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

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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

My research programme into educational theories and improving practice has involved both **creative** and **critical** phases that alternative and interact. (Whitehead, 1999 -http://www.actionresearch.net/living/jack.shtml). 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 the implications of expression of my desire to enhance the **systemic influences** of living educational theories with values that carry hope for the future of humanity in collaborative/cooperative/participatory enquiries.

Following the clarification below 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. In doing this I am aware of the danger pointed out by Medawar (1969), a Nobel Prize Winning Scientist, in the ideas of his friend Karl Popper, a Philosopher of Science, when Popper produced a logic of scientific discovery that failed to acknowledge the generative or imaginative processes in scientific thinking:

"The major defect of the hypothetico-deductive scheme, considered as a formulary of scientific behaviour, is its disavowal of any competence to speak about the generative act in scientific enquiry, 'having an idea,' for this represents the imaginative or logically unscripted episode in scientific thinking, the part that lies outside logic. The objection is all the more grave because an imaginative or inspirational process enters into all scientific reasoning at every level: it is not confined to 'great' discoveries, as the more simple-minded inductivists have supposed." (p. 55).

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

In this presentation of a creative phase of my research programme, I am aware of gathering together rather large quotations from the ideas of others. This is how I work in a creative phase. I gather together ideas that intuitively I believe will help to take my enquiries forward in deepening and extending my understandings. In this intuitive phase the ideas are not ordered as they are in a critical phase.

In a critical phase I then distil from the quotations, the ideas that I have integrated within my enquiry and which I use to explain the growth of my educational knowledge and my educational influences in learning. I am thinking here of the educational influences in my own, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which I live and work.

In this creative phase of my 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 seeking to live and evolve my values that carry hope for the future of humanity by engaging in collaborative/cooperative/participatory enquiries that include the I in the We and the We in the I, in an enquiry of the kind:

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?

I shall distinguish below, 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 alongsideness from her research into being a Health Visitor (http://www.actionresearch.net/living/robynpound.html);

b) Learning from Delong's (2002) 'culture of inquiry' in a collaborative inquiry.

c) Learning from Farren's (2005) pedagogy of the unique, web of betweenness and the co-creation of an educational space, and Crotty's (2011) open heartedness in educational relationships.

d) Huxtable's (2011) focus on children and young people as living theory action researchers;

e) 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?;*

f) The Collaborative Keynsham Kind Project (House, 2011) with the inclusion of Tattersall's (2007) Community Based Audit;

g) Rayner's (2010a, 2011) idea of inclusionality presented in a keynote to the 8th 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.

h) Concluding notes that include some influences of Andrew Henon in his work as a socially engaged artist; Penny Hay and Julia Butler in the 5X5X5 arts based action research project; Je Kan Adler Collins in his work in China and Japan on nursing and nurse education; Moira Laidlaw in her work in China and in supporting contributions to the Educational Journal of Living Theories; Jean McNiff in her generative and transformatory approach to action research and to the realisation of her passion for publishing in our joint publications; Joan Conolly in her respect for indigenous knowledge in Southern Africa and her desire to bring this knowledge into the public domain through her work and research at Durban University of Technology; Eden Charles and Ian Phillips for their Ubuntu ways of being and passion for living as fully as they can the values that carry hope for the future of humanity; Fernando Galindo for his communication of diverse cultural values grounded within his desire to help to enhance the quality of well-being in Bolivia; Nigel Harrisson, Christine Jones and Kate Kemp for the sustaining conversations in our weekly breakfast café conversations.

The presentation includes 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.

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 morally excellent individual and collective well being. For example, I believe that Marian Naidoo's passion for compassion is such 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 18th July (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 seeikng 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/robynpound.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 honouring 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)

In working with Judy Marshall over many years in the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice I am aware of her emphasis on understanding gender differences in living a life of inquiry (1999), and I am continuing to learn about the significance of these insights in my own enquiries.

My intentions 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 seeking 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, Pound 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 intend to check with Pound, the validity of any future claim that I am enhancing the flow of values associated with alongsideness in my future accounts:

> 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/robynpound.html (Pound, 2009).

Pound's (2009), Delong's (2002), Farren's (2005) and Crotty's (2011), Walton's (2011) and Huxtable's (2011a & b) relational ways of being, resonate with my relational and collaborative intentions. At this point I wish to acknowledge the significance for my own research programme and supervision of Peter Reason's desire to support collaborative inquiries in the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) from its inception in 1993 to its closure in 2011. Almost half of my doctoral supervisions between 1993-2011 came from individuals initially attracted to work within CARPP by the work and ideas of Reason (1994).

iv) Relating to and learning from Delong's (2002) 'culture of inquiry' in a collaborative inquiry.

Jacqueline Delong is tutoring a masters unit on approaches to professional development with students registered with Brock University in Ontario, Canada.

In her doctoral research programme Delong's original contribution to educational knowledge included the standards of judgment of developing a culture of inquiry. As I seek to strengthen my relationally dynamic way of being, through collaborative/cooperative inquiries, I recognise the importance of strengthening my engagement with cultural influences. In doing this I also recognise the importance of using an appropriate language for expressing the relational dynamic of these cultural influences, that are grounded in Delong's insights about the creation of cultures of inquiry.

Alan is enabling me to develop and use an appropriate language to communicate my self-identity as a dynamic inclusion of neighbourhood with my existence within cultural influences:

> 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 inclusion of neighbourhood, through the inclusion of space throughout and beyond 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, pp. 161-162)

I like Rayner's understanding and expression of self-identity as a dynamic inclusion of neighbourhood as configurations of energy. Delong has invited me sessions with a masters group using SKYPE. What SKYPE enables me to do is to record the images of both myself and the group whilst participating in conversations and question and answer sessions. The visual resource of the recording enables me to appreciate myself as existing within space and boundaries as a dynamic inclusion of neighbourhood and as configurations of energy, including the expression of a life-affirming energy.

The following video-clip is such a resource and shows me participating in a masters meeting with the group being tutored by Delong on the 7th May 2011.

27:48 minutes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ombYiAvv4J0

The following two clips are part of a series of conversations in which Delong and I are engaged in conversation about our intentions for the following day's session on the 7th May and then our reflections on the 8th May. Delong video-tapes the actual sessions and puts these on YouTube as data for our further reflections. Using SKYPE and YouTube in this way is enabling us to document significant communications in the creative phase of our enquiries as we work and research our continuing collaboration.

Intentions on the 6th May 2011 for the 7th May.   Reflections on the 7th May, on the 8th May.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7iSN9PZylU   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eFspUNddP4

Delong often expresses to me, a sensitivity to the emotions of her students, especially in relation to vulnerability. I intend to show, in a future critical phase of my enquiry, the evidence that I am now becoming more aware of the significance of his insights as I learn in working and sharing ideas with Margaret Farren and Yvonne Crotty.

v)   Relating to and learning from Farren's (2005) pedagogy of the unique, web of betweenness and the co-creation of an educational space, and Crotty's (2011) open heartedness in educational relationships.

Margaret Farren and Yvonne Crotty are colleagues at Dublin City University where they work together in enhancing the experiences of students on masters programmes. They are both experts in the use of information and communication technologies, in the co-creation of educational spaces and in the development of living theory multi-media narratives. Crotty has been awarded the 2011 President's Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Academic category:

> "Yvonne's approach to teaching is one of inspiration and enablement. She inspires confidence and a 'can do' attitude. Her creative attitude instills enjoyment in to each module and challenges the student to reach beyond what is mediocre. Her understanding of the theoretical process and analysis of new knowledge presented to the student, enables her to deconstruct what for many at the outset appears inaccessible." (http://www.dcu.ie/news/2011/may/s0511k.shtml)

> Yvonne's commitment to empowering her students and harnessing their full potential shines through in the many student testimonials received. In the words of one student:

"From the outset Yvonne has created a safe environment which is conducive to learning for her students. She was aware of her student's insecurities when we returned to college as mature MSc students and her feedback at this time was invaluable. She encourages collaboration and peer evaluation within her classes. Her creative values are evident in her approach to teaching as she encourages her students to examine their own creativity. Throughout my two years Yvonne has directed me in believing in my own abilities, which has made me better in my own work practice."
(http://www.dcu.ie/news/2011/may/downloads/academic-winner.pdf *)*

In sharing and participating in educational spaces with Crotty and her students I am feeling the significance of her 'open-heartedness' in the expression of a life affirming energy in the creating and sustaining of educational spaces with an influence that is distinguished by a passion for excellence. I would stress the importance of Crotty's influence in the expression of her values of excellence and aesthetics in terms of the quality of the educational videos that students on the masters programme are creating with her guidance and tuition. The types of videos that are being produced in the masters programme at Dublin City University are of a standard of excellence that deserve international recognition, especially in the attention to detail in the design of the educational video and in the clear focus on the educational use of the video.

In working with Crotty and Farren I am learning from them about the significance of *Co-creating an educational space* (Farren, 2008) as well as how to express the value of loving kindness as Farren shows me in her relationships with others:

> In this paper, I generate my living educational theory as an explanation of my educational influences in learning as I research my tutoring with practitioner-researchers from a variety of workplace backgrounds. I will show how I have closely inter-related the teaching, learning and research processes by providing opportunities for participants to accept responsibility for their own learning and to develop their capacity as learners and researchers. My Ph.D. inquiry 'How can I create a pedagogy of the unique through a web of betweenness?' (Farren, 2006) was integral to the development of my own Higher Education teaching practice as I clarified the meaning of my embodied values in the course of their emergence in practice. I try to provide an educational space where individuals can create knowledge in collaboration with others. I believe dialogue is fundamental to the learning process. It is a way of opening up to questions and assumptions rather than accepting ready-made solutions. The originality of the contribution is in the constellation of values and understandings I use as explanatory principles in generating my explanations of educational influence. This constellation includes the unusual combination of an educational response to the flow of energy and meaning in Celtic spirituality and the educational opportunities for learning opened up by digital technology. (Farren, 2008)
> http://ejolts.net/node/78

Video 4. Action Research Cycles (Farren, 2008e)

Video 4 (Farren, 2008e) was taken at the end of the validation meeting at which Chris Garvey was asking for clarification on the action research cycles. The presence of the other participants helped Chris to see how his learning could relate to the action research cycles. In a later email Chris pointed to the:

...significance of the peer validation meetings and how they were worthwhile and meaningful and extremely useful. They brought home to me the necessity to engage constantly in critical reflection and dialogue, not only in educational research itself but also within all areas of my educational practice.

(C. Garvey, personal communication, July 14, 2004)

The validation meeting challenged the participants to consider the data they needed in order to present evidence that they had improved student learning. The meeting represented part of my endeavour to live my own values of collaboration and dialogue in the learning process.

Pedagogy of the unique is a standard of judgment that recognises the importance of singularity; that is, each individual has a particular and different constellation of values that motivates their enquiries and each operates in a different context from within which their enquiries develop. The web of betweenness is a standard that recognises the relational dynamic (Rayner, 2004) of human existence. My commitment to the fostering of a web of betweenness reflects my belief that learning is a social interactive process involving members of the group of sharing participants who can develop new understandings through dialogue (Laidlaw, 1994; Shor and Freire, 1987). You can access each of the action research accounts. Chris Garvey and Fionnula Flanagan's [action research account](), and Mairead Ryan and Bernie Tobin's [action research account]().

Farren chairs the editorial board of the Educational Journal of Living Theories. Crotty (2011b) and Farren have worked together to produce a special issue of EJOLTS that includes the accounts from Crotty's masters students. You will be able to access this special issue from [http://ejolts.net/]() at the end of June. I intend to continue to work and to learn with Farren and Crotty in extending the influence of their insights with living educational theories. It was through the urging of Margaret Farren and Branko Bognar that we made public the living educational theories of practitioner-researchers in the edited collection of papers published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS) (Farren, Whitehead and Bognar, 2011)

In working with Huxtable I am learning more about the value of attracting people into a web-resource through the invitational quality of its visual design as shown below. I am also learning how to stay connected with the learning and well being of children and young people.

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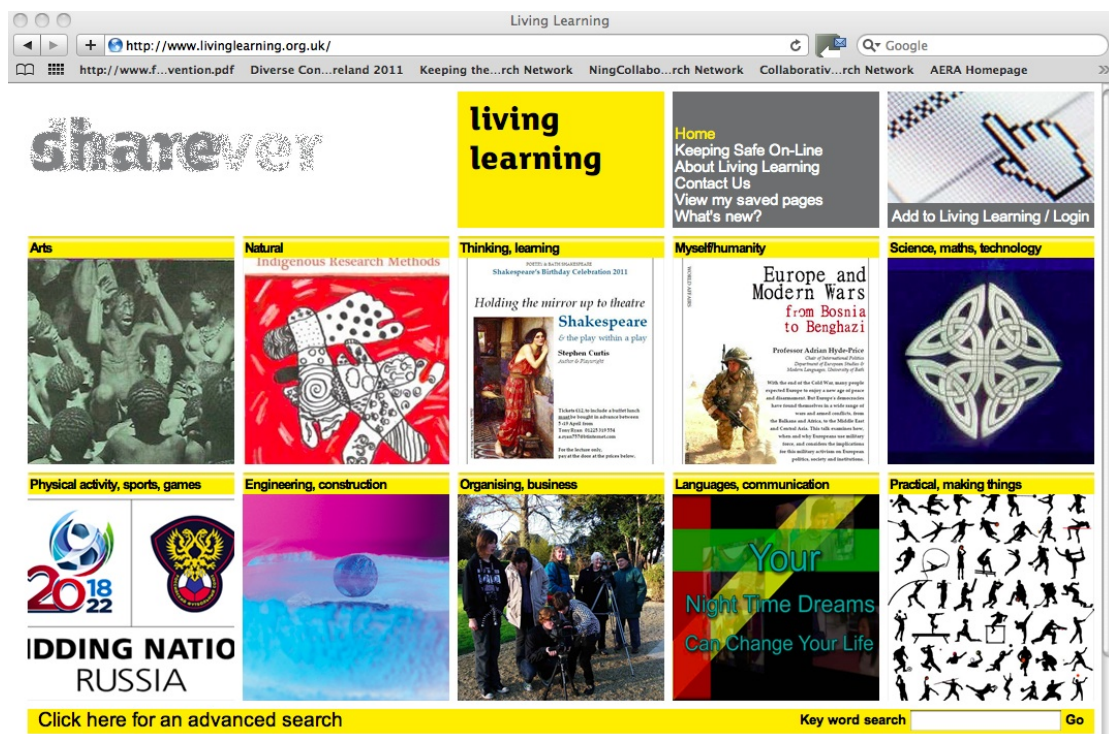
2) In Marie's Site, Marie offers her living theory as she shares her practical projects and her creative and critical engagements with the ideas of others, including government policies.

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

Marie's site | sitemap | log in

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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Sidebar: Values and passion led learning · TASC News · Living Values Improving Cooperative Practice Project · Young People's Conference · Living Learning - share your passions! · Blogging - new start!
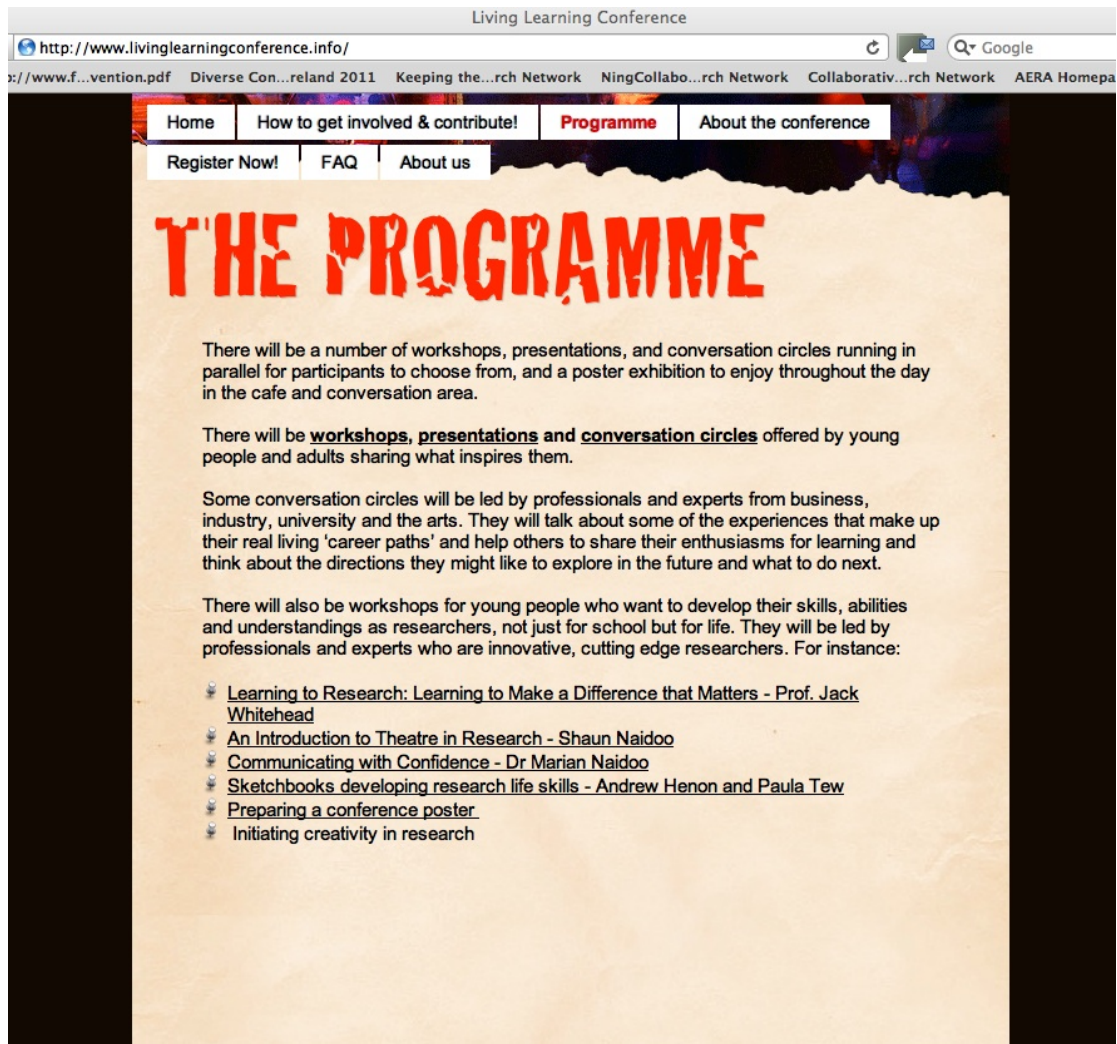
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http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite/

3) In a conference for young people organized by Huxtable for the 9th 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'

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 Walton (2008) 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 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.

vii)   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 (1989, 2007) who initiated this conference, 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.'*

Whilst the following extract from Walton's (2011) paper is rather long, I have included it because of my intuition that it is going to be highly significant in the development of my research programme as I seek to extend the systemic influences of living educational theories through collaborative/cooperative/participatory enquiries:

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 and intention to engage in collaborative/cooperative/partipatory enquiries is most significant in the expression of her value of a 'responsibility for the wellbeing of all' and to developing my intention to engage in a. 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 of 'a responsibility for the well being of all', as a virtue in

the sense of being morally excellent, 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=wxUtFNUs6mo

viii)   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. Again, it is a long extract because of my intuition that its contents are going to be highly significant in the evolution of my research programme:

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 (population15,500) 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 twon 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 the wellbeing all' within a community context.

In doing this I am exploring the significance of Rayner's idea of inclusionality for the development of my own value of a 'responsibility towards the wellbeing of all' in relation to my membership of the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA). I want to be clear that I am exercising my responsibility 'towards' the other rather than 'for' the other.

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 8th World Congress in Melbourne in 2010. Moira Laidlaw led the organization of the 3rd 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 8th 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 an expression of and influence within its natural neighbourhood, 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 Psychological and Behavioral Science is perhaps Rayner's clearest exposition of inclusionality with his idea of natural inclusion. Here is an extract from his Abstract:

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 inclusion of neighbourhood, through the inclusion of space throughout and beyond *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, p. 161).

Rayner is therefore wary of the 'devaluation of the needful hollowness of the self', and with it, the devaluation of the person who yields to doubt and fear or admits its persistent presence to others - as if this is something wrong with them that needs to be covered up. This is linked, for Rayner, with false hope and denial of the Shadow. For Rayner there is a need to acknowledge space as intangible presence at the heart of, throughout and beyond our selves, as source both of vulnerability and love as well as hate when denied or devalued. He correspondingly sees the intransigent denial of this aspect as the source of deep and persistent human conflict. For Rayner, natural inclusional thinking needs to acknowledge all aspects of human nature, not just those that appear superficially more acceptable or holistically 'Wholesome'. The following poem was elicited by Rayner's appreciation of the vital aspect of our selves that is so commonly despised but is in reality the source of our compassionate nature, if allowed to be:

Aftermath

We laboured hard

To secure firm foundations

That would keep us going

No matter what

But all the while

A gale was blowing

Ripping away

Whatever we tried to lie down

In flimsy flutters

So we could only keep going

On the off chance

That all would be well

In the end

And so our life passed

By us

As the gale blew

Through us

And we lashed our selves

To whatever would hold us fast

Insecure bondage

Serving only to whip

Our souls into frenzy

Whenever we tried

To slip our leash

Or let ourselves off the hook

Willing to believe

In our selves

Years and years and years

Dreamed by

As we hoped against hope

That all would be well

In the end

If we only kept going

Riding out the storm

But in the end

We couldn't keep going

Whilst lashed to the mast

Leaving us

To stop and reflect

In retrospect

On the wasteland

Of a life spent thrashing

Instead of splashing

Our selves all over

With what could truly sustain us

If we could

Truly

Let it be

I like the way MacLure emphasises the importance of not telling smooth stories of self as if the 'shadow' were not involved in the creation of self:

> Lather (1994) has noted that the narratives of educational research (and not just action research) are usually victory narratives. She wonders what it might mean to rethink research as a 'ruin', in which risk and uncertainty are the price to be paid for the possibility of breaking out of the cycle of certainty that never seems to deliver the hoped-for happy ending. Are the transition stories discussed above victory narratives? If so, they are not vainglorious ones. But I wonder whether it is worth considering other ways that interviewees and interviewers might collaborate in the telling of life stories. The aim would not be to try to get more coherent and 'disinterested' narratives, as Woods (1985) or Butt et

al. (1992) want to do. (MacLure, p. 283)

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. One's first response may be one of amusement. The serious intent in showing such visual resources is that they enable individuals to move their perceptions from the influence of binocular vision to the proprioceptive understandings of the significance of the movements of their bodies in space. The image below shows the limitations of my binocular vision as I look at a particular individual. The video data allows me to appreciate my existence in the space and boundaries I am moving within.

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

Such visual data allows me to make relationally dynamic meanings of the ontological, axiological, methodological and epistemology implications of my enquiries. In doing this 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 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?

I now 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/Akcijsko_istrazivanje_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 of working with others in 'we' enquiries that retain the integrity of 'I', through my engagement in the following symposium:

Wednesday 1st 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	*Participants* Prof Jack Whitehead Dr Marian Naidoo Mr Shaun Naidoo Dr William House Ms Marie Huxtable Ms Catherine Forester Dr Joan Walton

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?

I also intend to strengthen my collaborative/cooperative activities and understandings with the keynote and action research workshop at the Developing Innovative Visual Educational Resources for Students Everywhere (DIVERSE) 2011 at Dublin City University on the 30 June 2011 (http://diverse2011.dcu.ie/welcome.html), whilst bearing in mind my purpose and intention to work with others 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."* (Liverpool Hope University, 2011)

Concluding Note. I am aware of the omission above in this creative phase of my enquiry of several colleagues whose continuing significance in my life and research programme I want to acknowledge. I am thinking of Andrew Henon, Penny Hay and Julia Butler in 5X5X5, Je Kan Adler Collins, Moira Laidlaw, Jean McNiff, Joan Conolly, Eden Charles, Ian Phillips, Fernando Galindo, Nigel Harrisson, Christine Jones and Kate Kemp in the following ways.

Andrew Henon, a socially engaged artist, is helping to deepen and extend my understandings of the significance of volunteering and community, in the work of a socially engaged artist. I keep returning to his edited work 'Creativity Works' as a source of learning and inspiration.
(http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/henon/creativityworkslowah.pdf)

As a Trustee of the charity 5X5X5 directed by **Penny Hay** and administered by **Julia Butler**, I am learning from this arts based action research project to focus my attention on contributing to enhancing relationships in which:

- Adults and children are involved in recording and reflecting on the children's learning through written observations, photos and video. It is usually parents who join in to help document and their role is crucial as a partner in the research, working alongside the children, artists, teachers and cultural centres. (http://www.5x5x5creativity.org.uk/?id=144)

I also want to acknowledge the educational influence of **Prof. Moira Laidlaw**, a Professor for Life at Ningxia Teachers University in China and presently a tutor with the Open University on a Master's degree programme. What I learnt from Moira Laidlaw was that the energy-flowing values I use as explanatory principles in explanations of my educational influence are themselves living. As I was supervising Laidlaw's doctoral programme she explained to me that it wasn't sufficient just to clarify the meanings of my values in an action/reflection process through the course of their emergence in my practice. Laidlaw helped me to understand the relationally dynamic nature of my values in the recognition that they were living and evolving.

Laidlaw was also very helpful in recognising the value of visual resources in understanding the meanings of the embodied expression of energy flowing values. If you move the cursor backwards and forwards around the timings indicated on the still below, I believe that you will understand my feeling of empathetic resonance as Laidlaw's expression of a loving dynamic energy, evokes my own. Huxtable (2009) has given more details of this process of clarifying the meanings of embodied values with video.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1jEOhxDGno

Laidlaw's work in China supported the development of China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching (http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/moira.shtml) and was most influential in my appointment as a Visiting Professor of Ningxia Teachers University. Laidlaw continues to influence my learning about the importance of both personal values and cultural influences in her support for Anke Jauch's (2010) enquiry:

How can I improve my communication with my sister, so that I can lead a more loving, consistent and harmonious life with her? A personal action research inquiry into family-displacement in the former eastern zone and as a symbol of the reunification of Germany (http://ejolts.net/node/178)

I also want to acknowledge the influence of **Je Kan Adler Collins**, an Associate Professor at Fukuoka University in Japan.

Professor Je Kan Adler-Collins was most influential in enabling me to present a keynote at a Conference of Health Educators in Osaka, Japan (Whitehead, 2001) and hence to do what I can to extend the influence of living educational theories in a Japanese context. Adler-Collins is an Associate Editor of the International aNursing Review. You can access his webpage on living action research at

http://www.living-action-research.org/

During my supervision of Adler-Collins' masters and doctoral degree programmes he introduced me to Buddhist ideas of mindfulness and loving kindness. He has always emphasised the importance of creating a safe space for healing and learning and through his influence and the influences I have outlined above, I am integrating these insights into my own practices and understandings.

Professor Jean McNiff has been the most significant influence in urging and enabling me to make public ideas from my research programme. She has continuously stressed the importance of the generative and transformational qualities of action research. If you access the books section of http://www.actionresearch.net I think that you will immediately see Jean's influence – each one of our joint publications with the original proposal has been negotiated by Jean with the publisher.
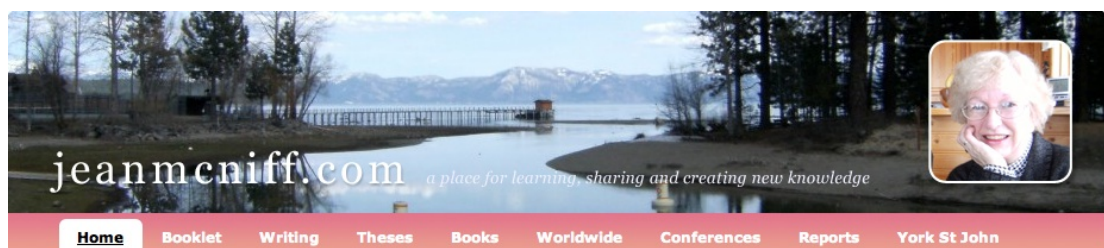
Here are details of books written or co-authored by Jean.

Action Research: Living Theory,

Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff (2006), London, Sage Publications

Action Research for Teachers: A Practical Guide

with Jack Whitehead (2005) London, David Fulton Publisher

All you need to know about action research,

2nd edition (with Jack Whitehead) (2011) London, Sage Publications

You and Your Action Research Project,

 3rd edition, (with Jack Whitehead) (2010), London,

 Routledge.

Action Research: Principles and Practice,

Second Edition (with Jack Whitehead) (2002), London, Routledge.

Action Research in Ireland

(edited with Gerry McNamara and Diarmuid Leonard) (2000b), Dorset, September

Action Research in Organisations

(with Jack Whitehead) (2000a), London, Routledge.

Rethinking Pastoral Care

(edited with Úna M. Collins) (1999), London, Routledge.

Teaching as Learning: an action research approach (1993),

London, Routledge.

Action Research: Principles and Practice,

First Edition (1988/1992), London, Routledge.

Jean was also most influential in enabling me to receive invitations from African Academics to present keynotes and workshops on action research and living educational theories in an African context. It was whilst on such a visit, organised by Jean, that I went to the Ubuntu Centre in Cape Town and by chance met Professor Joan Conolly from Durban University of Technology.

Joan Conolly has been influential in enabling me to present a keynote at the 2009 Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) Conference on 'Risk and Resilience in Higher Education in Improving Practice and Generating Knowledge' (http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwheletasakey09opt.pdf) in Johannesburg and in sharing ideas in the Transformative Education(al) Studies Project in South Africa of which she is the Lead Investigator (http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/southafrica/TESproposalopt.pdf). Conolly has also been influential in inviting me into Durban University of Technology to organise workshops on action research and living theory and to do what I can to support making public original expressions of the embodied knowledge of her colleagues as they explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of their students and in the learning of the social formations in which they are living and working.

Conolly's connections led to my invitations to present ideas on action research and living theory at the Action Research Conference organised by Professor Lesley Wood the Director of the Action Research Unit at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and to make presentations at St Thomas' University and the Universite Pedagogica in Maputo, Mozambique.

The latest invitation, which I felt privileged to accept, is to give the 2011 Mandela Day Lecture at Durban University of Technology on the 18th July.

All that I have written above, in this creative phase of my research programme, is presented in the spirit of devotion to changing the world for the better, where I can affirm, through my actions, my solidarity with humanity an individual contribution towards a continuous global movement for good:

Mandela Day 2011

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. http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/foundation/mandela-day/category/mandela_day_2010/

If you google Nelson Mandela and Ubuntu you can see and hear a 2 minute clip of Nelson Mandela talking about an Ubuntu way of being. In working and

researching to enhance the systemic influences of living educational theories through collaborative/cooperative/participatory enquiries I am attracted to the relational qualities of Ubuntu.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8DbmBgS6mI

Whilst supervising **Eden Charles'** doctoral research programme into *How Can I bring Ubuntu As A Living Standard Of Judgment Into The Academy? Moving Beyond Decolonisation Through Societal Reidentification And Guiltless Recognition.* (Charles, 2007 - http://www.actionresearch.net/living/edenphd.shtml), I felt the energy flowing, inclusional qualities of Charles' Ubuntu way of being and believe that I am integrating some of these qualities in the evolution of my educational research programme with a concern to extend and deepen the systemic influences of living educational theories.

In supervising **Ian Phillips'** doctoral research programme on *The makings and unmakings in the making of me: affirming and improving the professional practices of an educator-The African Storyteller* (Phillips, 2011), I am learning how to integrate insights on relational mutuality and dialogical praxis into my enquiries:

"Video narratives crystalise 'live' my advocacy, my dynamic relational standards of judgement. Included are *'a unique purposeful recognition, an enhanced relational mutuality and an engaging dialogical praxis'* comprising my valuing social living pedagogy. It is prototyped in building relationship with my father; co-creating with black boys Mandiani's *heal, protect and create strategies* toward transforming their ways of being and mainstreaming the African Voice." (Phillips, 2011)

I am hopeful that whilst stressing the importance of each individual expressing their responsibility for living as fully as they can the values that carry hope for the future of humanity, my own contribution could not have been made without the continuing support of the many others, especially those above, whose expressions of loving kindness and life-affirming energy are helping and sustaining me along the way.

Professor Fernando Galindo from the Universidad Mayor de San Simón in Bolivia has recently introduced me to an idea from the Quechua language of the Incas. This is spoken in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia and Argentina and is the idea of:

Ñaupaj + mampuni

Ñaupaj means past and when we add mampuni to the other word it means towards the future taking the past with us, or creating the future based in the past.

What I like about this idea is that it involves acknowledging an understanding of the past in creating a future that need not be based on reproducing the past, but acknowledges the importance of the individual and collective creativity in generating a future.

In generating a future I also work with Nigel Harrisson (2009), the Director of the Inclusion and Education service within the Children's Service of Bath and North East Somerset together with Christine Jones the Manager of the Statutory Provision for Special Educational Needs, together with their colleague Kate Kemp, in weekly Breakfast Café Conversations. Both Harrisson and Jones are registered for their doctorates at Liverpool Hope University being supervised by Joan Walton. Jones' multi-media, living theory masters dissertation on 'How do I improve my practice as an inclusion officer working in a children's service?' (Jones, 2009 - http://www.actionresearch.net/living/cjmaok/cjma.htm) continues to inspire me to spread the influence of such accounts in the faith/belief that they are contributing to the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

I am looking forward to sharing an account of my learning in a critical phase of my research programme at the British Educational Research Association Conference in 2011 at the London Institute of Education as we, hopefully, continue to share our enquiries together in ways that integrate our understanding of the past in the creation of a future that enhances the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. For the present I shall leave you with the poetic wisdom of Ben Okri:

> 1) To poison a nation, poison its stories. A
> Demoralised nation tells demoralised stories to
> Itself. Beware of the story-tellers who are not
> Fully conscious of the importance of their gifts,
> and who are irresponsible in the application of
> their art: they could unwittingly help along the
> psychic destruction of their people…. p. 17

> 14) Stories are the secret reservoir of values: change
> the stories individuals or nations live by and
> tell themselves, and you change the individuals
> and nations.

15) Nations and people are largely the stories they
feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories
that are lies, they will suffer the future conse-
quences of those lies. If they tell themselves
stories that face their own truths, they will free
their histories for future flowerings…. p.21 (Okri, 1996)

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