

**How do I improve what I am doing in seeking to live and evolve my values as fully as I can and contribute to educational knowledge?**

**A presentation to the Value and Virtue in Practice-Based Research Conference held at York St. John University, 1-2 June 2011.**

Jack Whitehead, Liverpool Hope University

DRAFT 27/05/11

### **The Successful Proposal**

My research is influenced by the guiding vision and orientation of the Centre for the Child and Family in Liverpool Hope University. These are to generate knowledge which directly improves the world and engage in research to create ways of living and working that have a humanising influence on children, families and wider society. It is also influenced by the wider mission of the Faculty of Education in its aspirations to develop knowledge and understanding that will contribute to the education and wellbeing of all as a globally significant endeavour whilst characterizing all work with values arising from love and hope.

The presentation will show how I am responding to the research question: *How do we integrate research and practice, across disciplines and between professions, to enable a demonstrable improvement in the wellbeing of children and young people?* It will show how I am contributing to the creation of a distinctive approach to scholarship through the integration of research, teaching, and the application of knowledge in practice. This includes the development of a living theory approach to action research and the integration and evolution of this approach in professional and community settings, to discover better ways of improving` the wellbeing of children, families, communities and wider society' (Walton, 2010).

The research will draw on data from the livinglearning website at <http://www.livinglearning.org.uk/>, from the Aiming High for Children project at Liverpool Hope University, from the Keynsham Kind community based project coordinated by William House and facilitated by Marian and Shaun Naidoo in Keynsham, UK, and from the global networks of practitioner-researchers contributing to <http://www.actionresearch.net> and to <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/>

Walton, J. (2010) The Centre for the Child and Family: Strategic Map 2011 – 2012. Retrieved 4 March 2011 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/walton/CfCFStrategicMap2011.pdf>

### **Introduction**

In presenting this research account to a conference on Value and Virtue in Practice-Based Research I shall begin by distinguishing, as clearly as I can, my meanings of 'Value', 'Virtue' and 'Practice-Based Research'. I shall then present the distinctive approach to scholarship that is emerging from the question *How*

*do we integrate research and practice, across disciplines and between professions, to enable a demonstrable improvement in the wellbeing of children and young people?* This 'we' question will be related to the 'I' question: *How do I improve what I am doing in seeking to live and evolve my values as fully as I can and contribute to educational knowledge?*

The distinctive approach to scholarship includes the development of a living theory approach to action research and the integration and evolution of this approach in professional and community settings, to discover better ways of improving 'the wellbeing of children, families, communities and wider society' (Walton, 2011). The approach is related to:

- a) Pounds' (2003) idea of alonsidness from her research into being a Health Visitor (<http://www.actionresearch.net/living/robynpond.html>);
- b) Huxtable's (2011) focus on children and young people as living theory action researchers;
- c) Walton's (2011) contribution to the collaborative enquiry *A Collaborative Inquiry: How do we, individually and collectively, integrate research and practice to improve the wellbeing of children?;*
- d) the Collaborative Keynsham Kind Project (House, 2011) with the inclusion of Tattersall's (2007) Community Based Audit;
- e) Rayner's (2010a, 2011) idea of inclusionality presented in a keynote to the 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA) (Rayner, 2010b) as a relationally dynamic awareness which perceives self as existing within its neighbourhood and neighbourhood influenced by self.

The final section of the presentation is focused on an exploration of some ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemological implications of the individual and collaborative enquiry in relation to Wilson's (2008) ideas on indigenous research methods and the construction by each individual of their own living theory methodology as they explore the implications of seeking to live their values as fully as they can whilst aspiring to the virtues of moral excellence.

My research programme into educational theories and improving practice has involved both creative and critical phases that alternative and interact. I presented my doctoral thesis on 'How do I improve my practice? Creating a discipline of education through educational enquiry (Whitehead, 1999 - <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/jack.shtml> ) in a way that acknowledged the importance of both creative and critical phases. The creative phases can appear chaotic and lacking in clarity when compared with the well formed critical writings that have appeared in referred research Journals (Whitehead, 1999, Vol. 2). Yet the creative phases are vital to an educational enquiry that is continuously pushing the boundaries of what the individual already knows.

This presentation is within a creative phase of my research programme. It marks the initial exploration of my desire to enhance the **systemic influences** of living educational theories with values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

Following my clarification of my meanings of value, virtue and practice-based research, I shall outline the initiatives that are forming this creative phase of my continuing research programme. My purpose in sharing this creative phase in a public forum is to ensure that such creative phases do not get lost or masked in the well-formed critical phases of a research programme.

### **i) My meanings of value, virtue and practice-based research**

I work with various types of values such as [ethical/moral](#) values, [doctrinal/ideological](#) (religious, political) values, [social](#) values, [aesthetic](#) values and educational values. My values flow with a life-affirming energy and are my basis for ethical action. My educational practices are values-laden and my values influence what I consider to be appropriate courses of action as I explore my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

I tend to use my energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in explanations for why I do what I do and in explanations of my educational influences in learning. I also tend to clarify the meanings of my values in the course of their emergence in my enquiry. In other words I don't just use words to communicate my meanings. I use ostensive expressions of meaning as the meanings of my values emerge in what I am doing. I will give more details on how I do this below.

By a virtue I mean a quality that is morally excellent. I understand personal virtues as characteristics that are valued as promoting individual and collective well being. For example, I believe that Marian Naidoo's passion for compassion is a virtue. It is a quality I aspire to. My passion for compassion is an energy-flowing value that I am seeking to live as fully as I can in improving my practice and in generating my living educational theories.

By practice-based research I am meaning research in which the practitioner is asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' There are many interpretations of 'practice-based research' and I want to be clear how I am using the term as I focus below on the development of a living theory approach to action research.

I have accepted an invitation to give the 2011 Mandela Day lecture at Durban University of Technology in South Africa on the 18<sup>th</sup> July ([http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/foundation/mandela-day/category/mandela\\_day\\_2010/](http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/foundation/mandela-day/category/mandela_day_2010/)):

Mandela Day is a call to action for people everywhere to take responsibility for making the world a better place, one small step at a time, just as Nelson Mandela did. Nelson Mandela spent more than 67 years serving his community, his country, and the world at large. On Mandela Day people are called to devote just 67 minutes of their time to changing the world for the better, in a small gesture of solidarity with

humanity, and in a small step towards a continuous, global movement for good.

I shall be suggesting that action researchers around the world could strengthen our solidarity with humanity by sharing our small steps towards a continuous, global movement for good by participating in:

*Living Values, Improving Practice Cooperatively: An Action Research Project* (see - <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/huxtable/LLCCPD/Home.html>)

I hope that the following presentation will stimulate your desire to participate in this action research project and to share in your living theories the values and virtues that are giving meaning and purpose to your own lives in your practice-based research.

**ii) The development of a living theory approach to action research and the integration and evolution of this approach in professional and community settings.**

When I coined the idea of a living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) I did it to distinguish the explanations **generated** by practitioner-researchers to explain their educational influences in learning, from the explanations **derived** from the theories of the disciplines of education. In my experience of being initiated into the disciplines approach to educational theory, the practical principles I used to explain my educational influences in learning were treated by the proponents of the disciplines approach as being at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles derived from the disciplines of education (Hirst, 1983, p. 18).

Developing a living theory approach to action research involved exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' The contributions to educational knowledge from these educational enquiries focused on the explanations of educational influences in learning offered by individuals to explain these influences in their own learning, in their own learning and in the learning of the social formations in which they lived and worked.

The integration and evolution of this approach in professional settings can be seen in the doctorates and masters degrees at

<http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

and

<http://www.jeanmcniff.com/theses.asp>

The integration and evolution of this approach in community settings is being explored in the Collaborative Keynsham Kind Project (House, 2011) with the inclusion of Tattersall's (2007) Community Based Audit. For details of the discussion paper on this project see section v) below. The exploration of the integration and evolution of a living theory approach in community settings has

been taken furthest by Joan Walton (2011) in the enquiry, *A Collaborative Inquiry: How do we, individually and collectively, integrate research and practice to improve the wellbeing of children?*

At the heart of the evolution of my living theory approach to action research and continuing professional development in education and community is Robyn Pound's focus on alongsideness in her living theory research into health visiting. I am seeking to integrate her insights about the relationally dynamic qualities of alongsideness into my enquiry.

**iii) Pounds' (2003) idea of alongsideness from her research into being a Health Visitor**  
**(<http://www.actionresearch.net/living/robynpond.html> );**

In the evolution of my research programme my intentions are now focused on enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity in living educational theories. By this I mean that my intentions are embracing more fully the importance of a systemic influence. They are including Mary Catherine Bateson's insight about the importance of being sensitive to ecological complexity and discerning in women their honoring of multiple commitments in a new level of productivity and new possibilities of learning:

*But what if we were to recognize the capacity for distraction, the divided will, as representing a higher wisdom? Perhaps Kierkegaard was wrong when he said that 'purity is to will one thing'. Perhaps the issue is not a fixed knowledge of the good, the single focus that millenia of monotheism have made us idealize, but a kind of attention that is open, not focused on a single point. Instead of concentration on a transcendent ideal, sustained attention to diversity and interdependence may offer a different clarity of vision, one that is sensitive to ecological complexity, to the multiple rather than the singular. Perhaps we can discern in women honoring multiple commitments a new level of productivity and new possibilities of learning.*  
(Bateson, 1989, p. 166)

They also include Delong's understandings of a culture of inquiry (Delong, 2002) Hence, it is not surprising to me that my intentions to move into collaborative/cooperative inquiries with the purpose of enhancing the systemic influences of living educational theories are being influenced by the following majority of women.

I am seeing to integrate insights into my way of being and researching Robyn Pound's expression and understanding of alongsideness in her relationships with babies and parents. For me, Robyn expresses a life-affirming energy in her relationships that I feel and identify with as I watch and listen to the video clips below.



Videos from the 22nd October 2009

- [1\) 6:10 min video on Values and Living Theory](#)
- [2\) 5:50 min video on Qualities of Relationship](#)
- [3\) 6:89 min video on Qualities of Relationship and Engaging Fathers.](#)
- [4\) 8:40 min video on Cultural Influence](#)
- [5\) 5:46 min video on Questions of Institutional Influence](#)

I also agree with Pound's points about the importance of sharing our individually generated knowledge whilst working and researching the significance of alongsideness:

*I am passionate about health visiting and the opportunities it offers for working alongside parents and colleagues to improve the lives of children. I know no other job that offers universal access to families across the social spectrum, across all ages, in homes and communities. What a privileged working life I am having searching to improve, evaluate and explain what I do to build emotional well-being as a primary preventive response to public health issues.*

*This website is for sharing what I am learning about alongsideness in health visiting in families and their communities; how learning comes about for me and why it is important. By sharing my experiences and emerging theories of practice I am inviting you to join me in bringing the values, skills and knowledge we find useful in community practice into the public domain in order to continue the process of improving what we do. My current interest is in finding ways to share practical knowledge about working with very discouraged people who may experience social exclusion.*

*My concern is that unless we practitioners share our individually generated knowledge about how we practice, this information will not be available to those who make decisions about what is worth doing and the qualities involved in doing it effectively. My PhD enquiry into my practice as a UK health visitor supporting developing family relationships was completed in 2003. Here is the abstract. If you would like to access the whole thesis, it can be downloaded as PDF files of individual chapters from the following link - <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/robypound.html> (Pound, 2009).*

Pound's (2009), Walton's (2011) and DeLong's (2002) relational ways of being, resonate with Huxtable's own relational and collaborative intentions in her focus on children and young people's learning. Huxtable's influence can be felt in sustaining my focus on children and young people's wellbeing and learning.

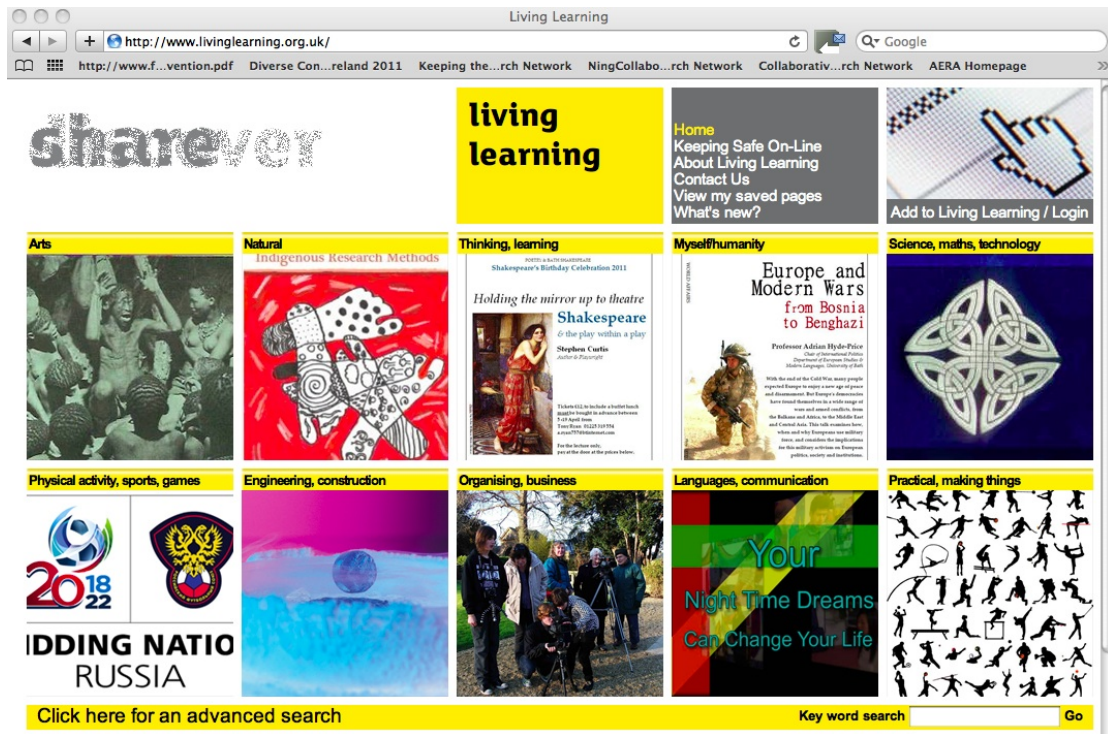
**iv) Huxtable's (2011a & b) focus on children and young people as living theory action researchers,**

Huxtable's major influence in my own enquiries and the evolution of my values to strengthen my expression of a responsibility for others in educational spaces, is that she continuously emphasizes the importance of relating my activities, influences and writings to the lived experiences and learning of young people. Huxtable (2011a & b) emphasizes the importance for educators and educational researchers of enabling young people to be supported in the becoming action researchers who are generating and sharing their own living educational theories. For example in a contribution to a Council of Europe, Pestalozzi Workshop, Huxtable (2011b) addresses the topic of Children and Young People as Living Theory Action Researchers. In a contribution to the Value and Virtue Conference Huxtable (2011a) explores the creation of her own living theory as she explores her systemic educational responsibility. Thus highlighting the importance of engaging with both one's own individual practice with specific individuals and at the same time engaging with issues of systemic influences in enhancing learning.

Perhaps the best illustration of Huxtable's influence in emphasizing the importance of pupils' voices, with a teacher in a continuing professional development programme is in Joy Mounter's (2008) Understanding Learning and Learners Masters Unit: *Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory?* (<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/joymounterull.pdf>)

In the evolution of my living educational theory, in a professional setting, I am learning from the relational dynamic of Huxtable's personal and social responsibility and the way she is expressing these in the following four web-sites.

**1) In the living learning website,** individuals, especially young people, are being encouraged to share their passions, ideas and learning:



<http://www.livinglearning.org.uk/>

2) In Marie's Site, Marie offers her living theory as she shares her practical projects and her creative and critical engagements with the ideas of others, including government policies.



Marie's site | Home

http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite/ Reader Google

http://www.f...vention.pdf Diverse Con...reland 2011 Keeping the...rch Network NingCollabo...rch Network Collaborativ...rch Netwo

spanglefish.com Marie's site | [sitemap](#) | [log in](#)

# Marie's Site

- HOME
- SEARCH THIS SITE
- MY WRITING
- MA UNIT MATERIAL
- OFFICIAL STUFF
- REFERENCES
- LEARNERS VOICE
- INCLUSIVE G&T NOTES
- THEORIES, MODELS ETC
- PERSONAL STORIES
- LINKS TO OTHER SITES
- LINKS TO RESOURCES
- QUIPS AND QUOTES
- INSPIRATIONS
- CONTACT ME
- BLOG
- NEWS
- CONVERSATION CAFE
- CALENDAR
- NEWSLETTER
- GALLERY
- BERAPRACT160408
- ECM
- NATIONAL G&T LEAD
- 6TH AUGUST 08
- WELLBEING

## New start!



I have added to this site since 2006 and a spring clean is in order. What to keep, what to delete, what to put away for another time and what to add?

What am I about? The photo on the left says it all for me so the photo stays.

Next job - review the purpose of the site. Originally it was, and still is a space:

- For me to keep and find things as I am useless at filing.
- To walk my own talk and make visible some of the 'back stories' of my learning adventures and journeys. Why? Well, I have learned so much from other people who have been generous enough to share theirs that I feel the least I can do is to make mine visible.
- To develop a resource of references, sites etc for anyone who also wants to research to improve their values-based practice, whatever field they are in.

So... with that in mind, I have re-started the News letter and the blog. Next job - do a bit of deleting and putting away.

If you would like to let me know what, if anything, you find useful, thought provoking, irritating... anything you would donate to make the site more useful, I would much appreciate it.

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<http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite/>

**3) In a conference for young people** organized by Huxtable for the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011, Huxtable is bringing together young people, novices and experts to share what inspires them. There will be reflections on this conference posted on 'Marie's Site'

Living Learning Conference

http://www.livinglearningconference.info/

Home How to get involved & contribute! **Programme** About the conference

Register Now! FAQ About us

# THE PROGRAMME

There will be a number of workshops, presentations, and conversation circles running in parallel for participants to choose from, and a poster exhibition to enjoy throughout the day in the cafe and conversation area.

There will be **workshops, presentations and conversation circles** offered by young people and adults sharing what inspires them.

Some conversation circles will be led by professionals and experts from business, industry, university and the arts. They will talk about some of the experiences that make up their real living 'career paths' and help others to share their enthusiasms for learning and think about the directions they might like to explore in the future and what to do next.

There will also be workshops for young people who want to develop their skills, abilities and understandings as researchers, not just for school but for life. They will be led by professionals and experts who are innovative, cutting edge researchers. For instance:

- [Learning to Research: Learning to Make a Difference that Matters - Prof. Jack Whitehead](#)
- [An Introduction to Theatre in Research - Shaun Naidoo](#)
- [Communicating with Confidence - Dr Marian Naidoo](#)
- [Sketchbooks developing research life skills - Andrew Henon and Paula Tew](#)
- [Preparing a conference poster](#)
- Initiating creativity in research

<http://www.livinglearningconference.info/>

#### 4) Living Values, Improving Practice Co-operatively: An Action Research Project.

My learning from participating in this project is focused on my collaborative/co-operative learning in the enquiry, *How do I improve what I am doing in seeking to live and evolve my values as fully as I can and contribute to educational knowledge?*

I am exploring the possibilities of improving my practice and generating knowledge by engaging in the 'we' question with Joan Walton and others, in the action research project:

*How do we integrate research and practice, across disciplines and between professions, to enable a demonstrable improvement in the wellbeing of children and young people?*

## Living Values, Improving Practice Co-operatively: An Action Research Project

We do research to understand. We try to understand  
in order to make our schools better places  
for both the children and the adults  
who share their lives there (Eisner, 1993)

This is an opportunity for leaders, teachers and other professionals, committed to improving the life-chances and well-being of children and young people, to enquire individually, collaboratively and co-operatively.

Accounts by teachers, Head teachers and other educators who have worked in this way can be found [here](#).

**Find out more** by emailing  
[marie\\_huxtable@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:marie_huxtable@bathnes.gov.uk) and/or coming to the meeting:  
Thursday, 19th May, 5.15 - 7.00pm,  
Room 1WN 3.12, University of Bath.

Through the project we will be researching to create and make public our knowledge of how we are each, and together, improving education in our daily practice using [a living theory approach](#).

As we research to improve our individual daily practice we will also be researching together to learn how to improve how we learn, work and research co-operatively and collaboratively

This project also offers a final opportunity to register for [accredited masters level CPD modules with funding from the TDA](#).

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/huxtable/LLCCPD/Home.html>

The above action research project is being undertaken by members of the practitioner-researcher group associated with the Centre for the Child and Family of Liverpool Hope University. This Center is Directed by Dr. Joan Walton.

**v) Walton's (2011) contribution to my learning in the collaborative enquiry, *How do we, individually and collectively, integrate research and practice to improve the wellbeing of children?***

In the evolution of my living educational theory I am aspiring to live more fully the value espoused by Walton of 'responsibility for the well-being of all'. In moving into this collaborative enquiry I can appreciate the importance of dialogues that show a serious engagement with the ideas, feelings and

experiences of others. In the following Abstract and Introduction to Walton's paper on *'How do we, individually and collectively, integrate research and practice to improve the wellbeing of children?'*, Walton is explicitly encouraging early years practitioners to develop their own living theories whilst acknowledging the influence of ideas from both myself, Jean McNiff and others. Walton also says that she is engaged in an exploration of *'how I could improve my practice as facilitator of this process, based on my values of respect and mutual empowerment within a participatory world view.'* :

### **Abstract**

*Traditional forms of research have not adequately provided us with the knowledge we need to improve children's wellbeing (UNICEF 2007). Boyer (1990) proposed that universities should not just value scholarship in the form of research but should include teaching and learning, application to practice, and an integration of different disciplines. Schön (1995) suggests the new scholarship requires a new epistemology which should emerge from action research.*

*Developing the new epistemology I initiate a collaborative inquiry with early years practitioners, looking at how to improve the wellbeing of children. They are encouraged to develop their own living theories (Whitehead 1989) through an exploration of what really matters to them, and how they can support each other in developing a meaningful response to their individual and collective concerns.*

*Outcomes from the inquiry include the transformational impact practitioners experience as a consequence of listening and sharing with others in the collaborative learning process.*

### **Introduction**

*The purpose of this paper is to provide an account of a collaborative inquiry undertaken by early years practitioners in day nursery settings. They were inquiring into the question: "How do we, individually and collaboratively, integrate research and practice to improve the wellbeing of children?" The project was a partnership between the Centre for the Child and Family (CfCF) at Liverpool Hope University and a city council, with myself as main facilitator.*

*The project was initiated after the city council approached the university, stating that they spent a major proportion of their budget on staff training programmes and attendance at conferences, yet could see no improvement in practice within children's services as a consequence. They wondered if there were a more effective means of supporting the learning of staff.*

*There were two main strands influencing the development of this project. The first was my contention that we have not, locally or globally, learned how to ensure the wellbeing of all children, despite large amounts of research undertaken. I use the UK as a case study to justify this view, but I think the argument would have relevance to a greater or lesser extent in any country. I use the evidence provided*

*to support the view that we need to place greater emphasis on research methods that aim to improve the world, not just explain or interpret it.*

*The second influence was the experience of my own professional practice in and with children's services, identifying key factors which hinder the ability of professionals and organisations to radically improve the lives of children and young people. Again I consider this issue can only be properly addressed through a radical transformation of the relationship between research and practice.*

*The Centre for the Child and Family was established explicitly to create a more dynamic relationship between research and practice, such that research was grounded in the experience of practitioners, and its findings disseminated in ways that were practically useful for practitioners and their managers. New ideas of scholarship were being explored in this process, based on Boyer's (1990) view that scholarship in universities should include not just research, but also application to practice, teaching and learning, and integration across disciplines. Donald Schön (1995) stated that the new scholarship requires a new epistemology which should take the form of action research.*

*The collaborative inquiry followed a cyclical process of action and reflection, where all participants were co-researcher and co-inquirers (Heron 1985, 1996). At the same time, individuals identified and pursued their own specific inquiry question concerning how they would improve their practice with and for children, based on a living theory approach to action research (Whitehead and McNiff 2006). I too was exploring the question as to how I could improve my practice as facilitator of this process, based on my values of respect and mutual empowerment within a participatory world view.*

*This paper was written as a review of the first seven months of the inquiry. Initially progress was slow; but as practitioners learned to understand the significance of their contribution to improve the wellbeing of children, and became more aware of the factors that both helped and hindered their ability to do so, their motivation and enthusiasm for their work was greatly enhanced. Evidence of improvement was presented to the funding groups, who have now commissioned the Centre to develop the project across a wider range of children's services. (Walton, 2011)*

Walton's influence in my learning is most significant in the formation of my value of a 'responsibility for the wellbeing of all' and to developing my intention to engage in a collaborative/cooperative inquiry. Relative to Joan Walton and to Shaun and Marian Naidoo's and William House's ways of being my capacity to living this value is rather weak. I am seeking to strengthen my understanding and expression of this value, as a virtue, through participating in the Collaborative Keynsham Kind Project and in developing a collaborative inquiry with Joan Walton. Our first conversation on our desire to engage in this development can be accessed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxUtFNU6mo>

**vi) My Learning in The Collaborative Keynsham Kind Project (House, 2011), with the inclusion of Tattersall's (2007) Community Based Audit.**

The discussion paper of May 2011 on the 'Keynsham Kind Collaboration: a journey of well becoming', with William House and Shaun and Marian Naidoo can be accessed from:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/keynshamkind/KeynshamKindapril110411.pdf>

Here is an extract from the discussion paper, produced by William House, on its Vision, Mission and Overview of the Project beginning with an insight from William James:

*I am done with great things and big plans, great institutions and big success. I am for those tiny, invisible loving human forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, which, if given time, will rend the hardest monuments of pride. William James*

***Vision***

*Keynsham Kind aspires to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Keynsham by working with them towards a more vibrant and cohesive community in which people take control and responsibility and value themselves, one another and their environment. It is from this well- connected, caring and value-driven community that health and wellbeing will emerge and poverty (in all its meanings) will be reduced.*

***Mission***

*This will be achieved by working with individuals to inspire and empower them to identify and pursue their own projects and achieve their potential as defined by themselves according to their own values; by enabling people with common or complementary concerns and interests to come together in a form of co-production; by drawing existing health and social care professionals into this empowering and enabling process so that their aspirations are more closely aligned with the deepest desires and values of the people; by critically evaluating the project in a way that provides continuous feedback and enables those involved to take over the reflective and evaluative practice; by ensuring that the project remains locally owned; by providing high level hard outcomes relevant to health and wellbeing.*

***Overview of project***

*The project will focus on the town of Keynsham (population 15,500) between the cities of Bristol and Bath in South West England. It is a socio-economically mixed community with areas of deprivation and of modest middle class wealth. The core of the project will be a collaboration between the community regeneration charity,*

*RE:generate, Bath and North East Somerset GP Commissioning consortium, and the organisational development and research company, Naidoo Associates with their university partners at Liverpool Hope University. The project will consist of the RE:generate core process of community 'animation' undertaken in the more socioeconomically deprived wards and through engagement with health and social care providers (particularly willing GP practices) in the town. This involves both empowering individuals and providing training for groups in understanding root causes of problems and in achieving their goals in a co-productive way – including those of the health and social care professionals. This will be supplemented across the whole town by work to foster improved connectedness by promoting better information dissemination and greater opportunities for people to meet including identification of physical spaces. Complementary to this will be measures to foster greater awareness of values within the community. Other willing local groups with complementary ambitions will be welcomed into the broader collaboration.*

*All those involved will be offered critical reflection and feedback on their contribution in a way that enables the participants to take over the research, and evaluation of their own practice and ensures that control remains with the people. Financial support will be sought from diverse sources: major community development grants, research grants, and support from local authorities. A ring-fenced trust fund will be established by an independent body to which local people can apply for small project support. Dissemination of the project outcomes, both of the process and high level health and wellbeing outcomes and other parameters, will be continually fed back to those involved in the project using creative arts based approaches where appropriate. Wider dissemination will be sought through all channels including web-based media.*

*Fundamental to the project design are the notions of emergence and self-organization. These terms derive from complexity science and enable a very useful understanding of the behaviour of social groups and networks. By providing people with inspiration, some basic tools for change and a small amount of resource, groups will self-organize and innovative change will emerge, though the exact form this will take cannot be predicted precisely. However, given good connectedness and a value-driven context the change is more likely to be beneficial to the community. Not only can we not predict the nature of emergent change, nor can we predict its extent. Sometimes a small intervention will have widespread effects and vice versa. This is the well-known non-linear behaviour of complex systems. At the very least, positive effects of this project can be expected in adjoining districts as the benefits of change become known. (House, 2011)*

All my previous enquiries have been grounded in my professional practice in education. My relationally dynamic values are evolving with my participation in this collaborative, community focused project. Through my engagement with the above project I am seeking to enhance the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. I am thinking particularly of the formation and expression of a value of a 'responsibility for all' within a community context.

I am also exploring the significance of Rayner's idea of inclusionality for the development of my own value of a 'responsibility for all' in relation to my membership of the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA).

**vi) The Action Learning and Action Research Association (ALARA) and Rayner's idea of inclusionality.**

The Action Learning and Action Research Association held its First World Congress in Brisbane in 1990 and its 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Melbourne in 2010. Dr. Moira Laidlaw led the organization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress at the University of Bath with the theme of '*Accounting for Ourselves*'. A theme that still informs my own research with its evolution into relational accountability (Wilson, 2008).

Alan Rayner (2010b) gave the first keynote at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress on *Sustainability of the Fitting – bringing the philosophical principles of natural inclusion into the educational enrichment of our human neighbourhood*. The theme of the World Congress was on '[Participatory Action Research and Action Learning: Appreciating our Pasts, Comprehending our Presents, Prefiguring our Futures](#)'.

Each living theory includes an appreciation of one's past in comprehending the present with an intention to create a future that is grounded in values that carry hope for the future of humanity. Rayner's idea of inclusionality, as a relationally dynamic awareness which perceives self as existing within its neighbourhood and neighbourhood influenced by self, can be appreciated through his latest publication (Rayner 2011) *Space Cannot Be Cut – Why Self-identity Naturally Includes Neighbourhood*. This publication in the Journal of Integrative Psychology and Behavioral Science is perhaps Rayner's clearest exposition of inclusionality with his idea of natural inclusion:

*Here, I show how 'natural inclusion', a new, post-dialectic understanding of evolutionary process, becomes possible through recognising space as a limitless, indivisible, receptive (non-resistive) 'intangible presence' vital for movement and communication, not as empty distance between one tangible thing and another. The fluid boundary logic of natural inclusion as the co-creative, fluid dynamic transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context, allows all form to be understood as flow-form, distinctive but dynamically continuous, not singularly discrete. This simple move from regarding space and boundaries as sources of discontinuity and discrete definition to sources of continuity and dynamic distinction correspondingly enables self-identity to be understood as a dynamic all natural figural forms as configurations of energy. Fully to appreciate and communicate the significance of this move, it is necessary to widen the linguistic, mathematical and imaginative remit of conventional scientific argument and explication so as to include more poetic, fluid and artistic forms of expression.* (Rayner 2011, Abstract).

One of the reasons I emphasise the importance of seeing ourselves acting in educational spaces, with the help of video, is that video-data can help us to see ourselves moving in the relational dynamics of the boundaries that are influencing what we are doing. Perceiving ourselves as existing within the relational dynamics of these boundaries can add to what we can see with our



binocular vision and can help to transform our perception of ourselves moving in space. Explanations of educational influences in learning that use energy-flowing values in such boundaries, as explanatory principles, are making ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemology contributions to educational knowledge. I am finding Rayner's ideas and publications are helping me to find an appropriate language for expressing these contributions.

**vii) Some ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemological implications of the individual and collaborative enquiries.**

To stress the importance of a relational dynamic awareness in an exploration of some ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemological implications of my individual and collaborative enquiries I shall begin with a brief video-clip that has been speeded up to emphasise the relational dynamic of my existence in space. The video-clip is from a workshop I was leading in the Guildhall, Bath.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfeWCS86imI>



In making sense of the ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemology implications of my enquiries, I draw the following insights about responsibility and culture from the work of Wilson (2008). In relation to responsibility I agree with Wilson when he says:

*The responsibility to ensure respectful and reciprocal relationships becomes the axiology of the person who is making these connections. We must also be responsible in our choice of where we will build these powerful connections as we choose the topics of our research..... Our axiology demands that we be accountable to these relations that we form. (p.79)*

I also agree with Wilson's emphasis on the importance of recognising cultural influences:

*Within an Indigenous research epistemology and ontology is the recognition that research and thinking need to be (and are) cultural based. Of course all philosophy is based upon a culture, a time, a place. It is impossible for knowledge to be acultural (Meyer, 2001). We need to recognize that this is an important part of how all people think and know (not just Indigenous people). Once we recognize the importance of the relational quality of knowledge and knowing, then we recognize that all knowledge is cultural knowledge. The foundations of this cultural knowledge guide the way that our societies come to be formed.... (p.91)*

My individual and collaborative questions involve both 'I' and 'we' in a relational dynamic. They are ontological questions in the sense that asking, researching and answering these questions is part of the evolution of myself and my theory of being.

The questions are axiological in the sense that they involve me clarifying and justifying the values I use to give meaning and purpose to my productive life in education. I aspire to and hold myself in a relational accountability to a purpose and culture of the Faculty of Education of Liverpool Hope University:

*To contribute to the development of knowledge and understanding in all fields of education, characterising all work with values arising from hope and love.*  
(Liverpool Hope University, 2010).

Answering the questions includes the development of a living theory methodology (Whitehead, 2009, 2011) which is grounded in the insights of Dadds and Hart (2001) on methodological inventiveness:

*" The importance of methodological inventiveness*

*Perhaps the most important new insight for both of us has been awareness that, for some practitioner researchers, creating their own unique way through their research may be as important as their self-chosen research focus. We had understood for many years that substantive choice was fundamental to the motivation and effectiveness of practitioner research (Dadds 1995); that what practitioners chose to research was important to their sense of engagement and purpose. But we had understood far less well that how practitioners chose to research, and their sense of control over this, could be equally important to their motivation, their sense of identity within the research and their research outcomes." (p. 166)*

*"If our aim is to create conditions that facilitate methodological inventiveness, we need to ensure as far as possible that our pedagogical approaches match the message that we seek to communicate. More important than adhering to any specific methodological approach, be it that of traditional social science or traditional action research, may be the willingness and courage of practitioners – and those who support them – to create enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop; understandings that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care. Practitioner research methodologies*

*are with us to serve professional practices. So what genuinely matters are the purposes of practice which the research seeks to serve, and the integrity with which the practitioner researcher makes methodological choices about ways of achieving those purposes. No methodology is, or should be, cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods of techniques..."* (Dadds & Hart, p. 169, 2001)

The epistemological significance is focused on the logics, units of appraisal and the living standards of judgment that are used to evaluate the validity of the contributions to educational knowledge of living educational theories.

Logic, as the mode of thought appropriate for comprehending the real as rational (Marcuse, 1964 p. 105) is at the heart of making sense of something. I work with three logics, the propositional, the dialectical and inclusional (Whitehead & Rayner, 2009). Adherents to propositional or dialectical traditions have often denied the rationality of each other's logic. In the living logics of inclusionality, propositional and dialectical logics are seen to be helpful in limited ways in understanding the rationality of one's living educational theory.

The units of appraisal are what we focus our attention on as we test the validity of a claim to knowledge. Whilst working as a physical scientist my units of appraisal would be a hypothesis or theory. In evaluating the validity of a living educational theory as a contribution to educational knowledge the unit of appraisal is in the individual's explanation of their educational influences in learning.

The living standards of judgment are what we use to test the validity of a contribution to knowledge of a living educational theory. The living standards of judgment are related to the energy-flowing values that form explanatory principles in explanations of why we are doing what we are doing in seeking to improve our practice and enhance our educational influences in learning.

I usually use a validation group to help with the social validation of the contributions to knowledge of living educational theories. I draw the standards of judgment used in a validation group from the four criteria of social validity used by Habermas (1976, pp. 1-2). The standards are comprehensibility, truth, rightness and authenticity. These can be extended in questions addressed to the claim to knowledge:

- i) Is it comprehensible?
- ii) Is there sufficient evidence to justify the claims being made?
- iii) Is there an appropriate awareness of the normative back that is influencing the claims being made?
- iv) Are the claims authentic in the sense that the researcher shows that they are committed to the values they claim to espouse, over time and interaction?

In concluding this presentation I want to draw your attention to an intention to contribute to enhancing the awareness of educators in the 47 member countries

of the Council of Europe, through the Pestalozzi Programme. My intention continues to focus on my individual and collaborative/cooperative enquiries:

*How do I improve what I am doing in seeking to live and evolve my values as fully as I can and contribute to educational knowledge?*

*How do we integrate research and practice, across disciplines and between professions, to enable a demonstrable improvement in the wellbeing of children and young people?*

In working towards the development of a stronger European identity I am seeking to extend the influence in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe of the contributions to the Council of Europe Pestalozzi workshop in Zagreb in May 2010. These have been published by the Croatian Teacher Training Agency (Kovacevic, D. & Dominic, R. O. 2011 see [www.karaman-design.com/download/Akcijisko\\_istravanje\\_web.pdf](http://www.karaman-design.com/download/Akcijisko_istravanje_web.pdf)). The Education and Teacher Training Agency of Croatia has made this publication available freely on the web and it can be accessed by educators throughout the member states of the Council of Europe and beyond.

As my educational research programme continues into a critical phase of writing I shall of course be holding myself to account, in both personal and social processes of validity, for continuing to live and evolve my values and virtues as fully as possible in seeking to contribute to enhancing the wellbeing of children and young people and to enhancing the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. My thanks for this opportunity to share my ideas in the public forum of the Value and Virtue in Practice-based Research Conference and to offer them to you in the hope that you will help me to strengthen their validity and to enhance the contribution of the research programme to making the world a better place to be. Having just received the Conference Programme as I write I am particularly hopeful that I can strengthen my collaborative intentions through my engagement in the following symposium:

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011**

**Parallel Session 2, 15.30 – 17.30**

**Symposium Title**

**Room De Grey 125**

**Symposium**

2.1	Symposium of research from Centre for the Child and Family, Liverpool Hope University 5 papers	<i>Participants</i> Prof Jack Whitehead Dr Marian Naidoo Mr Shaun Naidoo Dr William House Ms Marie Huxtable Ms Catherine Forester Dr Joan Walton
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in the ongoing individual and collaborative enquiries into:

*How do I improve what I am doing in seeking to live and evolve my values as fully as I can and contribute to educational knowledge?*

and

*How do we integrate research and practice, across disciplines and between professions, to enable a demonstrable improvement in the wellbeing of children and young people?*

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