

'How do I enhance my educational leadership in developing gifted and talented educational practice?'

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Abstract

My research is in the context of my practice as a senior educational psychologist with responsibility for developing and co-ordinating gifted and talented educational provision in a local authority.

The foci of enquiry are

- Pupil's voice in their own lives and learning
- Inclusive and inclusional gifted and talented educational theory and practice
- inclusional pedagogies
- Systemic responses to government strategies

I am using Living Theory methodology (Whitehead, 1989) to make explicit and explicate my educational values, skills and understandings in developing inclusional living standards of judgement for an epistemology of educational knowledge. This supports Schön's (1995) call for a new epistemology. It responds to Snow's (2001) challenge to find ways of making the embodied knowledge of educators public. It also supports Eisner's (2005) advocacy of the creation of representational forms that are appropriate for enquiring into educational relationships which are complex and relationally dynamic.

My analysis will include an account of my educational influence in living my educational principles of supporting young persons' understandings of themselves as creators of knowledge and in developing the living values that give meaning and purpose to their lives.

Introduction

The field of research in which my thesis is located in is my practice and intention, to generate responses to 'A Students Prayer' by *Umberto Maturana*

*Don't impose on me what you know,
I want to explore the unknown
And be the source of my own discoveries.
Let the known be my liberation, not my slavery.*

*The world of your truth can be my limitation;
Your wisdom my negation.
Don't instruct me; let's walk together.
Let my riches begin where yours ends.*

*Show me so that I can stand
On your shoulders.
Reveal yourself so that I can be
Something different.*

*You believe that every human being
Can love and create.
I understand, then, your fear
When I ask you to live according to your wisdom.*

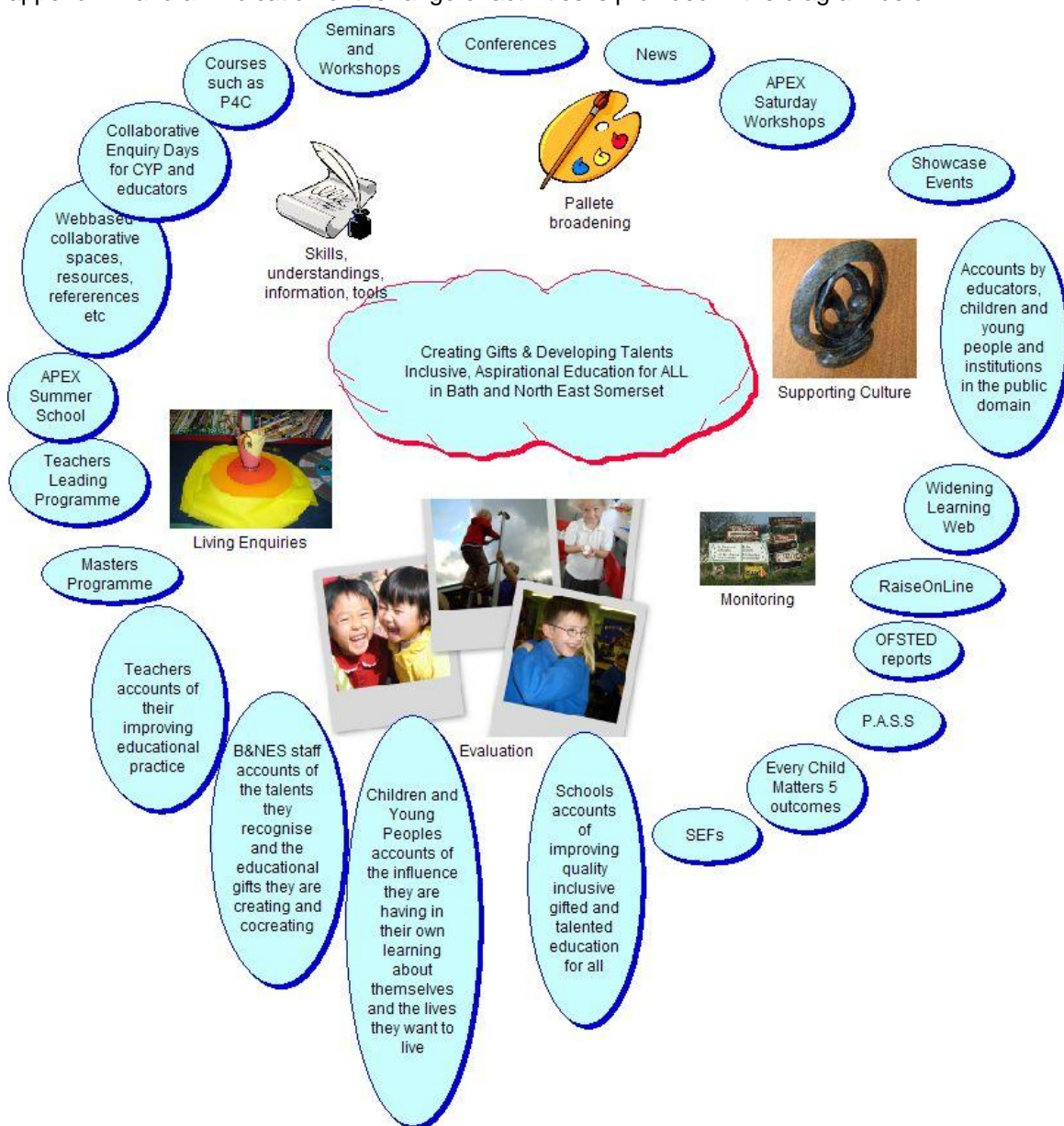
*You will not know who I am
By listening to yourself.*

*Don't instruct me; let me be.
Your failure is that I be identical to you.*

...which enables children and young people to live a life they judge satisfying and productive as Fromm (1960) describes when he says:

"...if a person can face the truth without panic they will realise that there is no purpose to life other than that which they create for themselves through their loving relationships and productive work." (p. 18)

My intention is educational and my practice is that of a senior educational psychologist with responsibility for coordinating, developing and implementing APEX (Able Pupils Extending Opportunities) in a local authority. A brief resume of the scope of the work, is provided in appendix 1 and an indication of the range of activities is provided in the diagram below:



The foci of enquiry

- Supporting and amplifying Pupil Voice which recognises children and young people as:
 - creators of their own living theories; able to express their values, explain their own theories to account for the way they are and want to be in the world and

- develop their own living standards by which they judge their lives as satisfying and productive
 - o valued co-creators of knowledge able to contribute to their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the communities of which they are a part.
- Extending inclusive and inclusional gifted and talented educational theory and practice.
- Contributing to understandings of inclusional pedagogies; the dynamic, co-creative inter-relationship, between educator, pupil, 'curriculum' and living standards of judgement.
- Developing systemic responses to government strategies which are values based and grounded in researched educational theories and practices.

I am using Living Theory methodology (Whitehead, 1989) to make explicit and explain my educational values, skills, understandings and inclusional living standards of judgement that emerge through the enquiry. I have a particular responsibility within the local authority for the implementation of policy to enhance leadership in developing gifted and talented educational practice. Hence I will be analysing the educational influences of the policy making, implementation and evaluation processes of the National Gifted and Talented Education strategy. This will include the interrelationship with other national strategies such as Personalisation of Learning and The Study Support Framework and agendas such as Inclusion and Children and Young People's Voice.

My analysis will include an account of my educational influence in living my principles of learning and teaching as I promote and support the sort of learning that I believe is transformational, that contributes to rather than negates a young person's understanding of themselves as creators of knowledge, their living values, what it is that gives meaning and purpose to their lives, their embodied educational theories and how they influence them in gaining the skills and understandings in learning to live a satisfying, productive and meaningful life.

Through my study, living standards of judgement will emerge which will contribute to the new epistemology that Schön (1995) calls for, and develop the systematised responses called for by Snow (2001):

"to enhance the value of personal knowledge and personal experience for practice .Good teachers possess a wealth of knowledge about teaching that cannot currently be drawn upon effectively in the preparation of novice teachers or in debates about practice." (p. 9)

(a) The significance and provenance of the research question;

My research question has four facets and the following outlines their significance and provenance.

1) Pupil's Voice

My research question rests on an appreciation that children and young people are authoritative influences in their own learning, in their own lives, and in the learning and lives of others.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of enabling pupils to contribute to decisions concerning the structure and delivery of what they are to learn. Pupils' voice and personalisation of learning are current themes in research in education (for example, the 'Special Issue of Educational Action Researcher of September 2007' on Young People's Voice) and government strategies (for example, 2020 Vision: Report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group). Both focus on how to engage the pupil more in the 'given' curriculum and evaluate success according to 'given' criteria as is evidenced by the repeated recourse to phrases such as, 'raising standards', 'underachievement', 'value added', 'realising potential'. Motivation, participation, social and emotional well being, are conceptualised as tools, subservient to exam

and test results, employability and rates of entry to prestigious universities. I share the concerns expressed by Fielding (2001):

“The value of student perceptions in contemporary high stakes contexts consist largely in their capacity to alert schools to shortcomings of their current performance and possible ways of addressing the deficiencies”. (p. 123)

Through my research I intend to respond to the challenge of writers such as Alderson (2000), Mayall (2002) and Mounter (2007b) who see children as experts in their own lives and urge educators to seek better ways of unlocking the child’s voice.

II) Gifted and Talented Education

I believe that for me to learn to live a satisfying and productive life I need to learn through my life about myself as the person I am and want to be, in a world I want to contribute to. I need to learn about my aptitudes, dispositions, passions, interests, values, educational theories, and how I develop the talents I deploy to create, value and offer my gifts through my life. I need to learn about the standards by which I may judge my life as worthwhile. Using the lens of gifted and talented education the educator is given the unusual licence to focus on enabling the learner to come to know themselves as a unique individual, valued and valuable within community with amazing possibilities to shape their lives to their own satisfaction and to the benefit of us all. In being enabled to craft and offer our gifts freely to other we have the possibility of, as Marx described, being twice affirmed. Biesta (2006) expresses something more of what I am struggling to communicate when he writes

“...we come into the world as unique individuals through the ways in which we respond responsibly to what and who is other. I argue that the responsibility of the educator not only lies in the cultivation of “worldly spaces” in which the encounter with otherness and difference is a real possibility, but that it extends to asking “difficult questions”: questions that summon us to respond responsively and responsibly to otherness and difference in our own, unique ways.” (p. ix)

White (2006) shows that concepts of intelligence, as expressed in England and America, and the school curriculum have been linked at the level of policy for centuries, and still are and he concludes:

“However influential the two core notions have been, if you look for sound supporting arguments behind them, you will be disappointed. There are no solid grounds for innate differences in IQ; and there are none for the traditional subject-based curriculum.” (p. 1)

Despite this, the heritage of men such as Galton, Morant and Burt, with values rooted in notions of empire and privileged classes, are felt today within the school system and the government’s policies. This can be seen very plainly in the National Gifted and Talented strategy and demonstrated by the similarities in these quotations provided by White from Terman in the early part of the 20th century and Eyre at the beginning of the 21st century:

*“In another paper (Terman 1922:657-9, quoted in Minton 1988:99), stated that:
... all the available facts that science has to offer support the Galtonian theory that mental abilities are chiefly a matter of original endowment... It is to the highest 25 percent of our population, and more especially to the top 5 percent, that we must look for the production of leaders who will advance science, art, government, education, and social welfare generally...”* (White, 2006, p. 24)

and this from Eyre in 2004 who headed NAGTY (the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth) set up by the government for the ‘most able’ 5 per cent of pupils in the country:

“...today’s gifted pupils are tomorrow’s social, intellectual, economic and cultural leaders and their development cannot be left to chance”. She goes on: ‘A major reason for a dedicated educational focus on gifted and talented pupils is their potential to play a leading role in their adult lives. If

England is to be successful in a globalised world then it will need to produce leaders who can compete with the best". (White, 2006, p. 143)

Other understandings of gifted and talented education are needed which are fit for a world with egalitarian and humane values so, following Hymer's (2007) living theory action research program, I am seeking to contribute to the generation and testing of inclusive and inclusional (Rayner, 2006) living theories of gifted and talented education.

III) Educational pedagogies

If children and young people are to be empowered, to develop their talents to create, value and offer gifts which can enhance their own lives and that of others, new pedagogical understandings and practices are needed. I agree with White's (2006) conclusion:

"The school curriculum is not a thing in itself. It is a vehicle to realise larger aims. ... The school curriculum is – or should be – a vehicle to enable young people not only to lead a fulfilled personal life, but also to help other people, as friends, parents, workers and as citizens, to lead as fulfilled a life as their own" .(p. 151)

I share Biesta's (2006) concerns of how learning is understood and translates into practice in the relationship between the pupil and teacher when he writes:

"The main problem with the new language of learning is that it has facilitated a redescription of the process of education in terms of an economic transaction, that is, a transaction in which (1) the learner is the (potential) consumer, the one who has certain "needs", in which (2) the teacher, the educator, or the educational institution is seen as the provider, that is, the one who is there to meet the needs of the learner, and where (3) education itself becomes a commodity – a "thing" – to be provided or delivered by the teacher or educational institution and to be consumed by the learner." (pp. 19- 20)

My intention is to go beyond the simplistic notions of learning as Biesta urges and contribute to the development of a language and practice that reflects the *educational* intentions of the educator. Whitty (2006) makes the distinction between education and educational in his presidential address to the BERA conference in 2005:

"One way of handling the distinction might be to use the terms 'education research' and 'educational research' more carefully. In this paper, I have so far used the broad term education research to characterise the whole field, but it may be that within that field we should reserve the term educational research for work that is consciously geared towards improving policy and practice...." (p. 173)

Whitehead (2007) shows this distinction has been long recognised but not appreciated when he asks 'is education research educational?', drawing on Whitty's 2005 presidential address to BERA, and his own commitment to an educational research programme, set out in his own presidential address to the BERA conference in 1988.

In describing my research as educational I intend to communicate that I am researching a values based pedagogy which is inclusive and inclusional. In such pedagogies I see educators in a receptive responsive relationship with their pupils as co-creators of knowledge. I am seeing this co-creation in terms of knowledge about the world and self, through which individuals are able to contribute to their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the communities they are part of.

IV) Systemic responses to government strategies

All schools are expected by the DCSF to have a teacher leading in their school improvement of gifted and talented education. A DCSF Institutional Quality Standards states that the gifted and talented policy is integral to the school/college's inclusion agenda and approach to personalised learning, feeds into and from the single school/college improvement plan, and must be consistent

with other policies. The DCSF believes that the policy should direct and reflect best practice in the school/college, it should be regularly reviewed and that it should be clearly linked to other policy documentation. The policy should also include input from the whole-school/college community that is regularly refreshed in the light of innovative national and international practice.

The policy statement with the implicit inclusive values is at odds with the detail of implementation strategies schools are expected to adopt which rests on Galton's theory of intelligence.

In exercising my responsibility for improving gifted and talented educational provision in the local authority I am seeking to connect with the values that the national strategies are intended to express. I am therefore extending Hymer's (2007) enquiry into the systemic influences of a senior educational psychologist with responsibilities for developing leadership with teachers in enhancing the gifted and talented educational provision. I am researching educational relationships through which teachers are expressing their intentions and responsibilities towards their pupils. These relationships are such that pupils can recognize, value and work with their aptitudes, dispositions, interests and enthusiasms, develop their talents and recognize, create, value and share their gifts as they explore the possibilities they may wish to focus on through life to the benefit of themselves and society.

(b) The underpinning theoretical basis of the research;

I recognise there are different forms of theory which underpin different forms of enquiry, and as Morse (2005) says:

"...theories are not fact. They are not the truth. They are tools. They are merely abstractions, conjectures, and organisations of reality, and as such, are malleable, changeable, and modifiable." (p.3)

However I also recognise these tools are not just servants, they are masters of the enquiry. My intention is to educationally enquire in a manner which can allow me to engage critically and with the potential of evolving new understandings, as Polanyi's (1958) suggests:

"...for once men have been made to realize the crippling mutilations imposed by an objectivist framework once the veil of ambiguities covering up these mutilations has been definitely dissolved many fresh minds will turn to the task of reinterpreting the world as it is, and as it then once more will be seen to be." (p. 381)

My theoretical underpinnings therefore require a different form of logic than those of the traditional Western Academy, as described by Huxtable and Whitehead (2007).

"Our intention is to develop living approaches to evaluating our educational influences in learning which are dynamically interrelated with the standards by which we make those judgements and have the possibility of contributing to our educational endeavours. To do this we need to develop new forms of logics, research methodologies and evidence which keep connection with the values we are seeking to live.

For example, the majority of theory in the Western Academy uses a propositional logic with a 2,500 history going back to Aristotle, with the law of contradiction stating that two mutually exclusive opposite statements cannot be true simultaneously. Dialecticians however, hold that human beings hold living contradictions together in their practice. For example, in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' individuals can experience themselves as a living contradiction in recognising that they hold together certain values with their negation at the same time. Dialecticians and formal logicians tend to deny the rationality of the other's position. We believe a third logic, a living logic of inclusionality, can include insights from both propositional and dialectical theories without denying the rationality of either logic. We accept Marcuse's (1964, p. 105) idea of logic as a mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rational."

I will be drawing on the theoretical insights of psychologists, educators and others such as Hymer (2007), Dweck (2000), Rayner (2006), Whitehead and McNiff (2006) and Hart et al (2004) to challenge and stimulate my reflections and imagination in the creation of my living educational theories and the gifts which I generate, recognise, share and explore through researching in the field of 'gifted and talented' education.

(c)The appropriateness of the chosen research methods and methodologies in relation to the research question;

Medawar (1969) concludes

“The purpose of scientific enquiry is not to compile an inventory of factual information, nor to build up a totalitarian world picture of natural Laws in which every event that is not compulsory is forbidden. We should think of it rather as a logically articulated structure of justifiable beliefs about nature. It begins as a story about a Possible World – a story which we invent and criticise and modify as we go along, so that it ends by being, as nearly as we can make it, a story about real life.” (p. 59)

I have therefore chosen to work with a Living Theory methodology which enables the living, dynamic, relational educational processes to be recognised, explicated and explained as they emerge through lived experience and allow the engagement of my imagination to the creative possibilities of methodological inventiveness (Dadds and Hart, 2001).

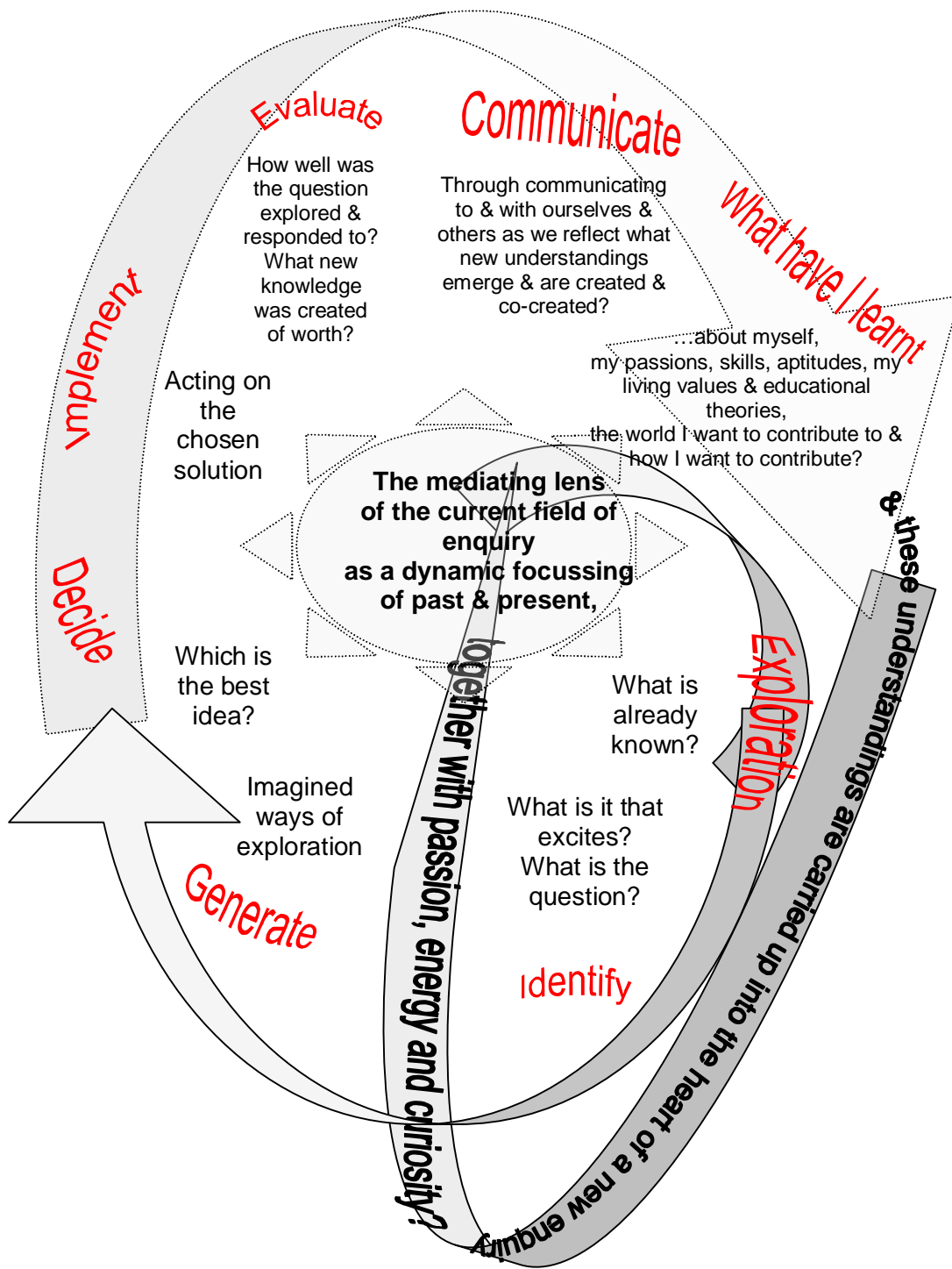
I believe that unwitting assumptions influence the questions I ask, the manner of their asking, and the answers that I construct, and that all are intimately interwoven and influence not only my own learning but that of others; child and adult, and the organisations and communities in which I work. I choose Living Theory as my research methodology because there is an explicit acknowledgement that the question arises through the answer created; not in a static link but through a creative, dynamic, responsive-receptive process. Resting in a living, inclusional logic the systematic and systemic nature of enquiry seeks to explicate the relationship in which questions and answers and the person, and people, asking them, can be held together in educational relationships.

The methods I have used, and will continue to employ and develop, include forms of action research such as TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context), developed by Wallace (2004). This is being used by educators and with children for the reasons Mounter (2007a) articulates:

“This very much links with my initial thoughts of keeping the framework of research methodologies as free as possible for the children. They are used to working within the action research methodology created by Wallace (2004), The TASC Wheel. We use this for all of our topics, as a starting point and framework for our learning. This will be a methodology the children may use instinctively, with no support or guidance from me.”



I have explained the interconnections with the reflections on the emerging educational values, theories and knowledge of self (Whitehead, 1989) as a living form of a multi-dimensional TASC knot (Huxtable, 2007).



Other methods of enquiry will be developed in working with educators and their pupils through the masters programme and the authority wide teachers leading in inclusive gifted and talented education programme. I also intend using narrative (McNiff 2007), letter writing (Shobbrook,

1997) and other dialogic methods and I will generate forms of documentation which will include multi-media and web based educational conversations for the same reasons that Whitehead (2005) has described.

"I often find images carry more meaning than words, although I usually need words to communicate the significance the image has for me. I also find conversations with others about images help to develop shared meanings of the values that help to constitute my productive life. I call these shared meanings about embodied values the affirmations of inclusionality and the representation of these meanings, visual narratives."

Examples of this work can be found in my chapter, *Creating inclusive and inclusional understandings of gifts and talents through Living Educational Theory research*, in *Beyond Gifted & Talented: Towards a conceptualisation fit for the 21st century*, edited by Hymer, Balchin, and Matthews which will be published in December 2008.

(d) The anticipated contribution of the research to the field in general.

Extending understandings about the use of multi-media narratives in educational research

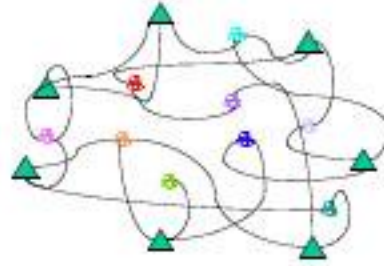
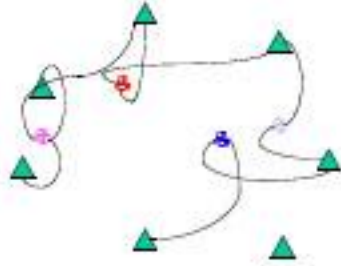
I am by interest and profession a psychologist and I appreciate the delightful complexity that people present and the difficulties of providing evidence of flowing, dynamic relationships as Eisner (2005) says

"Human beings are, after all, sentient beings whose lives are pervaded by complex and subtle forms of affect. To try to comprehend the ways in which people function and the meanings the events in their lives have for them and to neglect either seeing or portraying those events and meanings is to distort and limit what can be known about them. The artistic treatment of forms of representation has the capacity to arouse such feelings. Such forms provide the conditions through which empathy can emerge, and generate the nachleben that gives us vicarious access to the lives of others." (p. 116)

We therefore need to extend the forms of representation in educational research. The change to the University of Bath regulations in 2004 permitting the submission of e-media has opened up possibilities for the submission of multi-media narratives. The doctoral theses of Hartog (2004), Naidoo (2005), Farren (2005), Glenn (2006), Charles (2007), Roche (2007) have used multi-media narratives to establish the academic acceptability of living standards of judgment. My intention is to contribute further to the use of multi-media narratives and other representational forms in educational research.

A related anticipated contribution is to the forms of representation that are appropriate for communicating the meanings of these relationally dynamic standards of judgment. I am thinking here of the development of forms of representation of the embodied knowledge I am expressing through the diagram above of my activities. These activities and relationships are understood as existing within a dynamic network of relationships that are themselves being influenced by the sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts of their existence.

Building on Church's (2004) work on networks from her doctoral thesis:



MADLINE - The threads join us together through the knots of our joint activity. It is the relational, engaged in the creational, that creates the structure. The threads tie together in knots and create the strength to hold us. The co-ordinator, or secretariat is the artisan. Keeps the net in good order, knows which knots are best for what, notices the breaks and fraying and seeks to rejoin them.

It was a moment of great clarity and inspiration. And I'd got there through reading, talking, thinking, talking, reading, thinking, and waiting for the images and words. I waited for them and they came. (Church, 2004, p. 87)

I anticipate making, using multi-media accounts of learning, an original contribution to the forms of representation that can be used in explanations of my educational influence in joint activities that are relational, 'engaged in the creational', and that create transitional structures of understanding within a continuous process of educational transformation.

Extending understandings of enhancing a living theory methodology for educational research

Snow (2001) and Schön (1995) have highlighted the epistemological significance of legitimating the educational knowledge produced by practitioner-researchers. Furlong and Oancea (2005) have focused attention on the importance of establishing appropriate standards of judgment for evaluating the quality of the knowledge generated by practitioner-researchers. The 2006-7 BERA Practitioner-Researcher SIG e-seminar has focused on the topic of:

What are appropriate standards of judgment in evaluating the quality of the educational knowledge and educational theories we are creating as practitioner-researchers?

With the development of inclusional perspectives (Rayner, 2005) in educational research the anticipated contribution of the research is intended to be in the creation and development of relationally dynamic living standards of educational judgment from a perspective of inclusionality.

Schon (1995) recognised new forms of scholarship demand new epistemologies. Through this work I intend to respond to his call by enhancing the educational knowledge-base of practitioner research. I intend to do this using a Living Theory methodology to clarify and develop living, inclusional standards of judgment. I intend to show how the use of this methodology can contribute to an epistemology for educational research.

Extending Understandings of Gifted and Talented education

I recognise the dominant theories and practices in gifted and talented education as responses to the outdated values and forms of analysis described by White (2006). Through this research I intend to contribute to educational theories and practices that are rooted in egalitarian and

humane values (Biesta, 2006) which enhance the educational experiences of children. I am thinking of their learning about themselves, the world and the life they determine as worthwhile while, as they learn to contribute to an evolving, loving and peaceful world. I anticipate contributing to the development of educational theory that explains how to enhance the educational experiences of pupils to develop their talents while creating, recognizing, valuing, developing and sharing their gifts. Through this research I will develop relationally dynamic standards of judgment (Rayner, 2005) by which I may hold myself to account as I account to others.

Building on Roche's research (2007) I will connect the expression and development of talents with the ontological values I use to give meaning and purpose of my life and work in education and transform them, in the process of their communicating their meanings in the process of their emergence into living standards of judgment.

"I also reconceptualised my own identity as a critical thinker and began to challenge dominant orthodoxies that have traditionally determined who is seen as a knower in a primary classroom and who is seen as an educational researcher. I articulate how my ontological values of care, freedom and justice in relation to others were transformed through their emergence into the living standards of judgment by which I evaluated the educational influence in learning of my developing dialogical practice." (Roche, 2007, Abstract)

Finally I intend to develop a multi-media narrative for communicating my living educational theory of developing gifts and talents through researching my educational relationships in which I am seeking to support the development of the talents and gifts of both teachers and pupils. The multi-media narrative of my living theory (McNiff, 2007), of the expression and development of gifts and talents, will include collages of video clips. The narrative will explain the educational influences of pupils, teachers, parents and their sociocultural and sociohistorical environments, in the expression and development of gifts and talents.

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Appendix 1

Indicative scope and evolution of APEX (Able Pupils Extending Opportunities Project)

APEX delivers the LA policy for gifted and talented originally established in 1999 which contributes to the realisation of the educational vision expressed in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

"We want all Children and Young People to do better in life than they ever thought they could. We will give children and young people the help that they need to do this"
Bath and North East Somerset Children and Young People's Plan 2005

APEX employs a senior educational psychologist to co-ordinate and develop the work, admin and research assistant support who work with teachers, schools, children's services teams and external partners to support and stimulate the development and research of inclusive gifted and talented educational theory and practice in the Bath and North East Somerset learning community. This work includes developing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating a Saturday Workshop and Summer School programme with managers, quality assurance monitors, workshop and module providers and assistants who provide a variety of learning opportunities for children and young people.

The influence of APEX activities is evaluated through participation, questionnaires, unsolicited responses, SEFs, discussions with Heads, teachers, parents, children, Children's Services staff, collection of statistical data and the development of new forms of educational evidence such as visual narratives.

Over the years teachers and children from nearly every school in the authority have been involved with APEX, schools are referring to APEX in their SEFs, teachers, children and young people who take part in learning opportunities offered have continued to take advantage of them. Work is underway with other educators to develop performance measures to evidence the impact of APEX on both 'enjoy and achieve' but also the other four outcomes within the CYPP.

Funds from schools forum gradually replaced grant (NOF and standards fund) monies which finally ended in 2004. This pays for the coordination, management, administration, development, and delivery of activities such as:

- Saturday workshops and Summer Schools for children and young people,
- School based INSET
- Accredited CPD for teachers to research their own practice with University of Bath (TDA funded)
- Learning opportunities for adults, children and young people, e.g., collaborative, creative enquiries
- Local access to courses, conferences and training for educators led by national and international educators at the leading edge of the field
- APEX website information about local activity and national strategies and agendas
- Enhancing access to and involvement in local, national and international research communities and networks
- through the widening learning web

In addition the local authority provides the management, administration and infrastructures in which APEX sits such as integration of support for schools working with local national agendas and strategies delivered by other departments and services within Children's Services; e.g. inclusion, study support, extended schools, lifelong learning, ECM, curriculum for the 21st Century, personalisation of learning...

Other resources and funds have been made accessible to schools and teachers through making links locally, regionally, nationally and internationally with universities and organisations such as National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY), National Association for Able, Gifted and Talented Children (NACE), NOF (New Opportunities Fund), DCSF and QCA. Teachers have been engaged with the British Council international programme and over the years groups have been able to visit and share practice with educators in Calgary, Canada, Neimegan, Holland, and Ekaterenberg, Russia.

APEX in context, overview of indicative developments

- The first course for teachers was offered to introduce teachers to the latest thinking in gifted and talented education in 1997. Conferences and courses continue to be offered locally with nationally and internationally recognised speakers. Many conferences have been

repeated in response to popular demand, for instance Philosophy for Children is now on its 8th repeat, approximately 200 teachers have taken part and schools are using the work according to their own needs.

- A contribution was made to the House of Commons Select Committee in Highly Able Children – Huxtable, M. (1998) Memorandum 26 Appendices to the minutes to Third Report of The House of Commons Education and Employment Select Committee on Highly Able Children 1999
- In 1998 the pilot of the Saturday Workshops was launched. It arose from cross service links with the aims of extending the opportunities for KS1, 2 and 3 pupils beyond school to apply and develop their skills with other like-minded pupils, in a range of different contexts, with guidance from adults from various professions and disciplines.
 - Analysis and development of the Saturday workshops and Summer School was made public in Gifted Education International- Huxtable, M. (2003) The Elasticated Learner: beyond curriculum learning opportunities in a local authority. Gifted Education International Vol 17 No 2 p140
 - In 2005-2006 123 workshops ran with 1730 places taken. Children from all of the authority are accessing the workshops.
 - Summer Schools have been provided since 2000 and accessed by pupils from schools across all of B&NES. This year 296 applications from 69% of secondary schools and 85% of primary schools from across the authority were received for 13 workshops run 2007; 26 places available in each, for pupils in Y4/5, 6/7 and KS3/4.
 - Satisfaction from students and parents is high with repeat enrolments & some parents finding out when the summer school is going to be before they book their summer holiday. Teachers have reported the enthusiasm of children to communicate what they have been doing. Schools have the workshops and summer schools as part of the implementation of their policies and to evidence their progress in addressing the needs of gifted and talented children.
- In 2004 the first collaborative, creative enquiry day was offered for 5 schools to work as co-learners with an author to work on their skills and understandings for a day with the eyes of an 'authentic' writer.
 - These days have continued to provide exciting opportunities for educators and children exploring as mathematicians, choreographers and scientists.
 - Dr Frank Martinelli (Ralph Allen) and Dr Gary Mathlin (Univ. Bath) offered a day for scientists and engineers, and Sarah Savage (consultant) and Sue Jones (Ralph Allen) offered days for mathematicians in the summer 2007. Sue Jones was invited to present the work at a regional gifted and talented conference.
- 2004 P.A.S.S. (Pupils Attitude to Self and School) was introduced to the schools in the authority. This is a significant tool that can be used to evidence how the views of students are informing school development.
 - Currently 11 secondary schools and 23 primary schools (recently the KS1 version has been made available) have P.A.S.S. Schools are using it according to their own need; some for transition, some to target particular interventions with individuals, some for the SEF on pupil voice, some to contribute to the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme across all schools.
 - There is a proposal going to Schools Forum for all schools to use P.A.S.S., the data to be integrated by the LA to contribute to targeting, monitoring and evaluating provision and amplify the children and young peoples voices in developing provision in school and the authority.
 - A group has been created to extend children's and young people's voice in APEX and is contributing to improving the evidence of impact and direction of the work.

- 2005 the masters program, funded by TDA, was offered by Dr Jack Whitehead (Univ. Bath) to support teachers researching their own practice and improve inclusive gifted and talented educational theory and practice
 - The APEX coordinator registered for a self funded module to support the teachers – Huxtable, M. (2006) How can I improve my practice through ‘walking the talk’ and ‘dealing with doorsteps’? Masters Educational Enquiry module University of Bath
 - Accredited accounts of the teachers are available on www.actionresearch.net and the APEX site. There are currently two groups meeting weekly and the research is extending to improve our practice as we support children as living theory action researchers.
 - Four papers and a colloquium were accepted from local educators for the World Conference on gifted and talented education in August, 2007 and a teacher’s article has appeared in the NACE news letter. This ground breaking work of educators and children is being seen nationally and internationally and reinforcing the strong national reputation that B&NES has for gifted and talented education.
 - Huxtable, M. and Whitehead, J. (2007) How can inclusive and inclusional understandings of gifts/talents be developed educationally? - Presented at The World Conference For Gifted and Talented Children on From Local Worlds Of Giftedness To Global, 5-10 August 2007, University of Warwick.
 - Two papers from teachers in the group have been accepted for publication in a special issue of Gifted Education International including one by me, Huxtable, M. Living Theory and TASC: A multidimensional, inter and intra relational, flowing knot of enquiry. Accepted for publication in Gifted Education International 2008.

- The response of the authority to the DCSF launch of its national gifted and talented education initiative in 2005 was developed through the evolution of inclusive understandings of gifted and talented education.
 - Huxtable, M. (2005) Everyone a Winner - Towards Exceptional Achievement of All. Gifted Education International Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 51-69
 - OFSTED is increasingly having a specific focus on gifted and talented education. The schools that have begun to work with the NACE Challenge Award Framework are in a good position to respond. One secondary currently has the award, another secondary is ready to put in for the award.
 - The majority of schools are involved with the 2007-2008 teachers leading in improving inclusive gifted and talented education for all programme being developed in collaboration with the senior inclusion officer, the senior adviser for secondary, and the primary adviser for primary
 - Teachers who want to develop their work for accreditation are joining the master’s groups at University of Bath with Jack Whitehead.

- An opportunity for local authority staff to become familiar with action research, share the values they were seeking to live more fully through their practice and support their research was offered in 2005.
 - Supported by Jack Whitehead (University of Bath) this work has evolved into Improving Practice, Conversation Café which now meets weekly.
 - New forms of evidence is being developed to contribute to evaluation of the authority’s work
 - Jones, C. and Huxtable, M. (2006) How can we support educators to develop skills and understandings inclusionally? - Presented at BERA Annual Conference, Warwick 2006.
 - Huxtable, M and Whitehead, J. (2006) Creating living standards of judgment for practice-based research in the professions through our question, How do i—we improve our educational practices? - Presented at BERA Annual Conference, Warwick 2006.
 - Whitehead, J. and Huxtable, M. (2006) How are we co-creating living standards of judgment in action-researching our professional practices? Presented at ALARM PAR Conference, Groenigen 2006.

- Huxtable, M. (2007) How do I know whether I am contributing to an educational world of quality, where children and young people develop the skills and understandings which enable them to live satisfying and productive lives? Presented at the BERA Annual Conference, Institute of Education University of London.