

Chapter 3

Living my life
creatively

Expressing and clarifying my values through the creation of a DVD

In this chapter I demonstrate how through the creation of a DVD of my practice I have developed and built on my growing understanding of my emergent practice. I will also show how through the process of observing myself in practice I have been able to clarify my embodied ontological commitment to a passion for compassion. This process has enabled me to transform this embodied ontological commitment into a living and communicable epistemological standard of judgement by which I can now hold myself accountable.

When the process of communicating the narrative of my learning began I was concerned that my written word would be unable to communicate in the way I knew I could communicate using a different medium. Sometimes I find that the written word can not fully communicate what is happening, particularly within a creative environment. For me in particular the written word can be restrictive, we miss the subtleties of seeing the relationships being played out before us. So much of what we communicate is communicated through body language, how we respond with gestures and glances and how we place ourselves in relation to each other and within space. Even how we enter and leave a space can speak volumes. As this plays a big part in my practice I wanted to find another way to communicate, another way of sharing my practice. Eisner (1995) also places emphasis on the potential for achieving greater understanding that may be difficult to express in words. As a performer it would be a natural step for me to create a performance piece as a way of communicating my ontological commitment to a passion for compassion. The performance of texts developed from research can also be used as part of the inquiry itself and I have also used this process as part of this inquiry.

“Performance of the research text is an embodiment and representation of the inquiry process as well as a new process of active learning. The possibility of active learning in each performance or recreation of the text exists through our ongoing commitment to maintaining the conditions of our relationship. Each performance is an experiential basis for reflection, analysis, and learning because in relationship we are ‘participants-as-collaborators (Lincoln, 1993, p. 42) Together we were able to draw out each other’s knowledge and strength. (McIntyre & Cole, 2001. p.43).

To create a performance text was tempting but it would always rely on me being present alongside my thesis to perform, this would be a little impractical. It was also for me less of a challenge. I wanted any readers of my thesis to be able to have access to my practice in a visual way, in this way any claims I make within the text of my thesis can be tested by the reader who will be able to see me engaged as a practitioner. This would enable me to present to the reader an evidence base for any claims I may be making.

When I returned to Higher education as a student following a gap of many years I discovered that I had changed in a way that the Academy had not. I had taken a very creative route and had found my voice through the medium of theatre and in particular theatre-in-education and theatre for development. My experience of undertaking a Master of Science degree at the University of Bath was that more value was still being placed on the traditional forms of representation of knowledge. I am aware that when trying to communicate my practice and my embodied knowledge as a practitioner, for me, the written word is very often inadequate. I also felt very strongly that as a creative practitioner and performer to exclude this from my thesis would be denying my self and the uniqueness of myself as I have engaged in the development of a living theory of my practice as a

facilitator of healthcare improvement. I first of all had to make a decision as to how I could include a creative representation of my work and what form that creative representation should take.

Since returning to the health service in 1992 I have been involved in the facilitation of healthcare improvement. Throughout this period I have been asking myself the question ***“How can I improve my practice as I engage with others in a process of co-creating a better health service?”*** This inquiry focuses primarily on the last six years of my practice as I have tried to develop a more creative approach to working with colleagues drawing on the work of theatre practitioners such as Boal and Brecht and educationalist such as Freire. This approach, I believe, has led to the development of a much more holistic and creative way of working which places particular emphasis on identity, relationship and communication. It was important for me to find an art form that the Academy would accept, if only in part, as a visual representation of the narrative of my learning but also one that I was satisfied communicated in a pedagogical way. What I mean by this is that as I have engaged in this process of action research I have come to know my practice, I have developed a knowledge base and an understanding of my practice and this has allowed me to generate an epistemology of my practice. I want to share this knowledge base with others, both practitioners and those within the Academy in a hope that this will contribute to our growing understanding of practice.

Throughout the period of this inquiry I have kept a video record of much of my work as part of my process of data collection. The more I looked at the video recordings the clearer I became about my practice, my embodied knowledge and the values I was living as part of my practice. I believed that creating a DVD of my practice that included insights into my values would help the process of transforming my values into living standards of judgement by which I would be more able to hold myself accountable. I

also believed that engaging in this process in a transparent way would enable the validity of my work to be judged. Any claims I make within the writing of my thesis could be validated by seeing me living my values in practice.

As I began the process of editing my material and creating a DVD, a process that lasted for a period of about four weeks in November 2003, I was at first almost overwhelmed by the amount of material I had amassed. I was initially daunted by the prospect of first of all watching all of this material and then creating something, in an artful way that would have the potential to be informative and also would be able to communicate what I needed it to communicate. Not only was I overwhelmed by the material but also by the technology involved in this kind of editing process. I made a decision to approach the making of my DVD in the same creative and disciplined way I would begin a devising process. When devising I need to immerse myself in all the research material I have amassed and then apply myself to a process of dialectically engaging with the material. In this process I am not only aware of myself as a “*living contradiction*” (Whitehead. 1989) I am also able to create characters and scenarios where these contradictions are re-enacted in a creative form in order to engage and influence an audience. Balancing this creative process with the additional challenge of familiarising myself with a confusing array of technical equipment stretched me at times to my absolute limits. I had many moments of doubt when I questioned my ability to manage this complicated process but I was also encouraged by what I was learning about myself as I watched myself engaging in my day to day practice.

When engaged in a challenging and creative activity I also need to keep feeding myself aesthetically and I do this by walking in the countryside surrounding our home. I find that re-engagement with the beauty of the world in this way reminds me of my place within it. I become grounded

by my sense of belonging to and having a place to be that connects me to everything else. As I walk I am acutely aware of my surroundings and myself and how the two are intertwined. For some reason this engagement with the natural world gives me a sense of purpose, a sense of being, a sense of belonging. This is certainly meant in a spiritual sense but not in a religious sense. This engagement with nature enables me to focus and reminds me of what it is that drives me, that drives my passion, that drives my inquiry and that is a need to make things better. I have come to understand through the process of this inquiry that I have a very powerful ontological commitment to a passion for compassion. When I talk about compassion, what I am referring to is unconditional and connects me to the other in such a way that I can not ignore. I have a need to try to get inside the other in a way that enables me to develop a greater understanding of them and as a consequence of how we relate and respond to each other. This passion for compassion also comes with a hope for the future as I engage in a way that strives for improvement.

An extract from my research journal helps to communicate how important my engagement with the natural world is as part of this process of connecting.

Blank Document

I always seem to make the same choice when opening a new file, but the description today, blank document, seems very appropriate. Today I have found it difficult to write, finding things to distract me, but at the same time feeling deeply that I have something to write. I finally gave in to Shandy's big, sad, brown eyes and agreed to a quick walk. I warned her it would have to be short as the light was already beginning to fade. In reality, despite her enthusiasm, short walks are what we should be limited too. Shandy is a Springer Spaniel and will be 13 in April, just 2 days older than Daniel. Like many Springer's she refuses to grow old

and faced with tall grass or a field of corn she will spring on her back legs to her hearts delight and hang the consequences. The consequences for a dog of her age, with arthritis in her hips and a gross loss of sensation in her back legs are quite profound. She falls over, regularly, and flat on her face but with that singular determination that dogs seem to possess, she drags herself up and carries on where she left off. As we walk up the lane on this cold winter's afternoon, bathed in the light of a most glorious sunset, I find myself reflecting on how many times I have fallen on my face and how I have struggled to pull myself back up onto my feet. Why have I continued doing what I do when so often it has been a struggle? Why am I driven in the way I am with a passion that so many times exhausts me? I am suddenly shaken out of my thoughts by an eerie sound. At first I am not sure what it is, it is a siren of some sort, but it is still a long way away and the way it echoes around the valley confuses me. There is a gate nearby into a field, which gives me a clear view of the road below and of our house. The sound gets closer and I am now certain that it is an ambulance. I am transfixed, unable to move and have to wait until it passes, blue light flashing, siren sounding, with an urgency that contradicts its speed which is slow and careful, taking at least 5 minutes to disappear. My thoughts then went to the person inside, their life obviously hanging in the balance. I wondered about that life, whether it was short or long, happy or sad. It seemed to me all the more tragic because of its proximity to Christmas. I remembered the Christmas I spent in Alder Hey hospital at 6 years of age with my own life in the balance. I also recalled another Christmas when I was 8 when I had sat quietly beside my beloved grandmother as she died in an armchair, beside the fire, with a mug of hot milk in her hands. I remember the feeling of utter powerlessness, wanting it to stop but knowing that it was out of my hands, there was nothing that I could do. Many years later, when I was 22, I again dined with death. My new husband (Alex) and myself were

taken on a sailing trip to St Margaret's Bay by a work colleague of mine called Robert. Robert and Alex were both experienced sailors but I had never been allowed to sail. I was a strong swimmer and loved swimming but my mother's younger brother had drowned on his 16th birthday and although she had insisted that we all learn to swim, sailing was something she had never allowed. I was very excited, I loved the sea. It was unusually warm and sunny for March and I was wearing a pair of shorts and an Aaron sweater, what I thought was appropriate dress for an afternoon of sailing. As we launched Robert's very small mirror dingy quite a brisk wind sprung up from nowhere. I sat in the boat as Robert pushed us out into the water but before Alex could even get in a sudden violent gust took us off at a rate of knots. It was so exciting, so exhilarating it made me laugh out loud. Robert had managed to jump in just in time and he was laughing too. "We had better turn around and get Alex," he shouted. I turned around to look back at the shore and was amazed at how far we had already gone. Alex was now just a dot on a distant shore, I could just make out that he was waving frantically. I wasn't sure how you turned a boat around and watched as Robert struggled with the sail and tried to swing us around. We were caught again in a sudden gust and the sail spun around and before I could duck out of the way it struck me on the head and we capsized. As we both surfaced we were still laughing. Robert told me not to worry and to hold onto the upturned boat beside him and we would just pop it over. Unfortunately the bit of the boat that you kneel on underneath to right it snapped and we realised that we were not going to be able to fix it. I panicked and instinctively tried to swim away back to the shore. It was then that I discovered I was completely tangled up in the boats rigging and I was trapped. I tried desperately to untie myself but after just 2 minutes in the sea my fingers were frozen. Robert shouted to me to hang on to the boat and pointed out that swimming anywhere was a bit stupid. It was then that the realisation hit me "Are we going to drown?"

I asked Robert. “Probably” was his reply. Of course as things transpired we didn’t drown, we were rescued by an RAF helicopter that happened to be in the vicinity. However, for the half hour or so that I spent in the water, as the waves lapped over my face and I lapsed in and out of consciousness, I saw my lived life flash before me. I can remember feeling slightly amused that this does actually happen and also at the selection of images that flashed before me, some of them deep and meaningful and some seemingly trivial. What is most significant for me though was the absolute clarity and truth with which I was seeing. I confronted truths that I didn’t want to confront or that I had been afraid to face. Remembering these moments on this afternoon makes me wonder if it is this that drives me. Is it because I have experienced moments of absolute truth and clarity that perhaps this has given me the determination to try to find that truth and clarity as I live my life now? Can it also be that having experienced moments of total powerlessness I have created an empowerment within me that engages me in other struggles? I hope that as I create my thesis, the story of the creation of my living theory that I can begin to understand, in greater depth, my self.



Shandy died in January 2004 – I miss our walks

Reading this extract from my research journal reinforces the importance of the natural world and the way the connectedness I have with the people and experiences in my life have made a contribution to my creative processes. I am also reminded of the work of Alan Rayner and his ideas on inclusionality (Rayner 2004) which have influenced the way I think of and try to practice in an inclusional way. I feel his notion that we should feed life with death rather than feeding death with life is particularly pertinent to the way I live my life. I think this comes from me having faced my own mortality at such a young age and as a consequence this has given me an acceptance of the certainty of death.

These walks have also become an integral part of the way I work with Shaun. As we walk we talk in great depth and detail about the work we are doing, trying to make sense of our experience and finding ways to move what we are doing forward in a creative way. I wanted to find a way of including our walking conversations in the video. I also find that music helps me to focus in a more creative way and I often find when listening to music I am relating the lyrics of songs to my work and this also helps to make meaning out of what I am doing. I wanted the music on my DVD to enhance its meaning.

The images selected for this DVD have been taken from several pieces of research undertaken throughout this period. Each of these pieces of research was undertaken for a specific purpose and where and when required were subject to approval from their local ethics committees, which in each case was granted. The focus of this DVD, which I have created to accompany my thesis, is not however specifically related to those research projects. My focus here is on *my learning* and in response to asking myself the question “*How can I improve my practice*”. It is important to note that the clips used for this DVD do not include all the data available for each project. The clips selected for the DVD have been

included because of their significance in illustrating a particular learning point in relation to either my practice or to illustrate my values in practice. It is also important for ethical purposes for me to point out that consent was obtained from those individuals present on the DVD. This consent extended not only to their contributions being included in each research project but was also extended to include this DVD and for any other educational purposes identified by the research itself. In addition express permission has been agreed for any copyright material that has been included.

Chapter 1 – Introduction – Time 2minutes 55 seconds

Chapter one places my research within the larger context of current affairs and the political climate of this period. I want to communicate the importance I place on context within my work. I also want to communicate the pressures that healthcare professionals, service users and carers were subject to throughout the period of this research. In my ‘walk talk’ with Shaun I place emphasis on the importance of relationship in the work I do. I believe that by engaging in inclusional, responsive and dialectical relationships we have the potential to generate new knowledge that may help us to co-create social formations and as a result enable better environments in which to deliver and receive health care. I have also tried to find a balance between the statements made by the headlines, the constant criticism by the media of the health service and the bigger picture of the threat of war and global instability with the images of the people who contributed to my research. I introduced the image of the turning globe held together with sticking plasters to express my concern with global issues, my relationship with the natural world and the relationship between the two in order to offer a more unified view of the world. This I believe communicates the emphasis I place on my embodied value of inclusional and responsive practice. What I mean by inclusional

practice goes beyond the notion of making sure we are all included to an understanding of our selves in dynamic relationship with everything else.¹

“Inclusionality is awareness that space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete massy objects, is a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organization, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication. Correspondingly, boundaries are not fixed limits - smooth, space-excluding, Euclidean lines or planes - but rather are pivotal places comprising complex, dynamic arrays of voids and relief that both emerge from and pattern the co-creative togetherness of inner and outer domains, as in the banks of a river.” (Alan Rayner’s website. www.bath.ac.uk/~bssadmr)

The choice of music here is also very important and it took me a long time to find a song where the lyrics felt appropriate. The song opens with *“In times like these, in times like those.....what will be will be.. and so it goesand it always goes on and on and on and on.”*(Jack Johnson.2003. Times like these. On and On.)

To me this communicates the sense of inevitability that was felt throughout this period particularly in relation to war and fears of global conflict and potential destruction. The singer also uses words with opposite meanings such as war and peace, action and reaction, birth and death. This reminded me of the importance of diversity and a wish for us not to see opposites in a negative sense but to value the richness that that difference can bring. The final words of the song *“Somehow I know it won’t be the same,”* are important to communicate the process of continual transformation that I and the people I am working with are engaged in. As part of my ontological commitment to a passion for

¹ Inclusionality and my growing understanding of inclusionality and how that has progressed from a complexity theory perspective are discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

compassion comes a hope that I have for the future. I believe I communicate this hope for humanity in the work that I am engaged in.

Chapter 2 – Breaking Down the Walls of Silence – Time. 9 minutes 27 seconds

In this second chapter I show some of the work involved in the “*Breaking down the walls of silence*” project.² This project was established to improve the quality of the experience of people with dementia using our services. As the project lead I wanted to develop a more inclusional and responsive way of working that placed the patients and their carers at the centre of the work, so that we could develop a more patient centred focus. My emphasis on the responsive is also important. What I mean by responsive is that I believe that in my practice it is not enough to be inclusional. My passion for compassion means that I am bound to respond in order that together we can begin the process of transformation for improvement. In my walk talk with Shaun in the opening clip I am expressing my delight at the way in which some of the service users and carers embraced this piece of work and welcomed me into their homes and into their lives. In the first 3 clips I am interviewing people with dementia and their carers in their homes. These particular clips have been selected because I believe that they are able to clearly communicate to those watching how I am living my values in my practice. The first clip communicates my passion for compassion by showing how I strive to live my embodied values of trust and love and respect for self and for others in my practice and that this is being communicated through the loving and trusting relationship that we have established with each other. The following clip shows Charlie reading a letter he had prepared for me. Charlie cares for his wife Marion at home. Marion has Alzheimer’s disease which is quite progressed and her ability to converse is limited.

² A fuller account of this work is available in chapter 6.

Charlie was anxious that he might leave something important out about his experience as a carer and how he had had to change in order to look after his wife. He was reading this letter out loud to me and I was listening to him and filming at the same time and I was very aware of Marion's body language. I was worried that I was losing her as she was unable to engage in the conversation, I thought that she was feeling excluded and as a consequence had become disengaged. Marion then catches my eye and in a very beautiful moment of connection she makes a grand gesture behind Charlie's back. I believe that this moment captured on video communicates the trust and respect and the inclusional and responsive nature of our relationship.

The following clip of my walk talk with Shaun describes the moment when I decided I should bring my experience of theatre in education and theatre for development into my work in healthcare. I believe that this clip shows my growing understanding of my practice and also my understanding of the ways I can develop and improve my practice as a facilitator of healthcare improvement. I can do this by using a creative approach that can draw on my embodied knowledge as a practitioner in theatre in education and theatre for development. I also believe that it demonstrates both a concern and an understanding of the context within which I am working.

This chapter includes a character, Sue, devised from the research. In the first clip of Sue she is visiting her General Practitioner (GP) to express her concern about her mother's health. The character of Sue was developed with a pedagogical intent from the information collected from the experience of service users and carers throughout this research. One of their concerns, which came up over and over again, was the importance of the recognition of the early signs of dementia, signs that are so very often not noticed or sometimes can be dismissed. Sue's character

communicates these concerns very clearly and in this situation they are again dismissed and she is reassured by her GP that her mother's behaviour is nothing for her to be worried about. This re-enactment was devised from the many stories I collected from people who had had a similar experience. This lack of recognition of memory problems as being one of the early signs of Alzheimer's disease can have a negative effect on the care and well being and potential outcome of people in the early stages of this illness. Characters like Sue have been used as part of an ongoing programme of education and development for healthcare professionals particularly within primary care. With the development of characters such as Sue I am trying to make sure that the voices of people with dementia and their carers are included in the development of health policy and provision and I believe that this clip communicates the inclusion and responsive nature of my relationship with them. The methodology I use to translate research data into theatre is discussed in greater depth in chapter 8, using the performing arts to encourage emergence.

Chapter 3. – I am because we are – Time. 11 minutes 58 seconds

In this chapter I show some of the work involved in the research project "I am because we are".³ I have interwoven selected clips from the interviews I conducted as part of the research for this project with clips from the characters in the game show we devised to communicate the research findings. These clips have again been chosen because of the significance I have placed on them in relation to their specific contribution to my learning and my growing understanding of my practice and the values that inform my practice. In this context I feel I am able to demonstrate the importance I place on working in an inclusion and responsive way. I am doing this by including the voices of those contributing to the research and

³ A full account of this project is included in chapter 8. Using the performing arts to encourage emergence.

also by the construction of a theatre form that allows the audience to participate in the theatre itself. The performance of these three characters also enables me to communicate the empathic relationship I have developed with those I am portraying. The first character April communicates the stereotypes with which many people we talked to still see nursing and nurses. This was often in conflict with what those interviewed said was their experience when they were patients. The question of identity was a big issue for nurses, patients and those responsible for the development of nurse education. The character of May a newly graduated nurse who is grappling with a decision either to stay working as a nurse in a job she feels passionate about or to take up the offer of a lucrative position with a pharmaceutical company. The initial response from the audience to the character June was laughter as they recognised her from their own experience. The laughter of recognition is very important as it allows me as an actor playing the character to engage with them and fully express my empathy with the character I am portraying. June's voice represents the voices of many nurses who I interviewed who expressed their frustration at not being able to do what they felt intuitively they wanted to do. They expressed their frustration at being locked into a system that only seemed to value outcome in the form of waiting times, delays, waiting lists and discharges. People we talked to about their experience as patients talked about the need to be cared for while in hospital. They needed to be supported and their expectation was that that was the nurse's role, but their experience was that the nurses were often too busy to tend to their needs. What this event was able to do was to create an environment where, stimulated by the characters and the research, nurses could engage in a relationship where the issues that were raised could be discussed and challenged in an open, honest and meaningful way.

I believe that in this context my practice has been both inclusional in the sense that I have been aware of and embraced the boundaries that prevent us from being inclusional. I have also been responsive in a pedagogical sense in that I have found a creative process that allows me to develop empathic relationships with the people I am working with in a research context. I am then able to give voice to their experience in a way that engages the audience / participants in a dialectical process where we all seek ways in which to live our embodied values fully in our co-practice. These pieces of theatre are not presented to an audience in an attempt to provide prescribed solutions but rather to stimulate and engage in order to encourage conversation within which people can address their own issues in ways that are meaningful to themselves.

Chapter 4 - National Service Framework for Older People – Decision

Day – time 33 minutes and 52 seconds

This chapter opens with me and Shaun walking in the beautiful countryside that surrounds our home. We are talking about the difference between this piece of work and the previous chapter **“I am because we are”**. The concern I am expressing here is whether with such a large audience we can still include an element of participation in the theatre piece itself. We eventually agree that despite this difficulty we want to ensure that the audience is able to participate. This clip shows how important to me my embodied values of inclusionality and responsive practice are. Showing how I respond to people telling me their stories by the creation of the character Joan I believe I am communicating love and respect for self and for others. I do this by entering into a relationship with the participants of the research in which I feel that I express trust, love and empathy and a desire to communicate their voices, voices which are so often stifled within society as a whole by our negative response to the elderly. My intention here is to share my passion for compassion in a

way that will encourage those in the audience to consider their own practice within similar contexts.

In the first clip of Joan I have tried to communicate her understanding of her own ageing body and her determination to make the best of her situation. I was so often humbled by the elderly participants of the research by their determination to continue very often despite their relationship with healthcare providers rather than as it should be, being supported by them.

In the second clip of Joan I have tried to communicate through her voice how vulnerable older people can often be and again how very often the systems we put in place to help can often fail them. Comments from the older participants like *“I mustn’t grumble”* and *“There’s nothing down for you – nothing – is there?”* reinforce these facts. When interviewing the older participants they would very often open the conversation with support for the health service, however as their stories unfolded there were many occasions when they had actually been treated very poorly. They talk about the pain they suffer in a way that communicated that they expected to have to put up with a certain amount of pain. The GP in this clip also reinforces this fact that very often healthcare providers expect older people to put up with more discomfort just because they are old. I found this difficult to accept and believe that this is because it violates my embodied value of love and respect for self and for others. In clip three I have tried to communicate this through Joan by her desire to return home but also to have the support she needs in order to live her life in the place she wants to be rather than to have to give up her independence and live in a nursing home.

This chapter I believe also demonstrates how I am reflecting on my practice in order to improve it. I show the development from chapter 2

where I tentatively bring in my embodied knowledge of theatre in education and theatre for development to this chapter where I have not only devised a piece of theatre rooted in the research evidence but I am also sharing the research evidence with the audience in a way that enables my practice to be judged. Engaging in this process in this way allows me and my practice to be held accountable by myself and also by others.

Chapter 5 – Creativity in a Complex World – time. 3 minutes 34 seconds

In this chapter I was presented with somewhat of a dilemma and in the first clip of Shaun and I enjoying our walk talk I am expressing this concern. I want to communicate in this chapter some of the creative work I engage in with healthcare practitioners, carers and service users. Taking part in a creative workshop can sometimes make the participants feel vulnerable as they engage in a process that involves them in taking risks. The space that is created for them is one of a sharing of a mutual vulnerability and so they feel able to take risks as they know I am holding a safe space for them. The presence of a video camera in these situations can sometimes be too imposing and changes the nature of the work. I myself engage in creative workshops with other practitioners and I decided, with their permission, to include some clips from these. I also wanted to communicate some of the passion I have for what I do and what Jack Whitehead refers to as my *“life affirming energy.”* This life affirming energy also communicates a hopefulness for the future and is clear to see when I am occupying a space where I know I am living my embodied values fully in my practice and the sheer joy of that experience can be seen in this chapter. The lyrics to the song express this also *“When my heart skips a beat”*.⁴ (Ben Harper. Steal my kisses. Beatbox mix. 1999) In the opening walk talk with Shaun I express the fact that if we are to be truly inclusional and responsive in our practice then our practice also

⁴ Chapter 7 - Being creative in practice, contains a full account of the creative workshops.

has to be improvisational. I can only be improvisational in my practice if I am able to express my tacit or embodied knowledge in a trusting and loving relationship with myself and the people I am working with. I believe that it is only through this engagement that our co-practice can be truly emergent.

Accounting for myself

When I was happy that the DVD editing process was complete I decided to present it to a group of Action Researchers in the Department of Education in the University of Bath. I wanted to share this piece of work with them in order that I could hold my claims to account. Jack requested the following by way of preparation “*...to focus on the communication through a visual narrative of your living standards of judgment that are being clarified through their emergent expression in your complex adaptive responses in particular relationship and contexts. One of the most significant things I think you can do in your preparation is to focus on the language you use to describe your values to yourself as you see yourself in the different relationships and contexts through the DVD.*”

I once again felt very vulnerable as I shared my work with this group of people whose opinions I respect and value. I was also concerned that what I was communicating was in fact now second hand and with a medium it had not been developed for. Each piece of theatre has been devised from research for a particular audience. They have each been devised to be presented within a live context and with a pedagogical intent. It is also important to note that the pieces of theatre are never presented as stand alone performances that are delivered to an audience. Each of these pieces of theatre was used as a stimulus within a service improvement setting where audience members were engaged in a workshop setting where they were focussing on improvement. My concern was that here the theatre was

now being communicated through a different medium, DVD, was no longer live, and was not created for this particular audience, the contact with the intended audience was now excluded. I hoped it would be able to communicate what I wanted it to communicate. The audience engagement had quite a profound impact on me, their questions were difficult and searching but I believe I was able to answer them in a way that satisfied their questions. The following are excerpts from the email responses to me on the following day.

March 2004

The contents of your visual presentation are way beyond anything I have done myself or have seen from other researchers. Your Breaking Down the Walls of silence is brilliant. When you communicate with passion ‘If we can know that it is the people who are important, then everything else will fall into place.’ You carry hope for the future of humanity through the care of your passion and your capacity to articulate.

Jack Whitehead

- 1. I felt your ‘love and respect’ for (inner) self was evident in the radiance of your performance, that allowed you fully to express and enjoy your empathy with those you were portraying.*
- 2. I felt your approach to be very important in ‘bridging the gap’ between explicit ‘knowledge transfer’ (definitive language use, especially through the written word) and the ‘implicit communication’ (expressive language use) that awakens/evokes the latent understanding that is embodied in our human experience and unique personal situations.*
- 3. I feel the ‘power’ issue is sensitively dependent on where the power is coming from – whether it is based in an impositional logical premise and hence authoritarian and hierarchical in style, or whether it comes relationally from the togetherness of co-creative relationship.*

Alan Rayner

You communicated the uniqueness and living nature of your embodied values of inclusional relationship, responsive practice, trust, love and respect for self and for others and the importance of living life creatively. I experienced Alan's response this morning as most affirming. That was a wonderful achievement last night, showing why you valued so highly your theatre in education in a way that enabled the authenticity of your own values to shine through. Great.

Let's not underestimate the importance of the embodied value of humility in what you do. It's probably, alongside your empathy, that enables others to feel your genuine desire to hear their story and to relate closely to their concerns and to who they feel themselves to be.

Jack Whitehead

I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed your DVD.....I loved the way you had chosen to present it – that inter-leaving of words to indicate the issues, with the turning globe and other visual images at the beginning and the end, was strikingly effective and I was very taken with how you linked your conversational planning with the Luckington walk. But most of all, your three role plays, the daughter who is so anxious and so caring about her mum, desperately hoping all these small signs don't add up to something serious (but they do! They do! And then June, the caring nurse, who's just bloody exhausted and fed up with all the red tape that gets in the way – and the fact that staff are just too busy trying to cope to be of much support for each other – and finally the lady who is well aware of her ageing body but determined to make the best of it as she buttons up her cardy and turns a brave face to the world....

Is there no way your disk can be submitted as a complimentary text alongside your written thesis. It's too important to be relegated to just an appendix.

Pat Darcy

There is a dilemma in that this DVD should form a central 'body' of your thesis. The University regulations as they stand don't allow this because the main 'body' of the text has to be written text.

Jack Whitehead

So it is therefore within this context that I submit my DVD to the Academy, not just as an appendix to my thesis and unfortunately not either as a central 'body' to my thesis, but rather as an alongside partner to my written thesis. In this way I share my practice in as transparent a way as I can in order to hold my practice and the claims I make in relation to the way I try to live my values fully in my practice. I do this in the belief that it will make a contribution to a new scholarship of educational practice in the way that Donald Schön (1995) called for us to develop.