

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: CREATING A LIVING THEORY ACCOUNT OF MY INQUIRY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce my research, and frame my thesis, as a self-study of my practice as a form of 'Educational Action Research'. I will begin by outlining what 'living theory' (Whitehead, 1989) means in the context of a study of singularity, and account for my approach as one that broadly draws on and is informed by humanistic, feminist and critical qualities of inquiry.

The self-study of teachers as a form of educational action research has emerged in recent years as a growing discipline of inquiry, in reaction to the tradition of social scientist coming into classrooms to do research on pupils and teachers. Social science research in education is based on the disciplines of education such as psychology and sociology, resulting in theory presented in propositional form. Whitehead (1989:42) claims that the propositional form "masks the living form" which in its own right can generate valid descriptions and explanations of an educators practice and development. Without denying the importance of the propositional theory, Whitehead argues for a "reconstruction of educational theory into a living form of question and answer", which may include ideas drawn from propositional theory but which exist not as a stand alone proposition but within the explanations given by practitioners of their practice, characterised by questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'

Zeichner describes the approach to studying one's own practice as "the new scholarship" (1999:11). Discussing what makes a discipline of inquiry, Lomax states:

“the idea of a discipline is distinguished by the ways of thinking, theorising, practicing or enquiring which constitute the thing itself... The discipline of educational Inquiry is epistemologically and methodologically distinct from social science because it includes the values which constitute the idea of ‘educational’” (Lomax, 1994:4).

McNiff (1999) challenges the adequacy of the established view of science that offers descriptions of nature as value free, without consideration of ethics or moral intent, and which places the scientist on the outside of the field of investigation, without any regard for personal engagement, as though he does not influence the field in any way. Arguing that ‘new science’ such as complexity theory has moved on, McNiff suggests that:

“It is time for the social sciences to catch up, and for educational research, both as an art and a science, to point the way in which existence might be understood and expressed at the level of lived experience – a form of living theory (Whitehead, 1993) that shows the reality of flesh and blood people in relation with each other and the earth that supports them”. [Furthermore, McNiff argues that] Methodology is more than a method... *including* the values and attitudes that the researcher brings to her work” (McNiff, 1999).

Context, Purpose and Position

A context for my inquiry

The context for my research and practice is my role as an educational practitioner, as a tutor in higher education at a new university, namely Middlesex University Business School.¹ Specifically, I focus on my practice on the MA in Personal and Organisational Development (MAPOD), a part-time Masters degree for practitioner managers, with a range of professional backgrounds working in both the private and public sectors. The common feature in their backgrounds is that their organisational roles include a specific

¹ Hereinafter ‘MUBS’.

responsibility for the development of people and the organisation. My work is located in a Business School, the context of which is significant both culturally and politically to my inquiry. It is more than background to my inquiry, since it influences, shapes and constrains the educative purpose and relations of my practice. The context of my practice is thus subject to critique in this thesis, as well as my practice itself. For example, notwithstanding specific points of critique that emerge about context through the thesis, in Chapter Five I subject context to critical scrutiny in respect of my lived experience as a women academic. I return again to address the significance of context in Chapter Ten, as I explore the challenges of educating and changing the social formation of the academy.

My Practice Context

The MAPOD is a two-year block release programme designed to support the process of reflective and critical practice for experienced practitioners who, in their professional roles, influence the learning of people and organisations. The course is designed as a modular programme with each module having a theme.

In year one the modular themes are ‘personal learning and support strategies’, ‘research’, and ‘organisational learning’. In year two the modular themes are ‘the role of the change agent’ and a dissertation which explores questions of either personal or organisational learning, or their mutual relationship. Additionally, at the end of year one, students are required to write a reflective account of their learning, and midway through the second year they are required to produce a portfolio reflecting on their experience of working together on the programme as a learning community.

The modules are not taught or tutor centred in the traditional sense; rather, the content is designed and delivered collaboratively with students. Both tutors

and students make offers of sessions appropriate to the broad modular themes and in response to perceived needs of the group. Whilst the lead initially may come from the tutors, this becomes more of a co-operative venture as students individually and collectively develop the skills to direct their learning, as they deem appropriate. This is achieved by an overarching design that is process driven, where we work together in the residential setting on the task of building and creating a learning community.

In between the residential blocks of three to five days (on average totalling fifteen days per year), we meet by mutual agreement in small groups known as action learning sets of approximately five people per set, where students progress individual written work for assessment, based on accounts of live work issues and projects related to the modules. The students learn through the reflective process in the action learning sets to critique their own practice knowledge and their working theories, and they explore the ideas of others through literature, from which they draw a new synthesis for practice. The sets are tutor facilitated and the assessment process includes self, peer and tutor feedback.

Introducing My Purposes

My primary purpose is to improve the rationality and justice of my own practice, but what does this mean? When I began this inquiry I held an aesthetic sense of what might constitute careful and competent learning facilitation, which I could not then describe or explain. Rather, I held an image of educative practice that was contained in graceful and reciprocal educative relations that served to uphold the humanity of personhood. Heron (1992), in his theory of the person, presents in the first instance four modes of the psyche, 'the affective', embracing feeling and emotion; 'the imaginal', the capacity of the psyche to generate an individual viewpoint, a unique outlook on

life through the use of imagery; ‘the conceptual’, including reflection and discrimination; and ‘the practical’ mode, concerned with intention and action. These modes are linked to four forms of knowledge, the experiential (affective), the presentational (the imaginal), the propositional (conceptual), and the practical. He presents this model as a hierarchy in which the person is established as a distinct focus of experience.

I have come to appreciate that qualities of graceful conduct in respect of improving the rationality and justice of my practice in my teaching and learning relationships, although at first dimly apprehended, have emerged over time in response to the needs of my students. In so doing, I have clarified my values in practice in the context of specific learning relationships. It is this emergence in response to the particular that also leads me to suggest that my students have shown me what rationality and justice can mean for my practice, in the context of our specific learning relations as I responded to their humanity, and when I failed in my efforts, to live my values as espoused in my teaching and learning relationships with them.

In Chapter Nine, I aim to show how this inquiry has enabled me to come to see how my embodied knowledge responds to the needs of students and how it has facilitated a realisation of my purposes, to improve the rationality and justice of my practice. I do this by showing through video data what my practice looks like when I am *doing* in response to the needs of my students and *being* in ‘graceful’ and reciprocal educative relations with my students means. By embodied knowledge, I mean that my educative practice contains an embodied evaluation of past actions and an intention to improve in the process of living learning relationships.

McNiff (1999) suggests that some things defy definition, in particular acts of love, care and compassion, which McNiff claims ‘speak for themselves’. She

further argues that we are in danger of “losing the awesome wonder of life as experience” (1999) if we try to pin it down within the limits of a narrative account. In my effort to show you how I respond to values of humanity within my teaching and learning relationships and in my curriculum theorising, I invite you to engage (in the above mentioned chapter) in an alternative form of representation based on visual images of teaching and learning relationships with specific students. Eisner (1997) suggests that alternative forms of representation, such as poetic or visual forms, can express what words alone cannot convey. These images are thus combined with narrative accounts as an attempt to show and explain more clearly the reality of lived experience as I work toward living my values more fully in practice.

I began my inquiry in the context of MAPOD by identifying values of student autonomy in learning, based on the belief that one of the goals of education is to encourage students to think for themselves. I also identified valuing the experience that students bring with them to the teaching and learning relationship as important, thus acknowledging that tutors were not the only ones with expertise. I then linked to this an approach to teaching, learning and curriculum design based on more open, equal and democratic relations than those usually found in the education system, in order to give students the opportunity to experience a greater degree of freedom in their learning. These values and beliefs are informed by a humanistic approach to educative relations, as in the work of Rogers (1983), whose ideas of student-centred self directed learning, learning from experience, the importance of self evaluation in learning and the role of the tutor as empathetic facilitator, all played a part in the shared understanding of the tutor team and our initial conception of the MAPOD programme. Rogers eschews the politics of ‘jug and mug’ education, where the student is but a passive recipient and he calls on educators to help their students learn how to learn. He cites:

“We are, in my view, faced with an entirely new situation in education where the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the *facilitation of change and learning*. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realised that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of *seeking* knowledge gives a basis for security. Changingness, a reliance on *process* rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world” (Rogers, 1983:120), original emphasis.

Humanistic values for education and learning remain central to my living theory. However, during the course of this inquiry they have become clarified and enriched by feminist and critical thinking, helping me pursue more effectively my purpose of rationality and justice in my teaching and learning relationships - addressing questions of the kind ‘How do I improve my practice?’ This enhancement to my values and my living theory is explained in the accounts given in this thesis.

Linking My Position

This inquiry is a self-study of my practice, located within the field of Educational Action Research and this thesis is constructed as a living theory account. Whitehead (1993) suggests that educational practitioners develop a conception of ‘what works’ drawn from their practice experience. Of course, this might include ideas or beliefs about educational practice drawn from theories of education, which educators can apply or draw into their practice. The idea that we may come to know ourselves as a ‘living contradiction’ involves experiencing a gap between the values that we espouse about our practice and our experience of it; in other words, when we notice there is a contradiction between what we say (or claim) and what we do. Whitehead suggests that when we notice ourselves as ‘living contradictions’ we imagine a way forward through which we may resolve this tension and improve our practice, thus learning to live our values more fully in our practice.

The values that I as an educator bring to my practice are the very yardsticks by which the integrity of my research can be measured. They can be found in the descriptions and explanations I offer about my practice within this thesis, and in my claims of professional development given, in the progress of this inquiry account.

Of particular concern to me are questions of coherence and authenticity. Are my descriptions and explanations clear and are they sufficiently coherent with respect to the values that I espouse? Does the evidence presented in my descriptions and explanations bear out the claims that I make? In other words, is my account authentic? These are important questions of validity which are reflected in the standards of judgment I have presented in the preface, and which I believe are appropriate to judge the quality of the claims to know made in this thesis.

This self-study has been conducted as a systematic discipline of action and reflection in which cycles and spirals of inquiry have enabled the research to evolve. Becoming a reflective practitioner has formed one such spiral of my inquiry, as I have developed skills of reflection and a critique to my own practice. From Hartog (2002),² I identified nine key values lived out and aspired to in my practice. I present and describe them as follows:

² Entitled 'Becoming a reflective practitioner: a continuing professional development strategy through humanistic action research'.

<i>Becoming a Reflective Practitioner: Nine Key Values lived out and aspired to in my practice.</i>	
1.	Listening and learning to hear.
2.	A quality of mindfulness.
3.	Appreciating and valuing my ‘maternal voice’ in teaching and learning relationships.
4.	Developing an ethics of care in my teaching and learning relationships.
5.	Treating my students as whole persons.
6.	Developing an educative practice of ‘connected teaching’.
7.	Valuing the emotional as well as the cognitive processes of learning.
8.	Being critical a) of authority and b) of tradition.
9.	Linking education and democracy.

(1) Listening and learning to hear with a quality of attention to self and others that a process of self-reflexive inquiry supports, turning the mirror inward to engage with the ‘other’ in the teaching and learning relationship. I may be holding my students metaphorically, individually and/or collectively in an educative space in which they are ‘heard’ as persons, both by their peers and myself, as they grapple with their learning, and learn to ‘hear’ and know themselves better in the process.

(2) A quality of mindfulness attentive to my own thoughts and projects and at the same time, the needs of my students. When I work in this way, I am undoubtedly doing my best work. I am engaged in a process of reflection in practice that is deeply attuned to their needs and process as learners ‘in the moment’, and to my own, as I seek to facilitate their learning and the learning relationship we create together. Tremmel (in Zeichner and Liston, 1996:18) likens this quality of reflective practice to the Zen Buddhist practice of ‘mindfulness’. He suggests that this involves both an attention to the situation and to oneself

“...to pay attention to right here, right now, and to invest in the present moment with full awareness and mindfulness”.

Mindfulness has some similarity to what Schön (1983) referred to as ‘reflection in practice’, what he described as the process of framing and attempting to solve problems on the spot. The qualities of mindfulness are, I would argue, special in that they denote a particular quality of attention in the midst of action.

I am fortunate to have had mindful moments of reflective practice in the context for my practice as programme leader and tutor on the MAPOD. It is a context which has afforded me the opportunity of living my values more fully in my practice as an educator, particularly those of student centred learning and community building in the learning relationship. These values are, in turn, embedded and flow from a philosophy and practice for this programme grounded in beliefs of democratic principles in education, lived out through practices in the teaching and learning relationship such as self and peer assessment as well as tutor assessment.

(3) Appreciating and valuing my ‘maternal voice’ in teaching and learning relationships with my students and caring about them as persons who are engaged in their own learning journeys and developmental processes.

(4) Developing an ethics of care in my teaching and learning relationships, thus nurturing my aspiring image of self as educator, as one caring. The concept of the maternal voice (Noddings cited in Belenky *et al.*, 1986:214) which I have employed in my research has enabled me to inquire into what I need to do to develop an ethic of care in my practice and has helped me clarify my position as a feminist critical educator.

“The ethical self is an active relation between my actual self and a vision of my ideal self as one-caring and cared-for. It is born of the fundamental recognition of relatedness; that which connects me naturally to the other, reconnecting me through the other to myself” (Noddings, 1984:49).

When we behave as one caring it is not a question of obeying moral principle, though that may be a part of it, but rather we are “meeting the other in a genuine encounter of caring and cared for” (Noddings, 1984:175). This is a ‘choiceful’ act, she argues, which can either enhance or diminish us as one caring.

(5) *Treating my students as whole persons* is an aspect of my aspiring self, engaging with them in respect of their cognitive and emotional needs as learners.

(6) *Developing an educative practice of ‘connected teaching’*, where I am seeking to ‘get alongside’ my students to understand them first as people, so that I might understand their perspective. Using the metaphor of ‘teacher as midwife’, Belenky *et al.* (1986:217) describes this practice as “connected teaching”. I am purposefully inquiring with my ability to engage with my students as one caring. I emphasise this principle, as a senior lecturer working in higher education, working in the context of a business school.

My experience is that such a stance toward an ‘ethic of practice’ for a professional educator is a challenge, since the order of the academy is essentially an androcentric one, privileging the masculine qualities of knowing, in the form of reason and logic and denying, or at best ignoring, the more feminine qualities of connected knowing.

(7) *Valuing the emotional as well as the cognitive processes of learning*, whereby anyone who has worked in a business school will appreciate that the

emphasis is placed on the rational cognitive processes of learning, in terms of knowledge acquisition and little or no reference is made to the emotional process in 'management learning'. By contrast, MAPOD set out to engage the whole person.

(8) *Being critical a) of authority and b) of tradition*, and by adopting this stance I am seeking to challenge the status quo. Two of the aspects of being critical, as identified by Mingers (2000:227), are the critique of authority (that being the dominant or privileged viewpoint) and the critique of tradition (that being the taken for granted assumptions about the way things are done around here, which tend to be inherently cultural). In challenging the status quo, I do this both in my educative relations with students and also by explicitly placing emotionality on the agenda, for example, by raising the link between anxiety and learning and working with it in the assessment process, and by explicitly addressing emotions and organisations within the wider curriculum. More specifically, I have through my inquiry, developed a critique of my practice and myself as a reflective practitioner.

(9) *Linking education and democracy* - the critical stance of the course does have an influence on the working practices of the students and, in turn, they question practices in their own organisations, thus bringing a degree more humanity, democratisation and ethical practice to the workplace. Thus, I attempt to link the fundamental purposes of education 'as democracy' through my practice to the wider concerns of organisation and society at large.

Additionally, I engage in activities which serve to reflect on my practice. Schön (1983) refers to these as the activities and disciplines of planning and evaluation. Most significantly, however, at the heart of my practice is the recurring question: 'How do I live my values well in my practice'? The articulation of my values has become clearer through the process of this

inquiry, growing out of the image of a practice of ‘good grace’ into concrete responses to the needs of my students and an attempt to live out the values I espouse, and clarified in the context of particular learning relationships. In this thesis I will present examples of my lived experience, both personal and professional, that have shaped and influenced the values I seek to live by.

Context and Position

I see the academy as an androcentric order, where the interests of the business world, coupled with the scientific tradition, have served to uphold the voice of reason and subdue or silence emotionality in learning. Taking up a feminist position in my research, I strive to uncover these forms of oppression and redress the balance in my practice, and as such, I have been significantly occupied with concerns of finding voice, both my own and the voices of my students, within the academy. My thinking about these issues has been influenced by two specific theoretical perspectives. The first comes from the work of Belenky *et al.* (1986), where issues of voice and mind are the central themes, within a framework of five perspectives of knowing, which range from the experience of silence to a position of constructed knowing. The second influence is the work of Gilligan (1982), whose ground breaking research with women on moral development suggests that women speak in a ‘different voice’, one that is primarily concerned with the relational aspects of humanity. Indeed, the work of Belenky *et al.* was inspired and influenced by Gilligan’s findings. Building on this relational platform, I have begun to craft an ethical dimension into my inquiry, which I have referred to as ‘an ethic care’ in the teaching and learning relationship. This perspective has been informed by the work of Noddings (1984), whose philosophy on caring is addressed in Chapter Eight.

“It is time for the voice of the mother to be heard in education” (Noddings, 1984, cited in Belenky *et al.*, 1986:214). This quotation frames the final chapter

of *Women's Ways of Knowing*, which is concerned with 'connected teaching', a concept illuminated by the metaphor of teacher as midwife who supports the students' thinking and helps them speak in their own voice. In this chapter, Freire's critique of the 'banking model' of education, (where education is seen as a process of depositing information into the heads of the students), is used to explain and counterpoise an alternative and emancipatory form of education based on connected teaching and learning relationships. "Like Freire's partner teachers, midwife teachers assist in the emergence of consciousness. They encourage the students to speak in their own active voice" (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:218).

Drawing on Ruddick's (1980) idea of 'maternal thinking', Belenky *et al.* (1986) link it to the concept of the midwife teacher, and they identify three components of maternal thinking, preservation, support and nurturance, which the midwife teacher draws on in the service of her students. Through preservation, maternal thinking seeks to preserve the vulnerability of the child in assisting to be born with its own truth intact; in doing so, the midwife teacher helps the student to hold on to, and not lose sight of, their own ideas and thinking. Secondly, maternal thinking supports the evolution of the students' thinking, enabling them to build on what they know, rather than abandoning what they know for the ideas and thinking of others. Thirdly, maternal thinking serves to nurture and shape the student, so that in time the student may take their own ideas and thinking into the outside world and be accepted in doing so.

The concept of maternal thinking has resonated with me, as it seems to name something about my practice, capturing a way of being in educative relations with my students. More fundamentally, it captures for me the connection between the feminist and critical position, in that it facilitates the processes of emancipation. In other words, it serves to facilitate an emergence of

consciousness about the production of knowledge itself. It puts the knower back into the known, as an active knower and as a creator of knowledge.

Feminism and action research is concerned with a way of being in the world. In dealing with voice we address power relations, and by listening to people we can empower them. The link between gaining voice and recognising the social construction of knowledge is central to feminist grounded action research. As educators, we cannot give voice but we can facilitate the dismantling of barriers to speakers. Women's development of voice, expressed as 'the other side of silence'. In other words, from 'silence' to realising that knowledge is constructed, is traced by Belenky *et al.* (1986). However, a criticism of Belenky *et al.* is that they fail to expose the mechanisms that keep women from speaking (Maguire, 2001:63). A feminist approach to action research seeks to uncover and, where possible, disrupt the power relations of silence, beginning with lived experience as a starting point from which to grasp the governing aspects of our social relationships. In this thesis I will explain how the MAPOD process facilitates a critique of lived experience, which helps to uncover and disrupt personal and professional relations of oppression.

At the heart of a feminist approach is a critical position on power and learning. As I research my inquiry accounts I will return to these fundamental concepts to hold them to scrutiny and to examine the coherence of them with respect to the relationship between my theory and practice. But for the moment let me try to link my perspective on context, position and purpose.

Context, Position and Purpose

As an educator, the context for my inquiry is in the field of management learning. I have taken up a position that views managers as moral agents, whose work is not value free. Neither, of course, is the work of an educator who

in the current climate in higher education is increasingly subjected to pressures and demands of the market economy. I return to issues of context in Part Three of this thesis, in my discussion of barriers to learning in respect of educating and changing the social formation in the academy.

Working with mature students (practicing managers) in the teaching and learning relationship, I have focused on facilitating them to come to voice, to be able to speak on issues as they find them and, in the process, help them reclaim the integrity of mind that the traditional passive process of education has stifled. The MAPOD programme has, with its focus on the personal and organisational development, sought to do this in a holistic way. The vehicle for student development has been that of critical action learning, through which I have advocated a strategy for the critique of a persons' learning history, examining the social and political opportunities and constraints involved, and with the potential emancipatory process of self-knowledge that reveals. I have argued that the personal knowledge reconstructed through critical action learning gives the individual a spur to action in the critique of their own practice for learning and change. To borrow the term 'artisans of democracy' from Rosenfeld and Tardieu (2000), I suggest that in the development of a critique to practice both my students and I have been engaged with learning the craft of the artisan. I have consistently built up a claim regarding my perspective on the purpose of education, principally being one of 'education for democracy'. Examples of student work for which I claim an educative influence are presented later in this thesis to illustrate how their engagement with the MAPOD process has enabled them to make a difference in their professional and organisational contexts.

Purposes then are concerned with effectiveness, justice and participation, and collaboration with others. If education is for democracy, then in its process it must reveal that which is hidden and that which undermines the social

formation both in our practice and in the context of a learning society. In other words, education for democracy seeks to reveal and, where possible, challenge formations and relationships of oppression in our practice and lived experiences.

Notwithstanding the integral disciplinary nature of the action research approach, there are similarities and links between the process of critical action learning and that of action research. What unites them is critique of practice. In Chapter Two, where I define action research, it is the nature of critique in action research which I both explore and subject to critical scrutiny, in order to demonstrate both its importance to educational action research and the need to be cautious. In taking a critical stance, that does not then itself become oppressive and defeat the very purpose of critique.

CHAPTER TWO: APPROACH AND METHOD

Introduction

This chapter is presented in three sections, namely “Defining Action Research”, “I am the Subject and Object of my Research” and “Method and Process”.

In the first section, “Defining Action Research”, I begin by introducing the history of this approach and the legacy of Lewin’s (1946) rational scientific social research and experiments in social change as an attempt to facilitate democracy. The contributions of Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Kemmis (2001) are then addressed, contemporary thinkers in the field, exploring the relevance of critical theory, an emancipatory approach to action research. Critiques that challenge the moral high ground of critical theory and expose it as a potential totalising theory are then drawn upon. Following this, I address the growing popularity of reflective practice as a means of inquiry in action research and, similarly, draw attention to the need for caution and critique to unquestioning claims for reflective practice. This section is concluded with an account of McNiff’s (1999) conception of action research as a distinctly human endeavour where individuals act with the best interests of others at heart. Finally, I highlight the significance of personal knowledge in research, drawing on Polanyi’s (1962) seminal contribution to the field.

In the second section, “I am the subject and object of my research: a dialectical engagement with the world”, I explain what I understand by ‘a dialectical engagement with the world’ drawing on Rowan’s (1981) dialectical paradigm for human inquiry and the six moments of dialectical engagement that entail, as a vehicle for the presentation of my cycles of inquiry. In constructing this account, I draw upon McNiff’s (1988) principles and practice of action research, and Eames’s (1993) account of a dialectical form of action research based in educational knowledge given from his own perspective as a teacher- researcher,

and of his understanding of the shared characteristics between the action research cycle and dialectical logic. My appreciation is developed of Whitehead's (1989) conception of 'I' as a living contradiction contained within the creation of a living educational theory and his subsequent development of these ideas (1993).³ Additionally, the ideas of Coulter and Weins (2002) are drawn upon, whose thinking about educational judgment was inspired by Hannah Arendt, who asks in her writings about the Holocaust what it means to be a judging actor and what it means to be a judging spectator? Finally, I draw on Lomax's (1994) professorial inaugural lecture to clarify what makes educational research valid.

In the final section, "Method and process issues in theory, writing and data in this inquiry", I address key issues pertaining to an action research approach, starting with the examination of the role of theory and literature, in order to highlight the important differences in their use in an action research account compared with their use in a more traditional approach to research and the consequent construction and presentation of a thesis. The process of writing this account is then explored, with particular reference to the role of life story in the construction of my thesis. Next, I explore my process of data gathering with respect to the methodological issues involved in gathering evidence from which I assert my claims to know my embodied values in practice. This includes oral and visual data in respect of my teaching and learning relationships with students on the MAPOD programme, which has helped me assess whether and to what extent I am living my values in action. By providing evidence in a visual form of representation, as an alternative and complement to the traditional narrative forms contained in a thesis, the aim is to show you moments in my practice which capture the living inquiry process in which I develop a

³ In *The Growth of Educational Knowledge*.

connoisseur's eye with the purpose of creating loving and life affirming educative relations.

Defining Action Research

Whilst the term 'action research' is generally ascribed to the work of Lewin (1946) and his work on community development and change, it was first used by Moreno in his work with prostitutes in Vienna some years earlier. The idea of action for change was then taken up by Corey (1949), who believed that teaching research should have a practical effect in the classroom. In the 1970s these ideas were revived by Elliot and Adelman (1973), in what has become known as the 'Ford Teaching Project'. In the 1980s the work of Carr and Kemmis⁴ established the 'high ground' for the practice of educational action research, linking the practical endeavour of action research with critical theory and the ideas of Jurgen Habermas.

"Action research is usually seen as a cyclical activity where you can make a plan, carry it through, monitor what goes on, reflect on events critically (using the monitoring data) and move forward. This is an extremely simplistic idea and in my experience one that has never operated as smoothly as this description implies" Lomax (2002:123).

Webb (1996) tells us that this definition of action research has become 'codified' as the way to do action research. It is, I suggest, part of Lewin's legacy of rational scientific social research and experiments in social change. "Rational social management, therefore, proceeds in a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action" (Lewin, 1946:38). What Lewin did was to bring together practitioners and social scientists to run workshops - social experiments in change in inter-group relations, using an hypothesis and evaluation to test the

⁴ And their book *Becoming Critical: Education Knowledge and Action Research*, 1986.

validity of their interventions. He saw action, research and training as a triangle guiding these interventions for practical social change. Lewin saw the potential for facilitating more equal and democratic relations by these interventions, but was equally aware that the political will and co-operation of those in power was needed to realise change.

Following Lomax, I want to draw on her adaptation of the definition of action research given by Carr and Kemmis (1986):

“Action research is a self reflective, self critical and critical enquiry undertaken by professionals to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the wider contexts of their practice” (2002:122).

In this adaptation, emphasis is placed on the individual professional located in their wider social and political context, with critique at the personal, organisational or wider systems level. In broad terms it is this adaptation that resonates with my approach.

Kemmis⁵ sets out to explore the relevance of critical theory for action research, which he describes as “emancipatory action research in the footsteps of Jurgen Habermas” (2001:91). He begins by framing action research as an approach that is capable of having an impact on practitioners’ theories and practice, “approaches which would involve practitioners themselves in researching the relationship between their theories and practices” (2001:91).

But does this conception of theory and practice imply that they are separate entities? If it does, it poses a problem for action research as it may well serve to privilege the universities’ vested interests in theorising, as suggested by Winter (1997), rather than seeing theory incorporated into practice as a

⁵ In the *Handbook of Action Research; Participative Inquiry and Practice*.

spontaneous response to the emergent issues of the research and not driven or predetermined by theory. However, what about Whitehead's conception of living theory, a practical conception of what works, grounded in the values and intentions of the practitioner, that may be influenced by the ideas of others and incorporated into practice? These alternative perspectives have quite different implications for our understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in action research.

As an emancipatory approach, Kemmis emphasises action research as research done by practitioners and not research done to them. Thus, he argues that practitioners will do, or not do, their own enlightenment in the process. What is important here is that research is carried out by practitioners; in other words, those who are responsible for the practice and not by outsiders.

The enlightenment view suggests that rational argument can help us understand and change oppressive social forces by more just social relationships. Critical theory, in turn, serves to highlight how an unequal distribution of power in social relations can distort communication. Habermas advocated an 'ideal speech' community, in which individuals are free to communicate, speaking their truth, undistorted by the influences of power.

What is Emancipatory or Critical Action Research?

Kemmis begins by telling what it is not. He says that much action research is of a technical and problem-solving nature. For example, a project aimed at decreasing sexist behaviour would be deemed to be successful when the outcomes match the aspirations. But what a problem-solving approach does not necessarily question are the goals, or how the situation has been discursively, socially and historically constructed. He suggests that there is also much practical action research of the kind that follows in the footsteps of the late

Donald Schön, where the education of the reflective practitioner aims at both practice improvement and at enabling the practitioner to see how their goals and the way in which they see their work is shaped by the way they see and understand themselves in context. Additionally, he describes a body of research that he says is much smaller, that of emancipatory - critical action - research.

“This form of action research aims not only at improving outcomes, and improving the self-understanding of practitioners, but also at assisting practitioners to arrive at a critique of their social or educational work and work settings... It recognizes that we may want to improve our achievements in relation to our functional goals, but also that our goals as defined by particular individuals, or as defined by particular organization may be limited or inappropriate given a wider view of the situation in which we live or work. It recognizes that we may want to improve our self-understandings, but also that our self-understandings may be shaped by collective misunderstandings about the nature and consequences about what we do. So emancipatory action research aims towards helping practitioners develop a critical and self-critical understanding of their situation - which is to say, an understanding of the way both particular people and particular settings are shaped and re-shaped discursively, culturally, socially and historically. It aims to connect the personal and the political in collaborative research and action aimed at transforming situations to overcome felt dissatisfactions, alienation, ideological distortion, and the injustices of oppression and domination.” (Kemmis, 2001:92).

Distinguishing between the three different categories of action research (technical, practical and emancipatory) was an important contribution to the field, enabling practitioners to understand more clearly the type of action research with which they are engaged. For example, humanistic approaches are concerned primarily with self-realisation and the removal of self-imposed distortions. They are most likely to achieve a functional or practical outcome; not a critical/ emancipatory one unless the conditions for an ideal speech community are in place.⁶

⁶ Whereas a critical approach addresses the historical and social context of oppression and relies on changing the power relations created by these relationships.

According to Rowland (2000), the purpose of action research for the ‘enquiring tutor’ is to improve our practice in such a way as to bring us closer to an ideal speech community, in which reason can overcome the vested interests of power. I believe that such ideals are worthy of pursuit and are reflected in the intentions and values that underpin the conduct of MAPOD as a learning community, and as such are reflected in the goals of my inquiry. I am aware, however, that overcoming the distortions of power is complex, and later in this thesis I will draw out this complexity in examples of my teaching and learning relationships.

The position of ‘the moral high ground’ of critical theory has not passed without criticism, in particular, Gibson’s (1985) critique of Carr and Kemmis’ *Becoming Critical...* points out that the book itself lacks critique. He argues that it is elitist, fails to see its own contradictions and, in particular, privileges the group yet is naïve to group dynamics. This critique is picked up and developed by Webb, who argues:

“The excesses of communitarian politics are played out in miniature if groups become carried away with building their own ‘solidarity’, manifestly or subtly encouraging their own conformity or, in short, becoming intolerant of alternative views to their own. The idea that a ‘rational’ position may be reached when all ‘distortions’ (to the correct view) have been eliminated is dangerous and so too is the recreation of ‘false consciousness’” (Webb, 1996:149).

Webb is not arguing for a position of liberalism in which all views are regarded equally, but rather one in which “it is incumbent upon a particular group, in rejecting the views of others, that they explain their own partisan position and seek legitimacy and continual reassurance in their use of power” (ibid.). Webb (1996:152) suggests the incorporation of Whitehead’s ‘I’ as a living contradiction challenges the privileging of the group over the individual and

offers an alternative action research approach in which the individual/self is the subject and object of inquiry.

Whitehead's conception of living theory is itself a major contribution to educational theory, since living theory is not conceived of as a separate entity from practice. Rather, its integrity comes from the unification of theory and practice in the experience of educational practitioners as they evaluate past actions and imagine future actions, in response to particular learning relationships and contexts in which they enact their values in practice. Whitehead's conception of living theory is a dialectical engagement with the world that challenges the traditional philosophy of educational research that is based on a disciplines approach to education.

Rowland (2000) also focuses on the individual educator, emphasising the wider context; in other words, how practice relates to wider social values and purposes. Rowland tells us that Foucault criticised Habermas for being utopian in even thinking that there could be a state of communication free of the coercive effects of power. Whilst Foucault, like Habermas, was concerned with challenging dominant power relations, he did not think that power itself was necessarily evil, believing that power was a product of social relations, which had the potential to change (Roland, 2000:73).

What Foucault says in the interview that Rowland draws on, leads us to see the link between personal development and reflective and reflexive enquiry as a means by which we might avoid abusive and domineering power relations. This is described by Foucault as:

“...an ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom... The problem is not trying to dissolve them in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one's self the rules of law, the practice of self which would allow these games of power to be played with minimum domination” (Foucault, 1988:18).

Coming to know myself as a reflective practitioner has been an important part of my development in the course of this inquiry that I intend to illustrate within the context of examples given in this thesis. In particular, developing the necessary maturity to address my own ego defences has enabled me to move beyond the limitations of my own perspective, take a more critical eye to my own practice and make the necessary changes. Drawing on Rowan's (2001) conception of maturity, I explore what this idea means for the reflective practitioner and for continuing professional development in an article.⁷ This is what I say:

“Central to existential insight is the belief that we are responsible for ‘being ourselves’. It is this quality that makes us fully human. Rowan suggests that this implies a commitment to ‘get inside ones own experience’, the commitment that is at the heart of humanistic action research and self-reflexive inquiry” (Hartog, 2002:235).

Rowan's concept of maturity involves a shift in consciousness from what he calls a mental ego to a mature ego. This, he suggests, involves a shift in power relations, from power over in the mental ego to power with others associated with a mature ego.

Notwithstanding the criticisms made of critical theory, the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986) informed by the ideals of the ‘ideal speech’ community of Habermas, are worth pursuing as part of a democratic process of inquiry. As tutors, we might ideally employ the use of dialogue as part of the learning process, explicitly inviting participants to build and develop the skills of ‘team learning’ and ‘personal mastery’.⁸ What we have to caution against is the use of critical theory as a totalising force that denies alternative conceptions of the truth.

⁷ Entitled “Becoming a reflective practitioner: a continuing professional development strategy through humanistic action research”.

⁸ Two of the disciplines of Senge *et al.*'s (1994) approach to organisational learning.

The Growth of Reflective Practice

Alongside the growth of action research, reflective practice has grown in recent years with ever increasing popularity. Reflective practice came to the fore as a result of Schön's seminal work in 1983 and 1987, and with his declaration of a 'new epistemology of practice'.

Schön's ideas were based on his work developing professionals, in which he challenged the adequacy of the 'high ground' of orthodox management theory to address the 'swamp' of the practice field. This new epistemology was to stand the question of professional knowledge on its head, as Schön sought to reveal the competence and artistry embedded in skilful practice. By unpacking the process of reflection-in-action (in other words, thinking-in-doing), Schön pointed to the knowledge that practitioners bring to unique and uncertain situations that cannot be accounted for by simply applying theory to practice. Once he had developed his image of the reflective practitioner, Schön began to pose the question "What kind of knowledge would be appropriate to an epistemology of practice based in reflection in action"? His second book (Schön, 1987)⁹ strives to address this question. Drawing out the situated practice of an architectural design studio, he develops a model of the 'reflective practicum' based on learning by doing, and helped by the expertise of a coach; in other words, a master practitioner who helps the student become proficient in reflection-in-action, through dialogue, in which the coach and student engage in a reciprocal process of reflection-in-action.

This model of reflective practice has undoubtedly influenced the education and practice of many professionals. Its popularity is such that little or no thought is given to the limits and consequences of the application of Schön's theory to practice itself. Usher *et al.* (2001:144-145) criticise and problematise the potential

⁹ *Educating The Reflective Practitioner.*

for the instrumental application of Schön's model for reflective practice. Whilst they note that Schön would not intend this to happen, they claim that this is how he is frequently read and suggest that a lack of reflexivity in Schön's text may be responsible. In emphasising the difference between problem-solving (a technical rational approach to reflective practice) and problematising (indicative of a critical approach to reflective practice), they suggest that:

“Professionals are increasingly coming to realise that practice is not just about ‘problem solving’ or selecting technical means to achieve given ends, but concerns ‘problem setting’, defined by Schön as a non-technical process, one ‘in which, interactively, we *name* things to which we will attend and *frame* the context in which we will attend to them” (Usher *et al.*, 2001:144), original emphasis.

They tell us that the reflected process, “turning thought back on action and on the knowing which is implicit in action” is stimulated by surprise, which in turn gives rise to “an invitation to renaming and reframing”; in other words, the process by which we come to understand what is going on in practice.

“Given that we are interested in helping professionals become reflective practitioners and that we believe Schön has a place in the curriculum, how are we to teach him: a) as a formal theorist of reflective practice, b) as an exemplar of how in particular cases to tease out, challenge or change our knowing in action, c) some combination of both?” (ibid.).

Usher *et al.* (2001:145) state that “reflection in action is a practice of generating theory that speaks back to and revises actions” and distinguish between theory as practised and actioned, as opposed to something that is abstract and disembodied contemplation. They suggest that the master practitioner coaching model, advocated by Schön for the development of reflective practice, “is less than critical” because: a) it fails to reveal and address the specific context of the particular cases; and b) it fails to reveal or make explicit the taken for granted assumptions that govern the thinking of the master practitioner.

Ghaye (2000) similarly urges caution about jumping on the reflective practice bandwagon. For whilst reflection may help us see and speak about our experience differently, through critique to practice, by reframing and changing our thinking, we need to be careful not to see it as a panacea. Ghaye is particularly mindful of this suggesting “that we should not be afraid to speak out, ‘to go against the flow’, to ask for evidence rather than blindly accepting ‘reality’ as described by others” (2000:66).

He reminds us that reflection and empowerment are problematic terms that may mean different things to different people, and he asks us to consider, whose reality, what evidence and what transformation we are claiming as a result of reflective practice. Furthermore, he reminds us that there are different forms of reflective practice, and that empowerment is a ‘personal reality’:

“I suggest that empowerment is about individuals coming to know, express and critically analyse their own realities and having the commitment, will and power to act and transform these realities to enhance personal and collective well-being, security, satisfaction, capability, and working conditions” (Ghaye, 2000:79).

These considerations are not insignificant given the relationship between reflection and action in the research process, and specifically in relation to evidence-based professionalism and the conduct of a research project for the self-study of an educational practitioner.

A Human Conception of Educational Action Research

McNiff suggests that action research is about individuals acting in the best interests of each other, when she says:

“It begins with individual persons, you and I, recognising that we care in relation with each other - I with you, and you with me - and we care enough to take the trouble to do something about our own personal practice for the benefit of

each other. Such recognition of personal accountability is an act of devotion, a prayerful act of care” (1999).

Like McNiff, I am attracted to the individual and relational purposes that action research can enhance. Through personal responsibility, commitment and passion for my practice as an educator I can account for myself, and where I find myself wanting or experience myself as a living contradiction I know that it is within my power to change. Like the health care workers that Ghaye writes about (particularly nurses), tutors have qualities of power that they can exercise for the good and well-being of others which, for example, may include caring and life-affirming educative relations, as well as their expert and professional power, and position power within their own academic community. As an academic, I can relate to these qualities of power whilst accepting and recognising that I have a low status (rather like nurses do in relation to the wider medical profession) both in the eyes of my management and in the wider academic community, but it does not prevent me using the power I do have to good intent.

McNiff (1999) advocates educational action research that addresses issues of what it means to be human and how we should live together (a humanitarian conceptualisation of curriculum). As educators, McNiff suggests we should try to make our own influence count for the good, this she regards as a personal undertaking:

“This is a personal undertaking, a desire to transform oneself into the best of available potentials, for those potentials are, in Macdonald’s words, potentials of response. We take care in our own way of being, knowing that we must embrace our connectedness with each other and the rest of creation, knowing that it is our responsibility as educators to respond with thoughtfulness and compassion” (McNiff, 1999).

The inquiry into my own practice began some years ago, circa 1996, when the MAPOD programme got underway. I began with the commitment to create a

learning environment that would serve as a safe haven for my students, many of whom were experiencing the stresses of mergers, acquisitions and redundancies at that time. They needed a learning environment that gave them time to think and recuperate, and where they might renew their own desires to make a difference. Creating such an environment was the work of community building, a task which I saw as central to the programme design and for which the residential element was crucial. It took me a while, however, to understand the significance of what a self-study might involve, specifically putting my 'I' at the centre of my inquiry, such that I became the subject and object of my own research. For a long time I lamented that if I were to improve my practice I would need first to understand it. I saw the first two years of MAPOD rather like a reconnaissance exercise in which I was finding out what the practice field of running such a programme comprised. Although I had experienced being a student on a similar management/ learning programme at Lancaster University in the early 1990s, I was not prepared for the demands and contradictions that I would experience in my role as a tutor.

Learning to understand my practice has been a significant and emergent process of my inquiry, subject to on-going critique. This personal undertaking led me to consider the role of personal knowledge in my inquiry, and to better understand the world from my own point of view, helping me see more clearly, over time, the process of creating and legitimating my own living theory. Let me explain by drawing on the insights of Polanyi (1962).

Learning to Understand the World From my Own Point of View

In introducing his thesis on personal knowledge, Polanyi constructs a lesson from the Copernican revolution, in order that we might see more clearly the relationship between the scientific preoccupation of 'objectivity' and personal knowledge. Until the Copernican revolution, man had been at the centre of the universe. Polanyi argues that if we truly examined the universe objectively, we

would be preoccupied with “interstellar dust, relieved only by incandescent masses of oxygen” (1962:3), which would mean that scientists would almost invariably ignore man’s role in the universe. Polanyi laments the absurdity of such a scenario. He argues that we must see the universe from a human perspective; in other words, from our own point of view as human beings.

“For, as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt to eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity” (Polanyi, 1962:3).

I see Polanyi’s view as pointing to the existential and human nature of all science and not just human inquiry or action research as a distinctly human endeavour. Polanyi argues that Copernicus “gave preference to man’s delight in abstract theory” (ibid.), a preference that has had significant consequences for how we see the world and for the dominance of the scientific paradigm. In recognising the value of abstract theory and so-called objectivity, Polanyi suggests that theory offers us maps, and the more pure it is (like mathematics) it can be laid down in a system of rules, the benefit of which helps us navigate our way through otherwise uncharted experience. It does, however, also serve to screen our “senses from sensory experience” (Polanyi, 1962:4).

He recognises that we have substituted the anthropocentrism of our senses for the anthropocentrism of reason. His thesis calls for the reclamation of “man’s indispensable intellectual powers and for their passionate participation in the act of knowing” (Polanyi, 1962:16-17).

With the emergence of positivism towards the end of the 19th century, the separation of reason and experience is further pressed by establishing the principle/practice of not “going beyond experience by affirming anything that could not be tested by experience” (Polanyi, 1962:9). Polanyi describes this as

“a massive absurdity” (ibid.). Furthermore, he argues that the theory of relativity, which was intended to confirm this scientific view, has “some striking evidence for its refutation” (ibid.). He argues that Einstein’s discovery of rationality in nature was covered up by philosophical prejudice, and that the scientific community were so carried away with Einstein’s world picture that they were unable to think in different terms (Polanyi, 1962:11-13). He further states that Einstein’s autobiography reveals that he intuitively discovered the relationship between time and space as a teenager, before he had ever heard of the Michelson-Morley experiment which, according to Polanyi, is the way Einstein’s discovery of the theory of relativity is generally introduced in text books, giving the impression that it is a ‘scientific’ experiment negating Michelson and Morley. Polanyi’s thesis on personal knowledge suggests that we find it:

“...manifested in the appreciation of probability and of order in the exact sciences, and see it at work even more extensively in the way descriptive sciences rely on skills and connoisseurship” (Polanyi, 1962:17).

It is the development of the connoisseur’s eye that I am particularly interested in, with respect to my own inquiry and in the process of developing myself as a reflective practitioner, in order to improve the rationality and justice of my teaching and learning relationships.

“Connoisseurship, like skill, can be communicated only by example, not by precept” (Polanyi, 1962:54). Using wine tasting and medicine as his examples, he suggests that the skills and connoisseurship involved emerge after a long period of experience and under the instruction of a master. There are similarities here in Schön’s (1987) model for educating the reflective practitioner, involving learning by doing and coaching, helped by a master practitioner. In the case of medicine, the diagnostic skills come into being through the practice and learning drawn from a number of case study examples. In my case, I have had

the good fortune to serve a form of apprenticeship during this Ph.D. inquiry at the Centre For Action Research in Professional Practice at the University of Bath, supervised by ‘masterful’ academics, who appreciate both the conventions of ‘scientific rigour’ and the role of aesthetic and tacit knowledge in research.

Reflective practice, though growing in popularity in professional development circles, is a relatively new form of inquiry in the business school context. My own development, whilst being rich in the experience of case examples drawn from my working relations with individual students on the MAPOD programme, has also been influenced by Senge *et al.*'s (1994) ‘fifth discipline’ approach to learning, in which personal mastery, along with systems thinking, shared vision, team learning and mental models, provide an integrated framework for personal and organisational learning. It is such an approach, linking the personal and the organisational aspects of learning, that I have pursued and which provides an overarching framework to my thinking and practice, both personally and professionally, in the organisational context of conceiving and giving birth to MAPOD.

Since reflective practice has a history in the education of nurses, social workers and in therapy, I have turned to lessons available in these fields of practice to inform my own thinking and development. However, lessons from management and business schools are emerging. For example, the chapter by Marshall (2001)¹⁰ is an excellent account that helps our understanding of the inner and outer processes of a reflective and reflexive approach, and in Hartog (2002),¹¹ I show how I have used a self-study inquiry to develop an appreciative conception of my practice that recognises the moral imperative of developing

¹⁰ A professor in the School of Management at the University of Bath, entitled “Self-reflective inquiry practices” in the *Handbook of Action Research*.

¹¹ A paper entitled “Becoming a reflective practitioner: a continuing professional development strategy through humanistic action research”.

reflective practice; showing how action research can provide a framework for evidence-based professionalism and how my practice is guided by values lived out and aspired to in my practice. What I have suggested, by bringing my own experience into the public domain, is that this approach has general utility for all practitioners concerned with continuing professional development and, in particular, those in the field of Human Resource Management and Development, which is the academic area within which I am located in the Business School at Middlesex University.

Commenting on the amount of time taken by students of chemistry, biology and medicine in their practical courses, Polanyi says:

“[it] shows how greatly these sciences rely on the transmission of skills and connoisseurship from master to apprentice. It offers an impressive demonstration of the extent to which the art of knowing has remained unspecifiable at the very heart of science” (Polanyi, 1962:55).

Following the insights of Polanyi, I am committed to understanding the world from my own point of view. For example, in Chapter Nine,¹² I aim to show, by way of examples, the art of my knowing and the intellectual powers indispensable to my passionate participation in the act of knowing.

To summarise, action research can be defined as an approach that involves self-reflection and self-critique in a process of critical enquiry with the aim of improving the personal practice of the professional and the wider context of that practice. As a human endeavour, it is based on a caring intent to improve the situation for the benefit of others. Thus care, rationality and justice are all fundamental to the values that guide a critical and emancipatory approach to action research. Central to this approach is personal knowledge, to know the

¹² Entitled “Developing a connoisseur’s eye: exploring the aesthetics of my teaching and learning relationships On MAPOD”.

world from our perspective as human beings, so that we might better understand our own process of creating and legitimating our own living theories.

***I Am The Subject And Object Of My Research:
A Dialectical Engagement With The World***

Introduction

In my research I place my ‘I’ at the centre of my inquiry as I create and legitimate my own living theory contained in the descriptions and explanations of my practice. By framing my research journey through cycles of action and reflection in a dialectical engagement with the world I aim to show you how this inquiry has evolved. In doing so, I will explain the development of my thinking in this inquiry from the early stages, when I struggled to see my ‘I’ at the centre of my inquiry, to the point where I have come to know myself as a reflective practitioner, able to develop a critical conception of my practice.

A Dialectical Engagement With the World

The purpose of a dialectical engagement with the world is to get closer to the nature of human experience and our understanding of it in the course of human inquiry. Action research is a cyclical process of action and reflection, distinguished by a systematic process of reflection on action, with the purpose of improvement and change. It is a process of inquiry often presented at its simplest within a cycle of three recursive steps – planning, doing and review. But a dialectical paradigm takes a broader view than that of the ‘project’. Rowan (1981) places his dialectical approach to action research linking the concepts of alienation, social change and the research cycle.

Alienation in Research

Alienation is defined by Rowan (1981) as treating people as fragments. In Marxian terms this includes alienation from the product, the work, others and the self. These are all aspects of alienation found in traditional approaches to research contained in the subject-object split, where people are cast as research subjects and the knower is detached through the objective-scientific process from his own knowledge.

Significantly, a self-study of a teacher researcher, as a form of first person research, challenges traditional forms of alienating enquiry by placing the 'I' at the centre of the inquiry and putting the knower back into the known, to give an account of their practice in the form of descriptions and explanations situated *within* the context of their professional role and educative relations *with* others. Although Rowan uses his cycle to promote participatory research (research with others who would traditionally have been alienated as the object of the research), I feel justified in drawing on his cycle using first person inquiry, in that the dialectical paradigm approach to research demands self-reflexive awareness from the researcher, which includes due consideration of the different perspectives of others in the research context and in the action reflection process (the politics of which, I attend to later in this account).

Rowan cautions us in our belief that new paradigm research is totally free from alienation, reminding us that we exist within an alienating world. Indeed, relationships of power are central to the politics of my inquiry and the pursuit of a discursive democracy. These are problematised and discussed in my accounts in this thesis. For the educational action researcher, this begs the question about the purpose of their research, which in my case is concerned with improving the rationality and justice of my practice.

Social change in research

The second concept addressed by Rowan relevant to ‘new paradigm thinking’ is social change and its relevance to research. He points out that traditional research has little concern for changing people’s lives in contrast to experiential and participatory research, which involves a deal of social change.

McNiff presents action research as a problem posing approach to inquiry, suggesting that it is the search for the right questions appropriate to the educational situation and the right answers:

“It is the questions of educational research that are important and the question that a teacher is prepared to ask himself about what is going on in this class, and his preparation to answer that honestly and with due regard to the possible consequences. These consequences will almost certainly imply a change, but it is a change that is going to lead to an improvement. That improvement would not have come about if he had not in the first place been aware or sensitive to his own professional standards” (1988:5).

Questions of the kind “How can I improve my practice?” thus form the basis of such an inquiry, benchmarked against the values espoused and lived in practice, along with the needs of the students and the exigencies of the situation.

McNiff (ibid.) points out that one of the challenges of educational action research is that it involves what good teachers do as a matter of course, begging the question “What makes it research?”. McNiff argues that research goes further than good teaching, in that it involves being critical and aware of that teaching, using this self-critical awareness to be open to a process of change and practice improvement. She says:

“It encourages teachers to become adventurous and critical in their thinking, to develop theories and rationales for their practice and to give reasoned justification for their public claims to professional knowledge. It is this systematic

enquiry made public which distinguishes the activity as research” (McNiff, 1988:6).

Thus, educational action research in a first person inquiry is predicated on critical self-reflection, the descriptions explanations and rationale of one’s living theories,¹³ and the process of communicating ideas and testing them out in the public domain.

Teacher research has grown up in response to the tradition of social science research in education where the professional researcher comes in to do research in the classroom setting, with little or no regard for the educative practice of the teacher or the values that underpin that practice. A study of singularity of my professional practice as a tutor in higher education is epistemologically and methodologically distinct from the traditions of social science in that it is based on my values as an educator and ideas about what constitutes loving and life affirming values. Furthermore, my inquiry is driven by values for social justice, concerned with the realisation of freedom for individuals and the collective realisation of discursive democracy.

Whitehead reminds us that “education is a value laden activity” and thus values are “fundamental to educational theory”, describing them as “human goals that give our lives their particular form” (1989:45).

“I do not believe that values are the type of qualities whose meanings can be communicated solely through a propositional form. I think values are embodied in our practice and their meaning can be communicated in the course of their emergence in practice” (Whitehead, *ibid.*).

¹³ Whitehead’s (1989) concept of the educational practitioners’ ‘living theory’, in which he proposes a reconstruction of educational theory that takes account of the living theories that practitioners construct in their conception of what works and in a form of question and answer which includes propositions from the disciplines of educational theory.

That values give purpose and meaning to my practice and thus the nature of my inquiry requires a humanist conception of ‘science’.

Rowan implies that the practice of social science and its methods of research have contributed to a fragmentary account of human experience. Drawing on Mitroff and Kilmann’s (1978) typology of scientists, he contrast the style of the ‘analytical scientist’¹⁴ with the ‘particular humanist’ who counterpoises the traditional analytical scientist¹⁵. For the ‘particular humanist’, activities are value constituted, action oriented and political, preferring the logic of the unique and the particular. The preferred mode of inquiry being the case study of the particular individual.

Reason (1981:49)¹⁶ reminds us that the ‘particular humanist’ along with the ‘conceptual humanist’ are two styles of inquiry based on feeling that are concerned with personal and passionate knowledge compared with the dispassionate knowledge of the traditional scientist. Mapping my preferred style of inquiry in relation to this typology, I would suggest that my approach leans heavily towards the style of the particular humanist, informed by personal knowledge and driven by passionate and committed inquiry, that seeks to embrace the feeling side of ‘personhood’. Like the particular humanist Reason describes, I am not particularly interested in developing general theories of human behaviour, though I do appreciate the general propositions of the ‘conceptual humanistic perspective’. As my inquiry shows, I have tried to capture the unique humanity of the individual in respect of my own study of singularity and evidenced in Chapters Seven and Nine.¹⁷

¹⁴ Whose preferred method would be, for example, the controlled experiment.

¹⁵ For example, as one who believes in the personal nature of scientific knowledge.

¹⁶ In his ‘appreciation of Mitroff and Kilmann’.

¹⁷ ‘Working with Margaret’ and ‘Developing a connoisseur’s eye’.

Reason (ibid.) also suggests that the style of the particular humanist is feminine in comparison to the masculine features of the traditional scientist. He reminds us that we are moving away from a traditional view of science, and he suggests that Rowan's intention is that his research cycle should encompass all modes of inquiry.¹⁸ Reason (ibid.) thus urges us not to get caught up in the process of classification suggesting that the challenge of science is whether it can tell good stories. In writing this thesis I have been concerned to tell a good story about my research.

The Research Cycle

Rowan puts forward a model for research that can be used differently depending on your approach. This model has six stages that include: being, thinking, project, encounter, making sense and communication.

In the traditional research project one may identify or be given a problem (being). The review of literature, to identify what has gone before, follows (thinking). A research plan or design is agreed (project). Then the experiment or survey is conducted (encounter). Data is analysed (sense making). Finally, the thesis is written, papers are produced and taken to conference (communication), after which the researcher returns to their normal activities (being).

A dialectic approach

A dialectical approach renders a different use of this model, though using the same stages. It places emphasis on change, process and movement, shaping the way that change takes place through conflict and opposition. In this respect, many characteristics of a dialectical approach and the cycles of action and reflection are shared. Eames (1993) acknowledges this as he describes what

¹⁸ Even though Mitroff and Kilmann locate it within a conceptual humanist perspective.

he understands by dialectical knowledge. He explains the similarities with cycles of action and reflection that he perceives specifically in the movement toward enlightenment generated by the action research process, the dialogic structure of question and answer, and their close relationship with practice.

Firstly, by building on Schön's (1983) work¹⁹ and the proposition that professional knowledge is formed through a reflective conversation, in a situation, the context of which is both unique and changing, Eames suggests that reflective practitioners both think and act through an interplay of question and answer. Furthermore, he states that dialogue is fundamental to the development of a living form of knowledge. Secondly, Eames (ibid.) locates dialogue as part of an ancient lineage of logic characterised by both stability in the form of the logic of question and answer, and yet uncertain in that the answer is not yet known.

“When I question my own practice, then, or when I engage in a dialogue with a pupil, I am using a logical form. I don't know for sure what the answer will be, or where it will lead me, but I do know that the logical form will sustain the forward movement of my living changing understanding” (Eames, 1993:5).

The dialogic process creates emergence in the inquiry rather than rather progressing to a predetermined plan, giving way to the emergence of spirals of inquiry to explore issues generated by the inquiry process itself, allowing the researcher to investigate different problems without losing sight of the main purpose of the inquiry, and attend to and accommodate the complexities of real life.

In asking question(s) in reflective conversations with the self, the educational action researcher experiences a gap or contradiction between their values as espoused and how they are lived in practice. For example, when 'I' as the

¹⁹ *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.*

subject and object of my own inquiry experience my 'I' as a living contradiction. Eames (ibid.) tells us that contradiction is the nucleus of dialectics and the process of acting in response to this contradiction enables the negation to be resolved.

“I perceive that my practice does not reach the way I want things to be; it falls short, and is being ‘negated’; I therefore take action to solve the contradiction - to ‘negate the negation’; this new phase will then give rise to fresh contradictions or negations, which I will take steps to solve or negate, and so on. It is a form that is continually living, changing, developing” (Eames, 1993:5).

Finally, Eames tells us that the third strand of dialectical knowledge is contained in practice, and he gives emphasis to the fact that the question and answers of the dialectical form are a part of practice, not separate from it.

Whitehead (1989) tells us that by viewing his 'I' through videotaped material of his teaching and learning relationships with his students, he could see himself as a living contradiction; holding educational values on the one hand and, on the other, experiencing their negation. He argues that the form of propositional theory serves to mask the reality of the living form; in other words, the dialectical nature of reality. Whitehead explains that this is because Aristotelian logic demands that the questioner put his question in a definite form asking whether or not a person has a particular characteristic and thus ensuring that propositional logic eliminates contradictions from correct thought (1989:44). It is this living and dialectical form of logic that Rowan also recognises in a dialectical approach to human inquiry.

Based on the logic of the dialectical nature of reality, Whitehead (ibid.) argues that the propositional disciplines of educational theory are inadequate to explain the dialectical nature of reality, and he presents a convincing argument

of why we need to create our living educational theories in response to questions such as “How do I improve my practice in the here and now?”.

Citing the Phadreas, Whitehead (ibid.) tells us that Socrates identified two ways of coming to know, one where things are broken down into separate components and another where we hold things together under a general idea. Thinkers who can hold together the one and the many are called dialecticians.

Holding together the one and the many is central to Coulter and Wein’s (2002) account of what makes an educational researcher a ‘judging actor’, in which they draw on the work of Hannah Arendt. Coulter and Weins (ibid.) suggest that we need to understand teaching as more than knowledge, as a form of embodied knowledge that links knowledge, virtue and reason (*phronesis* - roughly translated as judgment).

Arendt was a philosophy student whose mentor and lover was Heidegger. A Jewess, she fled Nazi Germany in 1933. Her later work included covering the trial of Eichman in 1961, in Jerusalem, as a journalist for *The New Yorker*. Her account was subsequently published as a book.²⁰ Arendt was concerned with asking questions such as “What makes an actor?” and “What makes a spectator?”. She was perturbed to understand how good thinkers, such as Heidegger, could be such poor judges, become seduced by the Nazi party and become bystanders in the atrocities that followed. Arendt (1963:57) points out the ‘mendacity’ of the German mind, evidenced in Eichman’s distorted account of reality in his suggestion that they had all “pulled together”, as though there were a mutual objective between the Nazis and Zionist leaders to manage the expulsion of Jews from Germany.

²⁰ Entitled *Eichman in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 1963.

The writings of Arendt drew on the philosophical foundations of Western thought, combined with her admiration of Socrates, whom she regarded as holding both the role of actor and spectator effectively, and sought both to explain and prevent another holocaust.

Reviving the *poiesis praxis* debate, Arendt distinguishes between labour as work and praxis as action. An Aristotelian conception of practice contrasts, on the one hand, practice as craft and, on the other, practice as praxis in the form of moral/ political action, linked to the idea of leading a worthwhile life. But Arendt rejects the elitism of Aristotelian times where knowledge and virtue linked to community were the preserve of the male citizens of the ancient Greek state, along with the contemplative life that privileges the spectator over the actor. She points to the importance of others in the making and understanding of our lives (plurality) and, additionally, to the importance of human agency or freedom in action (natality). In her explanation of how the Holocaust was able to occur, she points to the expulsion of Jews from the public sphere, denying both the agency of individuals and rendering them ‘invisible’.²¹

Coulter and Weins (2002) remind us that the question of human agency or action as freedom remains controversial and is addressed in Foucauldian thinking in terms of knowledge power complexes and in the work of Levinson, who reminds us that we are born ‘belatedly’ into the world. In other words, the world is not a blank canvas and as such, we are situated in the world historically, culturally and in other ways, including race and gender. However, what Arendt is arguing for in becoming a ‘judging actor’ is the need for public dialogue and she advocates ‘visiting’ the perspectives of the other. Commenting on Eichman she says:

²¹ Arendt is clear that totalitarianism darkens the public sphere and limits human agency.

“The longer one listened to him, the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to think, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else. No communication was possible with him, not because he lied but because he was surrounded by the most reliable of all safeguards against the words and presence of others, and hence against reality as such” (Arendt, 1963:49).

Coulter and Weins (2002) tell us that Arendt’s public sphere is not abstract, but rather a world of diverse and unique individuals. Indeed it is this uniqueness and diversity of the *particular conditions and standpoints* that one has to go through, according to Arendt, as a judging actor, to arrive at one’s ‘general standpoint’. Furthermore, the appreciation of the diverse and the unique requires the reflective judgment of Kantian thinking.

A Kantian approach begins by rejecting the elitism inherent in the Aristotelian conception of phronesis. The categorical imperative, or the notion of the universal law, obliges everyone to do their moral duty according to that law. Determinant judgment includes political, moral and educational matters. “Judging involves using the knowledge of good ends to decide appropriate means” (Coulter and Weins, 2002:16). In educational terms, the application of theory to practice model would be an example of determinant judgment. Kant, however, distinguished another form of judgment, that being reflective judgment. Coulter and Weins (ibid.) tell us that this was “primarily concerned with aesthetic taste and inspired Arendt to generate what they suggest is a more ‘powerful conception of judgment for education’”.

In contrast to determinate judgment, where meaning is found in the general, in reflective judgment meaning is to be found in the particular. Laws and rules cannot apply the particular to the general, rather the link can be found, according to Coulter and Weins (ibid.), “in using the imagination”. Secondly, the ‘common sense’ that can be found in the general and universal is, they suggest, inherent in the critical nature of the act of reflection. They remind us,

for example, that there is no community standard of beauty and that the capacity for judgment about matters of aesthetic taste is “within the capacity of us all” and thus not subject to an elite minority. They state:

“Dialogue about reflective judgments, however, is both possible and required: aesthetic criticism presumes the possibility of persuading others of the quality of the judgment without epistemologically or ethically secure foundations. (Otherwise why bother?)” (Coulter and Weins, 2002:16).

For the teacher to be a good judging actor, this involves listening to students, visiting their points of view before, during and after the educational encounter, and recognising their ‘plurality’ and ‘natality’; in other words, their differences and desire for agency. It requires a ‘visiting imagination’, describing which Coulter and Weins say:

“Such teachers do not teach classes or grades, but individuals within complex communities; these teachers are able to judge what is appropriate - what is educational - for each child and the collective simultaneously” (2002:19).

During the course of this inquiry, I have moved towards developing my practice in this way, and I believe that my accounts of working with Margaret, Louise and other students, presented in this thesis, show how I have developed a ‘visiting imagination’.

It is the convincing logic and the aesthetic and ethical nature of the dialectical approach and dialogical form of educational action research, contained in cycles of action and reflection, facilitating the generation of living theory (informed where appropriate by relevant propositional theories), that appeals to me as a practitioner researcher as a useful means of inquiry that serves the primacy of practice.

Rowan's Cycle: A Dialectical Account of my Inquiry

The account that follows is based on what Rowan would describe as an 'early cycle' in my research that traces my experience, thinking and motivation to change my practice, leading to the validation and initiation of the MAPOD programme.²² The primary aim of drawing on this early cycle in this chapter is to put flesh on my explanation of the action research process and to illustrate how I see that process in the context of Rowan's cyclical model. The questions that frame this early cycle include:

- What is the felt perturbation in my teaching that initiates this research?
- What are the educative values that underpin my approach to teaching and learning?
- How do I understand the limits and constraints of my educative practice?

Being

Starting from a felt dissatisfaction with one's current practice (this can be from *being* or *encounter* in Rowan's cycle), a dialectical engagement may involve turning away from old ways. In my case, the encounter of my teaching and learning experience on postgraduate courses in the Business School caused me immense dissatisfaction, in that I realised that by filling the heads of my students with lots of information (albeit beautifully presented in lectures and well-supported by handouts and classroom exercises) led mainly to a form of superficial learning; in other words, regurgitated for exams and essays, without any real or substantial evidence of deep learning relevant to the practical and practice questions my postgraduate Business School students faced.

²² The site of the inquiry context in which the subsequent chapters of this thesis are based.

Thinking

The thinking stage involves gathering information through conversation, literature and other means to test out ideas and consider what will work. Rowan is clear that it is not the application of ‘inert’ theory to practice, but rather a creative process of invention and testing. Rowan suggests that there is need to be decisive about when the information is ‘enough’ so that you can move forward to the project stage.

In my case, the thinking period began before I registered for the Ph.D. programme at the University of Bath.²³ However, my initial dissatisfaction with my teaching and learning can be traced back to 1992 when I wrote a paper.²⁴ This focused on my frustration at being told to teach a group of postgraduate practitioner students about training and development whilst being denied the right to facilitate their learning using experiential methods. For me it had raised issues concerning the effectiveness of the teaching pedagogy, and its resultant outcome of surface and rote learning contrasted with my desire to facilitate deep and meaningful learning relevant to the issues students might face in their work. In 1994, I presented a working paper²⁵ which enabled me to put into the public domain an understanding of my learning that had emerged as a result of testing out a pilot scheme using action learning, under the guise of a module entitled “Developing People and Organisations”.²⁶ The appeal was to the same type of postgraduates on the MA HRM course (though by this stage a

²³ It was the possibility of doing research relevant to my professional practice and lived experience that drew me to the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, at the University of Bath, in 1996.

²⁴ For my M.A. in Management Learning, Lancaster University, 1993, called “A problem at work: the problem of developing self directed learners on the part time MA Human Resource Management course”.

²⁵ Presented to “The Capability Through Business Studies” conference held at Middlesex University, entitled “Releasing capability through action learning”.

²⁶ The action learning model involves students drawing on real life practice problems as a vehicle for learning, using reflection and action, in a small group setting with the aim of developing their understanding or achieving a change in the practice situation in line with their professional and organisational goals.

different cohort) and it served to illustrate that action learning as an alternative had potential for facilitating learning and development, notwithstanding the initial resistance put up by some students and their accompanying expectations about the role of tutors and learners.

In 1996, I presented a paper to the Higher Education for Capability Conference on Professional Education and Capability (chaired by the late Donald Schön).²⁷ In this paper, I provided a critique of the professional body's proposed scheme for professional development, based on a prescriptive design for learning, in turn based upon what these practitioners should know and do. I questioned the validity of a 'sheep dip' approach, where it is assumed that one size fits all, and the lack of space in the programme to address the real work-based issues that the practitioners might face and conceivably learn from (if their experience of these issues were utilised as a form of reflection). Moreover, I was perturbed at the lack of reflection by the institute as a professional body concerning what is taught in management education; as though management theory covered objective truths about management and organisations, and that these truths had universal applicability with the assumption that learning constituted the learning about and application of these truths to practice.

Within these three papers, I had thought about issues of student autonomy, capability, learning design and the use of educative approaches (such as action learning). I also reflected on my experience, read and drew on relevant literature to further my understanding of these issues, tested out some of my ideas in practice developing a pilot module in action learning with a colleague and discussed alternative designs for learning with colleagues, arriving at a proposal for the validation of the MAPOD which was launched in 1995.

²⁷ Paper entitled "Shortfalls in professional education for the personnel and development practitioner: does the new IPD (Institute of Personnel and Development) route lead to capability?".

The plan was that whilst using a modular template to give some focus and direction to the programme, students would be free from the constraints of the professional body to design and take responsibility for their own learning, according to their interests and needs, using action learning as a vehicle for their learning and in particular the production of assignments as part of the Masters qualification. The role of the tutors would be facilitative. Expertise, though traditionally associated with the academic staff, was also recognised as being held within the student body and students were actively encouraged to share their expertise in the design and delivery of group sessions. Furthermore, the expertise of the tutors was also demystified by the idea that teachers could be learners too. Power sharing was seen to be a key part of this co-operative model and as part of the facilitation process students were invited to engage in a process of self, peer and tutor assessment. The action learning approach, combined with this co-operative assessment model, saw learning as a social process and with the inclusion of the large group provided an impetus for the creation of a learning community. Learning was seen as a matter of responsibility; not solely at the individual level, but as a shared responsibility between all programme participants.

The time spent working through this initial phase of enquiry prior to the MAPOD programme being launched, allowed me to develop my thinking and re-engage with the main research cycle at the point of project.

Project

This stage involves the outward movement of project, where one's ideas are put to the test. Rowan (1981) talks of having good enough plans. The handbook designed for the MAPOD validation event represented such plans, not perfect, but good enough. This is what he has to say about this stage:

“This is where I take a risk, and form an intention... This may require a certain degree of assertion even aggressiveness on my part” (Rowan, 1981:88).

Working with the limitations of one’s plans and facing the contradictions they present lead to the next stage in the cycle that Rowan calls encounter.

Encounter

This is the action phase in which Rowan (1981:99) suggests “I actually meet the other”. It calls for a readiness to improvise in the face unexpected reactions. He says:

“I may get confirmed or disconfirmed: and it appears, paradoxically, that disconfirmation is actually more valuable as a learning experience than is confirmation. An experience of unfreedom can be very stimulating to further effort” (Rowan, 1981:99).

In my diploma transfer paper written in 1997 for CARPP,²⁸ I reflect on and write about two examples where I experienced the negation of my values in practice. I describe a problem I faced with a colleague who was not agreeable to allowing the students to write in the first person. This issue came to a head when the first cohort were writing their dissertations. He asserted that the convention in the academy was to write in the third person, and that this practice was associated with objectivity and thus, academic validity, a perspective that I rejected as nonsense and particularly inappropriate in the MAPOD context, where personal learning and development was systemically intrinsic to the entire learning process. Writing in the first person helped students get closer to their lived experience, facilitating the reflective process in their writing and research. I was distressed by this apparent threat coming from within the MAPOD, as were those students who had been working with me, and who had become comfortable writing in the first person, describing the experience as liberating. They were particularly afraid that their new-found liberation in the educational process would be curtailed by the

power of the status quo. I was unable to reason with my colleague and it was as much as I could do to assure the students that it would be acceptable for them to continue to write in the first person, and that I was confident that the external examiner would share my perspective.

In the event, the students took the lead from their action learning set tutors, writing in whatever way they felt would be supported by their tutors and trusting in this support in the examination process. I was deeply unhappy that some students were consequently unable to express themselves as they otherwise might have done, and that this was down to a tutor using his position of power to keep things within the norm.

In addition, I wrote about the difficulties with a colleague who wanted her contribution to the learning programme designed and delivered on her terms. Despite student protests to her about the inappropriateness of a prescriptive approach on an earlier occasion, she proved to be uncompromising, putting her terms to me in writing, stating that they were non-negotiable. Specifically, she was not prepared to have her session reviewed or subject to reflection within the tutor team. To my mind, her stance undermined the co-operative basis of the programme. I reflected on this in the first instance, alone, capturing my thoughts concerning the nature of her demands and my responsibilities to the group as a whole. I concluded that one person is less important than the welfare of the group. I reviewed the situation with another colleague and we concluded that her situation was untenable. We composed a response stating “I find the conditions untenable and that if as stated your conditions are not up for negotiation, I must assume that you have withdrawn yourself from the programme” (Hartog, 1996a).

²⁸ Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice.

Rowan states that the period of encounter goes on until the point that one feels action is not enough, moving to a phase of withdrawal where one can begin to make sense of it all.

Sense Making

The questions that Rowan (1981:99) frames: “How can I understand what I have been through?” and “What the others have been through?”, suggest that this sense making stage requires a degree of self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher. In posing these questions from one’s personal perspective and from the point of view of others, different ways of seeing the same issues may be revealed. In turn, these various perspectives can inform our considered analysis and sense making of events. Considering the wider picture, the possibility of other perspectives is a way of reducing alienation in the research process, such that the views of others are taken account of.

Central to reflexive skills of inquiry is what Rowan (2001) calls ‘maturity’, which he describes as a shift in consciousness. Suggesting a model of ego development, Rowan (2001:115) offers us an extended view of ‘normal’ psychological development theories by drawing on Wilber’s map of psycho-spiritual development toward a transpersonal consciousness. Building on this map, Rowan suggests that we go through a period of transition in our lives from symbiosis with the mother to separation, and from body/self as a child, to mental ego as an adolescent. The next stage is one where the ego matures, which he describes as the “real self”, each stage, marking a revised conception of self. Significantly, Rowan (2001:15) describes this transition as a “mystical experience”, in touch with one’s inner identity and authentic self, a “step jump” sometimes triggered by a crisis in relationships. Rowan’s thinking also draws on existential insights, central to which is the belief that we are responsible for ourselves. Drawing on the traditions of the mystics, this means a commitment to

get inside one's own experience. Importantly, Rowan (2001:120) describes the true self as an "experience", not a concept, which is what he suggests social constructionist and similar postmodern perspectives on the self state.

To return to the crisis of relationships with colleagues described above,²⁹ as I continued to reflect on the resistance of my colleague who was not agreeable to letting students write in the first person, I began to understand better the reasoning behind his resistance, i.e. his fear of the status quo pronouncing that the practice was 'un-academic' and the consequent risk he perceived of his status as an academic being undermined. Although I did not agree with his position, I did begin to appreciate it and, in turn, his need for caution. I began to experience myself as a dialectician holding together these many positions whilst at the same time striving to protect the overall integrity of the programme. I came to realise in working with him subsequently, that I would need to work with our differences and work to educate him about the efficacy of my practice.

As for my other colleague, I could see her argument for wanting to keep her session(s) intact, but I remained unhappy about her unwillingness to work this through with students. Taking these perspectives into account, I agreed with colleagues to invite her to put her specific contribution to the students, up front, at the beginning of the programme, as a self-contained package, which they could choose as a group to buy into or not, whilst removing the opportunity that previously existed whereby she tended to impose her will against the will of the majority.

Looking back at this initial cycle, my experience of contradiction was focused on having my values denied in practice by my colleagues. I was less aware initially of the immaturity of my ego defences, and it was a while before I could

²⁹ During the first cycle of my inquiry.

place my 'I' at the centre of my inquiry in a truly reflexive way and embrace myself as a living contradiction.

Communication

The final stage in the research cycle is communication. Moving outward again this may involve forms of communication with oneself, others who were involved and others not involved. The challenge is being able to explain what has happened to oneself and others, appreciating that there may be different and multiple perspectives, and communicating in ways appropriate to the research context.

In my case, communication involved firstly dealing with the practical issues that the contradictions gave rise to within the team through discussion and correspondence. Then writing research notes for myself, in which I captured the lived experience of contradiction that these issues created in me, the partiality of my perspective, initial reactions and sense making of the events.³⁰ The rhythm of these six moments within the dialectical research cycle moves the inquiry on and, as Rowan suggests, we can get stuck in any one of these moments.

Between the writing of my diploma transfer paper (Hartog, 1997) and the submission of my M.Phil. transfer paper (Hartog, 2000b), I experienced a feeling of being stuck, unable to communicate the progress of my inquiry. This was largely due to my experience of submitting and failing the diploma on my first submission, experienced as a judgment without explanation or feedback about why. This experience left me feeling anxious, with low self-esteem, blocked as a writer and overwhelmed by the concern that I was not good enough. Only the

³⁰ Later drawn out in my diploma transfer paper.

life affirming relationship I had with my tutor persuaded me otherwise, encouraging me to write and to risk putting myself back into the public domain.

It was this experience that led to the framing of my M.Phil. transfer paper (Hartog, 2000b) as ‘finding voice in the academy’, which has emerged as a key theme in my inquiry and in this thesis.

Validity in ‘Educational’ Action Research

Lomax (1994:14) defines validity in her professorial inaugural lecture as about being able to make a plausible case for one’s research claims before an educated audience of peers. She suggests that subjective data, in the sense of teachers researching their own practice, is more difficult to work with than conventionally termed objective data and demands a higher level of skill from the teacher researcher (she uses the term teacher to cover those who teach children in school and those teaching adults in higher education).

Whitehead (1989) reminds us that validity is important in all research because fundamentally it is concerned with the generation and testing of theory. He suggests that the researcher needs to know what the unit of appraisal is and what the standards of judgment are in order to test a claim to educational knowledge. Furthermore, he suggests that the unit of appraisal “is the individual’s claim to know his or her educational development” (1989:46); included in that unit of appraisal would be methodological, logical, ethical and aesthetic standards to judge the validity of the knowledge claims. Commenting on the validity of what we claim, Lomax (1986) suggests that it is the degree to which it is useful or relevant in guiding practice and whether the claim precipitates a debate about improving practice in the wider community.

Significantly, Lomax distinguishes herself as a professor of educational research and not a professor of research in education. Lomax is a champion of the teacher research movement in the United Kingdom and like Whitehead (1989) believes that the research model of social science is not appropriate to educational researchers. Educational research, for Lomax, is primarily research done by people who practice in education (whether that be in a school, higher education institution or in a management education context in industry). Also in her professorial inaugural lecture, Lomax (1994:14) additionally identifies nine features that characterise educational research, as follows:

1. *It is always tentative*, in that education by its very nature is a continuous process, in which ‘truth’ known at a given point in time may be subject to change.
2. *It has an ethical dimension*, addressing its own research motives and explaining what is meant by improvement, through a continuous critique of personal and professional values.
3. *It is self-developing*, enabling the researcher to produce their own form of ‘living educational theory’ through questions of the kind ‘How do I improve my practice’?
4. *It is practical*, in that it improves our practice, regardless of whether we are concerned to improve something that is practical or a theoretical concern in her practice.
5. *It is authentic*, in that it has resonance for other practitioners, who can empathise with the values that underpin the research.
6. *It is democratic*, in that it evidences empowering relationships with others in the research process, enabling the ‘other’ to influence the research and speak for themselves.
7. *It has rigour*, in that the case is coherent and the claims and evidence are plausible.

8. *It is holistic*, both in the motivation to improve our practice and the development of our competence as an educational action researcher.
9. *It is influential*, in that our values and research practice is shared and disseminated in the public domain, with the purpose of persuading others about the significance of the work that we do.

These characteristics of what makes educational action research have provided the template for my standards of judgment presented at the beginning of this thesis.

In a later paper, Lomax (1999) suggests that a double dialectic of meaning making is the hallmark of valid action research. This involves writing as a sense making activity for oneself and writing as a sense making activity for others. The first concerns how we make meaning to ourselves as we grapple with the representation of inquiry and practice, for example in the narrative accounting of our inquiry. The other side of the dialectical relationship, concerned with our representation to others, for example in the presentation of conference papers, serves to co-opt our peers as an audience of critical friends, invited to give feedback on the robustness or otherwise, of the claim(s) to know. In this regard processes of sense making and communication in Rowan's model may converge.

By writing papers for academic conferences, I have been able to test out my thinking in the public domain in the course of this inquiry, and in the form of this double dialectic of meaning making that Lomax suggests. Critical friendship helps the researcher to think differently, see differently and, in turn, act differently. It is an educative process that helps make educational action research educative and facilitates the 'judging actor'.

The process of the double dialectic of meaning making also has similarities with the 'judging spectator' identified by Arendt, linking thinking and sense making,

through reflection, with communication and future action. During the trial of Eichman for his war crimes, Arendt (1963) observed that Eichman had refused to think outside of the prescribed regulations and orders that were issued, and she concluded that it was this lack of thinking rather than an innate evilness or stupidity that resulted in his complicit behaviour. To develop the skills of the judging spectator requires what Arendt calls “a two in one dialogue with the self”, a process which I locate in reflection as “a dialogue of myself with myself... in which I am both the one who asks and the one who answers” (Arendt, cited in Coulter and Weins, 2002:19).

This type of reflective thinking is temporary and, according to Arendt, involves a return to the world to defend an assessment. Arendt’s conception of the judging spectator, like that of her judging actor, is a dialectical one.

Using Rowan’s (1981) model of ‘a dialectical engagement with the world’, what I have described is what Rowan would call an early cycle rather than what traditionally would have been called a pilot study; in some accounts of action research it is referred to as a reconnaissance exercise (intelligence gathering in order to plan an action to be taken).

Rowan (1981:105) suggests that the cyclical model makes it easier to grasp multiple cycles of inquiry. These cycles of inquiry ‘knit together’ to form this thesis. They are identified along with key conference papers which I have written, publications, and my diploma and the M.Phil. transfer papers,³¹ all of which have informed the writing of this thesis. Indeed, this writing has enabled me to make sense of my inquiry for myself, test out my thinking in the public domain, and given way to emergent themes captured in my recent publications and in the construction of this thesis.

³¹ Presented to The Centre For Action Research at the University of Bath.

To summarise, in this section I have presented an account of my approach to the research, drawing on Rowan's cycle of a dialectical engagement with the world to illustrate the nature of my research journey. Furthermore, I have explained what a dialectical approach means to me in respect of a self study of my practice as an educational action researcher and asserted the logic of question "How can I improve my practice?". I have shown what I understand to be a disciplined approach to educational action research, as put forward by Lomax (1999:4), "the idea of a discipline is distinguished by ways of thinking, theorising, practicing or enquiring which is the thing itself", drawing on the ideas of others to support my account.

Method and Process Issues in Theory – Writing and 'Data' in This Inquiry

Introduction

In this section I address the key issues pertaining to an action research approach, starting with the examination of the role of theory and literature, in order to highlight the distinctive difference in their use in an action research account compared with their use in a more traditional approach to research and the consequent construction and presentation of a thesis. I then explore the process of writing this account, with particular reference to the role of life story and history in the construction of my thesis.

Next, I explore my process of data gathering, with respect to the methodological issues involved in gathering evidence from which I assert my claims to know my embodied values in practice. This includes oral and visual data in respect of my teaching and learning relationships with particular students on the MAPOD programme, which I used to help address the questions "To what extent I am

living my values in action?” and “How can I improve my practice?” By providing evidence in a visual form of representation (as an alternative and complement to the traditional narrative forms contained in a thesis), my aim is to show you moments in my practice which capture the living inquiry process and through which I develop my connoisseur’s eye with the purpose of creating loving and life affirming educative relations.

The Role of Theory and Literature in an Action Research Account

Literature serves to inform us what others have written and are writing in the field, so what is its role in an action research inquiry? Winter (1997) asks the question “Where does ‘theory’ come from in action research?”. As he asks this question he poses a concern about the relationship between theory and practice, and he problematises the vested interest of universities in drawing cultural authority from the separation of theory from practice and the concerns of practitioners. He tells us that theory in action research “is a form of improvisatory self-realisation” (1997:2), where theoretical resources are not predicted in advance, but are drawn in by the process of the inquiry. This is because the focus can shift in the action research process as an inquiry develops. He further suggests that unlike conventional research, the theory in an action research account does not come mainly from the initial review of “the literature” but rather from “a process of improvisation as we draw on different aspects of our prior professional and general knowledge” (1997:2).

Therefore, ideas drawn from the work of others are not presented as a body of knowledge at the outset, against which my inquiry is benchmarked. Rather, the literature review *per se* has evolved in the course of my inquiry process, enabling me to improvise and draw on different ideas in response to issues and questions arising from my inquiry into my teaching and learning relationships. For example, ‘maternal thinking’ (Ruddick, 1989) provided me with a useful

heuristic device, whilst I reflected on what it was about maternal knowing that seemed relevant and important to my inquiry; as in the case of Louise who features in Chapter Nine,³² where the decision to work with her on a one-to-one basis outside the action learning set was driven in part by a recognition which came from my own maternal knowing that with one-to-one support she might make the developmental strides she was struggling with (nurturing being a key principle of maternal thinking). I sensed that this kind of attention might facilitate Louise's development in helping her find her voice and achieve the clarity in her thinking and writing that she had been struggling with hitherto, partly because she needed more time and attention than that which was available in the action learning set.

Literature in action research thus becomes integrated in and for action, because as Winter suggests, in action research "we must decide how best to intervene here and now" (1997:3), taking account of our specific professional values and purposes, thus making informed choices about what ideas are to be incorporated, without descending into prescriptive authority and keeping dialectical pluralism and openness toward emergent possibilities in the inquiry. Furthermore, Winter links theory and citizenship in a democracy, linking the rights of citizens with responsibilities. Finally, he suggests that action research generates its own form of theory describing it as follows:

"This is a form of theory which is integrative, critical, and political; it is both personal and collective, a synthesis of values and understandings, and a response to the many methodological dimensions of practical action in complex organisations profoundly influenced by external political forces. It is a form of theory which is required for the full exercise of a citizen's responsibilities in the workplace, and it is also a form of theory that the university must embrace and sponsor if it is to retain its aspiration to be a place of critical reason in a social and political order which threatens the independence of the university through the very same political and economic forces which threaten the humanity of other workplaces" (Winter, 1997:4).

³² Entitled "Developing a connoisseur's eye".

In a living theory thesis, the emphasis is on the descriptions and explanations of my own living theory guided by a desire to live out my values in practice. In part, my living theory is informed by the work of others where the writing and ideas of others speak to and affirm my own values, beliefs and experience, thus becoming a means of supporting and validating my own living theory approach. The ideas of others have also served to extend my understanding and move my inquiry forward. In Chapter Three,³³ I examine the work of Belenky *et al.* (1986), and in the course of constructing my thesis I also draw on the work of significant others including Freire (1972, 1985), Gilligan (1982), Noddings (1994) and Ruddick (1980, 1989),³⁴ with the aim of showing how their work has helped me address my central question “How do I improve my practice as a university educator?”. In addition, I will show how their ideas have inspired, informed and illuminated my understanding in this inquiry and moved it forward. Freire, writing on the act of study, says:

“When reading a book, we subject readers should be receptive to any passage that triggers a deeper reflection on any topic, even if it is not the main subject of the book. Sensing a possible relationship between the read passage and our core-occupation, we as good readers should concentrate on analyzing the text looking for a connection between the main idea and our own interest” (1985:3).

I first read the above passage in about 1992, whilst studying for my MA in Management Learning. I realised then that we do not come to a text as a *tabula rasa*, but rather as one full of experience. Having read Freire, I began to understand why some ideas and the writing of others resonated with me, and why some did not. Since then, I have preferred to read and engage with those texts that I can resonate with, that I feel in the reading both speak to me and enable me to connect in some way the ideas of the author with my own. I have

³³ “Women’s ways of knowing: a review and critique”.

³⁴ All of whom influenced the thinking of Belenky *et al.*

been more resistant to texts that do not engage me in this way, although I have persevered with less accessible texts during the course of this inquiry, knowing that ideas such as Habermas' theory of communicative action are relevant to my inquiry, even though the text itself is difficult.

In reading and drawing on the ideas of others, I have read several of the key texts and articles which I draw on in this thesis, several times over, during the past six years, each time gaining new meaning and a deeper understanding and appreciation of the text. As an aid to my reading as inquiry, I have noted down those connections between the ideas of the author and my own interest. I have amassed in the process a collection of notebooks and files of my reading with quotations from the literature and my accompanying notes and points of connection. These notebooks have been a useful resource in constructing my written accounts.

Writing as Inquiry

Reference is frequently made in 'how to' accounts to do action research and to the action research report, which assumes the findings are written up at the end. In this case, writing has been an important part of the process of my inquiry and sense making. Writing has enabled me to test out my ideas reflectively in the public domain, as well as providing a means of communicating those ideas and findings to others. Richardson suggests that "writing is not just a mopping up activity at the end of a research project" (1994:516). She describes writing as "a way of 'knowing' - a method of discovery and analysis" (ibid.); in other words, writing as a creative and dynamic process. Richardson tells us that form and content are not separable and that through writing we may discover new aspects of our topic of inquiry and our relationship to it. This perspective certainly resonates with my experience of writing during the process of my inquiry and in the construction of this thesis. For example, when I constructed

my M.Phil. transfer papers I framed the chapters using poetry. Richardson suggests that the language of poetic form has more immediacy, and as I reflect back on this, I can recall the underlying emotional process and vulnerability I felt in writing that account as I put my voice into the public domain. In addition, in writing about the personal basis of my history and knowing, I have been moved to explore possible connections between my personal and professional life. In exploring the process of reflection involved in critical action learning and research, I have been moved to explore the opportunities this may facilitate for teaching business ethics. Richardson reminds us that there is no one right way to stage a text; rather, like clay, we might view writing as material with which to craft and mould our account, being mindful of the audience we address and its conventions.

Lomax (1999) suggests that there are two complementary ways that we make meaning in the action research process. The first concerns how we make meaning to ourselves as we grapple with the representation of our inquiry and practice; for example, in narrative accounts of our inquiry. The other side of the dialectical relationship is concerned with the representation of meaning to others; for example, the feedback we get from critical friends in response to our written accounts. In my case, this would include feedback on conference papers and papers submitted to publications. Such feedback has helped me grapple with issues in my inquiry and to appreciate my own living theory in the process.³⁵ These processes, particularly the role of critical friends in responding to written accounts, serve to confront the educational action researcher with

³⁵ For example, an e-mail from Professor Rosenfeld (one of the authors of *Artisans of Democracy*) in response to my paper presented to the Second International Conference on Reflective Practice, “Maternal thinking a legitimate discourse for educational practice; making a difference”, suggests that he resonated with the three facets presented in the paper on maternal thinking, but he thought I had presented the heart of the matter in too implied a manner and not enough in actionable terms, thus giving me something to chew over both in terms of working with this aspect of my inquiry in the writing of this thesis and for any future publication about which he was encouraging.

what he/she knows. In my case, critical friendship has challenged me to rethink and reframe my perspective, dig deeper and be more reflective and inquiring as I account for myself, as well as serving to affirm my understanding of my inquiry. Critical friendship foregrounds the dialogical process helping the educational action researcher to see differently and act differently. It is an educative process. In turn, new insights that emerge through this process may enable me to change and improve my practice.

During my first cycle of inquiry I was unsure where to begin or what to write. Golberg suggests that if you want to learn to write “go home” (1986:143); this is what she says:

“It is very important to go home if you want your work to be whole. You don’t have to move in with your parents again and collect a weekly allowance, but you must claim where you come from and look deeply in to it. Come to honor and embrace it, or at the least, accept it” (Golberg, 1986:143).

In my case, Goldberg’s injunction gave me permission to embrace autobiographical writing, and during the course of this inquiry I have written three distinct autobiographical pieces. The first, written in March 1996, served to construct a life story (Hartog, 1996b), beginning with my parents meeting each other in Scotland in the mid-fifties, my childhood experience of living and growing up in the West Midlands, to my employment at Middlesex University in 1990, and the creation of MAPOD in 1995. In this account, I describe learning from experience as an “underlying value in my approach to my work” and suggest that “personal learning is a prerequisite to being able to bring about learning for others in the organisation” (Hartog, 1996b:19). Professor Judi Marshall³⁶ responded to this first account as “competent but not yet revealing my edges”. It felt competent to me and yet I could, through her feedback, see how it was contained, carefully packaged but not loose or deep enough, and

³⁶ Professor Judi Marshall, at the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, University of Bath.

her comments caused me to wonder what my edges might be. The second account, written as part of my M.Phil. transfer paper in September 2000 (Hartog, 2000b), was an attempt to dig deeper and reveal more clearly the values that had influenced me in my formative years, and to make more explicit the links I believed explained my values and stance towards truth, justice and democracy between my personal and professional life. At the time, I was still unsure as to whether and to what extent I was revealing these edges to my reader. In both accounts I spoke of taboos, in particular, experiences that served to silence; in other words, experiences that deny voice and create forms of oppression.

Silence and voice has emerged as a theme of this inquiry, both for me and for many of my students. More recently, in April 2003, I wrote a piece called “Choices and self-determination”, which I have included as Chapter Four in this thesis. While writing this account, I realised that the stories told informed me about my quest for self, helping me realise the origins of ‘my still small voice’ (Belenky *et al.*, 1986) and ‘the roar behind *my* silence’ (*ibid.*), ideas which inform the subsequent discussion of these two stories. In constructing this thesis, this latter example of autobiographical writing has revealed stories that hitherto had been experienced as undiscussible. This feeling of undiscussibility is, I now suggest, significant to the overall tenor of critique that I want to bring to this thesis, for if something is experienced as undiscussible, it belies speaking truth to power. I believe my edges are now more transparent.

After writing this latest piece, I reflected for a while on why families keep secrets, which in turn led me to think about organisational undiscussibles (Agyris 1990) and how those in authority tend to try to keep the lid on things, how confidentiality and loyalty tests are sometimes used in the employment relationship to keep things quiet, or indeed place the decisions of those in authority beyond question. We have seen this principle at work recently within

central government, in its relationship with the late Dr. Kelly in respect of the Iraq dossier.

If action research is to play a part in changing the social formation then I believe that organisational undiscussibles need to be addressed if we are to bring a critique into practice, opening and creating a space in which alternative conceptions of truth may be aired and a space through which organisational learning may occur. I begin to do this in Chapter Five.³⁷ I return to this point in the Chapter Ten.³⁸

Freire (1985:17) tells us that becoming critical is “to see reality as it is”. In other words, critique involves the process of political literacy or in Freirian terminology ‘conscientization’:

“...the process by which human beings participate critically in a transforming act... One of the important points in conscientization is to provoke recognition of the world, not as a ‘given’ world, but as a world dynamically ‘in the making’” (Freire, 1985:106).

Thus, in educating the social formation there are choices, i.e. to speak as one finds, to be an actor or to hold silence and be a spectator.

My energy was further harnessed by a writing activity called “writing down the bones”, a technique suggested by Goldberg (1986:8) in which the rule of thumb is to keep the pen on the page and the words flowing spontaneously for say 45 minutes at a time. I used this activity frequently to capture my thoughts and feelings about my lived experience on the MAPOD programme. In particular, I often wrote in this way early in the morning on MAPOD residential or when I returned home at the end of a residential week, in order to capture the rawness

³⁷ Entitled “Finding voice in the academy: towards a politics of articulation, contesting power in the academy from an oppositional site”

³⁸ Called “Educating the social formation”.

and immediacy of that experience. This has been my way of keeping a field diary. I would then refer to these notes and draw on them as I constructed more formalised accounts and conference papers.

Recording Data: Using Audio and Videotapes to Gather Data

In this section I want to explore and report on how I recorded and made sense of data using audio and videotapes in my inquiry. The purpose of recording the data was to capture something more fully than words and narrative recollections alone would yield in respect of my lived experience of teaching and learning relationships with students on the MAPOD programme.

I always try to record the action learning set meetings, in particular, the check-in, and where possible, I record the community dialogue sessions using a tape recorder.³⁹ I believe it is important that I am as fully engaged in the process at the time as I should be; otherwise, I would be placing myself on the edge of the group as a participant observer which I am not, I am part of the process I seek to observe. By listening carefully to the tapes I can hear how we were together, I am more aware of who spoke and who did not, what my part was in the conversation, whether I made facilitative interventions that were in keeping with the purposes of the meeting and my values in action, or whether my interventions denied those values. Listening to the tapes in-between set meetings allows me to compose myself and be more prepared for the next session.

I explain why I use the tape, what purpose I intend to use it for and I ask permission both to tape the session and to draw on the material/data collected

³⁹ Because there is much going on at the time and it is difficult to attend to everything.

in my writing and inquiry. Specifically, I have drawn on material from these tapes in Chapter Nine.

I encourage students to tape their own individual sessions. Mostly, students have come to appreciate the use of the tape for their own inquiries, some preferring to bring their own tape recorder to tape their sessions, so that they may recapture the flavour of the conversation and feedback given to them about their writing as they construct their assignments. If a student does not have their own tape recorder, but wants a taped record of their session, then I give them the tape. Sometimes, I ask them to let me have it when they have finished with it, or they offer me the tape later, especially when we have been able to acknowledge in our 'check-out' that something special happened in the process in the learning relationship. This was certainly the case in the one-to-one sessions I had with Louise, captured later in the body of this thesis.⁴⁰

Reconnecting With the Data

I have re-listened to tapes before writing a number of the chapters in this thesis. By doing so, I have been able to re-engage and recapture in my mind the moments of encounter, and the mood and flavour of the meetings. Whilst reconnecting with the data I am reminded of the room that we were in, the lightness or darkness, whether I felt comfortable or not, how we were sat together, whether we were at Hendon (the Business School) or at Hunton Park (the residential centre), my home or the home of a student. I am more able to rediscover how I felt about the meeting, the impression it had on me and my awareness of the impression it had on others. In short, whether the experience was felt to be positive.

⁴⁰ I have been using the tape recorder since the first MAPOD cohort, with the consent of those present.

In the later stages of my inquiry whilst working with students on MAPOD Cohorts 4 and 5, I introduced a video recorder to some of the action learning set meetings, again with the permission and agreement of those concerned. Audiotapes were still made for individuals to reflect and listen to their sessions and to use in the construction of their assignments. My aim in introducing the videotape was to capture what the audiotape could not, that being the visual aspects of the embodied relationship between us. In other words, I wanted to be able to see how I was with the students and how we were together, again giving me the chance to examine more closely whether, and to what extent, I was living or denying my values in practice.

The act of video recording is more intrusive than the audiotape. I was not sure if students would be comfortable with it, but on the whole members of my action learning sets on MAPOD 4 and MAPOD 5 were agreeable to me using this means as a record for my own inquiry. However, I would point out that, in both cases, I introduced the videotape towards the end of the second year, when I believed my relationship with the students was fairly well established and when I thought there was the necessary trust in place between us to warrant that degree of intrusion. There was, however, one occasion during an action learning set meeting when an individual asked for the tape to be turned off. This followed a tense moment of encounter in the teaching and learning relationship when I had pressed the student to address how she would account for herself reflectively in her dissertation. I had become concerned that her proposed evaluation of her project would be normative, lacking a critique of practice and of the managerial discourse that framed it.

Looking back at the tape, I sensed her perturbation and discomfort with my challenge prior to her request for the tape to be turned off. This reviewing of the tape gave me the opportunity to think and reflect whether I could have made that experience more meaningful and less threatening for the student. Could I,

for example, have tempered my challenging disposition with more careful facilitation, perhaps even inviting the other set members present to help her explore my question and at the same time dissolve the anxiety that my challenge seemed to create? If I had, I would undoubtedly have lived my values more fully in my practice than I did so on that occasion.

Harper (1994:406) discussing “the authority of the visual image”, points out that Bateson and Mead (1942), whose studies of Balinese culture are legendary, only turned to the camera some ten years into their study. “Their theories of the group they studied were correspondingly complex and grounded in anthropological knowledge” (Harper (1994:406). In my case, I had developed a degree of trust and intimacy with each student whose sessions I videotaped and in some cases I had already written about my situated experience with them, individually or collectively, before turning to the tape. I want to suggest that my theories are grounded in my lived experience of working with these students.

These tapes exist as a permanent record of moments in the teaching and learning relationship. They help me compose and construct more honest accounts of renderings of these moments. The tapes have forced me to look more carefully at my initial interpretation of events and to see things in the learning relationship that are not initially seen or appreciated from my point of view, as with the example given above.

Embodied Knowledge: Values in Action

My claim to originality is based on a living theory account of my inquiry into my own educational practice, for example, in Chapter Nine,⁴¹ I draw on evidence from these videotapes in the form of edited clips. My purpose in bringing these

⁴¹ Entitled “Developing a connoisseur’s eye: exploring the aesthetics of my teaching and learning relationships on MAPOD”.

visual images to the fore in my thesis is to give you a glimpse, an insight into my practice, so that you can step into my shoes for a moment, guided by my narrative account, to see for yourself some examples of my inquiry in action. In particular, I want to show how my embodied knowledge has guided my values in action, and where in my inquiry I have experienced myself as a living contradiction in the process of my teaching and learning relationships.

When I start the tape I do not know what is going to happen, and I do not even necessarily know what I have captured, nor its meaning or significance to my inquiry. Therefore, viewing the tape becomes part of my inquiry process, the benchmark being my purposes and espoused values. It is in asking the question “How am I living my espoused values in action?”, as I view the tape, that leads me to make sense of it, and to realise what is significant to me, as I can re-experience the evidence to see whether I am living or denying my values in practice. Not knowing what the data has to say until you engage with it is potentially risky. I have learnt to trust the process, anticipating that something useful will be realised from taped sessions of action learning set meetings that last on average three or four hours. Yet this wealth of raw data is itself challenging, as it takes time and often several viewings to decide what it is that you are drawn to and what the significance is of the data that you are selecting and/or rejecting. In the process, I have found myself consciously asking “why am I focused on this particular image?”. I also find myself checking that I am working with the data, by this I mean following its internal logic and not editing it at random to make it fit into a predetermined category.

Focusing and Drawing Out Meaning From the Data

The editing process that I have adopted is guided by the purposes of the particular session. Viewing the whole tape helps me relive the session and the sense making emerges in the context of the whole. That includes the particular

action learning set, the learning relationship with particular individuals and with the set as a whole. When I do this systematically I do not have to search for categories, they seem to emerge by themselves in the process. I think this is because I have lived within the data and am passionately connected to the learning relationships that organise and give meaning to those experiences the videotape has captured. But the intimacy does not make the editing process easy.

The paradox of not knowing also means that the quality of attention needed to view the tapes and select and edit the data is such that I have spent whole days viewing and reviewing the tapes. In the first instance I view the tapes, letting the data wash over me, attending lightly with a hint of detached curiosity about what I see and notice about the session. This part of my inquiry involves a kind of 'reverie', a psychodynamic technique (White, 2002). Through this kind of reverie I am able to review the visual data "allowing the nuances of the working alliance to illuminate my conscious awareness" (Hartog and Winstanley, 2002). On the second and subsequent viewings I tend to revisit the notes that I made of the session(s), checking them against my thoughts and recollections as I ask myself "what is going on here?" and consider whether I am living or denying my values in practice.

I then revisit my purposes before selecting or editing any clips. In practice, this process takes place over a period of months: in-between times, I let my impressions sit or settle as I get on with writing the related chapters, revisiting the tapes if I am unsure about what I am trying to say or the veracity of the claims that I am making. As I work through the tapes I begin to see chunks of meaning emerging from the data, and it is in relation to these chunks of meaning that I cut and select the clips, relocating the edited video images within my narrative account.

I have attempted to describe and explain the tapes' relevance and the purpose I believe they serve in illustrating my thesis. In addition, I have attempted to provide the background and detail that will help you to appreciate their significance and meaning as I do. I have at times felt torn by the editing process, deciding what images to include and what to leave out, and wrestling with the problem of how best to do justice to the nature of embodied knowledge in my inquiry account. What I have to be satisfied with is the synthesis I can offer you of my inquiry through the aid of visual representation.

Of course, the danger here is that there may be bias. In fact I am sure there is. Someone else viewing the tapes may well see other things from their point of view, but I am not trying to produce a thesis of collaborative inquiry. Yes, there are many instances of collaboration in the MAPOD process, but this thesis is an account of my living theory as a tutor in higher education, and as such it is primarily an account from my point of view.

I must acknowledge Judi Marshall's (1981) account of "Making senses as personal process", in which she shares her reflections of working with interview data, collecting it and making sense of it. Her account provided me with the stimulus to reflect on my own process of working with audio and videotaped data.

Summary

Firstly, in this chapter, I have defined action research drawing on the emancipatory traditions of critical theory, considered the increasing influence of reflective practice within this approach to human inquiry and identified the need for caution and critique in both cases. I have also identified the role of the individual practitioner in action research, distinguishing it as a personal and human endeavour in which one individual sets out to act in the best interests of

the other. I have explored how such a personal endeavour requires an understanding of the world from one's own point of view, drawing on Polanyi's (1962) insights on the importance of personal knowledge in research, which is central to the creation and legitimation of one's own living theory. Following Polanyi, I have drawn on the concept of connoisseurship in order to help me name the aesthetic and tacit knowledge involved in the action reflection process of my research; the purpose of which is to improve the rationality and justice of my teaching and learning relationships.

Secondly, I have explained what I understand a dialectical engagement with the world to be, placing my 'I' as the subject and object at the centre of my inquiry, as a teacher in higher education examining my own practice. I have framed my research as being concerned with social change in that it involves a search for the right questions appropriate to my teaching and learning relationships benchmarked against my educative values. I have argued that educational action research, though addressing questions that all good teachers address, is more than good teaching in that it involves systematic enquiry made public. In addition, I have addressed the nature of the action research cycle itself, reiterating the dialogic process of question and answer as it emerges in spirals of action and reflection. In explaining this process, I have attempted to show what it means to be a dialectician, holding together the one and the many, and the related importance of others in the making and understanding of our lived experience. In terms of my inquiry, I have identified the importance of others' perspectives, dialogue with students and the imperative of the educational researcher to see things from the other's point of view, and in doing so, learnt to honour and recognise the need for human agency in the other. Using Rowan's (1981) cycle of action research in a dialectical way, I have mapped my initial cycle of inquiry addressing the following questions:

- What is the felt perturbation in my teaching that initiates this research?
- What are the educative values that underpin my approach to teaching and learning?
- How do I understand the limits and constraints of my educative practice?

I then drew this section to a close by examining issues of validity in action research.

Finally, I have addressed issues of approach and method that are distinctive to action research. In particular, the role of theory in action research and the role of literature and writing in this inquiry. Specifically, I have discussed my process of recording and making sense of data in this inquiry, and specifically the role of visual evidence as an alternative form of representation in this thesis, enabling me to benchmark what I see evidenced in my practice against my espoused values, exposing the contradictions of my practice and enabling me to ask what I need to do in order to live my values more fully in my practice in those particular learning relationships.

CHAPTER THREE: *WOMEN'S WAYS OF KNOWING:* A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE

In this chapter I aim to provide a review and critique of *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (Belenky et al., 1986).⁴² The ideas that this book have given rise to are especially relevant to this thesis. I first read this book within a few years of its initial publication. Its ideas had resonance for me and gave me the tools to describe my own learning history. Furthermore, I believe it shaped my emergent 'living theory' of what developmental education required, in turn, influencing the design of the MAPOD, in respect of an approach to learning based on a community of learners. During my inquiry, I have read this book many times, developing with each reading a deeper understanding of the text, helping me clarify over time how I could improve my practice.

I begin with an introduction and overview of the study that forms the basis of this book, and then develop a more fulsome account of the five epistemological perspectives that shape the order of presentation of this book. In doing so, I aim to help the reader who may be unfamiliar with this work to gain an appreciation and understanding of how it has influenced my research. I develop my account by explaining how these perspectives resonated for me, and by providing a glimpse of how they helped me understand and know myself better as a learner. In addition, I indicate where they have influenced my thinking and living theory as a professional educator. By placing myself as knower within the text, I hope to show how the reading of this book and its subsequent review and critique was for me, not an activity of detached intellectual curiosity, used to produce a traditional literature review, but rather a process of engagement with ideas in which I as a knower was intimately connected and attached to that

⁴² Hereinafter in this chapter referred to as *WWK*.

which was also known to and communicated by others. The reading of this book began a relationship with those ideas that the authors brought into the public domain, leading to a personal and organisational learning trajectory of transformation. Finally, I will address issues of critique, drawing out in particular some of the key criticisms brought to light in the work of Goldberger *et al.* (1996).

Introduction

Belenky *et al.* (1986) describe ways of knowing that women reported to them, based on their individual life experiences. In the process, the authors identified particular ways of knowing that women have cultivated and valued, ways of knowing, they argue, that have been denigrated and neglected by the dominant intellectual ethos of our time. These ways of knowing, claim the authors, though gender related, are not gender specific, thus suggesting that whilst these ways of knowing might be held in common by women, they are also accessible to men. Their research involved intensive interviews with 135 women from higher education and the wider social sphere.

In developing their theory of knowledge, Belenky *et al.* were concerned to understand ‘how women know what they know’. They believed that what women considered to be truth and reality affects the way in which they see the world, including perceptions of self, and views of teaching and learning. The book shows how women’s self concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined. Epistemology is presented as an organising framework of the book.

They describe five epistemological perspectives from which women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge and authority. Moreover, they show how women struggle to claim the power of their own minds.

The context of this study needs to be appreciated in respect of what had gone before and the growing awareness that, in the majority of social science research, there had been a distinct absence of women, not least because academic research traditionally was conducted in universities, populated predominantly by male students.

The starting point for the authors had been Perry's work (1970) on intellectual and ethical development.⁴³ Perry identified stages of development in intellectual and ethical thought. Significantly, this included a shift from dualism to multiplicity – the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, giving way to a multiplicity of perspectives. He also noted that students move beyond dependence on authority towards a position where they hold their own opinion. Beyond that, he recorded a stage of development which he called 'full relativism', in which meaning and context are relative. At this stage, the student appreciates that knowledge is constructed, not given; contextual, not absolute; mutable, not fixed.

Significantly, the authors of *WWK*, in contrast to Perry (1970), reported *perspectives* on ways of knowing, not stages of development and they reported *differences* in the ways of knowing not present in Perry's study. The authors state that their wish is to *share* their findings, not *prove* anything.

That women speak in a different voice was not entirely a new concept. Gilligan (1977) showed that women differed from men in their orientation. She showed that women's moral development was more likely to be marked and differentiated by concerns about care, responsibilities and connectedness, whereas rights, autonomy and separateness were characteristic of men's approach to moral thinking, decision-making and action. *WWK* thus serves to

⁴³ Conducted at Harvard, an ivy league university in the United States, populated by male students.

extend the work of Perry and Gilligan, thus extending our knowledge of theories of knowing.

Additionally, *WWK* was groundbreaking in that it studied women from diverse backgrounds. As well as samples of women from the university population (the traditional source of participants and informants in social science research), the authors specifically included women from what they termed ‘the invisible colleges’. By contrast, these women were outside the formal higher education system and compared to students in higher education the women from the ‘invisible colleges’ had limited formal education. Generally, these women came from poor and working class backgrounds. They tended to need social support and instruction on parenting skills, which the ‘invisible colleges’ provided. Significantly, therefore, there was diversity in terms of class differences, education and life experience in the sample that informed this study. This particular feature of the research design is not insignificant, because by including women from such diverse backgrounds the authors were able to identify ‘voice’ as the anchoring point of the study. It is testimony to the collaborative approach of the authors, who found a way of working together that addressed the different interests of their client groups and the research questions they wished to pursue. The focus of the interviews was on women’s experiences of life and learning:

“We were particularly interested in how maternal practice might shape women’s thinking about human development and the teaching relationship. We expected that by listening to women talk about mothers and mothering, we might hear themes that were especially distinctive in a women’s voice” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:13).

Drawing out the concept of ‘maternal thinking’ as described by Ruddick (1980, cited in Belenky *et al.*, 1986), the authors anticipated that wisdom (knowledge) gained through maternal thinking and practice might illuminate educators and practitioners in social services in their work regarding human development.

The five epistemological perspectives by which women know and view the world, as identified by this study provide an organising framework for the book. These are (1) silence, (2) subjective knowing, (3) received knowing, (4) procedural knowing, including two different types of procedures, called separate and connected knowing, and (5) constructed knowing. The book is presented in two parts; the first focuses on ways of knowing, whilst the second explores the context of development in families and schools. The final chapter develops the idea of ‘connected teaching’, the theme of which is bringing the maternal voice into the academy. The substance of each perspective can be differentiated as follows:

Silence: in silence women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless, and subject to the whims of authority.

Subjective knowing: from this perspective, truth and knowledge are conceived as personal and private and subjectively known and or intuited.

Received knowing: this is where women see themselves as capable of receiving and reproducing knowledge from external authorities. But these women do not see themselves as being able to construct or create knowledge themselves.

Procedural knowing: procedural knowledge is present where women are invested in learning. It describes methods for obtaining and communicating knowledge. Two types of procedural knowledge are reported; ‘separate knowing’ distinguished by evaluation and objectivity in judging an others point of view, and ‘connected knowing’, distinguished by acceptance and appreciation of another’s’ point of view. These procedures build on ‘different voice’ theory (Gilligan, 1982), highlighting how separation and attachment

influence ways in which men and women tend to think through and approach issues.

Constructed knowing: from this position, women view all knowledge as contextual. They experience themselves as creators of knowledge and place value on both subjective and objective strategies for knowing.

Voice: a Metaphor for Growth and Development

The authors noticed how the metaphor of finding or gaining voice appeared to reverberate throughout the interviews. Initially, they thought it was merely a form of shorthand for a point of view, but as they progressed with the interviews they began to appreciate it as a metaphor that applied to many aspects of women's experience and their development. Women spoke of voice and silence as they described their lives, using variously such terms as speaking up, speaking out, being silenced, really talking, really listening, feeling deaf and dumb, having no words, saying what you mean and listening to be heard. This range of comments fell within the five perspectives and was related to feelings and beliefs regarding sense of mind, self worth and the extent to which women felt isolated from or connected to others. The metaphor of voice became the unifying theme that linked both the perspectives and the chapters in the book. Furthermore, the idea of finding voice is symbolic of the journey that women have had to make to 'put the knower back into the known' and to reclaim the power of their minds and voices (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:19).

The authors draw our attention to the differences between the visual and oral traditions in respect of knowledge and knowing. The following quotation shows the subtlety and influence of using this analogy when compared with the oral tradition in the shaping of the western mind:

“Visual metaphors such as, ‘the mind’s eye’ suggest a camera passively recording a static reality and promote the illusion that disengagement and objectification are central to the construction of knowledge” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:18).

The authors further point out that visual metaphors suggest that you need to stand or position yourself at a distance if you are to get a proper view. Contrast this with the oral tradition where “the ear requires closeness of subject and object” (ibid.) if one is to be heard and appreciated by the other. Put this way, the metaphor of voice and its importance in *WWK* takes on a very particular and enhanced significance, as will become clear when we examine the differences between ‘separate’ and ‘connected’ knowing.

In academia, when we speak in terms of the visual metaphor, we tend to invoke the qualities of illumination. For example, when we use theory to illuminate practice, the practice becomes a ‘thing’ for which the theory provides background objectification, and thus the mind’s eye is associated with intellect and reason. By contrast, more auditory or kinesthetic analogies, such as resonance, imply relationship and connectivity, within which subjectivity is an active component. Subjectivity was considered antithetical to the academic and scientific tradition until relatively recently. Though there has been some movement in this, academics tend to remain suspicious of subjectivity.

Taking the path less travelled, the authors choose to pay particular attention to the maternal voice and how it influences knowing.

“The stories of the women drew us back into a kind of knowing that had too often been silenced by the institutions in which we grew up and of which we were a part. In the end we found that, in our attempt to bring forward the ordinary voice, that voice had educated us” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:20).

In hearing and naming the maternal voice, not generally associated in institutions of higher education, *WWK* serves to facilitate the questioning of the

dominant repertoire of theories of knowledge in the academy, and offers possibilities for its expansion.

A More Detailed Understanding of the Five Perspectives

Silence: For women whose voices were silenced, silence was synonymous with oppression. Belenky *et al.* (1986), utilising a question from Gilligan's (1982) study, asked the women to describe their sense of self as they see themselves now and in the past. For women who are 'silent' this was an impossible task, as they claimed that they "relied on what others told them about themselves to get any sense of self" (1986:31). In their interviews, they described their experience as being silenced by voices of authority, and they reported that these authorities were quick to tell them (with respect to their thinking) 'you've got it wrong'. In examples such as this, words were used as weapons, undermining or belittling them. For some women, silence provided a degree of safety, as they were fearful of speaking in the face of authority. Some described their experience as being akin to feeling "deaf and dumb" (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:34). Authorities were described as "wordless authorities" (1986:27). By which, the women explained that those in authority seldom made it clear what they wanted or expected, moreover, such authority figures "expected you to know in advance" (1986:28). These women were effectively terrorised in their silence, defending themselves both psychologically and, in some cases, physically, by being on guard and anticipating the whims of authority. This type of silence is marked by violence. Silent women, the authors reported, often grew up in social isolation from others, with their families cut off from the wider community. In addition, discussion with other family members was often actively discouraged. "The silent women lived cut off from others in a world full of rumor and innuendo" (1986:25).

Conditions of social isolation, coupled with a lack of opportunity to play with other children, or the chance to engage in dialogic relations with others, served to arrest the development of silent women. Through dialogue ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ speech is developed. Whilst the former facilitates an awareness of one’s thought process, in other words, an awareness of the development of mind, the latter facilitates a development of voice. Whilst these are ‘home’ factors, the school context was not necessarily any more supportive for silent women. Belenky *et al.* (1986) point out that schools provide little for the development of outer speech and inner speech, where the traditional role of the teacher is that of the knowledge authority. Thus, the teaching methods serve to reinforce the experience of silence. Furthermore, Belenky *et al.* argue that to concentrate on developing the written form before the oral process has been developed is likely to be tragic. They describe these silent women as “...lost in the sea of words and numbers that flooded their schools” (1986:34). For them, school was an unlikely place to find voice, “...it only confirmed their fears of feeling ‘deaf and dumb’” (ibid.). And, in the words of one woman, “in school you get detention for talking to others” (ibid.). The term and perspective of silence became a benchmark for the study.

“This position though rare, at least in our sample, is an important anchoring point for our epistemological scheme, representing an extreme in denial of self and in dependence on external authority for direction” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:24).

From my perspective

The descriptions of silence, as described in *WWK*, strongly resonated with my childhood recollections and observations of my mother. I was born in Coventry in the 1950s. My parents had emigrated from Scotland so that my father could work in one of the car factories. My mother, the youngest of ten, struggled to cope. Socially isolated, she had no-one to turn to, to help her in developing her

skills in cooking and parenting. Money was tight, we lived in relative poverty, and due to the onset of illness in pregnancy my mother had lost her job. She had epilepsy, and without a reference she was unable to find another job, not that she could have coped with a job and a child at that time. To keep a roof over our heads my father worked long hours, but he was unable to cope with the domestic chaos that prevailed and, in turn, he took his frustration out on my mother, subjecting her to regular beatings. Thus, domestic violence, social isolation, the lack of opportunity to play, and the absence of dialogue with others bounded my childhood experience within a wall of silence.

Like the silenced women that Belenky *et al.* describe, I had learned that survival depended on obeying wordless authorities. I grew up knowing that I should not wait to be told to do something; rather, I should anticipate what they wanted. Being seen and not heard was required.

Subjective Knowing: The hallmark of subjective knowing is the emergence of ‘the inner voice’. This perspective marks a developmental shift from passivity to action, in effect, from silence to a “protesting inner voice and infallible gut” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:54), which facilitates a sense of self, agency and control.

Significantly, ‘truth’ now resides in the person, this transition enabling women to become their own authorities. This is the key difference, when compared with the perspective of received knowing. However, both perspectives still share the tendency toward dualism, that being the belief in right and wrong answers. Belenky *et al.* suggest that a shift toward this perspective is linked to the experience and reaction women have to “failed male authority” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:57).

“For women, the freedom from social convention and definitions implied in the shift into subjectivism represents a more greater autonomy and independence” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:55).

Subjectivism is in essence the antithesis of rationalism and scientific thought; therefore, this perspective is not without risk to the knower in a world dominated by the scientific and rational tradition. Belenky *et al.* inform us that some women are ‘shaky’ about the power of their own judgment.

The developmental process in this period of subjective knowing lays the ground for experiential learning through reflection, as the women learn to ‘hear themselves think’ and take heed of their observations and listening.

From my perspective

Though I remained confident as I entered my teenage years that the right answers were to be found through those in authority, particularly in education, I began to experience doubt both in respect to parental authority, and that of church, whose doctrine of blind faith defied both logic and plausibility. Being brought up a Roman Catholic, attending a girls’ catholic school and taught mainly by nuns,⁴⁴ I gradually became more cynical about the wisdom of many of my teachers. I could not see how such apparently intelligent people could be fooled by the double standards portrayed by the clergy (who governed the school).

In the mid-sixties, the role of women in society was changing, yet at the same time the clergy, by Papal decree, was charged to preach from the pulpit on women, their place in society and the doctrine of the church, which banned the use of the pill. Though at the time I was too young for these matters to affect me directly, they did affect the decisions of women of my mother’s generation, many of whom, like my mother, neither wanted nor could cope with another

⁴⁴ There were a number of lay teachers, though they were required to be practicing Catholics.

pregnancy. There were rumours about one of the parish priests having an affair with a local woman. Many years later, another was to be charged and found guilty of child sex abuse. The parish priest had no interest in the poor or needy in the parish; he was only interested in building up the wealth of the parish, and to this end he only had time for 'his' wealthy sponsors. I found this deplorable, since the majority of parishioners were working-class, and selflessly gave significant sums of money to the church every week. Though unable to speak up or speak out against these failed authority figures, my inner voice was beginning to inform my thinking.

For me, the turning point in my quest for self came following a long period of illness in my fourteenth and fifteen years, when my educational future was placed in doubt, and when the options being presented to me were typing skills, a quiet little job in an office, and a good marriage prospect. I could no longer see my life in terms of the values of the community in which I lived, or indeed, imagine fulfilling their expectations of me. I began to plan my escape and, with the help of my doctor, I determined to make education my ally.⁴⁵

Received Knowers: This perspective involves listening to the voices of others as a means of knowing what to know. Thus, within this perspective listening, receiving or taking in what authorities have to say is equated with being a learner.

“While received knowers can be very open to take in what others have to offer, they have little confidence in their ability to speak. Believing that truth comes from others, they still their own voices to hear the voices of others” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:37).

From this perspective, the notion that 'truth' is received and is somehow 'out there' and experienced as external, is the predominant view of women who have

⁴⁵ I continue this story in Part Two of this thesis.

this perspective. The idea that ‘truth’ is constructed is out with the perspective of these women. One of the features of this perspective is that it is difficult to believe that authorities themselves might disagree or hold competing views. I recall vividly a particular occasion with the first MAPOD cohort, when one of the students, frustrated by the different views expressed by the tutor team, shouted: “Why can’t you lot get your act together”, reflecting her expectation that authorities should be clear about ‘the truth’.

Received knowers are listeners and tend toward conformist thinking. Belenky *et al.* suggest that the socialisation of women in society to ‘be seen and not heard’ conditions them to “cultivate their capacities for listening while encouraging men to speak” (1986:45). It is further argued that when women speak they are judged not in comparison to men but by this taken for granted ‘standard’ of behaviour. This view is supported by Cline and Spender (1987).⁴⁶

Though there have been changes to society’s norms in the west, facilitating opportunities for more equal relationships between men and women, particularly with regard to educational opportunity, change on the home front by comparison, for many working mothers, has been in my experience been minimal, whilst in the boardroom very little has changed. Received knowers are potentially very vulnerable. According to Belenky *et al.*:

“Received knowers are especially at the mercy of authorities judgments. If someone in a powerful position tells such a woman that she is wrong or bad or crazy, she believes it” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:49).

On the other hand, if the authority demonstrates belief in the woman, it is likely to cause the woman to believe in herself.

⁴⁶ In their aptly named book, *Reflecting Men at Twice their Natural Size*.

From my perspective

As a child I experienced myself as dumb and without a voice though I did not experience myself as deaf. Rather, I depended on authorities for guidance and believed that if I listened well to those in authority I would learn. But like the women in Belenky *et al.*'s study, I was vulnerable to the judgments of authorities, and their view of me shaped my own view of myself. I went to my first primary school until I was approximately eight years old, where most of the teachers I encountered gave me some encouragement to positively see myself as a learner and a potentially useful citizen. But in my next school the message changed. The school was pioneering discovery methods of learning, where the children were being sent out to complete tasks and projects and learn for themselves, but with little or no guidance. I was used to being instructed and found myself at sea in this new regime. The school authorities demanded due deference from pupils, which translated as 'carry out instructions as given by authority figures and don't ask questions'. Consequently, I found myself in a double bind. I did not thrive in this environment. I was not considered suitable grammar school material and I duly failed the eleven plus examination, leaving to attend a local secondary modern school. Despite this experience of perceived failure as a learner, I persevered, believing that I just had to listen harder and pay more attention if I was to become a successful learner.

Procedural knowing: Procedural knowledge is generally thought of as 'the voice of reason'. Belenky *et al.* tell us how the voice of reason stifles the inner voice. One example given is the procedures taught for analysing a painting. They describe five criteria on which one's evaluation and judgment of a painting is made, namely:

- the composition;
- the texture;

- the colour;
- the lighting;
- how the artist expresses his/her feelings.

The self is noticeably absent from this procedure.

“The inner voice turns critical; it tells them their ideas may be stupid, and because their ideas must measure up to certain objective standards they speak in measured tones. Often they do not speak at all. But this is not a passive silence; on the other side of this silence, reason is stirring” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:95).

In academia, there are conventions supporting this type of reasoning. In particular, argument and adversarial discourse. Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983, in Belenky *et al.*, 1986:102) described two different self-concepts. One a ‘separate self’, that is autonomous, which gives its name to ‘separate knowing’, and the other, in which one is ‘connected’ to others in relationship, and thus named ‘connected knowing’.

Separate Knowing: Doubting is at the heart of separate knowing. Citing Elbow, who coined the phrase ‘the doubting game’, we are told that this involves “putting something on trial to see if it is wanting or not” (1973, in Belenky *et al.*, 1986:104). In short, this procedure requires us to look for what is wrong and/or missing, taking the contrary position, or playing devils advocate. It is a procedure commonly applied in academia toward teaching learning and assessment.

From my perspective

This was the game I would learn as an undergraduate and further refine as postgraduate and new academic. Paradoxically, in finding voice in the academy,

the doubting game can leave students feeling that they rather than their ideas are being put on trial. Belenky *et al.* suggest that students may become pawns in the doubting game.

“In accepting authorities’ standards, separate knowers make themselves vulnerable to their criticism. The authorities have a right to find fault with the reasoning of separate knowers; and since there is nothing personal in their criticism, the separate knowers must accept it with equanimity” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:107).

That this is the dominant way of knowing in academia is not insignificant. As a tutor, I have felt obliged to teach my students how to play the doubting game. I wanted them to know how to construct a good enough argument and to know that they should back up their claims with evidence. Not least, because I know that they would likely be judged by that standard by other authorities. Separate knowing is a public language expressed in public performance and based on reason and critical thinking, in contrast to subjective knowing which is a private language based on intuition. But I have learned that, for some students, even teaching them how to play this game can hinder their development, as they experience and/or perceive this procedure to be destructive. For students who have yet to find their voice, and who are vulnerable to criticism, the location of criticism as personal and not in the context of their ideas is often how they hear feedback, which can undermine their development and, in some cases, lead to feelings of failure. This experience as a tutor is borne out by the findings of Belenky *et al.* who report that “on the whole, women found the experience of being doubted debilitating rather than energizing” (1986:227).

In developing their argument, the authors describe it as “the doubting model as peculiarly inappropriate for women” and further state that they are “not convinced” that it is any more “appropriate for men” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:228). At times this traditional approach to academic judgment on MAPOD became a source of tension between staff and students, raising questions concerning

what constitutes academic rigour and ‘valid knowing’. It has been a significant question for my own practice, and one that has influenced my research.

The language of separate knowing is a public one based on reason. Belenky *et al.* remind us that we are governed not by men but by laws. This type of procedural knowledge extracts the self from the known. It relies on objectivity and pure reason. It is an adversarial form and has significant power implications. On this very issue, Belenky *et al.* state:

“This is not the common ground of genuine colleagues. The teacher has not, in the words of radical educator Paulo Freire, become a genuine ‘partner of the students’, a ‘student among students’ (1971,p.62). The teachers still wield the power: They write the rules of the game and rate the players’ performances. But teachers and students can now speak a common language, and they can at least play at being colleagues” (1986:107).

Despite shifts in power relations on MAPOD toward greater equity between students and tutors through practices such as peer assessment, partnership as described by Belenky *et al.* remained problematic. It is one of the living contradictions experienced in my practice as a tutor and is a paradox that sat uncomfortably at times with the broader efforts of tutors and the programme to facilitate a different way of being in educative relations with students, that being a more collegiate relationship, and one responsive to students’ needs.

Separate knowing is engrained as the dominant mode of discourse in business and society. It is characterised by debate and the notion of the better argument. Schweickart (1996) suggests that we are not easily able to conceive of a way that is different and yet, still valid.

Connected knowing: Connected knowers develop procedures for gaining access to other people’s experiential knowledge through resonance and empathy. It involves acceptances and precludes evaluative judgment. It is the

opposite of the ‘doubting game’; it is ‘the believing game’ (Elbow, 1973, in Belenky *et al.*, 1986:113). It involves “seeing the other not in their own terms but in the other’s terms”.⁴⁷ Schweickart cites the definition offered by Clinchy (1989) of the ‘believing game’, stating:

“[it is where you] suspend your disbelief, put your own views aside, and try to see the logic in the idea. Ultimately, you need not agree with it, but while you are entertaining it, as Elbow says, ‘say yes to it’: you must empathise with it, feel with it and think with the person who created it” (Clinchy, 1989, cited in Schweickart, 1996:310).

Connected knowing is marked by “really listening”. It involves the “capacity to attend to another person and to feel related to that person in spite of what may be enormous differences” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:143).

Contrasting the Two Procedures

In separate knowing, evaluation serves to place the object at a distance and the self above it, creating mastery over it, whereas connected knowing requires intimacy and equity with the person and their ideas. Knowledge as judgment and knowledge as understanding would seem to differentiate these two procedures.

“Connected knowers begin with an interest in the facts of other people’s lives, but they gradually shift the focus to other people’s ways of thinking. As in all procedural knowing, it is the form rather than the content of knowing that is central. Separate knowers learn through explicit formal instruction how to adopt a different lens -how, for example, how to think like a sociologist. Connected knowers learn through empathy. Both learn to get out from behind their own eyes and use a different lens, in one case the lens

⁴⁷ The work of Elbow (1973), a composition theorist is cited by Belenky *et al* (1986:104). They state that he had run a programme at one of the participatory colleges in their study, on innovative writing for new students. Though his ideas of believing and doubting originate in the context of composition writing, Belenky *et al.* use them as an explanatory framework to explore the way in which a reader and specifically an academic authority might approach a text.

of a discipline, in the other the lens of another person
(Belenky *et al.*, 1986:115).

Though connected knowers avoid making judgments, this should not be taken as a sign of passivity or lack of agency. The attitude of trust and the assumption that the person has something good to say would, according to Belenky *et al.*, suggest forbearance, if not an intentional form of passivity, reflecting a relationship in tune with the other.

Connected Teaching

Linked to connected knowing is connected teaching. It is concerned with bringing the feminine principle into the educational learning relationship. “It is time for the voice of the mother to be heard in education” (Noddings, in Belenky *et al.*, 1986:214). This is a clear reference to the maternal voice, the caring voice of the mother. Belenky *et al.* invoke the metaphor of ‘teacher as midwife’. This is where the teacher helps the student draw out and give birth to their own ideas. Where the women in their study reported occasions for developmental/cognitive growth, it was where a midwife model of teaching and learning had been employed (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:227). The authors further describe connected teachers as “believers [who] trust their students’ thinking and encourage them to expand it” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:227).

From my perspective

As a tutor, I have had to work much harder to develop this kind of knowing in my teaching and learning relationships, grappling with and learning how to really listen, and be accepting of student accounts. The challenge this has presented has given rise to an area of inquiry within my research, which I offer as storied account of working with students, in Part Two of this thesis.

Constructed knowing: This is a perspective that integrates ways of knowing, creating a voice in which women embrace the pieces of themselves, in search of their own unique voice.

“It is in the process of sorting out the pieces of the self and of searching for a unique and authentic voice that women come to the basic insights of constructivist thought: **All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known**” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:137) emphasis original.

To be able to see knowledge as constructed expands our possibilities for thinking about things. Constructed knowers appreciate the relevance and uniqueness of context to knowledge. Constructed knowing greatly expands the power of the mind. Building on Polyanyi’s (1958) contribution to our understanding of the role of ‘personal knowledge’ in scientific thinking, Belenky *et al.* suggest that constructed knowing excites a passion for knowing: “the passionate participation of the knower in the act of the known” (1986:141).

From my perspective

This thesis involves such passion as described above, in that a self-study places my ‘I’ at the centre of my inquiry, as I engage reflexively with the construction of my own living theory, and its reconstruction, as I come to know myself as a living contradiction, and as I passionately engage with improving my practice in my teaching and learning relationships. Commenting on this quality of knowing. Belenky *et al.* state:

“What we are calling passionate knowing is the elaborated form connected knowing takes after women learn to use the self as an instrument of understanding” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:141).

The capacity to ‘really listen’ goes hand in hand with the capacity to ‘really talk’. It involves constructed discourse, such as exploration, talking and

listening, asking questions, argumentation, hypothesising and the sharing of ideas. It is a reciprocal process where listening and taking on board the ideas of another no longer has the oppressive elements, as experienced by the received knower. “In ‘real talk’ domination is absent, reciprocity and cooperation are prominent” (Belenky *et al.*, 1986:145-146).

‘Really talking’ is likened to the ‘ideal speech’ situation of Jurgen Habermas and is based on each person being able to speak their truth unencumbered by power plays from the other. Habermas emphasises both understanding and achieving consensus concerning validity of claims, assessed by truth, truthfulness and normative rightness. Habermas relies on the process of intersubjective understanding as the litmus test for assessing validity claims, or a warrant to the argument. Intersubjectivity is taken as primordial by Habermas for the co-ordination of action.

Criticisms of *Women’s Ways of Knowing*

Perspectives or stage theory?

WWK has not been without its critics. Despite the authors’ assertions that the five epistemological perspectives identified in the study are not presented as a developmental stage theory, they have faced criticism on this front.

“Despite the explicit disclaimers, the rhetoric of the book, reinforced by its organisation and the invocation of other developmental psychologists, continually evokes notions of progress from simpler to more complex, less to more adequate ways of knowing or epistemological perspectives” (Ruddick, 1996:252).

This seems fair criticism, since the journey from silence to voice as described by the five perspectives does give the illusion of progress, and as Ruddick points out this journey mirrors the educational process of development utilised in the

United States. Indeed, the progress marked by constructed knowing in education is rewarded and seen as a mark of epistemological and intellectual success.

Valuing Diversity or Concealing its Complexity?

WWK made a distinctive contribution to its field, because it drew on the experience of women both at universities (the traditional location for participants in social science studies) and ‘invisible colleges’ of America, thus including women who had not had a formal education, and who were from poorer working class backgrounds and usually excluded from such studies. We are told that the study included a number of women from diverse ethnic minority backgrounds. However, criticism has been made in respect of its limited application to non-white American and Anglo Saxon cultures. Who are these women from ethnic minority backgrounds? The merging of the data into a melting pot of women’s responses conceals rather than reveals the uniqueness of their experience. Consequently, we do not get an appreciation of the richness or complexity of the diversity that women from ethnic minority communities bring to the study. Referring to the way in which the authors of *WWK* describe how they worked with the interview data, Maher and Tetreault make the point that “few of these individual ‘whole stories’ are heard” (1996:155). Indeed, they argue that what is missing is a perspective of the societal and structural influences of race and class, culture and other factors that serve to shape and influence the growth and development of self. This concealment of positionality, that is, the location of identity within a network of relationships, including cultural, political and economic, obscures the very differences that a study of inclusionality ought to achieve.

Silence: a Negative or Positive Experience?

Not unconnected to the view on diversity and positionality is the criticism of *WWK* for its rendering of silence as an inadequacy. Though there is no doubt that the women cited were silenced due to powerful voices in authority that left them feeling deaf and dumb, criticism suggests that silence may be a virtue in some cultural contexts and not a lack as implied by this study.

One such alternative has come from Patricinio Schweickart (1996). A Filipino, Schweickart begins her essay with reflections on the meaning and tradition of silence in her own culture, in which silence is valued. In particular, Schweickart presents a positive relationship between silence as a way of knowing and wisdom, and asserts that “thoughtful silence is a highly valued form of agency” (1996:306).

Though the criticism that Schweickart offers recognises the potential for difference, it does not in my opinion diminish the particular perspective on silence that the authors of *WWK* found. Adding further clarity to this perspective, in the light of such differences, Belenky (1996) adds a ‘d’ to the word silence. Not wishing to disrupt but clarify this perspective as an anchor for their epistemological framework, Belenky argues that what specifically distinguished these women whose stories informed this perspective was that they were silenced (Belenky, 1996:427). In her notes on page 427, Belenky points out that in studies of non Western cultures as those reported by Goldberger,⁴⁸ silence is linked to powerful accounts of “connecting with and apprehending the world” independent of language and ways of being that for those of us who are what she calls ‘word people’, dependent on language, find difficult to understand. Defending the original perspectives of silence and received knowing, Belenky (1996) argues that retention of these epistemological perspectives in their original form is important to projects concerned with

⁴⁸ And of course by Schweickart in the same book, *Knowledge, Difference and Power*, Goldberger *et al.* (1996).

emancipation, in other words, where the aim is to overcome the stifling of the human condition caused by silence, and where the goal is to facilitate human liberation and the facilitation of voice.

The journey from silence to voice involves awareness of how one's voice has been stifled, and a critique of the oppressor, thus enabling one to distinguish and construct a voice of one's own, and a sense of self and mind. A similar position is taken by Freire, who says:

“In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of their oppression, not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is necessary, but not a sufficient condition by itself for liberation; it must become the motivating force for liberating action... The oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves” (1972:25).

Personally, I find Belenky's (1996) clarification to add a 'd' to silence, immensely helpful. I have both experienced the perspective of silence as a child growing up in a chaotic world that mirrors the descriptions offered by Belenky *et al.* (1986), and as described earlier, and I have experienced being silenced as a mature professional woman in the face of overwhelming voices of authority. This is despite otherwise being considered by colleagues to have a strong sense of personal agency. I thus want to suggest that the experience of silence is not only an anchor point, as described by the authors of *WWK* for their findings, but in addition, I perceive silence like a virus, ever contagious in an authoritarian and androcentric social order. Not wishing to understate my view on this issue, I cite Richard Shaull:⁴⁹

“At first sight Paulo Freire's method of teaching illiterates in Latin America seems to belong to a different world from that in which we find ourselves. Certainly it would be absurd

⁴⁹ Who wrote the foreword for Freire's (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

to claim that it be copied here. But there are certain parallels in the two situations which should not be overlooked. Our advanced technological society is rapidly making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system. To the degree that this happens, we are also being submerged in a new ‘culture of silence’” (Shaull, in Freire, 1972:foreword).

I think Shaull makes the case that silence remains a real and present danger for all of us in the modern world.

‘Ideal Speech’ and ‘Really Talking’: a Different Perspective

Whilst appreciating Habermas’ effort to put intersubjectivity in the forefront of cognitive and moral theories, Schweickart critiques what she calls her ‘counterintuitive’ response to his reduction of ‘understanding’ to ‘agreement’, (1996).

“In my view Habermas offers a stripped down version of communication, one that has been emptied of substance in order to render it theoretically manageable. One theoretical consequence of the exclusion of ‘feminised’ substance is a theory that misrepresents the structure of intersubjectivity and communication. *Women’s Ways of Knowing* recuperates the substance that has been dumped out (or ‘muted’) by Habermas” (Schweickart, 1996:309).

Schweickart’s argument is an important one for feminist standpoint theorists, because it highlights how the force of the better argument and the debate takes prime position in normative discourse. Feminist standpoint theory suggests that connected knowing need not be seen as subservient, rather it needs to be seen as different and valuable in its own right. Feminist standpoint theory aims to convince us that we can adopt an appreciative stance.

Standpoint Theory: an Advantage or Disadvantage?

From the point of view of the authors of *WWK*, the intention to specifically draw on the experience of women stood in contrast to the male voices heard in the

Perry (1970) study and the predominantly masculine perspective of social science studies in general. However, one anticipated criticism of a feminist standpoint approach to theory is that in the same way as those studies it criticises for excluding the feminine perspective, in turn it employs the exclusion of the male perspective.

It has been suggested to me by male students that the very title of *Women's Ways of Knowing* creates an assumption that any perspective relevant to them will be absent from the text. Whilst I believe that the specific intention to represent the experience of women, traditionally excluded from such studies was right and is a cause for celebration, I do empathise with the view expressed by those male students. More significantly, the danger with feminist standpoint theories, if they are seen to be exclusive, perpetuates the gender specific rather than gender related myth that the authors tried to explicitly avoid. Ruddick (1996) in defence of *WWK*, points out that the authors speak of particular women, not woman in general. Furthermore, she asserts that identities are not fixed.

Significantly, the perspective of connected knowing revealed in the study is relevant to both men and women if we are to cultivate a different way of being in relationship with others, specifically in education and industry. Ruddick points out that both “Women and Men are limited by a **system** that makes it difficult to think in a ‘voice’ that is both ‘different’ and credible” (1996:266, emphasis original). Indeed, in drawing out her argument for maternal leadership, Belenky cites Ruddick, who says:

“it is a struggle for women to make their own viewpoint heard, even to each other and to themselves. She says maternal thinking is a ‘revolutionary discourse’ that has been silenced. ‘As a central discourse’, she says, ‘(it could) transform dominant, so-called normal ways of thinking’ (Ruddick, 1989:p.269)” (Belenky, 1996:416).

Why then has society never recognised maternal thinking as an asset? Belenky (1996) suggests that mothers are ignored precisely because they are seen as irrelevant to public life. She develops her argument to suggest that because the role of motherhood is seen as natural, in other words, in essence, a gift of nature, the mother is seen to be exerting no ‘agency’ and thus her caring work is counted as contributing nothing. ‘Agency’ implies activeness and self-directedness. Thus, Belenky is suggesting that in the perceived absence of ‘agency’ we might understand how it is that the role of motherhood is assumed to be natural. That this myth needs to be tackled and shattered is important, if the discipline of maternal thinking is to be appreciated as a discipline and quality that is gender related and not gender specific, in other words, confined to women, and if it is to serve the thinking, understanding and behavioural changes that this different way of knowing can facilitate leadership roles.

Belenky provides an explanation of why this myth has become embedded in society. She points to economic accounting systems used world wide for assessing a nations wealth. “Whereas Women’s traditional work is classified as ‘reproductive’ waging war is classified as ‘productive’” (1996:416). Belenky explains that accounting systems were invented to help nations work out how they would pay for their wars, arguing that even today in many countries military expenditure can be allocated in accounting terms as though it were contributing to the wealth of a nation “in spite of the fact that military spending allocates resources to unproductive and destructive endeavors” (1996:416).

Conclusions

Despite the criticisms, *WWK* has provided an expanded theory of knowledge, which has identified ways of knowing that are associated with the feminine principal, hitherto not recognised in earlier epistemic or developmental studies. It has contributed to our understanding of knowledge as a socially constructed

phenomenon and one in which the maternal voice plays a significant part. This is important in a society that values reason and which has largely failed to recognise and place value on what we can learn from a different procedure, yet equally disciplined way of thinking. Its epistemological framework with its distinct anchor point of silence draws our attention the relationships and conditions that cause oppression, and helps us understand the development processes involved in moving from silence to voice. Notwithstanding criticism, it would seem that *WWK* has touched the lives and minds of many women and I am one of the many. It is a force for a liberating pedagogy.

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that *WWK* shaped my emergent living theory in respect of influencing the MAPOD design as a community of learners. Like the ‘public homeplaces’ that Belenky (1996) describes,⁵⁰ MAPOD was founded with the idea that a community of learners would provide a safe haven in which learners, battered by the experience of inhumane workplace organisations, might find a space where they could recuperate in the company of peers and, in the process, develop a critical stance toward the social and political organisational arrangements that give rise to inhumane practice. At the time of launching MAPOD, in the mid-1990s, many of my students were Human Resource professionals, who were managing in difficult and changing circumstances, dealing with the onslaught of mergers, acquisitions and redundancy programmes. These professionals were often absorbed with the work of ‘emotional labour’ (Fineman, 1993), which drained many of them of energy and assaulted their integrity. The values of care and respect amongst equals and relationships based on mutuality and reciprocity, as reported by Belenky (1996:395), were similarly espoused in the MAPOD recruitment process and reinforced on the programme, in the expectation that participants were

⁵⁰ “Public homeplaces: nurturing the development of people, families and communities” by Mary Field Belenky, was one of the essays inspired by *WWK*, ten years after the initial study. See Belenky (1996).

responsible not only for their own learning but that of others. Learning how to facilitate a good company of learners became an important strand of my practice inquiry, not least as I would have to learn how to live up to the values and process that I espoused. Given my conditioning in the academy to be an effective procedural knower, I had much to discover in my inquiry about my way of thinking and coming to terms with myself as a living contradiction. The ideas in this book helped me do that.

Just as the authors of *WWK* returned to the work of Gilligan (1982) to develop their different voice theory, I too revisited her work so that I might better understand the storied accounts she gave to illustrate the differences in the rights and responsibilities orientation of participants in her studies on moral decision making. Moreover, it helped me to better understand how separation and attachment in the lives on men and women give rise to how ‘truth’ is carried by different modes of language and thought. Gilligan suggests that:

“To understand how the tension between responsibilities and rights sustains the dialectic of human development is to see the integrity of two disparate modes of experience that are in the end connected. While an ethic of justice proceeds from the premise of equality - that everyone should be treated the same - an ethic of care rests on the premise of non-violence - that no one should be hurt. In the representation of maturity, both perspectives converge in the realisation that just as inequality adversely affects both parties in an unequal relationship, so too violence is destructive for everyone involved” (1982:174).

In my own case, developing my understanding of these different truths has helped me grapple with and work through tensions between responsibilities and rights in my teaching and learning relationships, and in the course of this inquiry.

In this chapter, I have provided a review and critique of *WWK*. I have indicated how the ideas borne from this study resonated with my experience and how those ideas have influenced my thinking, professional practice and inquiry.

