Chapter 6

How does learning happen?:

My Educational learning story

Vocation (…)
the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need
(…) it begins in the nature of the human self,
in what brings the self joy,
the deep knowing
that we are here on earth
to be the gifts that God created.
Frederick Beuchener

Introduction

In this chapter I provide an account of my evidence of the biochemical nature of learning from the perspective of educational learning and through an educational lens. From my lived experience as an Academic Developer at the Durban University of Technology, I share my three concerns related to students not engaging actively in *whole-being-learning* which contributes to their low throughput. I share how it matters to me that teachers are passionate about teaching.

I provide a Venn diagram of *whole-being-learning* as manifested in a safe community of practice with nurtured relationships, recognised talents and gifts and integrated knowledge. I examine the extent to which I am living out my values through using multimedia representations and analysis of human expressions.

What is my concern? Why am I concerned?

In 2001, the Ministry of Education (Education 2001) issued a five year National Plan for Higher Education that had graduate throughput as one of its priorities. More than a decade later, graduate throughput has still not improved. A recent study at the DUT revealed an overall throughput of 23.60% (Pillay 2010). In Pillay's study, throughput is calculated by tracking a cohort of students registering for the first time in a given year, and completes the qualification in regulation time. In DUT's case, this is mostly three years. Throughput is a priority since an increased graduate output would ensure that the needs for high managerial and professional skills would

be met nationally. I see this need for increased throughput also from the point of view of the students who need to complete in minimum time so as to contribute to the socio-economic development of the disadvantaged communities in which they live.

I identify with our undergraduate students, at least 75% of whom are 'first generation' university students from previously disadvantaged communities (SASSE 2010). First generation students are students whose grandparents, parents or siblings have not attended university. Our communities are disadvantaged from a socio-economic perspective as well as from a formal education perspective. I believe that students from these disadvantaged backgrounds can achieve success in their studies notwithstanding the current trends and reports that indicate the contrary (Scott 2007; ASSAf 2010). Students living in the disadvantaged communities have a strong sense of community. My experience has shown me that the relationships in the disadvantaged community are different to those found in the university, and I agree with Parker Palmer when he asserts that

> There is a simple reason why some students resist thinking: they live in a world where relationships are often quite fragile. They are desperate for more community, not less, so when thinking is presented to them as a way of disconnecting themselves from each other and from the world, they want nothing of it. If [teachers] could represent knowing [and learning] for what it is – a way of creating community, not destroying it – we would draw more young people into the great adventure of learning (Palmer 1993: xvi).

With the massification of Higher Education where the students are mostly identified as a number by the teachers particularly in the large classes, the relationships in the classroom are often fragile or even non-existent. Furthermore, the students cannot relate easily to the content of their courses, especially as they are offered in either their second or third language (SASSE 2010). I believe the relationships of the students with each other, with their teachers and with the content influence their learning. The relationships need to be built on love and care for each other, with teachers and the content, in vital, dynamic community with each other. I would like to promote loving and caring relationships, which will assist the learner to "*feel good"* (Pert 2006:11) during their learning.

In dealing with low throughput, many "educators of all sorts are in real pain these days, and that pain has compelled them to explore unconventional resources" (Palmer 1993:ix). I believe as an educator I am exploring "unconventional resources" (ibid) in order to find relief for my 'real pain'.

> I have a 'real pain' –
>> Because of the difficulty
>>> of actively engaging learners in the classroom,
> I have a 'real pain' –
>> Of being unable to connect
>>> with colleagues, with learners, with their own heart,
> I have a 'real pain' –
>> When I experience that deep intense
>>> suffering of disconnection,
> I have a 'real pain' –
>> When there is more combat
>>> than community,
> I have a 'real pain' –
>> When I feel an alienated spirit, mind, and body,
> I have a 'real pain' –
>> When I am depleted
>>> with little left to sustain me
>>>> or others.
> *Delysia Timm, 2012*

In this pain and brokenness of my life, I find spirituality as an "unconventional resource" that offers hope to get reconnected and provide me with wisdom to

> recall [me] to that wholeness in the midst of [my] torn world, to reweave [me] into the [teaching and learning] community that is so threadbare today (Palmer 1993:x).

I am not the only person with this pain. My colleagues and students within this teaching and learning community are also experiencing this pain, constituting a "torn world" and "threadbare community" (ibid).

I am concerned that many of our students and staff are suffering from a condition called *"Ethnostress"*. *Ethnostress* is the term that Hill and Antone coined for the "confusion and disruption that people experience inside their [dysfunctional social] world" (Antone and Hill 1992:1). Diane Hill and Bob Antone in their study of dysfunctional social behaviour amongst Native Americans discovered that

> Over the generations of contact, many native communities have been bombarded with negative messages about "who they are" as a people, and the end result has been the creation of a stress; and Ethnostress which centers around a poor self-image and a loss of purpose and sense of place in the world. Because we have been influenced by the negative messages, we have lost self-confidence and self-esteem (Antone and Hill 1992:4).

I am concerned that the negative messages the staff and students have received come from the (di)stresses they experience in their societies and communities in which they live. I believe that we are experiencing a legacy of apartheid in South Africa that has negatively influenced the education and living conditions of both the teachers and students. The majority of our students and staff come from groups previously classified by race groups as Black/African, Indian and Coloured. These race groups suffered then, and still do, from a lack of economic empowerment, poorly resourced and underfunded education systems and living conditions with high incidences of crime and violence. In addition to all this, our students and staff at DUT are faced with serious loss of lives of family members, fellow students and colleagues due to HIV and AIDS. They live in highly emotionally charged and unsafe environments. The physical violence in the communities stems from anger and fear. There is an overwhelming experience of physical and emotional, mental and spiritual abuse. Their 'whole beings' are no longer 'whole' due to the (di)stresses they experience. The (di)stresses are felt deep down in all their fibres and in the very viscera of their beings. They no longer have a "strong sense of self":

> A strong sense of self is shaped in the early years of our life when we can be loved as a "precious child" who has purpose, who is acceptable, who belongs and has a place, whose very existence is beneficial and who has a sense of safety and security in the world because he or she also lives in a world that has sufficient food, water and shelter. These are the basic needs which are required by all human beings and which act as the foundation for a strong sense of self (Antone and Hill 1992:2).

For many students and staff, the societies, communities and families are dysfunctional and "threadbare" (Palmer 1993:x). The classroom has to a certain extent

become dysfunctional and "threadbare" (Palmer 1993:x). Both the students and the staff have so much happening in their viscera as their "molecules of emotion" (Pert 1999) are set in motion within their whole beings through the emotional (di)stresses they are experiencing. Both the students and the teachers are seeking for increased self-confidence and self-esteem. The continued loss of belief in themselves and mental and emotional pain leads to a lack of joy, a lack of love and a lack of learning in the classroom.

Both the students and the teachers are experiencing a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness (Antone and Hill 1992). In the state of despair and no learning in the classroom, there is a sense of brokenness. There is a deep-seated paralysis and inability to succeed in teaching and learning as whole beings. They are no longer able to "balance his/her mental, emotional, physical and spiritual human capabilities both internally within one's self and externally in societal interaction" (Hill 1999:19).

Within the community of practice in the classroom, there is insufficient interaction, meaningful questioning leading to an integration of knowledge within and between the students and the teachers (Xenophon 1897; Dewey 1938; Jousse 2000; Wenger *et al.* 2002; Jousse 2004). There is insufficient recognition of the gifts and talents within the teachers and the students (Huxtable 2008; Robinson and Aronica 2009; Whitehead 2009a). There is insufficient nurturing and serving amongst the students and the teachers (Greenleaf, R 1977; Palmer 1993; Palmer 2007).

In many of the classrooms I have experienced as a learner, and observed as an Academic Development practitioner, there is largely a destruction of community with authoritarian lecturing, largely unengaged listening and mechanical memorisation. There has been predominantly competition and not collaboration between learners and limited place for original inquiry. The space for learning tends not to be nurturing, lacks recognition of talents and gifts and there is minimal integration of knowledge. The students are barely engaging actively in the class. There is limited *whole-being-learning*.

I have identified three contributing concerns of low throughput. I am concerned that students do not believe in themselves, and the emotional issues that they experience are getting in the way of their learning. I am concerned that students are not really actively engaging with the teachers and with the subject matter hence learning is not

happening in the classrooms as it should. These two concerns are both linked to my third concern that teachers are in a state of despair in their classes and need support and encouragement. All three concerns point to a lack of *whole-being-learning*.

Before presenting the evidence for my concerns of low throughput, I will present an account of what matters to me, my passions, values and beliefs and what kind of difference I want to make in the world.

What really matters to me?   What do I care passionately about? What are my values and beliefs? What kind of difference do I want to make in the world?

It matters to me that teachers are passionate about teaching and learning and agree with Jousse that,

> There should be no superficial teaching. When one has given one's breath, one has to give one's entire being. To give oneself in teaching is to give life, or expressed better still, to give one's own life (…) One does not only give one's life for someone by dying for him. One also truly gives one's life to someone by living for him and in him. The true life-giver continues, then, to live on in himself, but no longer for himself. Indeed, from some point, he begins to live with such a power and such a superabundance that he lives on also in the one who has been given life. The true life-giver has to give himself without abandoning himself. For the life-giver-teacher, giving his life to someone will, then, be to give him all his living gestes, all his global, vital mimodrama (Jousse 2000: 411).

Within my entire or rather whole-being I have the "power" and "superabundance" of feeling, intuition and physical and sensory awareness. As a "life-giver teacher", I do need, however, to guard against losing my own life and becoming despondent. As an Academic Developer, I am called upon to be a "life-giver" to the teachers that attend professional development workshops. I am a "life-giver" as I guide teachers to maximise their passion and potential to enhance learning. Similarly, teachers need to maximise the passion and potential of the students to engage in whole-being learning. I believe that for whole-being learning or enhanced learning to occur, from my own experience and the experience of others, I need to actively engage within a safe space (Bruner 1977; Greene 1978; Kolb 1984; Holdstock 1987; Angelo 1993;

Hendry and King 1994; Allen 1995; D'Arcangelo 1998; Jensen 1998; Omrod 1999; Bransford *et al.* 2000; Jensen 2000).

I am passionate about developing a 'safe space' for the active engagement between the whole being learner, whole being teachers and the content for *whole-being-learning* to occur within a community of practice (Wenger *et al.* 2002). The community of practice can be developed through the creation of a safe space. I believe *whole-being-learning* happens within the safe space when there is integration of knowledge (Xenophon 1897; Dewey 1938; Boyer 1990; Jousse 2000; Jousse 2004), recognition of talents and gifts (Huxtable 2008; Robinson and Aronica 2009; Whitehead 2009a) and nurturing relationships (Greenleaf, R 1977; Palmer 1993; Palmer 2007) between the whole being learners and the whole being teachers. For this thesis I have identified these components of *whole-being-learning* and represented them diagrammatically in Fig 37.- *Whole-Being-Learning* The Venn diagram is a Mimograph (Jousse 2000) showing the relationships between the components of *whole-being-learning* which are constantly dynamically changing. I believe that anyone engaging in *whole-being-learning* can activate the engagement of *whole-being-learning* through interactions involving any of the three components. Since each of the components of *whole-being-learning* are in a dynamic, holistic relationship, they must not and cannot be regarded in isolation.

From Fig 37 – *Whole Being Learning*, happens when all three of the components within the Community of Practice interact according to the Law of Universal Interaction (Jousse 2000:111). The interactions that are continuously imbricated in the community of practice are triphasic, following :

"an Acting One – acting on – an Acted upon"

in the form of

' questioning one – integrating – known one',
'knowing one – recognising – gifted one'
'caring one – nurturing – hurt one'

ex-pressed in the algebrised form, as

'the teacher integrates the learner'

'the teacher acknowledges the learner'

'the teacher nurtures the learner'

Each interaction is triphasic and consists of

> 1) the Essential Action of the subject;[acting one] 2) the Transitory Action of the subject [acting upon]; and 3) the object on which this Transitory Action focuses, the object which is itself mimed as an Essential Action (Jousse 2000:70).

The Essential Action is the characteristic attitude or geste that is re-played by the being "as a *substitute* for the essence of the being, that essence which all human intelligence seeks spontaneously even before it starts analysing its own manner of being" (Jousse 2000:69). Jousse reminds us that

> these 'expression-of-attitude-beings', if we may call them such, do not confine themselves to 'keep' to this or that characteristic position; these 'expression-of-attitude-beings' do not have only one essential geste, an action which could be called 'potential'. They also act on each other, in perpetual interaction, through multiple 'Transitory Actions' which are ceaselessly diversified. Each Action activates other Actions, specifically according to its own 'potentiality' (Jousse 2000:70).

I believe that the whole being teacher and whole being learner have three Essential Actions and Transitory Actions within their "potentiality" which when realised activates whole being learning. The whole being teacher and the whole being learner are "in perpetual interaction" (ibid) within the community of practice developed from the safe space. The teaching and learning process for *whole-being-learning* is characterised by the teacher questioning, knowing and caring for the learner who is then integrated as 'the known one', recognised as 'the gifted one' and nurtured as 'the hurt one'. I believe that the Higher Education Educator and the student can be both the teacher and the learner within the classroom as they interact and thus engage in *whole-being-learning.*
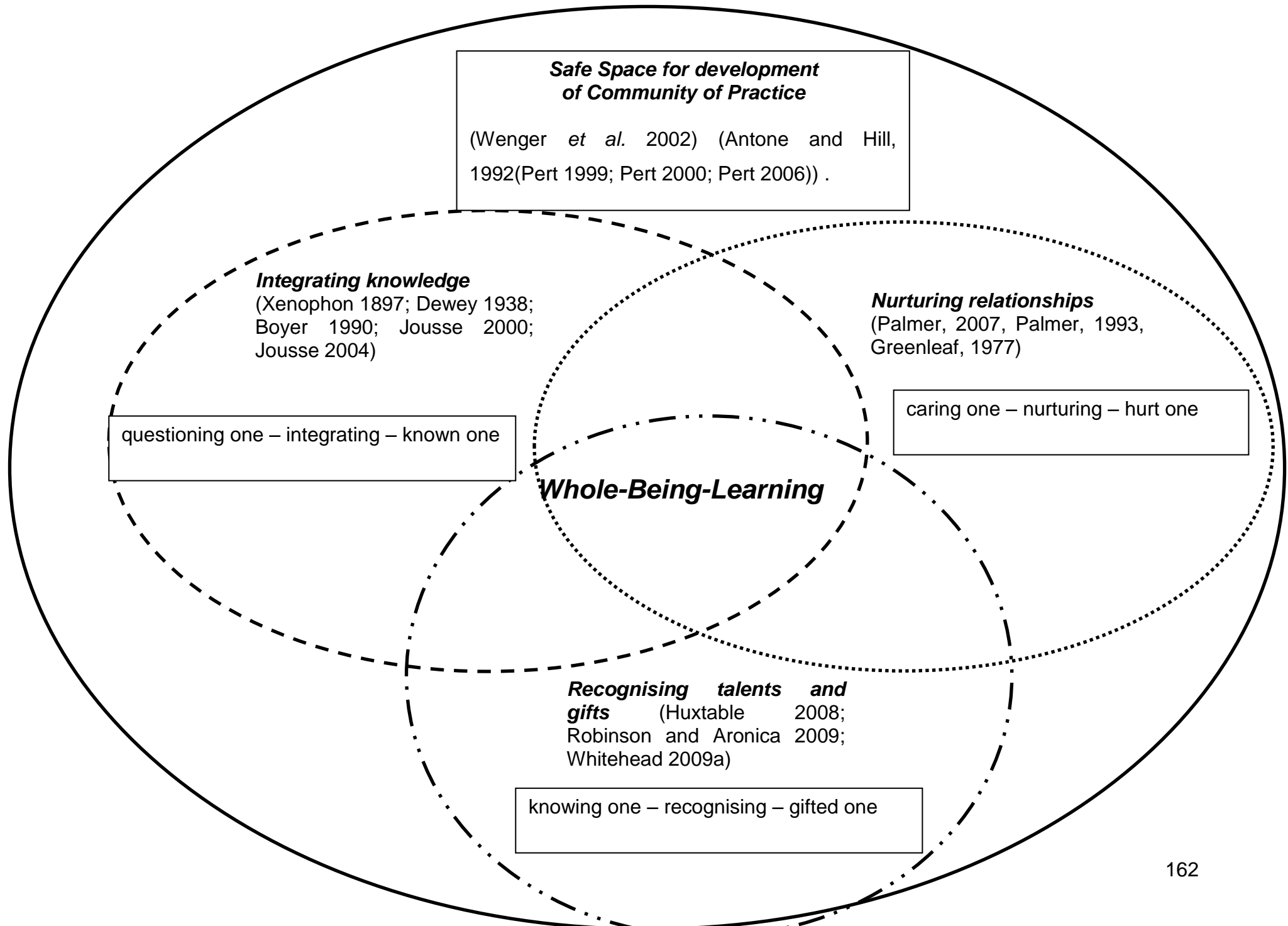
Safe Space for development of Community of Practice

(Wenger *et al.* 2002) (Antone and Hill, 1992(Pert 1999; Pert 2000; Pert 2006)) .

Integrating knowledge
(Xenophon 1897; Dewey 1938; Boyer 1990; Jousse 2000; Jousse 2004)

Nurturing relationships
(Palmer, 2007, Palmer, 1993, Greenleaf, 1977)

questioning one – integrating – known one

caring one – nurturing – hurt one

Whole-Being-Learning

Recognising talents and gifts (Huxtable 2008; Robinson and Aronica 2009; Whitehead 2009a)

knowing one – recognising – gifted one

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Figure 37 :Venn diagram of whole-being-learning, Timm 2012

I believe that *whole-being-learning* occurs when both whole being learners and whole being teachers are actively engaged. *Whole-being-learning*/teaching is when the whole being learner/teacher engages with their mind, heart, body and spirit, as one "indivisible psycho-physiological complexus of geste" (Jousse 2004:154) using all modes of human expression. Jousse reminds me that

> [I] think with, and feel with, [my] whole indivisible psycho-physiological complexus of geste, which resonates indivisibly with the universe, whether [I] am aware of it or not (Jousse 2004:154) .

I value loving other people and being in their presence, feeling their dynamic energy as they interact. I value not only being in their presence but also challenging them to develop and grow in all their dimensions of their being – spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally. I value supporting and encouraging people as they experience difficulties and challenges in their life. I value being impartial and not being judgemental of people and their ideas as they interact with others and as they seek meaning for their own lives. In my own life and work I value loving what I do, having a passion for what I do and having fun and pleasure in all I do. Having fun and pleasure in what I do makes me feel good. I experience a joy-filled love and a love-filled joy. Before providing evidence of the extent to which I am living out my values and creating a safe space for learning, I will explore what the safe space for the development of a community of practice looks like and all its various components.

How have I created a Safe Space for the development of a Community of Practice?

As a Higher Education Educator and Academic Developer, I want to make a difference by

> [creating] a space in which the community of truth is practiced… community of truth…- a rich and complex network of relationships in which we speak and listen, make claims on others and make ourselves accountable (Palmer 1993:xii).

I believe that the space I create needs to be a 'safe space' where we "speak and listen, make claims on others and make ourselves accountable" (ibid). We need to

engage in the space showing respect, openness and trust within the community. The majority of our students and educators are from Zulu cultural backgrounds and from them, I have learnt that the sense of respected, safe space in a community is about *ubuntu* and *ukuhlonipha* : a respectful regard for everyone and everything in all creation.

 I believe that it is not just about the brain-to-brain link but actually the whole being-to-whole being link that shapes our relationships. Our "molecules of emotion" (Pert 1999) are communicating throughout our whole being and not just in our brains. As teachers and learners interact, Goleman (2007) reminds us that our feelings and emotions we experience during these interactions are biochemical as they mould our biology.

Through the safe space, a community of practice will be developed. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002:4) describe a community of practice as "groups of people who share a concern about a topic, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis". The community of practice will consist of educators with a passion for teaching and a desire to engage in *whole-being-learning* strategies in their classes.

In the community of practice, the teachers and learners

> don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations and their needs. They ponder common issues explore ideas, and act as sounding boards. (…) However they accumulate knowledge, they become informally bound by the value that they find in learning together. This value is not merely instrumental for their work. It also accrues in the personal satisfaction of knowing colleagues who understand each other's perspectives and of belonging to an interesting group of people. Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity (Wenger *et al.* 2002:8).

Within the 'safe space' community of practice, relationships develop which extend beyond the meetings, and across disciplines, programmes and faculties within the institution. These relationships are motivated by a number of factors, but the most

common is the factor of "similar situations" (Wenger *et al.* 2002:9). The similarity of situation in the case of the 'safe space' community of practice is that all participants are asking "How can we activate *whole-being-learning*?"

Furthermore, Wenger et al (2002:9) posit that

> To develop such expertise, practitioners need opportunities to engage with others who face similar situations. (…) the knowledge of experts is an accumulation of experience – a kind of "residue" of their actions, thinking, and conversations – that remains a dynamic part of their ongoing experience. This type of knowledge is much more a living process than a static body of information. Communities of practice do not reduce knowledge to an object. They make it an integral part of their activities, and they serve as a living repository for that knowledge.

In the 'safe space' the teachers find great value in "sharing tacit knowledge [which] requires interaction and informal learning processes such as storytelling, conversation, coaching, and apprenticeship of the kind that communities of practice provide" (Wenger *et al.* 2002:4). Through this approach amongst the community, the 'safe space' is blessed with "richer learning, more interesting relationships, and increased creativity" (Wenger *et al.* 2002:35). The 'safe space' is respectful, where each person's voice is heard. Wenger et al (2002:37) remind me that

> Learning requires an atmosphere of openness. Each community develops a unique atmosphere – intense or laid back, formal or informal, hierarchical or democratic. Whatever norms members establish, the key is to build a foundation for collective enquiry. An effective community of practice offers a place of exploration where it is safe to speak the truth and ask hard questions. Trust is key to this process.

Stephen MR Covey identifies *The Speed of Trust* as key to cost free success. The four cores of trust are integrity, intent, capabilities and results. "The first two deal with character and the second with competence" (2006:54). "You will recognise them as the same elements that would prove or destroy your credibility as an expert witness in a court of law" (ibid).

The cores of trust embrace knowledge, practice and relationships: what Wenger et al (2002:27) identify as the domain of knowledge, the community of people, and shared practice that define communities of practice. I believe the domain of knowledge in

the 'safe space' Community of Practice focuses on the improvement of our professional practice as educators.

Through my practice and reflections on my practice, I have come to realise that "through its practice (…) the community operates as a living curriculum" (Wenger *et al.* 2002:38). I believe that the living curriculum of communities of practice will energise the process of transformation of the higher education sector, so that the learners are able to engage in *whole-being-learning*. I am encouraged when Wenger et al (2002) remind me that …

> Communities of practice are a natural part of organisational life. They will develop on their own and many will flourish, whether or not the organisation recognises them. Their health depends on the voluntary engagement of their members and on the emergence of internal leadership. Moreover their ability to steward knowledge as a living process depends in some measure of informality and autonomy. Once designated as the keepers of the expertise, communities should not be second-guessed or overmanaged. These observations may lead some to argue that there is nothing one can do to cultivate communities of practice, or worse, that anything organisations do will merely get in the way. We disagree. In fact this book is born of our experience that organisations need to cultivate communities of practices actively and systematically, for their benefit as well as the benefit of the members and communities themselves (Wenger et al 2002 :12).

How does the nurturing of relationships influence *whole-being-learning*?

I believe that personal and professional relationships within the community of practice are to be based on nurturing collegial relationships not reporting relationships. In order to promote *whole-being-learning* in our teaching and learning practice, each of us has the same responsibility to ourselves, our learners and the institution: to improve what we do systematically and to respond to the question: "How do we get the right things done?" (Greenleaf, R 1977:60) and "How can I serve best?" (Greenleaf, R 1977:33). From my spirituality, I believe that I can serve best and achieve *whole-being-learning* as an educator when I am able to accept the whole learner for who s/he is and empathise with her/him through showing interest in their whole lives. As the community of practice is able to accept learners for who they are, and empathise with them, there is a growth of trust and *whole-being-learning* happens as all are able to "grow taller than they would otherwise be" (Greenleaf, R 1977:35). In so doing, the learners and educators become more

autonomous and more disposed to serve. I believe that as members of the community of practice we all serve first and lead each other to engage in *whole-being-learning*. The leadership of the 'safe space' Community of Practice is not limited to me as an Academic Developer but it is shared amongst the existing members of the 'safe space' or even at times from new members in keeping with the nature and purpose of a community of practice for the mutual benefit and growth of everyone.

> Members of healthy communities of practice have a sense that making the community more valuable is to the benefit of everyone. They know that their own contribution will come back to them. This is not a direct exchange mechanism of a market type where commodities are traded. Rather it is a pool of goodwill – of "social capital", to use the technical term – that allows people to contribute to the community while trusting that at some point, in some form, they too will benefit. This kind of reciprocity is neither selflessness nor simple tit for tat, but a deeper understanding of mutual value that extends over time (Wenger *et al.* 2002:37).

The mutual value that extends over time must be experienced in our whole beings. Parker Palmer believes that 'our seeing shapes our being' thus if we see with the eye of the mind we only see a world of fact and reason and if we see with the eye of the heart we see a world changed by the power of love within a community (Palmer 1993:xxiii). We live in a whole world and thus need "wholesight" – both mind and heart united as we cannot forsake or abandon either – we need a spirit-seeking heart and a knowledge-seeking mind.

My understandings of quantum physics (Zohar 1991; Zohar and Marshall 1994), women's ways of knowing (Wilson 2004a; Wilson 2004b; Barnacle 2009) and Native American ways of knowing (Antone and Hill 1992; Hill and George 1996) reinforce for me that my knowing draws on my senses, my reason, my intuition, my beliefs, my actions, my relationships and on my body itself. Both my heart's vision and my minds vision are brought together as ways of knowing. I identify with Palmer when he states that there are three sources of knowledge or motives for our knowing - curiosity , control and compassion or love (Palmer 1993).

Within the community of practice, I believe that we need to be mindful that curiosity and control as sources of knowledge can lead to a loss of respect for life especially when the curiosity is an "amoral passion" and control is a "tendency toward

corruption" (Palmer 1993:8). Thus for *whole-being-learning*, the third source of knowledge is key together with a balanced curiosity and control. The motive for my knowing is largely compassion which I draw from my spiritual heritage. I agree with Palmer when he says "the act of knowing *is* an act of love" (Palmer 1993:8)–(italics in original). Knowing as an act of love is essential for *whole-being-learning* with the purpose of reweaving the "threadbare" community (Palmer 1993:x) that is in pain and *ethnostressed* (Antone and Hill 1992). This reweaving happens in the community of practice and connects the learner (knower) and the subject (known), requiring of each to change, or to undergo transforming joy whilst calling the community to "involvement, mutuality and accountability" (Palmer 1993:9). Involvement, mutuality and accountability are all evident in *whole-being-learning* resulting in wholeness in the midst of a torn world. I believe that unless the teacher can be compassionate and loving which results in taking concrete action with the other, the potential for *whole-being-learning* is not fully realised and will be limited.

With my self-knowledge and acceptance, I am able to be authentic and spontaneous in my engagement of *whole-being-learning*. I engage in an education of truth and freedom to create the world and to be created by the world, not in closed, circular logic but rather in transcendence to see "beyond facts into truth, beyond self-interest into compassion (…) into a love required to renew the community of creation" (Palmer 1993:13). I am drawn to education as an "organic body of personal relations and responses, a living and evolving community of creativity and compassion" (Palmer 1993:14). I experience a personal responsiveness and accountability to my learners and them to me as well as to the world of which we each are a part as whole beings.

I am unable to make sense of the self in relation to the world from only an objective sense only since my personal experience and relationships in the world influences my findings and I agree with Polanyi who states "knowledge is neither subjective nor objective but a transcendence of both achieved by the person" (Polanyi 1958). To understand the ways of knowing in a classroom, I find it more informative to observe the learning and teaching practices. The teacher rather than the theory is the living link between the knower – learner- and the known –the subject. As a teacher I can help learners to develop a relationship with the subject that is guided by an inner sense of truth.

Parker Palmer (Palmer 1993) provides four epistemologies that are useful to nurture learners to a sense of inner truth.

First, believe that knowing requires a personal relationship between the knower and the known. Students learn by interacting with the world and not from viewing it from afar.

Second, believe that knowing is a process in which subjective and objective interact. Students' passions influence, and are influenced by, the facts of the subject. The students would not only know the world but their inner secrets would become known.

Third, I believe that knowledge arises from commitments of communities. Classrooms would be places where community is fostered not feared. Students are formed in a knowing that comes from communal commitments and they are thus be able to use their knowledge to reweave a "threadbare" community (Palmer 1993:x).

Fourth, I believe that there is an organic relationship between the knower and the known. My classroom practice is to learn the intricate relationships of the world and not to rearrange the world. In learning the intricate relationships of the world, the knower is more aware of the interrelated quality of life and is able to work collaboratively.

How does recognition of talents and gifts influence *whole-being-learning*?

I believe a further contributing component to *whole-being-learning* is when the "knowing one recognises the gifted one". Marie Huxtable (2008; 2009) and Jack Whitehead (2009c) promote the recognition of the gifts and talents in learners as a way of valuing people as knowledge creators. I believe a learner experiences *whole-being-learning* when they

> come to know the person they are and want to be; recognise and enhance the talents they have developed and those they need to develop for creating, offering and accepting gifts; and envisioning the gifts of knowledge of the world to which they might commit themselves to creating and offering during their lifetime (Huxtable 2009:216).

The teaching and learning practices that activate *whole-being-learning* and in which talents and gifts are recognised, is creative and as such is

> distinguished by the relationships, spaces and opportunities that support and challenge the learner to explore new territory, (which may also be unchartered by their teacher or experts in the field), to exert themselves to think, to create meaning and to create knowledge and offer it as a gift to themselves and others (Huxtable 2009:219).

The 'safe space' through which the community of practice is developed allows for the creativity of the whole learner to be engaged. In this process, the whole being learner is provided an opportunity to get to know what they can do only when they actually do it – then they are being creative. I believe that there are not only a few gifted and talented people in the world to create valuable knowledge be it in any mimodrama or mimeograph, ex-pressed im-mediately or in some mediated form. I support the view of Huxtable that

> all persons are capable of developing and enhancing talents to create and offer, valued, and potentially valuable, knowledge as gifts to improve their own lives and that of others (Huxtable 2009:228).

As a teacher and Academic Developer in a community of practice developed through a 'safe space', in recognising the talents and gifts in the students or other educators, I am able to activate *whole-being-learning* especially for those who

> feel that what they good at isn't valued by [higher education]. Too many think they not good at anything (Robinson and Aronica 2009:11-12).

according to Ken Robinson, an internationally acclaimed leader in creativity, innovation and human capacity. I am further encouraged to understand that I can find the

> place where the things we love to do and the things we good at come together (…) *the Element* (Robinson and Aronica 2009:xiii).

Each of us has a different "*Element*" as it is characteristic of our aptitude and passion and needs a particular attitude and opportunities. Ken Robinson believes that an aptitude "is an intuitive feel or a grasp of what that thing is, how it works, and how to use it" (Robinson and Aronica 2009:22). I may have the aptitude for something however to enact it, I need to have passion or the love or deep delight and pleasure in doing that thing. I believe that in *whole-being-learning*, the 'intuitive

feel' together with the passion is recognised, honoured (Shekerjian 1990) and very often felt in my viscera as a form of subtle energy. This subtle energy is an aggregation of "microscopic gestes" that is embodied, molecular and manifests in the biology getting ready for "ex-pression" as "macroscopic geste" (Jousse 2000).

Robinson like Jousse believes that we need to understand that bio-psychologically and psycho-physiologically, our minds, bodies, feelings and relationships with others do not operate independently of each other (Jousse 2000; Jousse 2004; Robinson and Aronica 2009). Thus to activate *whole-being-learning*, we find our '*Element',* as we operate true to our organic nature as one holistic system within the community of practice.

How does the integrating of knowledge influence *whole-being-learning*?

Within the community of practice, the teacher as the questioning one is able to pose questions to the learner to integrate the knowledge of the learner as well as the knowledge of the subject. I yet again remind myself of what Jousse said:

> To be fit to guide the development of the whole human being, without deforming or impoverishing [her], it is necessary that the teacher be experientially aware of all the learner's underlying anthropological 'potentialities', which seek to blossom forth. This is precisely the role of the educator: to make them blossom forth, to 'lead out from within' = *ex ducere* (Jousse 2004:19).

The teacher thus needs to establish a connection and relationship to be able to be aware of the "learner's underlying anthropological potentialities". The "anthropological potentialities" are deep within the viscera of each learner and need to emerge.

Through asking questions, the teacher and the learner are able to get closer to underlying beliefs and the extent of knowledge of the teacher/learner. Posing questions leads to critical thinking in *whole-being-learning*. Critical thinking is reflective, criteria driven, authentic and reasoned (Nosich 2005). Thus through critical thinking, integration of the parts occurs to make up the whole.

The Socratic Method is a dialectic form where answers to questions are a prelude to further questions. Socrates in conversation with Ischomachus had the following to say about the use of questions in teaching and learning:

> Really, Ischomachus, I am disposed to ask: "Does teaching consist in putting questions?"[401] Indeed, the secret of your system has just this instant dawned upon me. I seem to see the principle in which you put your questions. You lead me through the field of my own knowledge,[402] and then by pointing out analogies[403] to what I know, persuade me that I really know some things which hitherto, as I believed, I had no knowledge of (Xenophon 1897ch 19 : 401 - 403).

The Socratic Method has been used as a teaching strategy to engage the learners in *whole-being-learning* (Nosich 2005; Boghossian 2006; Gose 2009). It is a useful method to use in becoming aware of the potential of the learner or to "ex-ducere" – to "lead out from within".

What role do the teacher/learners' pasts play in dealing with issues of the present and the future in *whole-being-learning*? I believe Dewey presents some light on this when he says that we need to :

> [discover] the connection which actually exists *within* experience between the achievements of the past and the issues of the present…(Dewey 1938:23)

Through discovering the connection '*within*' experience, the whole being is able to integrate education and personal experience through an organic connection. I believe the personal experiences that activate *whole-being-learning* are those that "live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (Dewey 1938:28). I see critical and creative thinkers as whole being learners who have capacity thus for lifelong learning as they continue to integrate their past experiences with issues of their present lives though interpretation, and finding patterns – asking "What do the findings mean?" (Boyer 1990:19).

Integration of knowledge in *whole-being-learning* happens when the whole being learner is able to "interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear" thus engaging in the scholarship of Integration as postulated by Boyer (1990:19).

 Now that I have provided a description of the safe space for the development of a community of practice and its components that contribute to *whole-being-learning*, I

will share evidence of the extent to which I am living out my values and creating a safe space for *whole-being-learning*.

What is the extent of me living out my values and creating a safe space for *whole-being-learning*?

I live out my values of sharing a joy-filled love and love-filled joy through loving relationships which include interactions during which I challenge, support and encourage people to develop and grow as whole beings. I believe that as people develop and grow, they are engaging in *whole-being-learning*. I believe that this *whole-being-learning* is activated best within a safe space that I am able to create as an Academic Developer.

My professional development career as an Academic Developer began in 2000 when I was employed as the Effective Learning Centre (ELC) Co-ordinator at the ML Sultan Technikon (MLST)[17]. The ELC, setup as a USAID/TELP funded project, had a vision to be a "hub for building the capacity of all academic staff at the MLST in the design and production of new and effective learning materials" (Naidoo and Cooke 2000). As the co-ordinator of the centre, I contributed to the creation of a vibrant and safe community of practice that enabled staff to be creative and innovative in designing learning materials. My contribution was largely in facilitating workshops for the academic staff to design learning materials that promoted active learning.

Many of the academic staff did not have access to computers and were not familiar with using them in the design of learning materials. They were in a strange and unfamiliar place. Many of them had not even used a computer before. They were afraid of this machine the workings of which they did not and could not really understand. They were afraid of losing all their work by pressing the wrong button. I watched as many of them would actually break out in a sweat and their hands and sometimes, their whole bodies would shake and tremble as they sat in front of the computer. I wondered how were they going to learn when they were so anxious and filled with fear.

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[17] The ML Sultan Technikon merged with Technikon Natal in April 2002 and became known as the Durban Institute of Technology and later the Durban University of Technology.

I too entered the class with mixed emotions - fear of being inadequately prepared for the questions from the learners, fear of my own ignorance or limited ability to use computers and fear of being boring and meeting glazed eyes. At the same time, I was excited about us all coming together to promote active *whole-being-learning*. I was excited about the opportunity to be involved in something new through using computers and technology for learning.

We worked through our fears and apprehensions by listening carefully to each other and responding to each person's needs. I helped to create a safe community of practice amongst them as we entered into a relationship together. I helped to create a

> living and evolving community of creativity and compassion…[we] were drawn into personal responsiveness and accountability to each other and the world of which we are a part (Palmer 1993:15).

I provided space and opportunity for the teachers to generate ideas, judging which felt right or worked best and refining the ideas as they tapped into their talents.

As I interacted with academic staff in workshops that I facilitated for the design and development of effective learning materials, I respond in a spontaneous manner to the presence of the staff in the workshop using my hands and my whole body. I do not consciously plan or set out to behave and respond in that manner, it happens spontaneously.

I have now realised that I was engaging in activation of *whole-being-learning*. The 2-hour workshops and full day annual seminar that I developed and facilitated for the academic staff of the institution only, whilst in the ELC were :

Using Information Technology to Promote Active Learning (March 2001 – September 2002)

Sharing Practice in designing innovative materials (Seminar, September 2002)

Curriculum Innovation: Promoting Information and Communication Technology to promote Active Learning (Seminar, September 2001)

Using Games to Promote Active Learning (2001,2002,2004)

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Using Powerpoint to develop learning materials that promote active learning and self-directed learning (2001, 2002,2003)

Designing Innovative Learning Materials Using e-Mindmapping software (2002, 2003) (Cooke and Timm 2004).

Whilst working in the ELC, it was common practice to video-record the workshops and seminars. The videos were required as part of the evidence by the external funders that the workshops were actually held.

In order to examine the extent to which I am living out my values, I have used two approaches. The approaches of Jack Whitehead and Marie Huxtable (Huxtable 2008; Whitehead 2008b; Huxtable 2009; Whitehead 2009a; Whitehead 2009c; Whitehead 2010a) of using multimedia representations to clarify and share meanings of the flows of energy in embodied values and the analysis of the ex-pressions following the fundamentals of human expression and communication of Marcel Jousse (2000; 2005).

Whitehead promotes the use of multi-media representations such as videos and photographs as he believes that they are able to adequately ex-press the "embodied values we use to give meaning and purpose to our lives in education" (Whitehead 2009c:113). Both Whitehead and Jousse share the common understanding that the written style of representation used in the Universities "removes valid ex-pressions of the life-affirming energy with values" (Whitehead 2009c:113) which Jousse calls "algebrosation…is a disease of expression, with words no longer referring to any concrete reality but only to other words" (Jousse 2005:199).

You may view the videos that I have selected either through Youtube – I supply the link for each video, or they can be accessed on the enclosed DVD's. You may view the videos and engage with the text in an interactive manner. I use Whiteheads method (Whitehead 2008b; Whitehead 2009a; Whitehead 2009c; Whitehead 2010a) of viewing the video in order to "see and experience" the relationally dynamic flows of energy and values, which you are invited to try as well. Using Quicktime to view the videoclip, move the cursor along at about 7 times the normal speed, a few times, back and forth, as you focus on the values being expressed. In the rhythm of moving backwards and forwards, the embodied expression of values of the person, between

persons and within a space will be appreciated. When you feel the 'moment of empathetic resonance' you can stop the cursor and test for yourself the validity of the video.

The first video clip you can view on Youtube or on the enclosed DVD- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zku3e7qE8Q (SOP 22, How do I facilitate workshops? March –Sept 2001) is compiled from a series of workshops that I facilitated on *Using Information and Communication Technology to Promoting Active Learning.* Figure 38 is a still picture of one of the sessions.

I shared this video with colleagues who had not attended the workshop to obtain their responses of my expressions and energy. They all shared similar responses. They said that they can feel the loving dynamic energy I have with the participants in my workshops as I spontaneously engage with them in the different parts of the room. The energy is expressed in the movements of my hands and my body. The passion, pleasure and love for what I do is truly expressed in my face. My eyes are shining as I interact with the teachers, as I speak and listen. As I reflect on the shine in my eyes, I am reminded of Ben Zander (2009), a famous orchestra leader who said:

> My job was to awaken the possibility in other people. And I wanted to know whether I was doing that. You know how you find it? You look at their eyes. If their eyes are shining you know you are doing it. If they are not shining, you have to ask yourself a question: Who am I being that my players' eyes are not shining? (Benjamin Zander: Classical Music with shining eyes: Tedtalk: http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/benjamin_zander_on_music_and_passion. html

In the first 1.06 mins of the video, I can see that I am listening attentively to the teachers as I position my body and make eye contact with them. I am fully present in the work that I do, and my energy and values are demonstrated in the video.

Figure 38 Video Clip of staff Development workshops held from march 2001 until sept 2001
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zku3e7qE8Q

I can see how I invite people into the space with my energy and excitement. I experience a flow of energy flowing through the cosmos which for me is the loving relationship I have with God. Through the Law of Universal Interaction of Jousse (Jousse 2000) as discussed in the chapter on the scientific evidence for my understanding of learning as a biochemical process, I am able to intussuscept the love of God and ex-press it among the staff in my workshop. I am able to provide a safe space for the learners. I am neither a "sage on the stage" nor a "guide on the side" (King 1993). I am a different being altogether. A "sage on the stage" (King 1993) teaches known knowledge for a known future. A "guide on the side" (King 1993) walks with the learner into a future that the guide can anticipate. In my world where the future is largely unknown, I can only provide a safe space for the learner to discover his or her way into the future. From my expressions on my face I am displaying a love-filled joy and a joy-filled love within the safe space and community of practice. I express an ontological value through love.

At the time of the recordings, I had no intention of using the videos for my personal research or even as part of reflective practice. All the videos were recorded by the same person, Keith, from the university Audio-Visual unit. After the project was completed, Keith presented me with a gift over and above the recordings of each session. The gift was a compilation of moments in the sessions where Keith felt that I truly inspired him as well as the learners. He had recognised my talents and the flow of life-affirming energy. I sent Keith an email with the following three questions to ascertain what he had recognised in all the videos. Keith's responses (K Kenneth, personal communication, January 2009) are in bold:

1. What made you choose those particular clips from the videos?
It was Timm's charismatic style and energy that made me choose those clips

2. What three (3) words would you use to describe my expressions and the type of energy I demonstrate in the videos?
Confident, fun, charismatic

3. What (3) words would you use to describe my interactions with the participants in the class.
attentive, responsive

Keith felt the life-giving energy that I presented in the sessions. He felt that during my teaching he was deeply aware of my presence in the class and the connection I made with the learners. I was truly surprised by this and I kept a copy of the video since I was excited about how Keith had actually noticed my passion for what I was doing in the class. He had shown me in my 'Element' which according to Ken Robinson "[is] the place where the things you love to do and the things that you are good at come together' (Robinson and Aronica 2009:8). These things that I love to do and the things that I am good at are my inner secrets which have become known to me through Keith not regarding me as a mere object that he was videoing but interacting with me as a subject. *Whole-being-learning* was happening in that space as Keith recognised my gifts and talents, and integrated his own gifts and talents to compile the video and share it with me as an affirmation of a nurturing relationship that he experienced.

As I view videos of two additional learning and teaching experiences I have a sense of intensity of what I am doing. I bring a quality of nurturing relationship into the safe space as I interact within the community of practice. There is a relational valuing of 'the other'. I am fully present in the class and I include everyone through a systemic influence shown in the professional academic work I do. My response to the cosmos is dynamic and mutual just as my response to the academic staff is dynamic and mutual.

The second video-clip (http://youtu.be/-bk97Q3w8Do) (SOP 24, How do I present at a Symposium?) – Figure 39 was recorded at an Institutional Symposium on *Curriculum Innovation: Promoting Information and Communication Technology to promote Active Learning* which was held at the Rob Roy Hotel on 18 September 2001. This symposium provided an opportunity for all academic staff to share their good practice in the design of learning materials that embed Communications and Technology. We were sharing as part of the community of practice. Each person had a chance to share their use of computers to develop games for active *whole-being-learning*. The empathetic resonance can be experienced in this videoclip at 2:16; 2:55-2:59; 3:23-3:30; 9:13 – 9:17 minutes. The critical incidents are when I am displaying passion and excitement for what I am doing as I share about the setting up of the ELC. The passion and excitement is evident from the movement of my hands and body and in my facial expressions which are all spontaneous.

Figure 39 Institutional Symposium held September 2001 http://youtu.be/-bk97Q3w8Do

I have included this third video since it was recorded at a workshop in an unfamiliar surrounding with unfamiliar persons. The third video-clip (http://youtu.be/qi1W2cKTMpE) (SOP 25, How do I facilitate workshops?)– Figure 40 was recorded during a workshop that I facilitated at a traditional University in another Province during March 2009. I facilitated a workshop on designing learning materials for staff that were teaching on a Foundation course. The Foundation Course is for students who had not met the entrance requirements for the courses but showed potential to succeed.

Figure 40 Development workshop for staff from a different institution
http://youtu.be/qi1W2cKTMpE

The teachers were interested in designing learning materials for their students who were generally weaker in understanding the language of instruction. I was invited to share the process of designing innovative materials that we had developed. I held an interactive workshop during which time we all shared our experiences of designing and developing learning materials.

I felt mixed emotions. I felt excited to be sharing my knowledge. I felt nervous and anxious as I discovered that the attendance of teachers at the workshop was compulsory and some of the senior professors had already expressed unhappiness about being compelled to attend. I did not know any of the lecturers which made me feel uncomfortable. I felt the mixed emotions from the teachers. Some of them were excited about this opportunity to learn whilst others were feeling overwhelmed and challenged by the task at hand especially that of teaching these particular Foundation course students.

When I asked them to share their feelings at the start of the workshop, they expressed feelings of doubt, apprehension even resentment. I observed from the way in which they sat in the room and also in how they interacted with me and others in the room. As I experienced the triphasic interactions (Jousse 2000), I was able to spontaneously express my love, compassion and creativity I felt with the teachers.

From the previous workshops that I had facilitated, I became aware of the ways in which I had used my hands to express myself. Thus in this workshop, I made a conscious effort not to use my hands when speaking. In the first 10 minutes of the session, you will notice that my hands are behind my body – I looked as if I had no arms. As a result of this, I found that I used my eyes when interacting with the staff

by opening them widely or rolling them upwards to express disbelief in a statement. I also used my eyebrows when directing my gaze at a particular person.

Incidents in this clip at 11minutes show me inviting them into the learning space. At 22:34 mins I am feeling pleasure in what I am doing and it is evident in the life-affirming energy that I am displaying. From 26:26-26:35 mins I am listening attentively to the participants and giving them attention. I am also creating space for the participants to speak. I am fully present in the workshop as evident from the energy and values of pleasure, passion and connectedness that I share at about 58-59:24 mins.

In the three accounts I present above, I provide evidence of my values as I express them in the work that I do. I have shown how my values are sustained over eight years and across different contexts, in a workshop situation as well as in a symposium. Thus education for me is about a classroom with interactive personal relations, community of creativity and compassion.

I concur with Ken Robinson (2009) who believes that many of us have limited conceptions of our own natural capacities. We do not understand our powers of imagination, intelligence, feeling, intuition, spirituality, and of physical and sensory awareness. We do not understand our organic nature in that our minds, bodies, feelings and relationships with others are related holistically and do not operate independently of each other. We do not understand our constant potential for renewal. This lack of understanding of our own capacities is compounded by our education. Many of us leave school unsure of our talents and don't do well at school nor enjoy being there.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an account of my evidence of the biochemical nature of learning from the perspective of educational learning and through an educational lens. I described how *whole-being-learning* can be achieved within a safe community of practice where relationships between teachers and learners and their content are nurtured, talents and gifts are recognised and knowledge is integrated as teachers and learners interact. I identified the following three concerns related to students not engaging actively in *whole-being-learning* which contributes to their low throughput. I am concerned that:

- students do not believe in themselves, and the emotional issues that they experience are getting in the way of their learning.
- students are not actively engaging with the teachers and with the subject matter hence learning is not happening in the classrooms.
- teachers are in a state of despair in their classes and need support and encouragement.

All three concerns point to a lack of *whole-being-learning.* I have examined the extent to which I am living out my values and creating a safe space for *whole-being-learning* through using analysing the human expressions in the multimedia representations of my teaching.