cognitively, socially, emotionally, physically and personally go somewhere new, to imagine possibilities and play with ideas and personas. I group these as the sort of learning opportunities Renzulli (1997) refers to as type 1. I laid out my rationale for the APEX workshops in, 'The Elasticated Learner and the purpose of beyond curriculum learning opportunities in a Local Education Authority' (Huxtable, 2003)[21].

The programme was eventually fully funded, first by the local Authority, and then by the schools through the DSG[22].I continue to see a place for APEX Saturday workshops. They offer opportunities beyond those that a school or cluster can offer and are in the boundary between school and life. In running them, I have continually challenged my thinking to improve my understanding of what distinguishes these workshops as quality learning opportunities from others such as classes, clubs or fun activities, and the nature of the educational influence in learning participants' experience.

I have anecdotal evidence that the workshops created or fed a passion for many participants. I also have the sense of excitement that spills out with the children and young people from the workshops when their parents collect them, and they 'vote with their feet': many have been to workshops for years. If numbers communicate anything, 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. Parents, children and young people consistently gave very positive feedback and demand increased.

I have had parents tell me how an experience on a workshop has contributed to a career decision of their son/daughter, or given them confidence, or an insight into the relevance of some of their schoolwork, or they have insisted they share their experience, or they wanted to find out more. Unfortunately parents do not provide written accounts. However listening to the parents tells me that for some children, the experience of learning in the boundary between school and life has opened their eyes to themselves and possibilities to explore.

Teachers have told me that their pupils have communicated their learning and enthusiasm from the workshops afterwards in school. Unfortunately teachers no more want to write than do parents. In some schools, children have had the opportunity to share their experience with other children,

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[21] You can get a sense of the experience of the programme on page 87 where I provide a visual narrative to communicate my values.

[22] DSG - Dedicated Schools Grant

which has moved the learning from the boundary between school and life into school.

This is an extract from one note I received that illustrates the sort of influence I am told I have had:

> 'Dear Marie
>
> A few years ago you provided me with advice and information which helped me set up a programme of enrichment for able children based around W School in Y. The APEX programme and the Bristol and Bath Mathematics Masterclass programme were the inspirations for the programme…' (personal email to me through APEX, 20th September 2011)

Teachers told me that young people have other things to do, such as part-time jobs, homework, sports, and sleeping. Young people and parents told me they did not know there were APEX workshops for them, even when they have attended such groups for years in primary school. When young people receive personal letters from their school inviting them to attend, the subsequent take up and attendance has been high.

Demands on school staff concerning target-driven agendas are considerable and increasing. This reduces teachers' time and inclination for knowing the majority of their students as individuals with unique needs and contributions to make and develop, or facilitate access to, educational relationships, space and opportunities. The affects of the increasing privatisation of education as a commodity are yet to be seen. The development of the APEX Saturday workshop programme as an opportunity for learners and educators to co-learn also arises from my work on collaborative, creative enquiry, which I come to later. As I begin to bring into this account the threads these various questions and responses have led to, I know that I may be confusing, as the relationships are not linear, but accounts are always restricted by their linear nature.

4.5 How do I enable children, young people and educators to experience themselves as experts developing expertise?

To transform dreams into aspirations that are acted on learners have many psychological needs. One is to be able to imagine themselves living their dreams. Professor Pausch (Pausch and Zaslow, 2008), in his moving 'Last Lecture' at Carnegie Mellon, gives a good example of what I mean[23]. Another is through the opportunities and support to behave as the expert they want to become. You do not learn to become a champion cyclist by learning to fall off, you learn by practicing the skills, attributes and attitudes of the expert cyclist you are in the process of becoming. Some of the Saturday workshops offer a taste of being an expert developing expertise, but I wanted to extend this. I could not see how a teacher could support their

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[23] I come back to Prof. Pausch in the concluding chapter, page 247

students in this way unless they knew what it was to be an expert developing expertise in an area of their passion. To enable teachers and learners to experience developing expertise in their field of passion I created collaborative, creative enquiry days. Initially I offered opportunities for one teacher to bring four pupils to work with teachers, and pupils from four other schools, as co-learners, developing their expertise as experts in a field of their passion with a field expert. This notion arose in a conversation with Pauline Miles back in 2004 (the notes are unedited):

Teacher and Child has then to become collaborative, the teacher must enter into the
learning – feels to me a relationship I experienced at an Aikido class I joined with my
(then) 3 year old son. Each contributes to and derives from something different in the
relationship. The teacher has a sophistication as a learner and broad experience and
knowledge base the child a naivety and freshness. There understanding of what is to be
learnt and what each derives will in turn be different. The roles of teacher and learner are
not discrete but the emphasis and responsibilities for the adult (teacher) and child will be
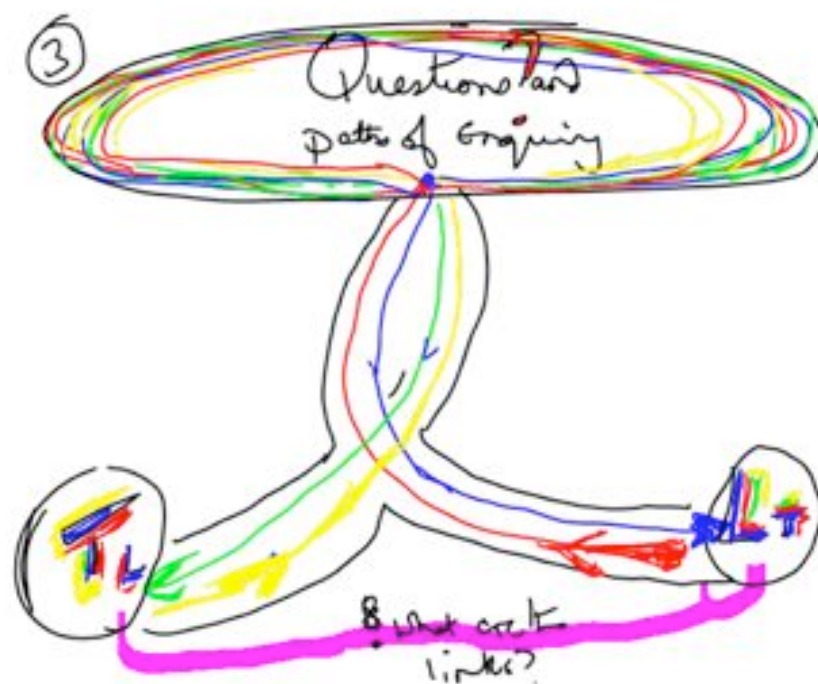different.

Figure 15 Representation of relationship between teacher, learner and enquiry

In offering these collaborative, creative enquiry days, my intention was not
simply to provide the opportunity for adults, children and young people to
develop their expertise. I wanted educators, as their pupils and students, to
experience themselves as learners creating knowledge of the world, as
experts developing their expertise, and for them to recognise the possibility
for improving their educational practice. In practice, this also opened the
eyes of many teachers to how far their pupils/students were in advance of
the 'diet' they were being offered in their schools, and some teachers began

to appreciate their pupils/students as co-learners. Children and young people were also able to see their teachers as valued co-learners who had expertise to offer beyond the limitations of the school curriculum and beyond the confines of the school.

Evidence, of the educational influence in the learning of the educators and young learners, was provided when some participants led a workshop at a leading teachers day organised by the Local Authority's Primary School Consultant. The children and teachers worked together using their experience as writers, and the skills and understandings they had developed with the authors on the creative, creative enquiry days, They worked together to engage the audience of leading teachers as creative writers developing expertise as co-learners. The children and adults worked collaboratively to create an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian culture of learning within the session.

As the collaborative, creative enquiry sessions have preconceived learning outcomes, preconceived by the developer and 'deliverer' who is expert in the field, I have thought of them as examples of Renzulli's type 2: opportunities to develop skills, expertise, understandings, information and tools. Learning opportunities with preconceived outcomes are the mainstay of national strategies developing the given curriculum in various forms: the national curriculum; a curriculum for the 21st century; a creative curriculum; a skills-based curriculum; a curriculum that is irresistible. These are 'delivered' using various, often prescribed, instructional and pedagogical strategies. Enquiry and problem-based learning approaches are used in the delivery of these forms of learning opportunities but the learning assessed is inevitably the learning prescribed by the teacher and not the learner.

A form of this type of learning opportunity is the main experience offered to teachers as training to deliver the curriculum. It is hardly surprising that they in turn train their pupils and students. I was concerned to expand the teachers' palette of learning experientially. As a consequence, I asked Jack Whitehead in 2005 to offer modules for a professional Masters programme. My intention was to provide opportunities for educators to learn to research their own educational practice. I will return to this later. My intention also led me to further develop collaborative, creative enquiry opportunities to develop knowledge-creating research with an insistence that adults participate as co-learners with the children and young people they brought with them.

I have begun to understand and develop this sort of learning opportunity but have some way to go to know how to evaluate the educational influence of such learning. The acquisition of skills, understandings, knowledge and 'tools' that already exist is seen to be the most important form of learning by most institutions. This is despite the fact that, for the most part, what most people of all ages learn of importance to them is not what is directly taught or intentionally inspired, but rather what they learn incidentally and through following their interests and developing passions for learning.

There are various ways of understanding whether 'learning' has 'happened'; Bloom's (1956) taxonomy is one example. The question, "What have you learned?" is often used at the end of an objectives-led workshop or lesson. When it cannot be answered, the assumption is that the participant has learned nothing. However, it is the language of the question that dictates the answer. I think Biesta (2006) is right when he says we have a language of learning and need a language of *educational* learning. Staring out of the window, playing with materials, appearing uninvolved with the tasks and activities set, are all seen as further evidence of a lack of learning, although the learner may have taken something important educationally from the experience and be engaged in deep and profound learning and creative thinking. What also need to be developed are appropriate approaches to monitor and evaluate educational learning. As assessment and intervention are intimately interconnected, so too are conceptualisation of outcomes and the educational quality of the event. I go into this in more detail in Chapter 5 when I introduce the development of inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision. Whitehead's work on multimedia narratives offers fertile ground here, which I have been exploring (Huxtable, 2009b) and take up in Chapter 6.

The flier (Figure 16, page 134) for a session on 6 October 2010 gives some indication of how this work developed and is interconnected with other types of learning opportunities. These opportunities include those for learners to research to create knowledge of the world driven by their passion. The title, 'Learning to Research: Learning to Make a Difference That Matters', was intended to point to the form of research I want to spread more widely.

Ask children, young people and their teachers what they understand by research and most will tell you that is about finding out what is already known and re-presenting it in some form. Although learning may get to the 'higher' levels as described by Bloom (1956) or Haring et al. (1978), more often it is no more than extended responses to, "What do you know about…?" I accept there maybe a place for such activity but find no justification for the assumption that it is an essential precursor to knowledge-creating research. Unfortunately the domination of research construed as gathering, organising and re-presenting what is already known reduces the value that many people have for themselves as capable of creating and offering knowledge of worth. Humans come into the world imaginative, creative learners. Their creativity is squeezed out of them, with their confidence, so that many do not pursue their passions and make the contribution they might to enhance their own learning and life and that of us all. I have heard a professor of philosophy in education claiming that it is only at postdoctoral level that knowledge-creating research is possible and even then was restricted to the prevailing paradigms. I found this ironic as I thought of the account by 6 year olds of their research to create their own learning theory.

The flier below summarises succinctly the form of research I believe is important and which is not generally taught or supported in schools. It is not

only the outcome in terms of the quality of the knowledge created that is important; it is also the quality of the educational experience of the research process. The venue is not simply for convenience. I wanted to place student and teacher outside of their school with its constraints of a given curriculum and established roles, to offer them the opportunity of co-learning in the living-boundary between them.

Figure 16 Learning to Research: Learning to Make a Difference That Matters, leaflet

What evidence is there of the influence I want to have? The collaborative, creative, enquiry days I have offered over the years for writers, mathematicians, choreographers, scientists, artists and action researchers have all met with the same enthusiastic response from adults, children and young people. They are energising and have stimulated unforeseen possibilities. For instance, as a result of the 8 July 2006 day in the Guildhall, more fully described in a paper for the BERA 2008 conference (Huxtable, 2008b), I was told:

> '2 of our girls did a power point presentation to the FULL GOVERNING BODY of our school starting with......WE are passionate about school dinners! STUNNING, AMAZING, SIMPLY INSPIRING! Governors were very surprised but liked the fact that the girls did it! It will be followed through in Sept!!!!!!!! … The presentation the children did was...wait for it... the VERY NEXT DAY on the Thursday! That is how inspired they were!!!!' (Extract from personal email from primary head teacher 17 July 2006)

Subsequently those children contributed to the development of the school lunchtime menus. The idea of creating and offering knowledge as gifts through research persisted, and the following year children researched to create a gift to offer the school when they left Year 6.

I believe there is still a role for such days. In using Renzulli's notion I have realised that there is little, if any, space or time made for 'type 3' – researching an area of personal passion to create and offer valued knowledge as a gift to self and others - within the school day for teachers, children or young people. This leads me to my next question.

4.6 How do I improve support for learners developing as expert enquirers creating and offering valued knowledge?

This is the question to which my initial efforts in developing collaborative, creative enquiry have become a stepping-stone to answering. The one-off days for educators, children and young people working with a creative writer, mathematician, scientist, engineer, choreographer, and researcher… were successful in that adults and children went away enthused and inspired to develop some 'guild skills' as Chris White (a colleague from Bath Spa University) termed them. What I am still enquiring into is how to:

- Develop support for ongoing disciplined research by learners to create and share knowledge of the world in an area of passion and
- Create a sustaining educational researching community, which is not school-based, to enhance a learner's educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations

These may or may not be resolved simultaneously. I know how to create a learning opportunity to enthuse on the day, and many participants leave wanting to do more. What I have not yet understood is how to create and sustain researching communities in the living-boundaries between the worlds of 'school' and the 'real world'.

During a conversation with Gary Mathlin (an astrophysicist at the University of Bath) who had worked with me on many of the collaborative, creative enquiry days, we touched on what it is that leads people to practice for hours with focussed cognitive engagement to develop skills and understandings associated with a field of enquiry. One question that arose was:

> "How can the educator, as an expert in a field or domain, facilitate a learner's acquisition of skills, understandings and knowledge, which will enable them to develop their knowledge-creating enquiry?"

In the process of facilitating a learner's efficient acquisition of skills, understanding and knowledge, the ability and inclination to create knowledge can be actively discouraged. The problem appears to be the same irrespective of the age of the learner or the field of enquiry. When the teacher is focussed by predetermined learning objectives, tangential thinking and the exploration of unknown paths are seen as unwelcome distractions and the pupil/student learns to avoid such enterprise. As Gary described how he was developing a lecture for active learning, I was reminded of 'games' I was introduced to many years ago by Chris Ashman, then at Norton College. Chris said that he worked on the basis that his students could learn faster than he could teach, and so tried to find ways that did not slow them down. A book he had given me included a paper by Leigh, 'What is expected of the facilitator of interactive learning? An answer based on consideration of facilitation of 'open' simulations.' (pp. 9-18). In it she asserts:

> 'Learning activities that engage the 'whole person' do so by inviting participants to bring into the learning space their knowledge and learning goals as well as their values, beliefs and emotions. Such an invitation makes demands on our 'emotional intelligence' (Goleman, 1995) which frequently exceed those of conventional teaching contexts. 'Managing the learning' in such contexts requires – among other things – courage to avoid acting prematurely, and an ability to attend to what is happening in the moment so that emergent learning is fostered and encouraged – which may even mean abandoning what was intended as the learning focus.' (p. 9)

Leigh goes on to describe closed and open games in a way that I recognise as distinguishing features between traditional approaches to developing enquiry-based learning and our experimental approach developing knowledge creating research in *educational* researching communities.

Characteristics of 'closed' and 'open' simulations (adapted from
Christopher and Smith, 1987 by Leigh, 2002, p. 10)

Closed games	**Open games**
'This is the problem *– how to solve it?'*	*'This is the* situation *– what to do?'*
'Focus of Briefing Phase	
. . . is on 'togetherness'	*. . .is on diversity of players – disparity of views*
Role of 'Games Director' / Educator	
a benevolent authority figure.	*. . .not a leader (this may be resented).*
Rules for the Action	
Players all have same rules	*Few rules; little detail. Chance events occur on players' whims.*
Scenario / Setting	
Play begins at a 'moment of crisis'. Each step proceeds logically from one before. Action is goal-oriented / forward looking. Stimulus is towards co-operative problem solving / emphasis on outcome.	*A journey – multiple plots and diffuse action. Stages not clearly marked. Changes occur because of players' actions. No clear order and balance. Minor actions spin off in apparently illogical manner. Emphasis on reactions with more diverse happenings. Emphasises behaviour, not outcomes.*
Outcomes – Focus of De-briefing	
Players derive pleasure from shared experience. There are problems and answers. Conflict can be reconciled.	Players find themselves more thoughtful than pleased. There is a lack of certainty and an awareness of new possibilities.

This helps me see the connection with the second question that emerged from our conversation:

> "How can the educator, as expert in the field or domain, help a learner develop their insightful recognition of the 'nuggets' of knowledge related to the field they create in the process of learning but lack the sophistication to appreciate and learn from?"

I do not see this being limited by age. I have yet to see anything that persuades me that adults learn differently to children. My growth is not a function of the number of years I have lived, although I hope I am more sophisticated having had more opportunities to learn from experiences and other people than when I was a child.

Schools are less willing than they were to allow staff and pupils off-site to participate in knowledge-creating enquiry with others, despite the enthusiasm of participants, even when there is an obvious curriculum link such as mathematics. Even with the development of the use of computers and better web access in schools, it has not yet proved possible to engage them with an educational researching community even in the virtual world. There is little attention given to the offering, accepting and valuing knowledge created beyond the given curriculum, and little space and support for knowledge-creating enquiry generated by learners wanting to research their passions.

Evidence of the contribution I have made to the development of opportunities and support for learners to develop as expert enquirers creating and offering valued knowledge, is in the accounts of Adrienne Hughes and Megan Morris, St Keyna's Primary School (Hughes and Morris, 2010) of their passion-led learning project and Rob Sandel, Camerton Primary School (Sandel, 2010) who has developed the use of TASC; his work was commended in a school inspection.

Another example can be seen in the work of Sally Cartwright (2008). Having worked with the Masters group as an educational research community to enhance her own learning through researching her practice, she formed an educational research community to support students working on their AS Extended Project (a national qualification). In Video 11 (page 139) her students can be seen talking to the managers in the Authority of the 14-19 Strategy. In this 5 minutes 18 seconds extract for their 40 minutes presentation. Two of her students are explaining how working with Sally has enabled them to develop as expert enquirers creating and offering valued knowledge and to grow in their understandings of themselves and themselves in and of the world.

You can hear Simon at 1.10 saying how he has learned to communicate to a lay audience the knowledge he has created through his scientific enquiry. In the process he recognised something in himself that affected his future aspirations and in later life he was thinking he would "love" to be in science media. This is said with a confidence of self-knowledge which Louise shows as she explains what she learned from the experience. She begins at

3.00 by acknowledging that everyone's learning journey is completely different. She describes the skills she learned and then at 4.10 she says and what she gained personally in learning to be able to address an audience. If you run the cursor back and forth around 4.22 you can get a sense of her embodied knowledge communicating with pleasure. Go right to the end of the clip and the pleasure and confidence of Simon and Louise as expert knowledge creators communicates very strongly as Simon says '… so thank you Mrs Cartwright'.

Video 11 Pleasure and confidence in knowledge creators

http://tinyurl.com/44of77d

I believe this video shows evidence of the educational influence engaging with an educational research community has in the learning of a student. As I watch the video, I see the students, express a loving recognition of themselves and others, extend a respectful connectedness and express an educational responsibility for themselves and towards each other. I expanded on this in an evidence-based analysis in, 'Developing Talents to Create and Offer Knowledge of the Self and the World as Educational Gifts' (Huxtable, 2009a).

Sally and her students showed me that there are two researching communities: one that connects the person with others who share their learning passion or field of enquiry, such as space travel, or AIDS… and one that is educational and connects the person with others with different passions but with enquiring minds involved in co-creating knowledge of the world and themselves in and of the world. These communities are distinct but not discrete, and can comprise the same people with the agenda moving between the two notions.

A *disciplines* research community offers access to the knowledge base, expertise and energy of that interest. Einstein is reputed to have said, 'We

act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all that we need to make us happy is something to be enthusiastic about.' There is a sustaining, creative and productive energy that comes from being with others who share our particular enthusiasms. This offers a community that not only supports the creation of gifts of knowledge of that world but also provides a discerning audience, where gifts offered can be appreciated for the valuable contribution they make.

An *educational* researching community offers relationships, space and opportunity in the living-boundaries between the various worlds that we each belong to, to co-create knowledge of self in and of the world; I mean here not the world of a particular interest but the world we want to make a better place to be. An example is the CPD/Masters group that I have supported with Jack Whitehead. Although the common denominator is a passion for improving education participants are from diverse settings and disciplines, for instance, an early years class teacher, the chief executive of the carers service, a socially engaged artist, school head-teachers and so on.

An educational researching community is created by people with shared values, who are both open to recognising, valuing and working with the gifts of unimagined possibilities that others offer, and also have the generosity of spirit to offer their own presence and knowledge freely as gifts. I recognise such a community when I sense an expression of my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility. I also need to experience the community as inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian. You may of course have a different way of recognising an educational researching community, which reflects your own values.

The space that APEX created for inclusive, collaborative, creative enquiry as researchers with Jack Whitehead has evolved to include something more than support for research to create and offer knowledge of the world. What I have moved onto, to enable me to develop APEX, is trying to understand the time, space and support which can enhance a person's ability to learn more about themselves in and of the world and possible future paths to explore in the process of learning to research to create knowledge of the world. I continue to keep in mind that the purpose of education is as much, if not more, to do with young learners learning to learn and create knowledge of themselves and themselves in and of the world, than it is to simply become more sophisticated in creating and offering 'disciplines' knowledge.

Researching to understand these communities and the engagement of learners in them, to enhance their educational possibilities and influence, is important to improve inclusive, gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision. The challenge is to do this with schools dominated by targets and actuarial forms of accounting for the quality of the educational experience children and young people are offered. This leads to my next question.

4.7 How do I enhance the educational possibility and influence of educational researching communities and educational space within living-boundaries?

There is little official requirement for schools to provide space and support for learners, adults as well as younger learners, to create and offer knowledge by researching their passions. I contend there is even less requirement for schools to provide space or support for learners to create knowledge of themselves in and of the world. This is not the space and support that government inspire packages concerned with personal, and emotional development, careers advice, or tutor time, offers. The focus there is on improving the learner's compliance with predetermined expectations. The focus I am concerned with is on the learner and their learning journeys and adventures as they come to know themselves. The focus is on the knowledge they create of the person they are and want to be in and of the world: the knowledge of what it is that gives meaning and purpose to their life they create as they develop their expertise as experts in their own learning, and come to recognise and value the talents and knowledge they develop and enhance, to offer as life-affirming and life-enhancing gifts.

The accounts created in the course of their Masters programme by the educators working with Jack Whitehead are evidence that it is possible to create and offer educational space and support for learners to come more fully into their own presence, even in the present climate, by developing educational research communities in living-boundaries between school requirements and the educators' desire to improve their educational practice. Many of these accounts can be accessed from http://actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml.

Enabling children, young people *and* adults to collaboratively develop as living-theory researchers offers the possibility of enhancing the educational learning of learners developing and offering talents and knowledge as gifts that improve their own and other peoples' life chances, well-being and well-becoming. I believe this can be done as Leigh (2002) describes by:

> '…inviting participants to bring into the learning space their knowledge and learning goals as well as their values, beliefs and emotions'

As an educator I am concerned with enhancing the educational possibilities and influence of relationships, space and opportunities. I want, amongst other things, to enhance contexts that encourage young learners to explore themselves as knowledge creators of the world in a wide range of fields. This is so children and young people may learn to answer for themselves what it is to develop expertise for knowledge creation as an expert musician, mathematician, writer, dancer… This provides a palette of experiences for them to draw on to inform their decisions as to what they might find satisfying and productive to devote time and energy to as an adult.

I see living-boundaries offering an opportunity for educators to particularly focus on enhancing the *educational* learning of the individual, rather than

focusing on attainment related learning and the impositions and expectations of other worlds, such as government, parents, communities, and the impositions of different values, beliefs and theories. Andrew Henon's book, Creativity|WORKS (Henon, 2009), offers an example. He is making visible the educational space in living-boundaries he created through his development and management of the NESA (North East Somerset Arts) project and the creation of the book I particularly want to draw attention to pages 41-53. They show the contribution APEX, in collaboration with other people and projects, has made to creating living-boundaries between the usually bounded worlds of beyond-school learning opportunities, school, curriculum, and the worlds of pupils, students, teachers, academics, socially engaged artists and educational psychologists.

The first living-boundary created as an educational space that I recognise on re-reading Creativity|WORKS is that created by Andrew Henon (a socially-engaged artist), Karen Drews (a photographer), Gill Kenny (the class teacher), Gill's colleagues and Head-teacher, myself and Gill's seven-year-old pupils. We were all engaged in a collaborative, creative enquiry for artists

> 'The sessions had two aims; to provide an opportunity for children and adults to experience themselves as artists, collaboratively developing talents with an artist, and second, to provide an opportunity for them to develop their talents as researchers creating, offering and accepting gifts of knowledge of themselves and the world.' (Henon, 2009, p. 45)

The educational space was created in the living-boundaries between worlds of classroom, socially-engaged art and living research, between teachers and learners and educational researchers, and between the individual and community. In those living-boundaries, some of the children and adults recognised themselves as knowledge creators able to offer and accept valued knowledge. Look at the photographs below.

Figure 17 Andrew Henon leading a collaborative, creative enquiry as artists

In the first photograph, I see Andrew Henon inviting the children to share the unique marks they have created, two girls carefully deciding which they want to share, and a boy offering his to Andrew. In the second photograph, I see children offering and accepting the knowledge they have each created with interest and pleasure. Their eyes and books are not all directed towards Andrew. The children hold their books aloft for all to see and their faces are variously turned so they can look at the work of others.

Some of the children had taken responsibility for extending their own learning between the sessions as well as during them. For instance, one of

the children had gone to the extent of making charcoal at home and bringing some of it to the workshop.

I wanted to share this venture with you as it was unusually within a school and with a whole class of young children. Up to this point I had only run these sessions outside of the classroom, and generally with older children as co-learners. What is not evident in these photographs is the relational dynamic in the space and the influence on the worlds that form the living-boundaries. This is more easily seen in the brief account of a collaborative, creative enquiry day in The Guildhall, in 2008.

80 children, young people and educators participated in a day held in the Banqueting Room, The Guildhall, Bath, facilitated by Jack Whitehead and myself. This day was also a step into an imagined but unexplored possibility. I had never before managed to create an educational space in the living-boundaries between such diverse worlds: school and beyond school, adult and child, teachers, academics, educational researchers, education administrators and many more.

The collage of photographs (Figure 18) gives you some feeling for educational space and the energy. I can see expressions of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility. I believe I can see in these photographs evidence of those in the space to be living the qualities of an inclusive, egalitarian and emancipating society.

Figure 18 A collaborative, creative enquiry as living-theory action researchers

A better sense of the relational dynamic flow of energy which I am describing as an expression of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility and values of an egalitarian, inclusive and emancipating society] can be seen in this video. It compresses an hour of real time video into a 20 second experience.

Video 12 Relationally-dynamic flow of energy in expression of values in a large space

http://tinyurl.com/42vjdkh

There are a number of ways of engaging with this video. Watching the 20-second video played through communicates the energy that is flowing in the space as a whole. Sometimes individuals are addressing the whole room, sometimes immediate groups or those close by, but as you watch try to keep a relaxed focus so you also see the flow of energy in the whole space. Moving the cursor back and forth around a point is another way, which I detailed on page 99 where I begin to develop a multimedia narrative to communicate my ontological energy flowing values. If you flick the cursor back and forth across a particular point you can get a sense of the energy flowing within living-boundaries. For instance, moving the cursor back and forth at 3.15 seconds of video 12 you can see the movement within the foreground group. Keeping that movement in mind extend your focus to include others to experience an empathetic resonance with the rhythm of the energy flowing in an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian space.

What I learned from that day was that it *is* possible to engage a diverse group in collaborative, creative enquiry. I also learned that the power and responsibility for learning is distributed in an educational research community. Each person recognises themselves and others as emancipated, equally valued members of the community or group, making their unique contribution to enhancing their own well-being and well-becoming and that of others. This is rather different to the dynamics of most learning groups where there is often a 'leader' and prescribed or negotiated outcomes that serve as a common goal.

This brings me to how I understand what I am doing as I evolve my living-theory praxis and the question…

4.8 How do I evidence and explain my educational influence in learning?

When I talk of 'my educational influence' I do so meaning the contribution I make to the progress a person or persons make to giving expression to their best intent, which is informed by their life-affirming and life-enhancing values. An explanation of my educational influence is how I account for my influence with respect to my values. Evidence of my educational influence with explanations is the substance of evaluating what I do, which I come to in more detail in Chapter 6. Here I want to offer some

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of the evidence and explanation to illustrate what I mean in the evolution of my living-theory praxis.

4.8.1 … the learning of others?

My enthusiasm for what I do comes from my commitment to enabling each person to live a loving life they feel is satisfying as well as productive and worthwhile. The people I work with most productively exude an enthusiasm for improving their own educational learning and a love for what they are doing. They encourage others to take responsibility for their own learning and improving the quality of educational experiences. They stimulate critical and creative engagement with people and ideas, are open to learning from and with those they work with, and show humour and pleasure in being with them. I try to bring such people into contact with the hope that something productive and of mutual satisfaction might arise. This is exemplified by the time I brought Jack Whitehead into conversation with Barry Hymer. Barry was working on a professional doctorate and was not able to produce the thesis he wanted to. I believe Barry offers evidence of my educational influence in his thesis where he writes:

> 'I experienced two critical, at the time unnerving and as it turned out, deeply generative conversations during a working visit to Bath & NE Somerset. The first of these, on 12 July 2005, was with a close professional colleague and friend, Marie Huxtable. The second, the following day, was with Jack Whitehead, originator of the living theory approach to action research and the person who was shortly to become Marie's doctoral studies supervisor. These conversations were good-natured and disinterested, but they challenged me to confront my qualitative demons, and to consider carefully my intentions and purposes in completing my doctoral studies. In an email to Jack Whitehead the following week, I wrote the following:
>
>> Marie and I had had a super conversation the day before – variously wide-ranging and focused .... Marie challenged me (gently, kindly, as is her and I suspect your way) about having been stuck on my doctoral write-up for around four years now. I've given her legions of excuses for failing to start the write-up, these mostly involving lack of time, but that conversation seemed to unearth deeper reasons, confirmed in my brief meeting with yourself: I had failed to find a way of connecting my research questions with a methodology capable of doing the job authentically. Whilst I've been aware of action research approaches for some years, I've never really shaken myself free from my background training (interesting word that – from the Latin traho – 'to drag') as an experimental psychologist, steeped in things positivist, and my insecurities about bringing myself into my studies. As of today, I think my doctorate is taking a very different direction. Your work helps me connect my passions with my writing, and validates an account which

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> will, I hope, involve me not as a trainer but as an educator
> (educere – 'to draw out, to bring out, to lead'), and which can
> draw I think on the core educational beliefs and principles set
> out in my 2002 book. (Email to Jack Whitehead, 18 July
> 2005)

> This email dates the moment I resolved finally to abandon the
> experimental method, and to use instead the data which had arrived
> almost unnoticed over many years, and which lay untidily all around
> me. These data were neither obviously connected to each other nor
> did they conform easily to the types of scale (Stevens, 1968) that my
> background training had taught me to collect and work on. They
> weren't neutral, and they certainly did "bring me" into the study.
> They held, I now realized, a potentially rich and fruitful source of
> evidence. They also revealed gaps in my self-knowledge, which
> suggested that I needed to collect further data, much more
> systematically and self-consciously than hitherto. I see the analysis
> of these collective data in search of evidence and connecting any
> evidence in a meaningful way, as comprising the purpose of this
> report, in order to address the central question, 'How do I understand
> and communicate my values and beliefs in my work as an educator
> in the field of giftedness?'' (Hymer, 2007, pp. 25-26)

Further evidence of the educational influence I believe I have had in the
learning of others is in the Masters accounts of educators I have brought
into what have now evolved into the CPD project group, 'Living Values
Improving Cooperatively'. A virtual place of this project can be accessed on
http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively/.
Many of the educators have offered as gifts, on
http://actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml, their accounts, which
they successfully submitted as part of their Masters programme. I believe
within those accounts is evidence of each person coming to extend
themselves a loving recognition, develop respectful connectedness and
express their educational responsibility for themselves and towards children
and young people. I believe that in the process of creating those accounts
and by offering them as gifts each educator is bringing into being a more
inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society.

To illustrate using a particular example I direct you to the work of Sally
Cartwright. She is one of those educators who has been part of the
Masters/CPD group for a number of years and successfully completed seven
Masters assignments. At the time of writing (December 2011) she is
working on her dissertation. As a consequence of working with the
Masters/CPD group she developed her support for the pilot group of
students working on their AS Extended Projects as an educational research
community as she had experienced it herself with the Masters/CPD group.
The following 9 minute video 13 is of an AS Extended Project student
responding to questions having presented his paper to a participating
audience. He shows a confidence and pleasure in what he is doing. I can feel
him extending himself a loving recognition, making respectful

connectedness with his audience and expressing an educational responsibility for him self as he explains his research. He chose the subject of his research, and I feel the importance this has for him with respect to his values.

Video 13 Young person communicating energy-flowing values
http://tinyurl.com/3z6ec8d

I am not intending to imply that the biggest influence in the educational learning of these young people could be attributed to me. Rather I am claiming that I have contributed to their learning by bringing their teacher into the educational space of the Masters/CPD group. There I have worked with Jack Whitehead, to support and encourage participants as they have learned to narrate their learning and create accounts of their living-theory. I have supported and encouraged participants to, in turn, enable their pupils/students to engage in their own educational research in an educational research community.

Another of my activities has been the development of collaborative, creative enquiries I refer to earlier (for example pages 134- 145). Jack Whitehead, Andrew Henon and myself ran such a day in The Guildhall in Bath, 2009 for young people and teachers developing as knowledge creating researchers. Sally Cartwright brought not only her AS Extended Project group but also teachers and students working on their AS Psychology course. I believe you can see evidence of my educational influence in the learning of young people in the 9 minute clip (video 14) of a young person presenting to peers and teachers what she had learned through her enquiry sparked her participation on that day.

Video 14 Young person sharing her passion-led enquiry with peers in school
http://tinyurl.com/4ygf6o8

This young person is sharing the knowledge she has created as a result of having begun to engage in knowledge creating research and an explanation of why it is important to her. I feel the sense of pleasure and confidence she expresses shows her presencing herself to herself as she offers her talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts to her peers, teachers, Jack Whitehead, and myself.

Since 2000 I have led the development of the APEX Summer Opportunities. I offer evidence of the educational influence I have had through this work in the following 6 minutes video clip. Video 16 is of a group of young people who worked with Vicky Tucker as 'Apprentices Making a Difference' at the end of APEX Summer 2009 **http://tinyurl.com/3lb588z.** The young people are presenting what they had learned to an audience of about 500, comprising other 'APEXers', family and visitors. I think the video allows these young people to speak for themselves as to the difference they have made to their own learning and life in the direction of their living values.

Video 15 Young people offering their talents and knowledge as gifts at APEX Summer 2009

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Video 16 is of a group who worked with Vicky a year later on 'Unplugged Bath'. I believe this offers evidence of the appreciation of the young people of themselves, their talents, themselves as knowledge creators, their ability and willingness to offer their talents and knowledge as gifts to others.

Video 16 Young people offering their talents and knowledge as gifts at APEX Summer 2010

http://tinyurl.com/3moff2p .

These clips are particularly important to me, as the young people have been researching questions that have brought them closer to understanding their own values and how they may want to make a difference that is important to them. I believe you get a sense of the expression of Vicky Tucker's values and her educational influence in her own learning and those of young people she worked with. Vicky worked with Jack Whitehead and myself to successfully submit her Masters assignment:

> 'A response as to how my involvement with the Gifted and Talented programme initiated by Bath and North East Somerset has made me re-assess my living educational values and beliefs, thus influencing my delivery and provision for the SEBD students with whom I work' (Tucker, 2008).

She concluded her assignment with, 'Although this particular account has concluded, the journey for knowledge and educational influence continues and will continue throughout my life.' Between the videos of the two modules I believe you can see evidence of Vicky's educational influence in the learning and lives of the young people she worked with and the evolution of her living-theory praxis. She explains in her assignment that she takes this learning into her work with students presenting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the special school she works in.

In watching these clips, I feel an empathetic resonance with the pleasure of the children and young people in presencing themselves to themselves in

valuing and offering the knowledge they have created of the world, themselves and themselves in and of the world, as a gift to themselves and others. In these videos I believe I can see evidence that my work has contributed to enhancing the life and learning adventures and journeys of these children and young people, learning to living loving lives that are satisfying, productive and worthwhile. This, to me, is to the core purpose of education and the evidence I have offered is how I know I am making a difference that matters to me.

4.8.2 … in the learning of social formations?

What is the evidence that I have had any educational influence in the learning of any of the social formations I work with? Have I had a direct and continuing influence in the work of those worlds? I doubt it. What I can and do claim, is that in working in the living-boundaries I have evidence that some of what I have contributed to is being heard and responded to by those who have power to transform the social formations that form these worlds. So, I here offer evidence that I am contributing to the educational voice that is being heard and responded to by those with power to transform schools and universities as educational contexts.

These Masters accounts are by Head-teachers who have worked with Jack Whitehead and myself, and I believe show evidence of my educational influence in the learning of those who are influential in the educational evolution of school as a social formation. For instance, Gary Williams, Head of a local primary school concludes:

> 'I have attempted to make a start on exploring the surplus surrounding gifted and talented education but I recognise that to present my own interpretation as "fact" or "truth" would be to ignore absent voices. One system cannot be replaced with another. Instead, amidst the rubble I have created of gifted and talented education, I hope our beliefs and values can find a meeting place from where we can begin the construction of a more liberated and pluralised educational story that is more meaningful and fulfilling for ourselves and the selves of all our pupils. That, I think, might be an educational story worth sharing.' (Williams, 2010a)

and:

> 'In making my narrative public I have attempted to engage you in that intimate meeting place so that greater regard can be given to the personal narratives of teachers. Through my story I have tried to demonstrate that, whilst I empathise with students like Stokesy, in the end I am not him and do not believe we should smash anyone else's light or head for the top of the nearest solitary tree. Instead we need to engage with each other's stories tolerantly and respectfully in a quest to find new meanings. I hope my story has aesthetic merit in as much as it has stimulated your senses by inviting interpretative responses and eliciting reactions (as contrasted with anaesthetic qualities which dull our senses). I would

also hope that my reflection on narrative has made a substantive contribution to the construction of knowledge and meaning making.' (Williams, 2010b)

Lousie Cripps, Head of another local primary school, concludes one of her accounts with:

> 'I need to work with the values of the other learners in school, and work with them to form a collaborative understanding of what we're being asked to do, then formulate actions which will provide educational opportunities for all the children.
>
> Specifically in helping learners to develop talents, our school understanding is to provide opportunities for all learners to show what they can do in the belief that enabling all learners to develop a growth mindset will give them access to developing talents.
>
> I see my responsibility, as Headteacher, in the light of this is to initially work collaboratively with adult learners in school in recognition of their distinctive values, to enable appropriate educational opportunities for all the children in which to develop their talents.
>
> Having continued to reflect throughout the journey of this account, I also need to be able to continue to question the exercise of my responsibility in this area, as further questions and issues are raised.' (Cripps, 2009)

I offer evidence of the educational influence I have had in the learning of young people in the form of the presentation made by Sally and her students to the Bath and North East Somerset 14-19 Strategy managers. Two of the students are from Sally's first group of AS Extended Project students and the others comprise the second group. I give an account of this in a paper published in EJOLTS (Educational Journal of Living Theories), 'Developing Talents to Create and Offer Knowledge of the Self and the World as Educational Gifts (Huxtable, 2009a). Subsequently these, and other of Sally's students, have presented at the Heads B&NES annual conference. By doing that and allowing their presentations to be made public on YouTube they have been able to have an influence in the learning of those who control and influence schools and the educational experience those social formations offer.

Finally, some schools have incorporated the notion I have offered them of an education*al* register of talents that their pupils want to develop, have developed and want to enhance, which recognises and values all their pupils as able to develop and offer talents and knowledge of value to themselves and others as gifts.

To bring this full circle, evidence and explanation of my educational influence in learning of social formations can be seen in the policy I instigated in 1999 and continued to realise in the local authority that continues to employ me until September 2012. There is an irony in finding that as I am completing my thesis, so too my employment with the local authority comes to an end, with the demise of local authority responsibility for educational provision for their communities.

4.9 Postscript

Within this account is not only a description but also an explanation of the educational influence in learning I am having. I wish to remind you of my values as explanatory principles and living standards of judgment, clarified as they emerge in enquiry within living-boundaries. They are my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility, and my social values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society.

Looking back at the diagrammatic summary of 'successful learning' I can see how some of the theory of education and the values-based educational theory that I have generated contributes to explaining how I have been developing my practice as I evolved my living-theory praxis.

In writing papers and creating this thesis I have refocused on my practice and the organic phase of my research. I have tried to do this systematically with a detailed care and attention to not only what influence I have had through my practice to contribute to the emancipating learning of others but also to my own. I recognise, if not appreciate, that my enthusiasm and energy for such learning is a talent which I assiduously try to develop and offer as a gift, as I seek to create and offer opportunities for each to recognise, value and work with what is important to them. This will enable them to look back at the end of their days on their lives, and feel that sense of pleasure and satisfaction that comes from having lived a good life well.

Through this multimedia narrative, I have tried to connect with head, heart and body, so as to communicate beyond the possibility that disembodied words allow. In this chapter, I have offered:

- An appreciation of my evolving living-theory praxis enabling individuals to come to know more of what they want to do during their life. This will allow them to gain the confidence and develop the talents which will enable them to live a life that is loving, satisfying, productive and worth living for themselves and others
- Some clarity about what it is to develop in living-boundaries inclusive, collaborative, creative educational relationships, space and opportunities that flow with ontological energy-flowing values of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility

- Some understanding of my contribution to the evolution of education that enables learners to become an inclusive, emancipated and egalitarian influence in their learning, life and world

One aspect of my work that I have not clarified fully so far is the support I have developed for schools confronted with government strategies and initiatives concerning gifted and talented education. The responses I developed have enabled me to make a contribution to the field of gifted and talented education. This is the subject of the next chapter.