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## Educative Relations in a New Era

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**ABSTRACT** The aim of this article is to present a form of curriculum theorising that is grounded in the living educative relationships, theories, practices and disciplined enquiries of a professional educator. It shows how the living curricular theories of professional educators constitute a discipline of education.

What I want to do in this article is to offer a form of curriculum theorising that is grounded in what I have called living educational theories (Whitehead, 1989). The particular form of curriculum theorising I have in mind has emerged from a synthesis of two traditions which have often been viewed as incommensurable. I am thinking of the two-thousand-year-old conflict between the propositional and dialectical traditions. These conflicts are represented in differences between Plato and Aristotle, and Popper and Marcuse. Plato, in the *Phaedrus* (Rhys, 1910), through the words of Socrates, writes of the art of the dialectician involving holding together both the One and the Many. By this he meant our capacities to synthesise and analyse, to hold together under a general idea and to break things down into their separate particulars. Aristotle in his work *On Interpretation* (1952) writes of the necessity of eliminating contradictions by choosing whether a person has a characteristic or not. Plato appears to embrace contradictions. Aristotle explicitly eliminates contradictions from correct thought.

Over 2000 years later, in the 1960s, these conflicts could be seen clearly between Popper's (1963) and Marcuse's (1964) views of knowledge. Popper believed that dialectical theories were based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking. Using the laws of inference he demonstrated that theories which contained contradiction were entirely useless. Marcuse, on the other hand, claimed that propositional theories, by eliminating contradictions, were masking the dialectical nature of reality.

I think the above writing is characteristic of many educational researchers and curriculum theorists. The linguistic form of my communication is propositional. I am making claims about the writings of several others, which can be tested for validity. I think I have avoided contradictions in the sense that my sentences do not contain mutually exclusive statements which I claim are true simultaneously.

Before I show you my living curriculum theorising in action as I create my curriculum vitae I want to engage with three texts on *The Curriculum of the Future* (Young, 1998), *A Life in Education* (Simon, 1998) and *The Curriculum Experiment* (Elliott, 1998).

### Curriculum Theorising in Propositional Forms of Discourse

Michael Young (1998), in *The Curriculum of the Future*, describes his move from the 'New Sociology of Education' to a 'Critical Theory of Learning'. Young argues that knowledge and learning are the major issues in the current crisis in schooling. He considers the role of the university and of disciplinary knowledge, such as the sociology of education, as a basis of a critical theory of education. Given the influence of Habermas' critical social theory in education it is refreshing to see the emphasis both theorists are giving to learning:

A theory developed in this way can no longer start by examining concrete ideals immanent in traditional forms of life. It must orient itself to the range of learning processes that is opened up at a given time by a historically attained level of learning. It must refrain from critically evaluating and normatively ordering totalities, forms of life and cultures, and life-contexts and epochs as a whole. (Habermas, 1987, p. 383)

Young lists the elements of a critical theory of learning to be that it:

- has a concept of the future and of education in relation to a vision of a society of the future;
- connects, rather than insulates the concepts and approaches developed by the different educational disciplines;
- gives primacy to the issues of learning in the production of new knowledge;
- has an educational purpose associated with realising the emancipatory potential of learning for all people throughout their lives;
- is critical in relation to the expansion of mass schooling and formal education generally, as well as of the limits of learning in workplaces and communities (Young, 1998, p. 181).

I can relate to each of these propositional statements concerning a connective curriculum. Young sees such a curriculum as open because the concept of purpose is defined in terms of future needs and debates about different futures. It cannot therefore be fixed or certain. He emphasises the importance of feedback between curriculum purposes and learners' needs. He says that a connective curriculum not only

shapes learner purposes, it has to be shaped by them. He also believes that the concept of curriculum purpose is an element of all the parts of the curriculum, such as subjects or occupational knowledge. It is not external to the parts.

I strongly support Young's view of the need to see a connective curriculum in terms of learning. The creation of living curriculum theories shows the curriculum being embodied in an individual's form of life. The quotations from Young, provide me with the opportunity to suggest that two forms of disciplinary knowledge, propositional and dialectical, if held together, could have more influence for good on the curriculum of the future than could a propositional form of critical theory on its own. I will emphasise this point by responding to Young's propositional text in a direct response as I 'interrogate' his propositional form of 'disciplinary' knowledge. I intend this response as an invitation to dialogue. I hope you experience it in this way:

Young: The demise of disciplinary knowledge in teacher education was part of a more general demand discussed earlier for more immediate and relevant knowledge; in this case the demand related specifically to classroom practice. However, the attempt to replace knowledge with skills failed to recognize that the problem of relevance is not just one of content or about skills rather than knowledge. It is a question of the relationships between universities and the schools and between the different kinds of knowledge generated in the two contexts. University-based research generates knowledge about education that relates to general principles and trends but not to specific contexts, even when it arises from research that takes place in classrooms. (Young, 1998, p. 180)

Whitehead: My own criticism of "disciplinary knowledge" in teacher education, was not focused on the "disciplinary knowledge" itself. It was focused on the "disciplines" approach to educational theory in which it was held that educational theory was constituted by the disciplines of the philosophy, sociology, psychology and history of education. My own attempts to reconstruct educational theory have not focused on replacing knowledge with skills. I have been seeking to reconstruct educational theory onto a dialogical and dialectical base where "relevance" is defined in terms of the capacity of educational theories to describe and explain the learning of professional educators in their educative relationships with their students.

Young: Educational knowledge generated from professional experience relates to individual pupils and aspects of the curriculum as it is experienced in specific schools, although it may have wider relevance. The solution to the problem of relevance is not, as in the policies of the 1980s and 1990s, to reject the disciplinary knowledge but to create opportunities for interrogating it from the point of view of teachers' professional knowledge and vice versa. Educational

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research and the professional education of teachers are both dialogues between theory and practice, albeit with different but complementary purposes. (Young, p. 180, 1998)

Whitehead: I do appreciate your solution to the problem of relevance. I do see Educational Research and the professional education of teachers as dialogues between theory and practice with different but complementary purposes. I also see them having the same purpose in a form of research-based professionalism in which professional educators can create their own living educational theories as they ask, answer and research questions of the kind, "How do I improve what I am doing?". In developing your critical theory of education in a propositional form I wonder if there will be logical and conceptual space for the dialogical and dialectical theories of professional educators with their students. As a professional educator I feel compelled to engage in dialogues between the theories of philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and historians and my practice. I also want to make contributions to educational knowledge as part of my research-based professionalism as an educator.

One researcher who has made such a contribution is Brian Simon (1998). In his autobiographical, *A Life in Education*, Simon makes sense of a lifetime's activity in which he has engaged in a study of the process of education itself, on the nature of learning and teaching, and on classroom organisation. He has provided a systematic and detailed historical study of educational developments over the last two centuries in an effort to understand the genesis and evolution of late-twentieth-century policies and practices in England. He also provides a close study of the local history of schooling, of its community aspects and documents his own intensive involvement in the whole development of comprehensive secondary education. Simon focuses directly on educational issues from within his discipline of the history of education. He says that his text is 'no autobiography detailing personal feelings, family affairs, friends' (Simon, 1998, pp. 4-5). What he does is to draw on contemporary experience to unravel how opinions were formed what kind of investigation and research was undertaken at different levels and why. He is clear that all these matters were closely relevant to the education of student teachers. The strength of the inspirational quality of Simon's writing is partly due to the insights he gives into the past. The strength of Young's writings is that he has created a positive vision for the future, drawing heavily on his sociological imagination.

Before focusing on my own living curriculum theorising from within my own discipline of educational enquiry, I want to engage with John Elliott's (1998) idea of the curriculum as an innovative pedagogical experiment. Drawing on the work of Stenhouse, Elliott writes that the curriculum, as Stenhouse conceived it, specified not only content, aims and pedagogical principles, but also an action research programme to

support teacher reflection and discussion about the aims, principles and problems of realising them in forms of appropriate action.

He develops his theory that pedagogical change fundamentally involves the collaborative reconstruction of the professional culture of teachers through the development of discursive consciousness. He is clear that discourse grounded in data about classroom practices needs to include school administrators, parents and employers, and teachers who have special responsibilities for curriculum planning and the assessment of pupils' progress.

While I accept the idea of developing an action research programme to support my reflections as a university teacher-educator, I want to raise my concerns about embracing the concept of 'pedagogy'. Hamilton (1999) believes that the European discourse of didactics is very close to the Anglo-American discourse on pedagogics. 'Only their language divides them' (p. XXX??). My concern is with the way language is used in forming a sense of self, especially in relation to one's professional role. My anxiety about the term 'Pedagogy' is that it is associated with the term, 'Pedagogue' meaning a schoolmaster or teacher. The term is usually used in a derogatory way implying pedantry (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). For this reason, I prefer to emphasise the idea of being a professional educator, with its positive images in the Anglo-American literature, rather than embrace the term 'Pedagogue'.

In accepting Elliott's ideas about the role of action research in my curricular practices as a professional educator in higher education, I recognise that I am moving into a context that is not addressed by Elliott. His ideas do, however, travel well into my curriculum theorising in my university teaching. I do see myself as a university teacher involved in a reflective process of reconstructing not only my methods, but also the vision of education that underpins them. I also agree with Elliott's point that such involvement provides the key to resolving the problem that has beset both teacher- and state-driven change; namely, of transforming the professional culture that shapes practice.

I use the clarity of Young's and Elliott's propositional thought to help me to articulate my own living curriculum theorising below. However, explaining my own learning in forms of living theories does liberate me from the constraint of believing that anyone else's propositional theory can explain my own educational development. The propositional theories can contribute to my explanation but my explanation will not be 'contained' within them. This move into creating my own living theory enables me to freely acknowledge the values of the contributions being made to my education by contributors to the disciplines of education. Living theory liberates me from the feeling of being constrained to 'fit' my explanation into any pre-existing conceptual framework from any of the traditional disciplines of education, considered on their own or in any combination.

see Hamilton  
refs

### Living Forms of Curriculum Theorising

The importance of creating living forms of educational and curriculum theorising was highlighted for me by a group of social scientists who, in a text on *Education: culture, economy, society*, claimed that 'No sophisticated theory of education can ignore its contribution to economic development' (Halsey et al, 1997, p. 156). In agreeing with their point, I want to respond with the additional claim that no sophisticated theory of education can ignore the living theories of professional educators. In making this point, I want to stress that I value the disciplines of education in the creation of educational theory. I also want to highlight the contributions to educational theory being made by professional educators as they engage in disciplined forms of self-studies of their own professional learning (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998 NOT IN REFS!!!); Hamilton, 1998; McNiff, 1999; ~~MacNEILSON et al, 1998~~

My own move into living forms of curriculum theorising is focused on the difference between lexical and ostensive definitions. Because of the solely propositional nature of Young's, Elliott's and Simon's texts, their words are defined in terms of other words. That is, the definitions are lexical. I am suggesting that my living curriculum theorising below, in my educative relationship with Kevin Eames, is focused on ostensive definitions. These are grounded in my educative relationships as a professional educator. I show the meanings of my theorising emerging from practice. I show how I am engaging with the propositional theories of the traditional disciplines of education and, as I create my own curriculum vitae, the course of my life.

In my own education, understanding my move from propositional to living curriculum theorising involved three insights. I owe the first insight to Michael Polanyi (1958) as I was moving, in 1971, from the position of a positivist researcher committed to the discipline approach to educational theory. I followed Polanyi's decision to understand the world from my point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising his judgement with universal intent. I decided to focus my educational enquiries on questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' My own creativity enabled me to accept the truth of experiencing 'I' as a living contradiction in my enquiry. My understanding of the significance of including 'I' as a living contradiction in claims to educational knowledge emerged from understanding Ilyenkov's text on *Dialectical Logic*, where he asked 'If an object is a living contradiction, what must be the thought (statement about the object) be which expresses it?' (1977, p. 320 (WHOSE REF??? Is this in the refs?)). By 'I' existing as a living contradiction, I am meaning that 'I' hold together values that are mutually exclusive opposites. For example, I experience myself as a living contradiction in those moments when I am conscious of holding certain values, whilst at the same time denying them in my practice. It is an experience that all the teachers I work with recognise in their own lives. It

✓ added

Ilyenkov

does, however, as Evans reports (1995, p. 232) take time and reflection for curriculum theorists to understand the significance of including 'I' as a living contradiction in their curriculum practices and in their claims to educational knowledge.

The second insight was to see that action-reflection cycles of the following form can emerge from questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?', and provide a methodical approach to the curriculum enquiry:

- I experience a concern when my values are not being fully lived in my practice.
- I imagine what to do and form an action plan.
- I act and gather data that will enable me to judge the effectiveness of my actions in living my values more fully.
- I evaluate my actions.
- I modify my concerns, plans and actions in the light of my evaluations.
- The tension that moves the enquiry forward is focused on the desire to live values more fully in the face of the experience of their denial in practice.

The third insight was to see that individuals necessarily create their own living curriculum theories as they describe and explain their own learning. These explanations can be communicated in their own unique form of representation and with their own constellation of values, which make them uniquely themselves (see Eames, 1995; Evans, 1995; Holley, 1997; Hughes, 1996, ~~1998~~ NOT IN REFS!!!; Laidlaw, 1996, ~~1996~~ 1996 IN REFS!!!; D'Arcy 1998, included in <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw>). Each of these theses, which can be understood as a 'curriculum vitae' in the sense of a course of life, has been presented in a way which opens the explanations to public test using Habermas's criteria of social validity. That is, we can ask of the explanations for the individual's learning:

- Are they comprehensible?
- Are the propositional assertions sufficiently justified with evidence?
- Is the value-base communicated clearly and justified?
- Is the account authentic?

In creating such living theories, it is important not to be constrained by an action-reflection cycle as a method that can give a form to the explanation. This would reduce the living theories to a technical exercise, rather than seeing these theories as improvised forms of self-realisation (Winter, 1998). The living theories emerge from the educative relationships of professional educators and their engagement with propositional theories as they become an integral part of moving their curricular enquiries forward. The theories are living in the sense that a present practice is understood in terms of an evaluation of past actions and an intention to create something better in the future.

I wonder if the differences between 'thinking about a curriculum for the future', within a propositional discourse, and 'living a present curriculum for the future', within a practical discourse, lies in an

epistemological difference between propositional and dialectical logics. Propositional forms of theory dominate what counts as 'disciplinary knowledge' and are sustained by disciplinary power (Usher et al, 1997, pp. 76–82). The argument for excluding dialectical forms of theorising from propositional knowledge rests on the dialectician's insistence on including contradictions in claims to knowledge and the formal logician's insistence that they be eliminated. Popper has argued that using valid rules of inference, we can infer from a couple of contradictory premises any conclusion we like and that a theory that involves a contradiction is therefore entirely useless (Popper, 1963, p. 319). Perhaps the major differences in the two epistemologies lies in their different approaches to contradiction. In propositional theories, the contradictions are between statements. In dialectical theories the contradictions are experienced in practice. Propositional forms of knowledge are communicated through statements. Dialectical forms of knowledge are embodied in, and communicated through, practice. The communication of dialectical forms of knowledge that are embodied in practice, raises questions about how to 'represent' such knowledge-claims.

One of the constraints on developing dialectical forms of representation of educational and curriculum theories could be the text-bound nature of much educational research and theorising. It could be that a breakthrough in dialectical forms of representation is imminent in the recent developments in image-based research (Prosser, 1998), where the meanings of values, such as freedom, respect, care, love and compassion can be shown in the process of their emergence in practice. With the upsurge of interest in the self-studies of teacher educators within Anglo-American contexts (Hamilton, 1998) and the recognition of the need for a greater range of 'forms of representation' in educational research (Eisner, 1993), the way may be opening for multi-media forms of representation (Walker & Lewis, 1998) to be included in claims to educational knowledge.

These multi-media forms of representation may help curriculum action researchers to show the meanings of the values which are embodied in their educative relationships, but which are difficult to express using words on their own. I am thinking of the spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values which curriculum action researchers often use in their explanations of their own learning (Holley, 1997; Laidlaw, 1996). They use these values as the standards of judgement in tests of validity as they offer their claims to educational and curricular knowledge to public criticism, validation and legitimization in the Academy.

I will show you what I mean, to the limit of my ability to communicate through text, in my educative relationship with Kevin Eames. I will also show you what I mean by a living form of curriculum theorising through my educative influence in his PhD research (Eames, 1995).

Here is the title and abstract from Eames's PhD thesis:



*How do I, as a teacher and an educational action-researcher, describe and explain the nature of my professional knowledge?*

**Abstract:** This thesis is an attempt to make an original contribution to educational knowledge through a study of my own professional and educational development in action-research enquiries of the kind, "How do I improve what I am doing?" The study includes analyses of my educative relationships in a classroom, educative conversations and correspondences with other teachers and academics. It also integrates the ideas of others from the wider field of knowledge and from dialectical communities of professional educators based at Bath University, Wootton Bassett School and elsewhere. The analyses I make of the resulting challenges to my thinking and practice show how educators in schools can work together, embodying a form of professional knowledge which draws on Thomism and other manifestations of dialectical rationality.

Contributions to educational knowledge are made in relation to educational action research and professional knowledge. The first is concerned with the nature of professional knowledge in education, and how action research can constitute the form of professional knowledge which I see as lacking at present. The second contribution is concerned with how we represent an individual's claim to know their own educational development. These contributions contain an analysis in terms of a dialectical epistemology of professional knowledge, which includes contradiction, negation, transformation and moral responsibility within a dialogical community.

### **My Living Curriculum Theorising**

The reason I have chosen to present these extracts from Eames's thesis is because I think that it shows me influencing an individual's understanding of the dialogical and propositional logics of curriculum theorising, and how they can be held together in an educational enquiry. Eames moves from a position where he experiences himself as a living contradiction in attempting to communicate his understanding of dialectics from within a propositional form, to a position where he is showing his own living curriculum theorising in action in an analysis of his own learning.

In my research supervision I bring into my educative relationships a set of values, skills, understandings and disciplinary knowledge which constitutes part of my own curriculum vitae.

In the dialogues below I am valuing the:

- logics of educational knowledge in creating a new discipline of educational enquiry;
- including 'I' as a living contradiction in educational enquiries;

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- understanding educational enquiries as living processes of self-creation and transformation which cannot be captured solely within an idea of 'structure' or 'framework';
- recognising that important human values, such as the spiritual aesthetic and ethical values which motivate and form part of educational explanations, cannot be communicated in a solely linguistic form.

In his commentaries on the conversations below, Eames shows the influence of my meanings on his own. My 'intention' is to live the above values in my practice. This intention is not pre-specified in the sense of the 'objectives' of a formal curriculum, where the content is to be 'transmitted' or 'delivered', and where the meanings of the 'objectives' and 'standards' are believed to be held within 'statements'. My curricular intentions are embodied as values whose educational meanings emerge as I live them in my educative relationships. As Eames develops his own understandings, while engaging with the significance of my meanings for his enquiry, he is creating his own curriculum.

#### **Claiming to Know my Educative Influence with Kevin Eames**

In December 1991, Eames took part in three conversations that changed his ideas on how he regarded educational knowledge and on how he saw it as a dialectical form of professional knowledge. The first conversation took place with 10 people in a research group at Bath University. Eames had been invited to talk about his research into professional knowledge. He started his presentation by locating his account of the logic of education and curriculum theorising of the philosopher of education, Paul Hirst (Hirst & Peters, 1970).

Eames then gave a 15 minute summary of his work on dialectical logic and listed the following questions:

- Is there evidence of dialogue?
- Is there evidence of contradiction?
- Is there negation of the negations?
- Is there a role for practice?

That's as far as he got. Here are the reasons he gave for abandoning the presentation at that point.

As I was giving the presentation, the conviction that there was something wrong grew on me. I became increasingly aware that what I was saying missed the richness of the evidence I had been looking at ... The OHTs (like the ones immediately above) were abstract, dessicated, lifeless – the opposite of what I felt (and had stated explicitly in the earlier chapters) that a dialectical process should be. So I stopped. I said: "The meaning of what I'm trying to sketch out cannot be contained within the propositional form of some guy standing in front of a machine and putting pictures on to a piece of

paper. I suppose I was using a propositional form, but I feel that it's a most inadequate account of it so far."

He then sat down and joined in the discussion. The discussion was taped and Eames uses the dialogue with his commentary below to describe the ways in which he believes his understanding was changing. To avoid confusion, I want to stress that all the commentaries which follow the transcripts from the conversations are written by Eames and not by me. The following extracts from his PhD thesis (Eames, 1995) are condensed from some 36 pages of text and have been chosen because they enable me to understand the nature of my educational influence. I want to emphasise that I am not claiming to 'have educated Eames'. In my view of education, each individual can claim to have educated themselves. However, I do claim to have influenced his education. Here is the evidence from Eames' thesis which shows how he is creating his own curriculum whilst being influenced by me in my role as a professional educator.

Kevin: Why is (a dialectical form) an appropriate form for teachers to use? And, I suppose, 'What does it look like?' is a subsidiary question, because it doesn't matter a damn what it looks like; it's what it does.

Jack: What is it? – the dialectical form – it – has been developing through the centuries, and we've just seen the death of the Marxist dialectic, which was the major step forward after the Hegelian dialectic, and what Marx did, for Hegel, was to put the last criterion in, which was practice. What Marx did was to say that Hegel's dialectic was much too abstract, and it needed to be concretised, to be focused on practice. Now, what you've done is taken a list of criteria, and applied them, almost in a traditional Marxist model, so I do think it matters what form we are now giving to that dialectic.

Kevin's comments: ... Jack's intervention was significant. I realise now that he was indicating to me the error in how I was thinking about dialectics. I was relying "it", so that it remained a concept "out there", rather than a form expressed through the process in which I was engaged. As a result, I had been "applying" my view of "it" in a mechanistic way to my own practice, and had failed to communicate the meaning of dialectics as I had experienced it.

Jack: If you think of dialectic as a process of change, then you can resist the imposition of a system or a structure ... We have the chance, through asking questions of the kind, "How can I improve what I am doing?" ... (with) the individual taking some responsibility for what they are doing, we might have the possibility of creating a different kind of dialectic, which has the power to transform practice. But it's cloudy, as you say. It's not well-formed yet ....

Kevin: Now, there's something in there about the relative status of kinds of knowledges ... Teachers' knowledge is of lower status than, say, university (academics') knowledge – particularly in the eyes of people who teach in universities ...

Jack: ... The knowledge-base is not grounded upon the practice of the teacher, but it's still very much a form of knowledge within universities. And the medical profession, and the legal profession built up their case lore into very high status knowledge, whereas I don't think that we have that.

Kevin's comment: I failed to respond to the full significance of the comments made by Jack ... Jack took up my point about the relative status of different kinds of knowledges, and described the absence of the teacher's perspective in present thinking on educational knowledge. I must address the issue of status – and the power that accompanies status ...

(Another) issue was raised also by Jack, when he suggested that we should see dialectics as a "process of change", rather than as "a system or a structure". The point he was making is fundamental to my present view of educational knowledge – although I didn't recognise it at the time, because we were all still at various stages, I think, of groping towards something that we perceived dimly – a form of knowledge which has "the power to transform practice" – but which we were unable to formulate concisely. As Jack said, it was still "cloudy. It's not well-formed, yet." ... I must try to define the form of educational knowledge which I hold in my present view – to make it less "cloudy". In doing so, I will try to bring into an organic whole my present concepts of dialectics, of process, and of practice.

This is what I (Jack Whitehead) learnt from the final conversation.

I include this final extract because it shows how I was able, towards the end of the conversation that afternoon, to attempt a definition of how what I mean by educational knowledge comes into being. The extract also provides a demonstration of how such educational knowledge is shaped.

Kevin: I think I see, now. It's something to do with having people who you have known over a long period of time, who can talk through with you, and share with you, ideas in dialogue and, within a kind of reassuring disciplined framework – it's something to do with the idea of community. It's something to do with (indistinct) over a period of time. It's something that will not necessarily reveal itself instantaneously, because I'm just kind of groping towards an understanding. It's the idea of being in this community, carrying out dialogues – it's talking to people about what you do, and listening to what they say back ...

Jack: There's something about that framework, though – the technical term is "ontological security" – that notion of being accepted by the

other, which really does give you that fundamental security in the ground of one's own being. Now, what we are talking about is challenging ideas in a way that doesn't really attack the security you feel, then your point, which threw me, was the notion of disciplined framework. I can't see what that means, or even whether it is taking place within a disciplined framework. I'd much sooner look at it as a process of change and transformation, but it's not chaotic. There is some order and discipline there -

Kevin: Rather than disciplined – “ordered”?

Jack: I don't mind “disciplined”, or “ordered”. It's the notion of “framework”. There's something about “framework” that seems to be limiting.

Kevin: Constraining...

Jack: Yes, and doesn't seem to have the openness.

Kevin: Yes – “shape of rationality”? There's something about these dialogues which are – by having a dialogue – you're undergoing – experiencing – an educational process.

Jack: For me, even the term “dialogue” is getting in the way. There's something beneath the notion of dialogue, which was something to do with what we were saying about taking risks, about revealing who you feel yourself to be. So remember to be careful about using a term to communicate – which doesn't enable you to communicate, as directly as you can the meaning of the experiences you have had. And if you can take today, and the one on Tuesday, you'd be very close to presenting that process in action ... You'd help people to get on the inside of that process of change and development which is educational and constitutes educational knowledge.

Kevin's comment: This extract came towards the end of the third conversation, and shows how, as a consequence of what I had learnt over those few days in December, I was able to make a clearer formulation than previously of the way educational knowledge is shaped. It develops over time; it happens through dialogues within a community; there's a tentativeness about it, and an openness to the thoughts of others about what you're saying to them ...

Jack was right to challenge my use of “framework”. What I meant was some kind of supporting device, which gives order to the way in which educational knowledge develops, for it is not haphazard or incoherent. However, I accept Jack's point that the notion of a framework is too “limiting”, in that it has a mechanistic quality that doesn't fit with the “openness” of what I am trying to describe. I am happier with my reformulation – “shape of rationality” – in that I believe what I am trying to describe is a process with particular

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qualities. It's not hard-edged, but it has form. It's also not random or chaotic, but is intelligently systematic. It's the way educators understand, communicate and take action.

Jack made the point, also, that I should beware of letting the terms I use get in the way of communicating "as directly as I can the meaning of the experiences I have had." I will bear that in mind, while also trying to cope with what I've learnt on the whole journey.

### Conclusions

(1987, 1995)  
As Eames describes and explains his own professional learning in coming to a transformed understanding of the nature of a dialectical form of educational knowledge, he is, in my terms, creating his own living curriculum. I also believe he is helping to establish a discipline of curriculum theorising which can be understood in terms of a living logic which can hold together both propositional and dialectical forms of theorising.

What I want to emphasise in living forms of curriculum theorising is the importance of a partnership between professional educators and educational researchers. Professional educators are creating educational knowledge in self-studies of their own practice (Whitehead, 1993; Hamilton, 1998; Lomax, 1999a,b). Other educational researchers are making their contributions to educational knowledge from within the traditional disciplines of the philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, economics, politics and management of education.

Let me suggest how the latter contributions from the different disciplines can be integrated within a discipline of curriculum theorising. Consider the conventional idea of 'discipline' described by Usher et al:

The conventional argument about disciplines is that they constitute a knowledge "base" or "foundation" that supports a superstructure of practice. The ascription of foundational status to disciplinary knowledge is because of its universality, security and reliability. If we take medicine as an example, scientific disciplines such as anatomy and biochemistry are seen as having a foundational relationship to practice because they seem to provide descriptions and explanations which are secure, reliable and applicable to any situation and upon which it would seem eminently reasonable for practice to be based. In this sense, therefore, foundation disciplines provide the necessary "theory" part of the theory-practice relationships, but do so at the cost of a radical separation between theory and practice. (Usher et al, 1997, p. 69)

They argue that we should accept the place of 'disciplines' as knowledge discourses by developing our understanding of adult learning as a critical field of practice. This appears similar to Young's emphasis on developing a critical theory of learning in the curriculum for the future. Whilst agreeing with much of their analyses I do want to suggest that a synthesis

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is required which can hold together the wholistic idea of a curriculum vitae as the course of one's life together with its separate parts. I have suggested that this synthesis could emerge from the creative and critical practices of adult learners as we create our own living curricula and engage with the processes of their legitimization within the Academy (Hughes et al, 1998 NOT IN REFS!!!). *added.*

I wonder if the following contribution to a dialogue which began between Socrates and Phaedrus, over 2000 years ago, might help to communicate my meanings in relation to the art of asking good questions in creating one's curriculum vitae:

Socrates: ... there are two forms of method apparent which would well repay our attention, if we could obtain a systematic view of their respective efficiency.

Phaedrus: What are they, pray?

Socrates: The first consists in comprehending at a glance, whenever a subject is proposed, all the widely scattered particulars connected with it, and bringing them together under one general idea, in order that, by precise definition, we may make every one understand what it is that at the time we are intending to discuss.

Phaedrus: And what is your other method, Socrates?

Socrates: That, on the other hand, enables us to separate a general idea into its subordinate elements, by dividing it at the joints, as nature directs, and not attempting to break any limb in half, after the fashion of a bungling carver ... If ever I find any one else whom I judge capable of apprehending the one and the many as they are in nature, that person I follow behind as though in the track of a God. And to all those who are possessed of this power I have been in the habit of giving, whether rightly or wrongly, heaven knows, the name of dialecticians. (Rhys, 1910, pp. 258-259)

I see what Socrates means about two ways of coming to know. I believe that there is a third way in which we dialecticians can 'come to know'. I am thinking of the knowledge we create through exploring questions of the kind, 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?' It might be possible to create a Greek theory of knowledge (Whitehead, 1999) on the basis of such enquiries as we hold ourselves accountable to living and researching our values as fully as we can in our daily lives. If, like me, you see life as an enquiry of the form, 'how do I live a good and productive life?' and have chosen education as your vocation, the quality of the questions we ask in our educational enquiries are highly significant in the construction of our curriculum vitae.

For example, here is a good question, 'How can we improve the educational experiences of the most vulnerable children in Bombay?' This question is being asked by Tony Ghaye, a Professor of Education at

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University College Worcester, United Kingdom, where the answer isn't known in advance, but which holds the possibility of creating new knowledge. In asking and researching this question, Ghaye has expressed his commitment to creating his own living educational theories (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998) ~~Ghaye, 1999~~ **NEITHER IN REFS!!!**). Another good question is, 'How can we contribute to improving the quality of life of those who are suffering in the present conflict in this region?'

What I am suggesting is that asking, answering and researching such questions can lead to living forms of curriculum theorising through which learners can create their own curriculum vitae in dialogue with others. In creating their own curriculum vitae, they can answer for themselves questions of the kind, 'how do I live a good and productive life?' Such curriculum studies involve the self-creation of the learner in asking, answering and researching good questions in their own disciplined, educational enquiries. Researching such questions does require the courage of an educator and educational researcher in being accountable to those they teach, as well as to the wider community, for the values they choose to live by and the educational knowledge they produce. It will be of no small interest to this educator to see if amongst the contributions to *Curriculum Studies*, the voices and values of professional educators and their students can be heard.

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