

Teacher CPD; an opportunity for teachers to develop their talents and create, value and offer their educational gifts?

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Abstract

This presentation offers an educational gift for the knowledge-base of the profession of education. The gift is a new epistemology for educational knowledge that has emerged from the knowledge-created from a research-based approach to the continuing professional development of teachers (Whitehead, 1989a &b). The new epistemology answers the call made by Schon (1995) to develop a new epistemology from action research. It includes new explanatory principles and living standards of judgment from the narratives of practitioner-researchers who are asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'how do I improve what I am doing?'. The explanatory principles are ontological in the sense that they are values-based and are used by professional educators to give meaning and purpose to their lives in education. They are relationally dynamic and flow with life-affirming energy and values that the practitioner-researchers believe carry hope for the future of humanity. The new epistemology includes the unit of appraisal of an explanation produced by an individual educator for his or her educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the social formations in which they live and work. It includes the living logics of the explanations of educational influence where logic is understood as a mode of thought that is appropriate for apprehending the real as rational. The presentation includes multi-media narratives on the grounds that the communication of the meanings of such explanatory principles, living standards of judgment and living logics cannot be communicated adequately solely through the medium of words on pages of printed text.

1) Introduction to a new epistemology

In this communication of a new epistemology for educational knowledge we begin with a speeded up video-clip from a workshop of the 16th July in the Guildhall Bath which Huxtable organized as part of the Able Pupils Extending Opportunities programme (APEX) of the Bath and North East Somerset Authority. Whitehead led the day to explore how individuals, working collaboratively, could create their own living educational theories.

The speeded up video is intended to communicate the idea of inclusionality that is central to the new epistemology. As the cursor is moved along the speeded up video we want to focus on the awareness that we exist in a flow of space, energy, values and dynamic relationships. Beginning with the relational dynamic of what we are doing helps us to distinguish between the propositional and dialectical epistemologies we use in our writings and the living or inclusional epistemology we use in our multi-media explanations of our educational influences in learning.

Following this video, to show ourselves in a professional space and practice we now want to focus on the explanations that teacher-researchers have produced for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. You can access the explanations we have in mind at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/living.shtml> for the explanations from completed doctoral research programmes,

and at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/mastermod.shtml> for the explanations from completed masters units and dissertations

We are locating this particular contribution to the evolution of a new epistemology for educational knowledge, in the context of the following recent papers in the BERA publication, Research Intelligence. The contributions have made the following points about the need for an epistemology transformation in what counts as educational knowledge.

Ferguson notes that changes have occurred in how research is carried out, funded, presented and assessed in the time she has been a practitioner-researcher. The changes include more diverse perspectives and presentation styles in research. She suggests that these changes are *indicative of an epistemological transformation in what counts as educational knowledge*. (Ferguson, 2008 p. 18)

In his response to Ferguson, Whitehead claims that this epistemological transformation will require new forms of representation and educational standards of judgment in Journals of Educational Research. (Whitehead, 2008a)

Adler-Collins is contributing an e-poster to the poster session on the 6 September 2008 at the BERA Practitioner-Researcher Day at Heriot-Watt University. In his response to Ferguson and Whitehead, Adler-Collins states his belief that *this will make a significant advance in the development of a new epistemology of educational knowledge*. (Adler-Collins, 2008, p. 18)

Using live urls in the e-version of Research Intelligence Laidlaw (2008) responds to Ferguson and Whitehead to emphasize the importance of multimedia forms of representations in developing new epistemologies. Laidlaw highlights the first issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS), an electronic journal that incorporates multi-media representations, as a further contribution to a new epistemology of educational knowledge:

It will be interesting to see how the first edition (to be published in September 2008) will stretch our understanding of the nature of educational knowledge through different forms of representation and fulfill what Bruce Ferguson asks for at the end of her article: [to] 'validate forms of research that can convey knowledge not easily encapsulated just within pages of written text and work to overcome those whose knowledge and skills have been, in the past, inappropriately excluded'. I couldn't agree more! (Laidlaw, 2008, p. 16)

2) The gift of a new epistemology for educational knowledge from explanations of teachers continuing professional development

Our claims about the existence of a new epistemology rest upon the explanations produced by teacher-researchers in research-based programmes of continuing professional development. We distinguish our epistemologies in terms of their units of appraisal (what is being judged), their standards of judgment (how the knowledge-claims are evaluated for validity) and their logics (the modes of thought that are appropriate for comprehending the real as rational – Marcuse, 1964, p. 105)

The explanations we have in mind are the explanations of educational influence in learning. Our choice of the word influence is highly significant. It is intended to communicate the need for a creative response from the learner in relation to their experience. Whatever is done to us, and from which we learn, requires a creative response for the learning to be counted as educational. Hence the word influence is intended to communicate something different to a causal relationship of the kind ‘if I do this, then this will happen’. Between the experience and the response there is conscious mediation by the learner.

Laidlaw (2008) provides a visual narrative of educational influence as she highlights the importance of focusing on students responding to their experiences with teachers in classrooms and pointed to a video-clip from Branko Bogнар:

In my opinion the work of Branko Bogнар in Croatia is particularly significant in this regard – see www.vimeo.com/videos/search:branko%20bognar, in which young students discuss their own experiences of carrying out action research enquiries. Any claims that he, or the teacher of the class, or the students themselves, make, can be enhanced through the use of the video-tape. In addition this tape can be used to help others see what is meant by quality in educational development. (Laidlaw, 2008, p. 17)

Hence we emphasise the importance of educational influence in explanations of learning with students as we consider their epistemological significance for educational knowledge.

Laidlaw has also shown herself in a classroom in China <http://ejolts.net/drupal/node/36> and provided access to the living theory accounts of the teacher-researchers she is working with at Ningxia Teachers University at: www.actionresearch.net/moira.shtml. In exploring the epistemological significance of the living theories offered by practitioner-researchers in their continuing professional development we are focusing on the:

i) units of appraisal as the explanations produced by individual educators for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the social formations in which they live and work. We call such explanations living educational theories.

ii) explanatory principles and living standards of judgment that are relationally dynamic and flowing with life-affirming energy and with values that carry hope for the future of humanity. We stress the importance of values and we believe that one of the distinguishing characteristics of an educator is that they are intending to influence

for good the learning of a student.

iii) living logics of the explanations of educational influence.

i) Units of Appraisal

The unit of appraisal is an explanation of educational influence in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. We refer to such explanations as a living educational theory and there are numerous examples of these units of appraisal in the living theory sections and master programme sections of <http://www.actionresearch.net>.

ii) Explanatory Principles and Living Standards of Judgment

In our understandings, an explanatory principle is a reason given to answer a question as to why something happens as it does. Our explanations of educational influence give reasons in terms of the ontological values and understandings that we use to give meaning and purpose to our lives. For example, we identify with Lohr's (2006) explication of love at work as an explanatory principle in our explanations for why we do what we do in our lives in education. We also identify with the expressions of explanatory principles and the living standards of judgment of Walton, Adler-Collins and Spiro, in which they include flows of energy and the explication of the meanings of their values in the course of their emergence in their practice:

Through her narrative Walton offers an emergent methodology that includes both narrative inquiry and action research. She generates a living theory, which includes 'spiritual resilience gained through connection with a loving dynamic energy' as an explanatory principle and an original standard of judgment. (Walton, 2008, Abstract)

Through his narrative Adler-Collins explains the evolution of his ontology and the creation of an inclusional pedagogy of the unique with transitional certainty as a living epistemological standard of judgment. He offers an energy-flowing, living standard of inclusionality as a space creator for engaged listening and informed learning as an original contribution to knowledge (Adler-Collins, 2008, Abstract).

Through her narrative Spiro offers a theory of 'knowledge transformation' that represents an aspirational contribution to our understanding of what it means to be 'creative'. She shows how ontological values can be clarified in the course of their emergence in practice and formed into living standards of judgment (Spiro, 2008, Abstract).

To emphasise the importance of clarifying ontological values in the course of their emergence in practice of using these values as both explanatory principles and living standards of judgment for evaluating the validity of living theories, we identify with Formby's (2007) Master's enquiry. She expresses her values of a loving, receptively responsive educational relationship in her title:

How do I sustain a loving, receptively responsive educational relationship with my pupils which will motivate them in their learning and encourage me in my teaching?

iii) The Living Logics of Explanations of Educational Influence

The reason we stress the importance of living logics in the new epistemology for educational knowledge is because of the role of logic in comprehending the nature of reason itself. We like the way Marcuse (1964, p. 105) describes logic as a mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rational.

In our writings we use three epistemologies each with their own logics. We use propositional logic as we comprehend traditional theories of the kind distinguished by Pring (2000):

“ ‘Theory’ would seem to have the following features. It refers to a set of propositions which are stated with sufficient generality yet precision that they explain the ‘behaviour’ of a range of phenomena and predict what would happen in the future. ” (pp124-25)

In these propositional theories it is usual to use Aristotelean logic with its law of contradiction eliminating contradictions between statements and the law of excluded middle in representing everything as either A or Not-A.

We also use dialectical theories such as Ilyenkov’s (1977) dialectical logic to comprehend educational processes as processes of change and transformation (Whitehead, 1999). Contradictions are the nucleus of dialectical logic and attempts to represent such transformations within propositions always encounter problems of validity in relation to contradictions between statements (Popper, 1963, pp. 313-316)

In the evolution of a new epistemology for educational knowledge we use the living logics (Whitehead, 2004) of inclusionality in a way that can hold within explanations of educational influence insights from both propositional and dialectical theories (Whitehead, 2008b). The significance of the idea of a living logic is that it can communicate a form of rationality in which the meanings of values as explanatory principles are emerging as they are being expressed and clarified in the practice of an educational enquiry. Working from a perspective of inclusionality as a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries (Rayner, 2004) values are expressed and clarified with a living logic that is not constrained by the limitations of propositional and dialectical thinking. These limitations are that propositional thinking eliminates contradictions from correct thought and that dialectical thinking has contradiction as the nucleus. Inclusionality can integrate insights from both propositional and dialectical thinking within the flow-form of its own rationality.

This presentation of the explanations with a living logic includes multi-media narratives on the grounds that the communication of the meanings of explanatory principles and living standards of judgment, that include flows of life-affirming energy with values, cannot be communicated adequately solely through the medium of words on pages of printed text.

3) Some implications of the new epistemology for educational research and continuing professional development

In exploring the implications of this new epistemology for educational knowledge and continuing professional development we shall relate our ideas to an important distinction between educational research and education research. In making this distinction we explain some of the dangers of permitting education researchers to control what counts as educational research, educational knowledge and educational

theory. We shall also explain the significance of our ideas in relation to the evolution of a knowledge base to inform educational practice. Because of the importance of the learner's educational voice in their own learning we shall highlight the importance of making educational responses to the voices of students and of integrating these responses in explanations of educational influence in continuing professional development.

Whilst there is a recognition of the importance of a flow of life-affirming energy in educational relationships in text about education going back thousands of years, how to represent such flows of energy with values in explanations of educational influence is only weakly understood in social science (Vasilyuk, 1991) and educational research. Section three will show that multi-media accounts of educational influence have established new energy-flowing and values-based explanatory principles and standards of judgment have been legitimated in the Academy. In sections four, five and six we will consider the significance of our research questions and foci of enquiry, our analytic and theoretical framings and our research findings and contributions to knowledge.

3.1. Educational research and Education research.

The educational gift we have in mind is in the form of explanations of the educational influences of educators in their own learning, in their learning of their students and others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. These explanations have emerged from research-based educational enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in continuing professional development (Whitehead, 1989a &b). The educational gift is a new epistemology for educational knowledge with its own units of appraisal, living standards of judgment and living logics.

We want to be clear from the beginning of this paper that we are making a clear distinction between the knowledge created by education researchers from disciplines of education such as the philosophy, psychology and sociology of education and the educational knowledge created by those who are researching what they are doing in the discipline of their own educational enquiries as they seek to live their values as fully as they can.

In current moves to create a World Association there are those like ourselves who wish to belong to a World Association of Educational Researchers and those who wish to belong to a World Association of Education Researchers. Our distinction is focused on the theories of education researchers that are within disciplines and fields of education such as the philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, economics, politics, economic, theology, leadership, policy and administration of education, and the living theories of educational researchers which are their explanations for the educational influences of individuals in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. In our educational research programmes we are making the assumptions, grounded in our professional experience and research that:

- a) Individuals can generate their own living educational theories as explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which they live and work.

- b) Individuals can bring their embodied knowledge as professional practices into the Academy as legitimated knowledge through exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ in which they experience themselves, their ‘I’ as a living contradiction.
- c) Through exploring these implications with action reflection cycles of expressing concerns when values are not being lived as fully as possible, imagining ways forward, choosing an action plan, acting and gathering data on which to make a judgment of the influence of the actions, evaluating the influence of actions and modifying the concerns, action plans and actions, individuals can clarify the meanings of the values they use to give meaning and purpose to their lives in the course of their emergence in their practice.
- d) They can use these values both as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence and as epistemological standards of judgment for evaluating the validity of the explanations.

We are assuming that one of the distinguishing characteristics of educational research is that it generates educational knowledge through the theories that are produced to explain educational influences in learning. We now turn to the importance of this knowledge for a knowledge base that can inform educational practices in continuing professional development.

3.2 Knowledge base to inform educational practices in continuing professional development.

There is an increasing focus on practice based research to add to a knowledge base for the development of educational practice as called for by Snow (2001) where she points out that *good teachers possess a wealth of knowledge about teaching that cannot currently be drawn upon effectively in the preparation of novice teachers or in debates about practice. (p. 9).* We agree with Snow about the desirability of distinguishing standards for the systematization of personal knowledge. Where we disagree with Snow is in her desire to reject personal anecdote as a basis for either policy or practice (p.9). We want to be careful at this point not to be misunderstood. Whilst we believe that personal anecdote is the ground of developing policy and practice, we also believe that we strengthen the validity and rigor of personal anecdote through the exercise of the mutual rational controls of critical discussion (Popper, 1975, p. 44). In other words we believe that it is necessary condition for the generation of living educational theories for individuals to begin with personal anecdote. The narrative is then developed from the anecdote to include an explanation of educational influence. We advocate enhancing the validity and rigour of the narrative in the process of clarifying and evolving the standards they use in the systematization of their personal knowledge in their explanations of educational influence through the use of a living theory methodology (Whitehead, 2008b).

Much of our research and practice is in supporting and tutoring on continuing professional development programmes that include the generation of such explanations of educational influence. In these programmes we stress the importance of gathering data that enables an evidence-based judgment to be made about the educational influence of the teacher in the students’ learning. This data can include

the narratives that the students produce about their educational influences in their own learning. In making these points we support Biesta's (2006) call for the development of a language of education which includes a sense of educational responsibility. We also support his point that seeing learning as responding, as distinct from acquisition is educationally the more significant:

“Instead of seeing learning as an attempt to acquire, to master, to internalize, or any other possessive metaphors we can think of, we might see learning as a reaction to a disturbance, as an attempt to recognize and reintegrate as a result of disintegration. We might look at learning as a response to what is other and different, to what challenges, irritates, or even disturbs us, rather than as the acquisition of something we want to possess. Both ways of looking at learning- learning as acquisition and learning as responding – might be equally valid, depending, that is, on the situation in which we raise questions about the definition of learning. But as I will argue in more details in subsequent chapters, the second conception of learning is educationally the more significant, if it is conceded 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).”

At the heart of our idea of responding, is responding to learners' voices.

3.3 Learner's educational voice in learning

There is an increasing appreciation of the importance of the educator's educational voice in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formation enhancing, in its development through CPD. There is also a growing movement to extend the influences of the voices of children and young people through enquiry based learning and the democratisation (Laidlaw, 1996) of education establishments.

What we have in mind in particular, in enhancing the voices of children and young people, are the writings of Mounter (2007) and Bognar (2008). Writing with her 6 year old pupils Mounter asks, researches and answers the question, *Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory?* (<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/tuesdayma/joymounterull.htm>). With the help of video-clips of conversations with her pupils about the validity of a model of learning known as Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC) Mounter demonstrates that some six year olds can critically evaluate a model of learning and amend it so that is more closely corresponds with their own theory of learning.

Bognar focuses on *Pupils as action researchers: improving something important in our lives*. Drawing on video-clips of pupils engaging in peer evaluation, together with conversations about action research with both teacher and pupils, Bognar explains his educational influence, the educational influence of the teacher and the educational influences of pupils in their own learning.

We believe that such explanations are making original contributions to educational knowledge. They are making this contribution through making explicit the meanings of energy-flowing and values-based explanatory principles and standards of judgment.

3.4 New energy flowing and values based explanatory principles and standards of judgement

We think that it bears emphasizing that this paper is focused on the logics and values that are constituting forms of living educational theory. Living theories are focused on generating explanations of educational influences in learning that are directly connected to processes of improving educational practice. A living educational theory is taken to be an explanation produced by an individual to explain his or her educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006)

White (2006) asserts that the concepts of intelligence and the subject based curriculum which underpin current practices in schools was in response to values and beliefs rooted in the 16th century and enhanced through the lineage of Galton. New concepts, practice and standards of judgment which are educational as distinct from instructional are needed to realise 21st century values and beliefs. He proposes that concepts of intelligence, as expressed in England and America, and the school curriculum are, and have been, linked at the level of policy for centuries. He contests:

‘However influential the two core notions have been, if you look for sound supporting arguments behind them, you will be disappointed. There are no solid grounds for innate differences in IQ; and there are none for the traditional subject-based curriculum. (p.1)

White provides evidence to support the assertion that the two ideas have common origins which can be traced back to the radical forms of Protestantism in the sixteenth century and more recently to the men with the same cultural roots and affiliations who are responsible for the current notions of intelligence and our present school system.

‘...Galton was the creator of the notion of intelligence which has been transmitted... No one before him had come up with the thought that we all possess different degrees of an ability which is intellectual, general and limited. (p.25)

The influence of the heritage of Galton, Morant and Burt can be felt within the school system and the practices being recommended through many of the national strategies we have today. White concludes that,

‘The school curriculum is not a thing in itself. It is a vehicle to realise larger aims... The school curriculum is – or should be – a vehicle to enable young people not only to lead a fulfilled personal life, but also to help other people, as friends, parents, workers and as citizens, to lead as fulfilled a life as their own.’ (p.151)

He throws out the challenge in a later paper (White, 2007) ‘Towards an Aims Led Curriculum’ on the Futures section of the Qualifications Curriculum Authority website, (the positioning of this paper on a government sponsored site is noteworthy).

‘Nettles have to be grasped – including the question: what counts as a

'successful', or 'fulfilled' life? Is it up to individuals themselves to determine this? Could they be wrong? Are there objective standards here?

I am confident that a decent, defensible set of aims can be shaped out of the post-2000 statement. They will centre around the kind of people we would like our schoolchildren to become: people who wholeheartedly throw themselves into absorbing relationships and activities of all sorts – not just intellectual ones; responsible, caring citizens; good friends, lovers and work colleagues.

The next step is crucial. It is to work out what kinds of learning best prepare children to acquire these qualities. How does one learn wholeheartedness? Cooperation in a team? Sensitivity to issues of global citizenship? Self-confidence? Being a friend?'

In this paper we are suggesting that a new form of CPD, which engages teachers in the processes of realizing and researching their own educational values and living theories that inform their lives and practice, informs not the next step but the continually evolving steps necessary for education to be fit for the 21st century, which reflects the values of emancipation, inclusion, and equality of our current society. We are using the words of one of the national strategies – gifts and talents – deliberately. They are values-laden words which are at the core of much we consider educational. Therefore the theories and practices need to clarify and be connected with the values we now ascribe to them rather than those of Galton who lived in a world of empire, class, and preordained destinies.

4. Research questions and foci of enquiry.

Our research with educators, children and young people explores how, through a master's programme, the gifts and talents of all can be engaged and enhanced in a world of educational quality as described in the values, aims and purposes of national strategies and agendas; for instance those underpinning the national curriculum http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/values.shtml.

The foci of our enquiry are:

- contributing to the knowledge base which can be shown to inform educational practice
- enhancing the voice of the learner in their own learning (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007)
- the development of new living standards of judgment, rooted in educational values, that contribute to improving educational practice. (Adler-Collins, 2007)

In this research we are using the following meanings of gifts. We are thinking of a gift as something that is freely given without any expectation of receiving and exchange gift. We understand that many social rituals involve the exchange of gifts. We believe that we use our talents in the production of gifts and that what we produce can be seen in economic terms as a form of exchange in which our labour is exchanged for money or material. We understand economic theories of human capital and Sen's (1999) economic theory of human capability. We do exchange our labour for money in the work that we do. However, in co-creating this paper we believe that we are working

with Yunus' (2007) ideas of a social business in which we are producing something, in this case our ideas on living educational theories, and offering them freely as a gift for others to use as they will.

Present government policy is to support the development of an all masters profession. In contributing to this aspiration we both contributed to the development of a masters module on gifts and talents in education that includes the above idea of a gift (the description of this masters module can be accessed at <http://www.jackwhitehead.com/tuesdayma/G&TinEd12&9.htm>). Marie encouraged a group of local teachers to register for the masters programme at the University of Bath to work with Jack. Marie supports Jack's desire to bring the embodied knowledge of professional educators into the Academy for legitimation in masters and doctoral programmes. Both of us are working and researching to contribute to the knowledge base which can be shown to inform educational practice. In doing this they are encouraging practitioner-researchers to enhance the voice of the learner in their own learning. They are working to develop new living standards of judgment, rooted in educational values, that contribute to improving educational practice. The influence of this masters programme and Jack's emphasis on the knowledge-creation, learners' voices and values-based standards of judgment can be seen in first accounts to be submitted and accredited for the masters programme on gifts and talents in education:

Tucker, V. (2008) *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.*

<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/tuesdayma/vickytuckerg&t.pdf>

Hurfurd, R. (2008) *How does using philosophy and creative thinking enable me to recognise and develop inclusive gifts and talents in my pupils?*<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/tuesdayma/roshurfordg&t.pdf>

We are also generating our ideas with the following analytic and theoretical frames.

5. Analytical and theoretical frames

A living theory approach to action research is used in which the individual practitioner generates explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Educators, children and young people locally are engaged in action research approach used in the enquiry which follows the model of Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC), developed by Wallace (2006). The way the TASC wheel is used as an action reflection cycle can be seen at <http://www.jackwhitehead.com/jack/arplanner.htm>

The robustness of the theoretical frameworks of living educational theories can be judged from their genesis (Whitehead, 1989a) to their global spread in processes of enquiry (Whitehead & McNiff 2006) that are withstanding evaluations of validity and legitimacy in a range of communities of educational researchers in Britain (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), China (Tian & Laidlaw, 2005) Japan (Adler-Collins, 2007), Canada

(DeLong, 2002) South Africa (Woods et.al., 2008) the USA (Farrell & Rosenkrantz, 2008), and India (Rawal, 2006).

In developing the robustness of living theories in terms of their validity we use theoretical insights from Habermas (1976) and Winter (1989). To enhance the validity of living theories we use the four criteria of social validity that Habermas describes in his work on communication and the evolution of society. In using these four criteria we focus on questions that are intended to enhance the comprehensibility of the individual's explanation, the quality of the evidence used to justify any assertions, the awareness of the normative background from the social context from which the explanation was produced, the authenticity of the writing in showing over time through interactions that the research truly believes what he or she asserts.

In enhancing the rigour of the research account we focus on the six principles Winter's distinguishes in terms of dialectical critique, reflective critique, plural structure, multiple resource, risk, theory practice transformation.

5. Research findings and contribution to knowledge.

The major contribution to educational knowledge is in the new epistemology (Schon, 1995) of the living theories produced by educators and their pupils/students as they explain their educational influences in enhancing their learning through the exercise and development of their talents and creation, valuing and offering of their gifts.

The contributions include the evidence of the integration of living theories into improving educational practice. These include over 30 living theory doctoral degrees legitimated in different universities. (<http://www.actionresearch.net/living.shtml>).

The contributions include analyses that integrate these ideas on improving practice and generating educational theory through a university master's programme which contributes to a local authority's educational inclusive gifted and talented policy (<http://www.actionresearch.net/mastermod.shtml>).

The originality of the research findings lies in the use of multi-media accounts to show and explicate the meanings of relationally dynamic flows of energy with values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence.

For centuries theories in universities have been represented in propositional relationships that have been abstracted from immediately lived experience. The distinguishing qualities of these theories have been described by Pring (2000):

“ ‘Theory’ would seem to have the following features. It refers to a set of propositions which are stated with sufficient generality yet precision that they explain the ‘behaviour’ of a range of phenomena and predict what would happen in the future...” (pp. 124-25)

The logic governing the relationships between the propositions is Aristotelean in the sense that contradictions between mutually exclusive statements are eliminated from the discourse. Everything is either A or Not-A in terms of the Law of the Excluded Middle.

Dialecticians have argued (Marcuse, 1964) that such propositional theories mask the dialectical nature of reality with its nucleus of contradiction. Philosophers of Science

such as Popper (1963) have argued that dialectical theories are based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking that, because they contain contradictions, are entirely useless as theories.

Rayner (2004) and Lumley (2008) research from a perspective of inclusionality as a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as connective, reflexive and co-creative.

At the heart of inclusionality... is a simple shift in the way we frame reality, from absolutely fixed to relationally dynamic. This shift arises from perceiving space and boundaries as connective, reflective and co-creative, rather than severing, in their vital role of producing heterogeneous form and local identity... (Rayner, 2004, p.1)

"...an inspiring pooling-of-consciousness that seems to include and connect all within all in unifying dynamical communion.... The concreteness of 'local object being'... allows us to understand the dynamics of the common living-space in which we are all ineluctably included participants." (Lumley, 2008, p.3)

Rayner's demonstration of the limitations of an either-or logic can be seen in the video-clip at:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVa7FUIA3W8>

The following speeded up video-clip of a day at the Guildhall, Bath on gifts and talents in education is intended to show what we are meaning by a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries. Our explanations of our educational influences and the explanations others give for their educational influences are contextualized within such relationally dynamics. To explain what we are doing and our educational influences in the learning of others requires the explanations to include explanations that are flowing with a live-affirming energy with the values we use to give meaning and purpose to our lives. Huxtable describes this energy with values in terms of a loving energy and respective connection. Whitehead describes this energy with values in terms of a life-affirming energy with values that carry hope for the future of humanity. Charles (2007) has described this energy with values in terms of Ubuntu as a way of being that emerged from Africa. Walton (2008) describes this energy with values in terms of loving energy with spiritual resilience.

The originality of such contributions to knowledge can be seen in the successfully completed doctoral research programmes at <http://www.actionresearch.net/living.shtml>

The research finding that we are concluding with is with three 6 year old pupils who worked with their teacher, Joy Mounter (2007) to answer the question *Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory?* (<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/tuesdayma/joymounterull.htm>). The account

includes three video-clips showing the 6 years critically evaluating the TASC model of learning and redesigning it so that it communicates the relational dynamic of their understandings of their own learning. The account was produced for the understanding learners and learning unit of a masters programme. Joy had been encouraged to register with Jack as a tutor by Marie. With Jack's tutoring and Marie's support, Joy produced her explanation of educational influence in a way that brought her embodied knowledge as a professional educator into the Academy, thus helping to fulfill Jack's desire to contribute the professional knowledge-base of education by helping to bring the embodied knowledge of educators into the Academy. Through making public Joy's account of working with her pupils, Marie's desire to focus on the expression and development of pupils' talents in producing gifts that are freely given to others is also being affirmed. In the early writings of Marx (Bernstein, 1971) he answers the question of what is to produce something as a human being. Marx says that we are twice affirmed:

"In my production I would have objectified my individuality and its particularity, and in the course of the activity I would have enjoyed an individual life, in viewing the object I would have experienced the individual joy of knowing my personality as an objective, sensuously perceptible, and indubitable power.

In your satisfaction and your use of my product I would have had the direct and conscious satisfaction that my work satisfied a human need, that it objectified human nature, and that it created an object appropriate to the need of another human being.

I would have been the mediator between you and the species and you would have experienced me as a redintegration of your own nature and a necessary part of yourself; I would have been affirmed in your thought as well as your love.

In my individual life I would have directly created your life, in my individual activity I would have immediately confirmed and realized my true human nature. (p.48).

Whilst recognizing that one individual cannot directly create the life of another, except in childbirth, we experience a flow of life-affirming energy in such affirmations. In offering this paper in the spirit of a gift which we have produced through the exercise and development of our talents we are hopeful that it might contribute in some way to your own loving and productive life in education.

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