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1976

An educative relationship in several scenes.

Dramatis Personae:

JW = Jack Whitehead

ML = Moira Laidlaw

(Speech; **Thoughts**; Dates and Places)

1991: at the University

JW: "I wonder if this might be a bit much but..."



ML: **Sigh. Oh, not another bloody book!** "Oh great! I'll read that one as well." **I'm sure there's one hour in 24 not accounted for.**

The following week in Jack's Office.

ML: "Those books were great, Jack. I've written a short story about dragons!"



JW: **Oh great! NOT! What next, abduction by aliens?** "Oh great! I'll read that one as well."

ML: Just a quick question, Jack. You know when you go on about values, yeah? What's the Holocaust got to do with education anyway?¹

JW: You WHAT? **Strewth! There's no hope!!!**

1992: In the car on the way to Greendown School.

ML: "Jack, in an educative relationship, there has to be a degree of mutuality, doesn't there? So, what have you learned from me?"

JW: **(Mm. Not a bad question, that. Something worth thinking about as an issue. Mm. What have I learned from her? Now, how can I put this**

¹What has the Holocaust got to do with Education anyway? A memorable question, eh? The paper I wrote about it can be found at www.actionresearch.net/moira.

delicately?)



"Nothing!"

1993 Spring: at Jack's House one evening

ML: "Jack, I'm sorry, but this Ph.D. is too much. I can't cope with it. I feel awful! It's dredging up such a lot of stuff."

JW: "This is up to you, of course and I'm not sure you will want to do it, but I wonder if you could look at it this way: that these feelings you're having are an integral part of the research... It would be a shame if you gave up. I think you (will) have something to say."

1993: Summer. In the University.

JW: "And so, using your talent for generating fictional stories that are recognisable as having the kinds of values you want to bring more fully into the world, you can begin to show in your educative relationships how you are bringing these values from your stories more fully into the" real "world. These will be..."

ML: "That sounds interesting." *What's the matter with me? It really does!*

1994: University, Jack's Office with other international colleagues discussing gifts and talents.

JW: "And what do you see as one of the gifts you have, Moira?"

ML: "Well, I suppose I write well."

JW: "Indeed, Moira, you write *very* well, and at length too! It's just a pity you have nothing to say yet!"

1995: Outside Director of Study's Office after Ph.D. Viva and private tantrum on having failed.

ML: "I'm not bloody giving up. I was amazing in there! I didn't know what I knew. I'm going to do it again and make *them* understand, that's why I want the same examiners. It was right that I failed. I didn't communicate to my audience."

JW: "I thought you should have got through this time."

I feel like shooting somebody!

1996: in Jack's Office after successful viva and bear-hug!

JW: "Congratulations, Dr. Laidlaw!"

ML: " *Thanks, Jack!*"

Coda

2000: At Jack's House

ML: I've decided to go on VSO to China.

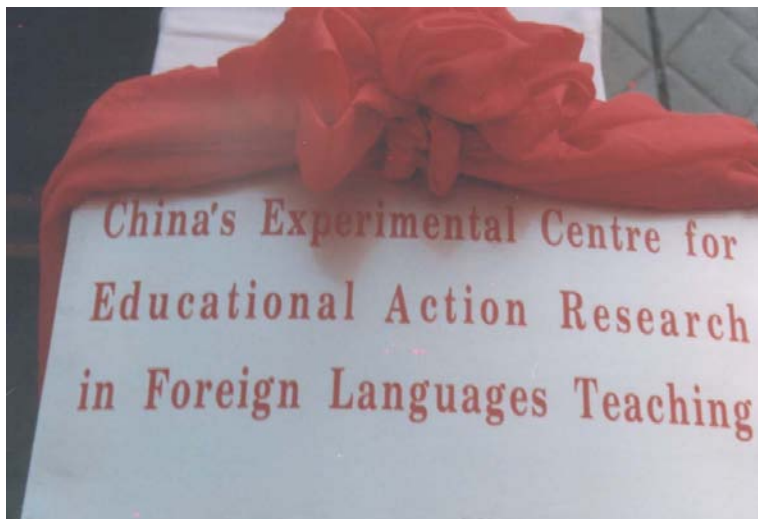
JW: Great! What an opportunity. I'm delighted for you!

July 7th. University of Bath.

Celebration with action researchers before going to China

ML: I can't believe I ever said I didn't understand what the Holocaust had to do with education. It's taken you ten years to teach me that, Jack, though. Doesn't say much for your teaching methods, does it?

JW: You're a slow learner!



THE END

Dear Jack,

Summer 2009

In 'Unfolding Bodymind' (Hocking, Haskell and Linds, 2001) Mary Bateson's writing is quoted as, 'the quality of recognition in any experience suggests a meeting of something already present...'.

After much angst, I came to understand our educational relations as one of joint detective work, seeking out and encouraging a mutual recognition of my living (e)pistemology, a shared exploration.

I think it took two, possibly three years, with me worrying about not understanding, being passionately inarticulate, then one day on the phone (you'd just come back from Canada) you said there was a book you thought I might read. It was 'Unfolding Bodymind'. Haa...aaa such a relief. You had found an example that might describe my way of learning, and it demonstrated not only that you had recognised what I was trying to put into words, but that this form of self study could be legitimated within the academy.

More recommended books and papers followed: Bernstein's 'Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity'; Thayer-Bacon's 'Relational "(e)pistemologies"' and Cho 'Lessons of Love: Psychoanalysis and the Teacher - Student Relationship'. Bloody marvellous Jack!

What more can I say, other than "thank you?"

I experienced and finally recognised your teaching as a form of patient, focussed, eccentric nurturing, which I could only understand in the living of it. I'm sure that the quality of your educational relationships means that your loving educational influence will continue to spread across continents, whether or not you remain within the Academy.

Jack, I feel truly honoured to know you and to have been one of your students.
With love,

Eleanor

A Visit to Ratcliffe on Soar: What do action researchers do in their spare time?

I've thought long and hard. What can I say about Jack Whitehead and his influence on my career and interest in education? It is true to say that I wouldn't be where I am today were it not for "the man with the big laugh," as Kevin's daughters call him. It would also be true to say that I am no longer part of the action research community that has clustered around Jack. That is not in any way due to a lack of interest, political difference or any such thing. It is due to my health, the time and distractions.

So what are my main memories about working with Jack? Well, in the 1980s when I was undertaking my M.Phil research, Jack was something of a controversial figure. I was being supervised by one of Jack's colleagues, the excellent Mary Tasker. After a short time, Mary began to feel uneasy about supervising my work as she had little experience of action research. So she, Jack and I met to discuss what could be done. We thought that joint supervision would be a way forward and I made an appointment to meet and discuss this proposal with the Head of School. Of course, the proposal was turned down. Neither Jack nor Mary was surprised – perhaps for their own different reasons – but I was. It did not seem an unreasonable request and I thought it would have been helpful to me as a research student. On reflection, I wondered if this was some kind of lesson or initiation that I had to go through – recognise that educational research is a highly politicised process and that, if you want your approach to be accepted you would, as Kuhn suggested, have to wait for the dominant culture to die out.

The main confusion for me though was that I liked Jack. I still do. How could you not? How come he was seen as such a difficult, wayward individual whose research was not really research at all? His generosity, passion and genuine interest in improving education are contagious to the extent I always feel uplifted after a spell in his company. He taught me loads too. I remember conversations about books I'd read with Jack asking for the writer to show and account for his/ her own learning. That kind of request was instrumental in my research. I thought it was all pretty obvious – hard work but obvious that this was what education was really about. Clearly, according to some, I was wrong. And so was Jack.

I'm sometimes kind of sad that I haven't continued my research. You see, that means I don't have as much contact with Jack as I used to have. It was very exciting working with him on various conferences and hosting great debates with him. (Incidentally, I didn't feel as though I was all that influential in those events

but I did meet a lot of interesting people through Jack. That's another reason for feeling so much affection for him.)

But there are other, very strong reasons for liking this man and I'd like to share one memory of a night out with Jack and two of my dearest friends. At a BERA conference in Nottingham, Jack, Kevin Eames, Erica Holley and I had, under Jack's tutelage, presented some of our research in an action research symposium. Several of those attending were quite highly charged, shall we say, by the ideas and wanted to carry on the vociferous argument after the scheduled end of the session. We didn't exactly beat a hasty retreat but decided that we would seek refuge in a public house I had read about in "The Good Beer Guide." My interest in good English ale had led me to believe that a nearby hostelry served what was purported to be the strongest beer in Britain. Now, Jack always asked for a pint of the strongest beer in the pub whenever we went for a drink so the strongest beer in Britain was something of a lure. We called a taxi and all four of us set off.

The taxi driver had no idea where we were going and had to call his office for directions. We were heading for the cooling towers out at Ratcliffe but for all we knew we could have been taken to Loughborough or Long Eaton. Anyway, we arrived at the pub, paid the fare and marvelled at the awfulness of the village where we found ourselves. Once in the pub it was clear that an error had been made. It was kitschy, tatty and did not serve the strongest beer in Britain. Jack found this highly amusing and bellowed his infectious laugh. Missing out on the strong beer did not bother him at all – he was however delighted that I had made this error: that entertained him even more. I seem to remember him suggesting that I could do some action research into organising a piss up in a brewery. What was even more diverting for Jack was the moment the organist started playing his sing-along tunes of the "On Mother Kelly's Doorstep" variety. He absolutely loved this and began to, yes, you've guessed it, sing along. The vision I have of Jack Whitehead sitting in an armchair enjoying this moment so soon after being involved in a controversial research debate struck me as being quite bizarre. But it also strikes me as being typical of the man.

One last thought - is someone going to tidy Jack's office? What will they find? I guess there will be various nastiness in corners – furred coffee cups and the like. I also reckon that the new occupant will also find plenty of inspirational thoughts and dialogues lingering there. Unfortunately, I don't think a room of that kind can inspire as well as the person who occupied it.

Andy

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I can't imagine the living contradiction retiring

Pam

I first met Jack Whitehead

at a BERA Conference sometime in the 1980s. I had wandered into one of his sessions – not knowing much about action research. I can't quite remember who was there but I think Jean McNiff, Ron King, Andy Larter and Kevin Eames sat at a table at the front of the room with Jack in the chair. I thought they were quite inspired in the way they talked about improving education by investigating and changing their own personal practice. How refreshing after all the social science theory and jargon prominent at that time. Then, one of the old guard in the audience made some hostile and derisory remarks about action research, not properly critical but more a personal tirade against something they thought did not belong. I am not usually a knight in shining armour, but afterwards Jack told me that I rose to the defence like a crusader. After the session, Jack sought me out and invited me to meet his group. It was the beginning of a long and continuing friendship.

After that, I used to journey up to Bath on a Friday evening to join Jack's action research seminars. When I began to develop a group at Kingston, Jack became our consultant. For many years, he came down to Kingston on a Friday evening to give tutorials to the students. Then it was back to my house where my husband Ron had prepared supper for anyone in the group who wanted an extended action research session. I am not sure amid the haze of alcohol what we added to the theory of action research but I am sure it was profound and certainly living. The next day, Saturday we had the teaching sessions all day and then Jack returned to Bath, no doubt a little the worse for wear.

Through the years, Jack and I have collaborated on many action research projects and have given joint papers at Conferences. Together we organised the World Congress on Action Research at Bath in 1994. For that, we prepared a script to use in our joint address to the conference. I remember Jack going off at tangents – and me having to kick him to get him back to the script. At the end, we both thought it had gone very well. On another occasion, we organised a symposium at New Orleans, which went very well so I thought I was justified in taking an afternoon off to cruise on a river boat. But no! I had missed a session that Jack was chairing and I had holy hell to pay.

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I left education as a career in 2002 (retired is not a word I like) and have moved to a new career (even less well paid) in local history and art history. On a recent visit to my home in Cornwall, Jack and Joan were taken by my husband Ron on a walk around the old water features of Newlyn as we were preparing a short history and guide book. Jack brought his video camera and took pictures. A week or two later I got the video in the post. It was an action research recording, with Jack exploring with Joan and Ron various aspects of the walk, suggesting alternative explanations, considering how the explanations were reached, always keeping the 'I' central to this living experience, which was embodied in the living explanations, which were theorised about the walk.

Good old Jack, he is determined that I should continue to explore the contradictions of my existence (whatever it is) to create a theory about my living self. No doubt he will always do so himself.

Pam Lomax

Newlyn, Cornwall

July 14 2009

Jack you have been a brilliant influence in my life. At first I thought you were crazy, now I realise you are a genius. I appreciate the way you allowed me to explore my inner self so gently and with such patience. I never knew I had it in me. It is a relief to realise that there is a whole world of people out there that value our passion as teachers and learners. It is a huge honour to work with you.

Anne Mackay.

Jack Whitehead

Jack Whitehead has been a seminal influence and a benign presence in my work and research for the best part of twenty years. His example has allowed me to speak and write in my own voice; to marry academic rigour to inwardness; and to trust in things not fully understood. Two pieces from Raymond Carver strike me as apt. I offer them to Jack with warmest affection.

Kevin Mc Dermott, Dublin June 2009.

*Friends, I do love you, it's true.
And I hope I'm lucky enough, privileged enough,
to live on and bear witness.
Believe me, I'll say only the most
Glorious things about you and our time here!*

From 'In the Year 2020'

Work

*Love of work. The blood singing
in that. The fine high rise
of it into the work. A man says,
'I'm working. Or, I worked today.
Or, I'm trying to make it work'.
Him working seven days a week.
And being awakened in the morning
by his young wife, his head on the typewriter.
The fullness before work.
The amazed understanding after.
Fastening his helmet. Climbing onto this motorcycle
and thinking about home.
And work. Yes, work. The going
to what lasts.*

Raymond Carver

Jack

1991 – four people sat by the University lake staring into their sandwich boxes after the first session of the MEd taught module ‘Action Research I’. After a period of silence and rumination, I looked at my likewise shell-shocked fellows and offered: “What the f*** was that? . . . What is my claim to have knowledge? . . . Can I make a valid claim that I understand my own educational development? . . . Dialectical logic? . . . Where’s this guy from??” However, as so many before, and after, we each went on our ways and thought more deeply about these questions that Jack (for it was he) had asked us to ask ourselves – and we each came to realise their importance and significance to us as individuals and as joint participants in the great educational enterprise that is Life, the Universe, and Everything. We all became action research devotees and went on to study AR2 the following term and based our dissertations on action enquiries. We came to understand that this guy was something special, an opinion bolstered even further when we learned of the university’s earlier, repeated and singularly unsuccessful attempts to dispose of him (Jack seemed to work this story into almost all of his papers written at that time).

“How can I improve the quality of my practice?” – it looks so innocent, as a question, but . . . action research claims to be an emancipatory activity: "...a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality, justice, coherence, and satisfactoriness of (a) their own social practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the institutions and programs and ultimately the society in which these practices are carried out. Action research has an individual aspect – action researchers change themselves, and a collective aspect – action researchers work with others to achieve change and understand what it means to change." (McTaggart 1992).

Jack has always talked about the ‘Life-affirming energy’ that flows around groups engaged in generating descriptions and explanations of their own Living Educational Theories. In the light of my own experience, I would suggest that the generation of life-affirming energy requires that you look at things differently and so requires a spark of life-changing energy to set it free.

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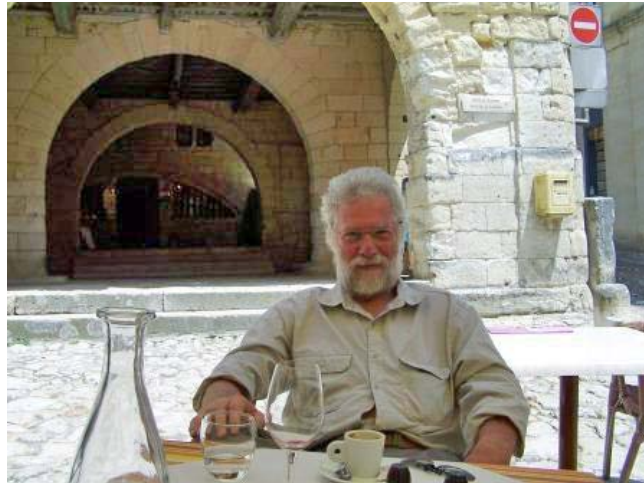
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By asking his 'How can I/we . . . ' questions, Jack is the source of that spark – and his spark has lit a flame that now runs around the world and makes it a better place. After staring into my damascene sandwich box in 1991, things were never quite the same again.



Me post lunch in Saint-Emilion. You may be amused to dwell on the fact that it shows a happy and replete man who has just consumed a large cauldron of moules frites - and who does not yet know that one of them was duff.

16 July 2009

Jack Whitehead has inspired me. It was not until I read his article "Using a Living Theory Methodology in Improving Practice and Generating Educational Knowledge" located on www.ejolts.net that I truly understood what I had been doing during these past 33 years as a teacher and as an administrator. His quest to change our understandings of teacher research, to make it real and to help us to hear the voice of the teacher researcher has been a noble quest indeed. His understanding of what it means to be human and what it means to hold professional knowledge within the context of "life-affirming energy" illustrates his deep understanding of our inner desire to make sense of our world, not just in a scientific context but in an emotional context as well.

Peter

Jack understands that learning happens not just in one's head but in one's heart and that this connection must be present for real understanding to occur.

Thank you Jack, for all you have fought for-for it was your heroism that will pave the way for many teachers to come as they ask their own question: "How can I improve my practice?"

Ruth

Dear Jack,

You have taught me the true meaning of education. Until entering your classes I had become adept at jumping through hoops to pass the relevant exam or assignment. Yet the learning that has had the biggest impact on me and has remained with me is the learning process that I have undertaken in your class. Why? This is because the enquiry that I conduct is an enquiry that has relevance and meaning to me. It is about the way in which I make sense of the world and not someone else's sense making. This does not mean that it is any the less challenging - in fact it is more so. I have never been more motivated, moved, depressed and invigorated whilst creating my own living theory. Surely ensuring that individuals are able to relate their learning to their life experience is the nub of education.

A big thank you.

Love,

Mary

Thoughts on Jack Whitehead from Marian Naidoo



My first contact with Jack was completely by chance. I had returned to further education after many years and was struggling with the MSc in Social Research at the University of Bath. I was required to undertake two pieces of research, one of which had to be quantitative and the other qualitative. I had successfully completed the quantitative work and had started to draft an outline for a piece of action research. I had been advised to find an additional supervisor with an expertise in this field. I had no idea how to go about this and in desperation rang the switchboard and asked to be put through to a member of staff who can help with action research. The operator paused for a moment and then replied, “Oh I think you want Jack Whitehead”.

That thoughtful introduction from the switchboard operator became quite a significant moment in relation to me as a learner and my introduction to living theory. Like many adult returners, I had become under confident and was beginning to doubt my ability to achieve a Masters. Here I am ten years later having achieved that and with Jack’s help and support as my supervisor I also managed to successfully complete a PhD.

In the introduction to my PhD thesis, I make this comment about Jack’s influence:

“I would also like to thank Jack Whitehead, my supervisor. Jack you are the most inspirational teacher I have met. You have shown me how to have confidence in both what I do and what I write about and you have undertaken that in a beautifully sensitive way.”

What Jack helped me to do was to find a confidence to look critically at myself as a practitioner and to develop an understanding of what my practice is and through this understanding find ways to do it better. It also enabled me to see and understand where I had been able to influence through my embodied knowledge.

Finding Living Theory for me was like coming home – it made perfect sense. In the work that I was engaged, bringing creativity into healthcare improvement, more traditional methods of research were inappropriate. Through the application of living theory, I was able to develop a new epistemology of inclusional and responsive practice.

Jack's support, expertise and challenge throughout this period helped me to stay with it. I was working in a very challenging environment and without Jack's support I would have given up. On many occasions I approached my supervision sessions ready to say I did not think I could continue – I had a full time job and two young children, how can I do this as well. I always left the session knowing that I **could** carry on and be successful.

We also had a lot of fun and there are a couple of moments that still make me laugh and this is one of them – Jack encouraged me to think about bringing theatre into my supervision session. At the time I had two supervisors and I knew that this would be a challenge to the other more traditional supervisor. I had developed a character based on research I was doing with carers of people with dementia. I came to the session as that character who was experiencing difficulty with her husband's care and wanted to challenge the staff in the day centre. The problem was Jack was delayed and the other supervisor had not read the email telling him I was going to do this. As I launched into a tirade about the poor quality of care and what I wanted him to do about it he moved further and further into the corner until he eventually worked up the courage to put his hand up and shouted "**Marian – I don't know what you are doing – but can you please stop.**" I stopped mid flow and the awful realisation hit me, we looked at each other for a couple of seconds and then I fled. I ran out into the corridor where I collapsed into a helpless heap of laughter. I never saw that young man again.

Finally, in the theatre we have something called the magic moment. With traditional forms of evidence and data collection, it would be very difficult to capture but with the use of film, this is becoming possible. I wanted to include the photograph below because in my research this captured one of these magic moments. Jack I know you are particularly fond of this moment and you helped me to understand and articulate how through this piece of film I was living my embodied value of a passion for compassion.

Thank you Jack for your support and inspiration and may we find many more magic moments in the future.

Love,
Marian



Bear Flat, Bath

July 2009

Dear Jack,

My story is similar to so many. I want to tell it because it is the similarity that tells so much about the constancy of you Jack to everyone you meet. I struggled for a year to find a research question/methodology that would fit the requirements of a health care faculty and answer what I really wanted to know about improving the family lives of children. At last I heard what my friend Jacqui Hughes had been saying. 'Go and see Jack'. You were helping her resubmit her thesis because of similar paradigm difficulties in another branch of the education faculty. With Joan you welcomed me into your front room and listened to my bleat. My emotion so brimmed it was hard to speak. You said I had important knowledge as a passionate practitioner and my enquiry should be encouraged. Months later this is what I taped recorded you saying in the Thursday group,

'At the moment the power behind what counts as knowledge is in the academy. It is not in the form of knowing that you have. I genuinely do believe that you have the form of knowledge I am interested in helping to make public. If we were to take the view that you are starting to work with parents of young children and the 'knowing' they have is developmental. It's emergent, but never the less is actually superior to the 'knowing' that is in the academy at the moment about what you are interested in. You would have the personal and professional knowledge together (parents and me). We (the academy) would be the learners. Over a few years our task would be to learn what it is for you and your parents to become good parents with your help and support. We would be subordinate, in terms of our learning to the personal and professional knowledge which you and the parents actually have, as you are working with the child, to become better parents'. (7.10.96)

I allow myself to cry now when I read those words. You changed my future and bolstered my resilience to be someone who knew something useful and to stay for all of my career in front line community work. You helped me find a new supervisor, **Martin Forrest**, in the education faculty at UWE. He was a true gentle man not the least bit phased by our informal arrangement and smoothed my process.

Your unstinting generosity is truly remarkable to me. You included me as if one of your students in the weekly research group sharing resources and giving me equal opportunity to present and debate even though I was registered elsewhere. You received not a penny from the time and energy you gave to the seven years it took to get me to submission. I feel sure you will say something like, 'but your enquiries are my enquiries and I am learning too'. I believe this is true. You showed your democratic impulse *lived* and I am indebted to the experiencing of it. For me lyrics from the 'Midnight Cowboy' echo the contrast between my experiences.

*Everybody's talking at me
I don't hear a word they're saying
Only the echoes of my mind...
I'm going where the sun keeps shining
Through the pouring rain
Going where the weather suits my clothes
Banking off of the north east winds
Sailing on summer breeze
Skipping over the ocean like a star.*

(Neill, 1969)

I feel at home in living theory action research, where what I believe does not look out of place. I hear what people are saying and expect challenge and vigorous debate. The climate of warmth and acceptance is energising so like you, I continue to learn. It is because I feel safe that I can be open to challenge and grow.

Thanks Jack,
Robyn

Acknowledgement of Gratitude Dr Ram Punia

I wish to thank Dr. Jack Whitehead, my supervisor, for encouraging me to pursue my EdD inquiry I undertook with some reservations but it ended with results beyond my expectation. I have known Whitehead for the last ten years. Unfortunately I came to understand his form of action research recently. He calls it 'living educational theory form of action research'. According to him Living educational theories provide the accounts of educators in their learning and the influences on the learning of others. I found that it is particularly suitable for the EdD awards designed for the making of professional educators with technical competence and character based on high values in life.

According to Whitehead professional educators embody high level of competence and character based on universal values. I failed to understand his work for a long time due to my spiritual background and Eastern upbringing. I believe in universal Self/I operating all around us. I do not believe in an individual I/self. For me it is simply a bundle of memories acquired from the time we are born. Jack insisted on placing I/self in the centre of inquiries. Hence, we seemed to have conflicting ontological differences. I have learnt from my EdD inquiry that the development of Individual self is also the development of the universal self as a co-creating process as a form of living educational theory form of action research. I now propagate this form of action research to generate self-knowledge.

Whitehead has a gift to recognise the embodied living educational theories of educators when they remain implicit to them. He suggested to me to explore my rich professional life as an international educator to fulfil an important gap in the professional knowledge base in this area of education. My EdD inquiry would allow me to make my embodied knowledge explicit to share it with academics and with practitioners.

I found it difficult to understand Whitehead's work from his academic writings. I understood his work from prolonged personal discussions and his embodied values. I believe to understand his living educational theory for of action research one has to know Jack as well. He is the embodiment of it. Our shared perception of the need for character based on universal values of life as an integral aspect of technical competence led him to supervise my EdD inquiry. Jack has a unique style of supervision of his students' research. He does not treat them like students: he treats them like colleagues- nay like close friends. As

his student I often dropped in his office without making an appointment knowing that I would always be welcomed with a broad smile and a hug.

I usually went to him to test my own insights and to generate new insights during our professional dialogues. In my professional career I have had such dialogues with only a few people and Jack is one of them. Our dialogues were not planned: they occurred naturally. I believe they can only occur amongst like-minded people sharing similar values in human life.

During my professional life I was known as a consultant in curriculum and staff development. But I considered my I/self a curriculum developer engaged in identifying, creating learning opportunities for myself and for others who cared to work with me. However, few educators shared this conception of curriculum development with me. I was delighted to find that Jack has a better name for curriculum developers. He calls them professional educators.

He is a professional educator who spent his life as an academic at a university with expertise in generating learning spaces for himself and for his students. I spent my life as a consultant in the international context creating learning spaces for myself and for my colleagues engaged in solving professional problems. I learnt from Jack that professional educators are those who can improve what they are doing but they do it for the right reasons. According to my understanding living educational theory form of action research Jack has invented aims to achieve this goal. The living educational theories of his students at the university of bath provide enough evidence to show the professional significance of this form of action research. I found that while Stephen Covey (1990) and (2004) provides excellent propositional knowledge to live by for leadership in all organisations to live in the world of this century, the work of Whitehead and his colleagues provides living examples of professional educators who are living Covey 1990, 2004 propositional knowledge.

I close with my usual madness. I believe nothing is destroyed in this living universe. The seed Jack has sown will grow into a huge tree when the time and place is ready. Words do not capture my thoughts adequately. Jack is much more than that. I wish him well in his new life. We do not retire until we leave this world. Life is a non-ending journey with endless transitions always taking us forward.

With love and Regards as always, Ram.

A Poem

By Swaroop Rawal

Standing alone
at the Worcester station
waiting for the train to take me to London
waiting for the train of thoughts, action
to take me
to the land of professional knowledge
waiting
waiting
waiting alone
that was when I first met Jack Whitehead
through the tons of reading material
which would help me understand the mysteries of research

I am glad I met him by myself
it makes him more mine
than if somebody had introduced him to me

As I write
the wet dark monsoon of today
reminds me of a similar 'that day'
as if the monsoon days are
here and
there too
making his *janambhumi* my *karmabhumi*
truly removing borders
a common world of people with similar values.

That day I read a line
"How can we make our practice as a teacher more effective"
and got hooked
read the paper
understood some thoughts
others flew over
read
read
read
incessantly and

then read some more
from the library of living theories

I was so alone
alienated in my *janambhumi*
'not first-rate', they said
'not a PhD'
'where' is the 'research'
'why this'
'to what purpose'
but JW
helped me survive
helped me find a voice
empowered me

'I' as a living contradiction-
enabled me to look at my fallible pedagogy
I was freed of my anxiety
I could look intently in my work
my evasions and clichés
I could look at my untapped resources and
realise that the time had come
when I had to give myself the answers
answers to why there were gaps
gaps in what I believed in and the actions I carried out

I met him in his library
without actually telling he told me -
my values were correct.
my desire to improve was valid
the methods I tried were up to mark.
and when one of my supervisors feared I would fail
I read his papers a hundred times
to understand
to change
I began to understand my '*dharma*'

Today I have won a skirmish in the 'battle of snails'
But 'my' *Mahabharata* still rages on
I pray JW continues

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continues holding his space
continues holding his values for social justice
continues
continues.....
I remember a bhajan I sang as a child...
*'Jyot Se Jyot Jagate Chalo
Prem Ki Ganga Bahate Chalo
Raah Mein Aaye Jo Deen Dukhi
Sab Ko Gale Se Lagate Chalo...
Dharti ko Swarg banake chalo'*

Glossary

janam-bhumi: motherland or land of ones birth. Janam means birth

karma-bhumi : Land of karma, Karma takes it meaning from kamma which means "to do", meaning deed or action, effect, destiny. bhumi means land.

Dharama: <http://www.hinduism.co.za/dharma.htm#What%20is%20Dharma?>

Bhajan: a Hindu devotional song

Translation of- *Jyot Se Jyot Jagate Chalo* You can listen to it on -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klcwFRgwvl&feature=related>

Jyot Se Jyot Jagate Chalo: with one flame go on and give life to another flame

Prem Ki Ganga Bahate Chalo: enable the Ganges (river) of love to flow

Raah Mein Aaye Jo Deen Dukhi: the sad and the downtrodden you meet on your way

Sab Ko Gale Se Lagate Chalo: embrace them as you walk on

Dharti ko Swarg banake chalo: Make this earth into heaven as you walk on

Reference

Papers by Jack Whitehead: <http://www.actionresearch.net/writing.shtml>

The library of living theories: <http://www.actionresearch.net/living.shtml>

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