

Chapter 9: Conclusion

What do I see as future explorations following on my study?

As a chemist, I believe that the chemical analysis of the changes or neuropeptide and receptor reactions and the growth of the myelin layer around the neurons through the myelination process, could be pursued in further work especially in order to gain other perspectives of the role of biochemical processes operating (during) human learning (Gershon 1998; Gershon 1999b; Pert 1999; Fields 2005; Leaf 2005; Lipton 2005; Fields 2008a; Fields 2008b; Pert 2008).

As a teacher and researcher in higher education, I believe that understanding the anthropology of learning, viz, the biochemistry which informs human psychology and human behaviour can contribute to greater motivation to improve learning, teaching and assessment processes, which can impact positively on success and throughput in higher education. I believe that learning in higher education needs to be exciting, pleasurable and self-rewarding and I believe that this is possible once the biochemical processes are taken into account.

I suggest the following questions for future exploration:

- How can neuropeptide and receptor identity and operation during learners' *whole-being-learning* be determined in a laboratory?
- What are the biochemical processes at work in commonly used medication, such as Ritalin, to "keep inattentive and impulsive students on the learning pathway" (Keane 2008)?
- How can policies in higher education accommodate, encourage and dignify fun and pleasure in learning, teaching and assessment strategies in higher education learning spaces?
- How and to what extent can academic developers and educators develop safe communities of practice within the higher education environment to promote *whole-being-learning*?

- How can higher education teachers be enabled to accommodate learning as a biochemical process in their teaching and assessment practices?
- How can teachers in higher education be enabled to recognise their learners' talents and gifts, and accommodate these talents and gifts in the design and delivery of the curricula?
- Most importantly - How can learning, teaching and assessment in higher education be pleasurable, delightful and self-rewarding?

What are my final reflections?

My study journey has been both emotionally and intellectually demanding and challenging, and rewarding. I have come to the conclusion that when 'we~i' experience positive emotions such as joy, fun and love during learning, 'our~my' biochemistry of learning is activated, and this kind of learning is more effective, not only because it is more enjoyable, but also because it results in learning which reflects beyond assessment.

When I reflect upon my doctoral journey, I have come to recognize what is anthropological about learning - what is common to all human beings about how they learn. I have come to realize the biochemical processes evident in human learning are even more significant than I have been able to demonstrate in this thesis. I believe that this is because learning at the biochemical level occurs deep within the viscera of all human beings, and exactly how that happens biochemically remains to be established.

My study started out by focusing on learning in the classrooms of a higher education institution, but I soon realized that my own learning and the learning of others throughout my life – from a personal, spiritual and educational perspective - was important and significant. I thus included, in my study of my personal learning and the learning of others, a focus from a spiritual perspective and through a spiritual lens. I then realized that my study is significant for teachers and learners not only in

education and specifically in university classrooms, but also in the teaching and learning of spirituality in our communities and society.

I have benefited greatly from my reflections. I realise that my reflection on my inner life, my beliefs and values with great curiosity, openness, acceptance and love has contributed to my own *whole-being-learning* (Siegel 2008). I have been delighted to realise the coherence between my ways of human knowing (epistemology), my ways of being human (ontology) and my human attitudes and values (axiology).

I discovered to my delight that the evidence which presented itself in my study appropriately answered the research questions which I asked, in keeping with ancient Zen wisdom, and with good teaching and research practice.

I have enjoyed showing how using my personal voice to share my ways of knowing, my ways of being and my values have made a contribution to self-study. I have had fun sharing how expression of my knowledge has benefited from the use of multimedia presentations.

I have been pleased to be able to demonstrate how *whole-being-learning* can be promoted in safe communities of practice. I have been delighted to be able to show that when relationships are nurtured with love-filled joy and joy-filled love, talents and gifts are recognised and knowledge can be integrated in emotionally-informed active learning exercises, such as game playing and game design.

As I have engaged in *whole-being-learning*, I began to recognise that I have a talent for asking probing questions, and that in answering these questions people become enlightened about themselves. These are the kinds of questions which open new ways of seeing themselves and seeing their learners' talents and gifts in safe and productive communities of practice.

It has given me pleasure to have demonstrated that people can be led to knowing more about themselves through relationships that nurture spirituality and creativity. I am excited to have found a new role for educators which can be used together with the “sage on the stage” (King 1993) and the “guide on the side” (King 1993), which is as a “designer of *whole-being-learning* opportunities” – “an architect of *whole-being-learning*”.

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to bring my embodied holistic knowledge to the academy as an original contribution to knowledge. For me learning is a dance that connects me to who I am completely as well as to other human beings and the subject content. I internalise the energy, words and music I receive, through interactions with the universe and others. I am then able to register and replay the expressions in movement or activation of my whole being – mind, body and soul as I engage in *whole-being-learning*. All of this fills me with delight and gratitude.

I discovered the extent to which I value educational and spiritual practice that expresses a joy-filled love and a love-filled joy. I offer this joy-filled love and a love-filled joy as an explanation for my educational influence, my living educational and living spiritual theory. I believe that, through my study, I have offered educators LOAVES of life-giving bread. From a spiritual and educational perspective within a safe community, I have given a Love Offering, an Available Voice and Energetic Service, in the hope that every teacher will find a way to fulfil the maxim ...

*Let the main object of this,
our didactic,
be as follows:
To seek and find a method
by which teachers may teach less,
but learners learn more
John Amos Comenius*