

## **What am I doing? Why am I doing it? How do I explain my educational influence in the context of the creative computing club at St. Stephen's School in Bath?**

Jack Whitehead, imagining that he is John Reeves asking, researching and answer these questions, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Jack Whitehead – I have been exploring these questions in the context of Breakfast Café Conversations at the Carer's Centre in Bath with the help of video tapes of four conversations. In answering 'What I am doing' I have used still images from the videos, 20 X speeded up videos so that I can see something of what I am doing in an hour's conversation, in less than 3 minutes of a speeded up video. and the real time video to focus on particular events that resonate with the values I used to explain both what I am doing and my educational influences in my own learning and in the learning of others. I'll use the same method is

***Jack Whitehead imagining that he is John Reeves exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering the questions.***

Because I use values as explanatory principles and living standards of judgment I shall begin by saying what I am meaning by values. An explanatory principle is a reason I give for why I do what I do. A living standard of judgment refers to the principle I use to evaluate the validity of my claim to know why I am doing something.

### **My meanings of values**

When I explain why I am doing what I am doing in my educational practice I give values-laden reasons. My reasons are values-laden because of my understanding that anything educational is values-laden. When I focus on improving what I am doing in education, I recognize an improvement in terms of my values. For me a value expresses something that matters to me, that I care about. I use value-words such as freedom, justice, respect, care, love and democracy to point towards the meanings of the embodied values I express in what I am doing. Whilst the words help me to communicate my meanings, the meanings of my values are clarified in the course of their expression and emergence in what I do, in my embodied expressions of my values. Whilst I draw insights from the most advanced social theories of the day my explanations of my educational influences cannot be reduced to the conceptual abstractions and theoretical frameworks of anyone else. However, I do use insights from these theories in generating my own living-living. Here are some insights from Schwarz's Theory of Basic Human Values in terms of the importance of values, six main features of values and ten values, that I find illuminating, as I ask, research and answer my questions, 'What am I doing?' 'How am I doing it?', 'How do I explain my educational influences?'

### **The importance of values**

Values have been a central concept in the social sciences since

their inception. For both Durkheim (1897/1964) and Weber (1905/1958), values were crucial for explaining social and personal organization and change. Values have played an important role not only in sociology, but in psychology, anthropology, and related disciplines as well. Values are used to characterize cultural groups, societies, and individuals, to trace change over time, and to explain the motivational bases of attitudes and behavior. (p.3)

### **Six main features of values**

(1) **Values are beliefs** linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they become infused with feeling. People for whom independence is an important value become aroused if their independence is threatened, despair when they are helpless to protect it, and are happy when they can enjoy it.

(2) **Values refer to desirable goals** that motivate action. People for whom social order, justice, and helpfulness are important values are motivated to pursue these goals.

(3) **Values transcend specific actions and situations.** Obedience and honesty values, for example, may be relevant in the workplace or school, in business or politics, with friends or strangers. This feature distinguishes values from norms and attitudes that usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations.

(4) **Values serve as standards or criteria.** Values guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. People decide what is good or bad, justified or illegitimate, worth doing or avoiding, based on possible consequences for their cherished values. But the impact of values in everyday decisions is rarely conscious. Values enter awareness when the actions or judgments one is considering have conflicting implications for different values one cherishes.

(5) **Values are ordered by importance** relative to one another. People's values form an ordered system of priorities that characterize them as individuals. Do they attribute more importance to achievement or justice, to novelty or tradition? This hierarchical feature also distinguishes values from norms and attitudes.

(6) **The relative importance of multiple values guides action.** Any attitude or behavior typically has implications for

more than one value. For example, attending church might express and promote tradition and conformity values at the expense of hedonism and stimulation values. The tradeoff among relevant, competing values guides attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz, 1992, 1996). Values influence action when they are relevant in the context (hence likely to be activated) and important to the actor. (pp. 3-4)

## **Ten values**

i) Self-Direction ii) Stimulation iii) Hedonism iv) Achievement  
v) Power vi) Security vii) Conformity viii) Tradition ix)  
Benevolence x) Universalism (pp. 5-7)

Whilst agreeing with Schwartz's Theory, as it is expressed purely in terms of words and conceptual abstractions, from a social science perspective, I also have a different educational understanding of values that goes beyond meanings that can be communicated through purely lexical definitions. By lexical definitions I am meaning that the meanings of words are defined in terms of other words. To clarify and express my meanings of values I need to turn to ostensive expressions of meanings in the sense that I need to show you my meanings, together with my use of words, as I expressed the embodied meanings in my practice. I shall now focus on the communication of my ostensive expressions of meaning with the help of digital visual data of my practice on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in a creative computing club I lead on Tuesday mornings at St. Stephen's School in Bath. In this communication I show what I am doing with the help of still images, a video at 20 times faster than normal, to allow an hours video to be viewed in under 3 minutes, a video at the normal speed to allow me to focus on the data that shows what I am doing that I can use as evidence in explaining why I am doing what I am doing. Two of my own children Josh and Katya attend the club and they help me to focus on what I am doing as a parent educator and to explain why I am doing what I am doing as a parent educator. Teachers are 'in loco parentis' and I intend to show the values I express as a parent educator that I use to distinguish what I do as educational and the reasons I use to explain why I do what I do as the explanatory principles in my living-educational-theory. What I mean by my living-educational-theory is an explanation of my educational influences in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence my practice and

understandings.

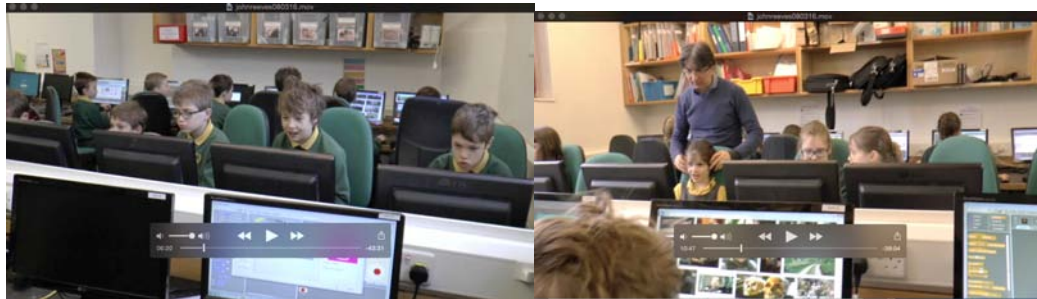
## 1) WHAT AM I DOING?

Still images from the video of the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

As part of my passion for creative computing I want young people to learn to code.

### i) Visual Data on the classroom context

There are four rows of computers with a 26 seat capacity. The right hand image shows me with my daughter Katya.



### ii) Visual Data on Coding

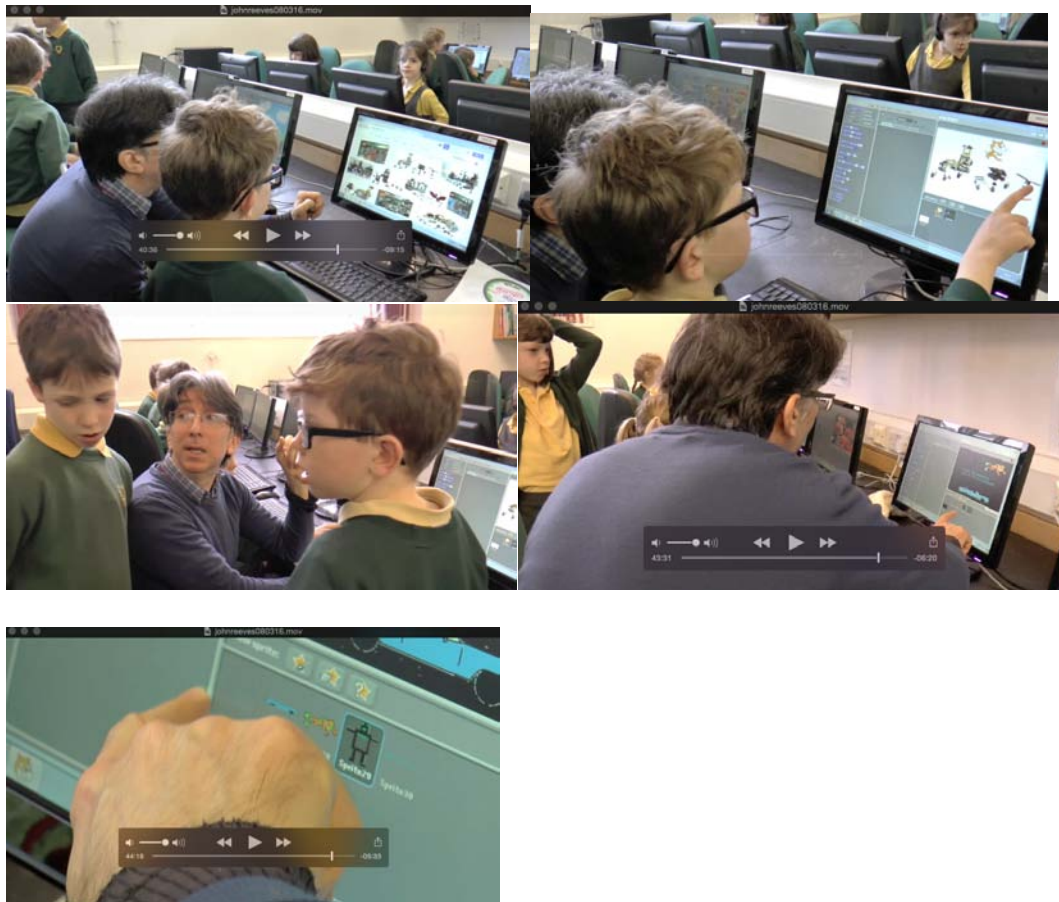
The pupils are using the application SCRATCH 1.4, with access to the internet.





**iii) Visual data on my support for story making and creative projects related to the kids interests, with just enough programming for them to enjoy making something. (My intention is to be inspirational and facilitating, rather than instructing. So that they can go away and actually do more of what they have learnt).**





iv) 2:30 minutes of Visual Data in a 20 times speeded up video



Accessible from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qY4TtPsYs70>

v) 49:51 minutes of Visual Data in real time video



Accessible from

[https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video\\_id=CP\\_yi75nl88](https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=CP_yi75nl88)

vi) 2:22 minutes of Visual Data in real time video



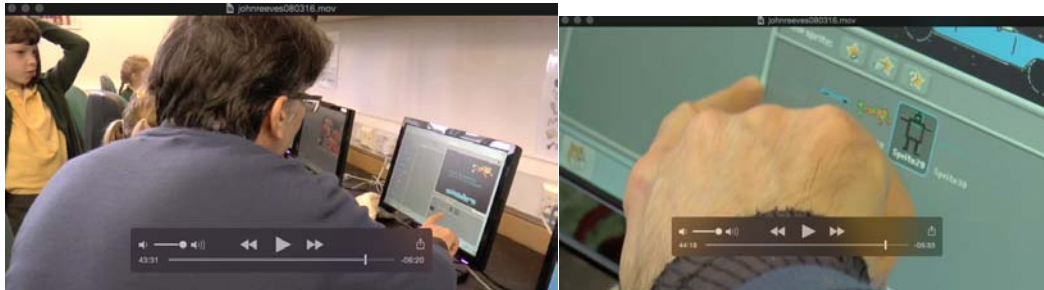
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**2) WHY AM I DOING WHAT I AM DOING?**

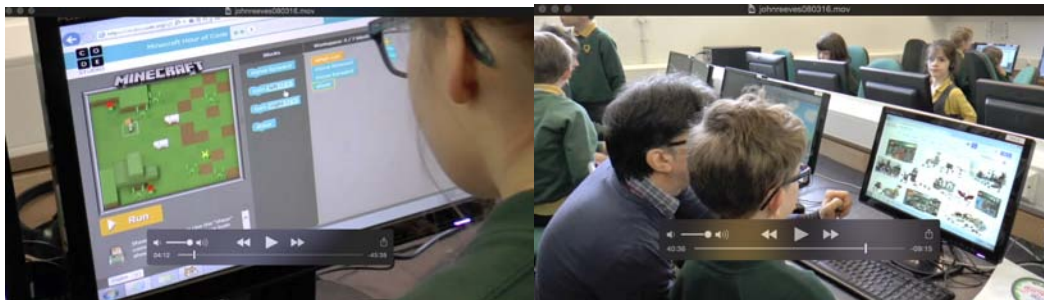
**Giving all the reasons for why I am doing what I am doing is rather complex and would involve an autobiography of my learning as I explain my present practice in terms of an evaluation of my past and an intention to contribution to a future that is not yet realized in practice.**

**Data becomes evidence when it is used to justify or refute the validity of a claim to know something. As I give my reasons for doing what I am doing, I am producing an evidence-based claim to know.**

**My reasons for organizing the computer club at St. Stephens are focused on my belief in the educational value of creative computing in children's learning.** Whilst I stated above that my intention is to be inspirational and facilitating, rather than instructing, I also do instruct in the sense of showing the children what they can do to accomplish what they want to do. You can see me showing the children what to do :

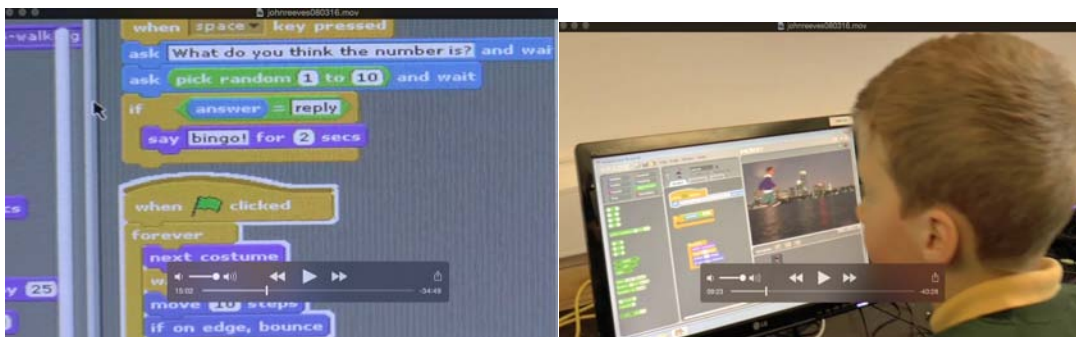


I focus on the creativity of the children in having their own ideas and using computing to accomplish this in the generation of their own narratives:



**I value the expression of children's creativity** in the sense of coming up with their own ideas and working out ways of using the computer to realize their ideas.

In valuing creative computing I also recognize the importance of developing the **skills of coding** to accomplish what it is that one wants to do:

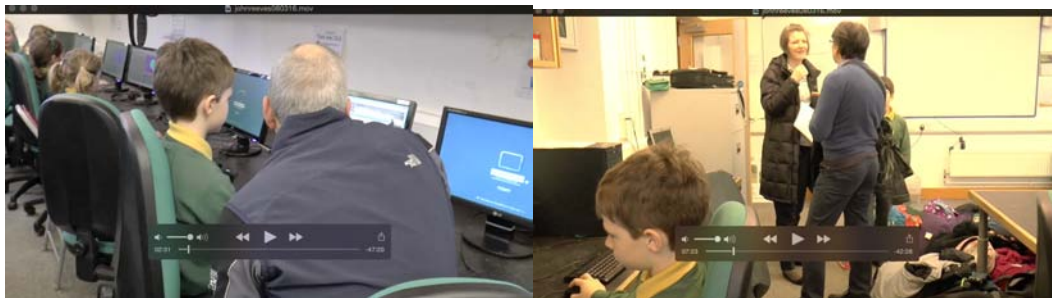


**I also value learning from each other** and I encourage the children to share their learning with each other.





## I value parental involvement



## My valuing of parental involvement is related to my values as a parent educator.

The values I bring into the space of the creative computing club include those of the **love and responsibility** I feel as a parent and parent educator. As parents bring their children into the club there is often an expression of affection between parent and child with a hug, touch and/or loving look. As a parent educator I bring into the space my responsibility as an educator in encouraging the expression of the creativity of the child in using the computer to make something of their own.

I am expressing my loving responsibility as a parent educator with my daughter Katya in the stills below with both an affectionate touch and interest in what she is making.





### **3) HOW DO I EXPLAIN MY EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES IN MY OWN LEARNING AND IN THE LEARNING OF OTHERS?**

I explain my educational influences in my own learning as I reflect on my experiences with the children and the technology. The methods I use for the data gathering above, include the taking of still images from the real-time video to enable me to clarify the values above. The methods include the 20 times speeded up video. This enables me to focus quickly on what I am doing as in the 2:22 minute below where I am working with an individual child to help him to produce his own narrative and to develop the computing skills he needs.

#### **2:22 minutes of Visual Data in real time video**



**Accessible from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVfSWaxw5hk>**

I explain my educational influences in my own learning as I get to know what each individual is working on, so that I can make a response that helps them with both their creative expressions and the skills they need to accomplish what they want to do.

I explain my educational influences in the children's learning in terms of living my values of creative computing and being a parent educator as fully as possible. The values of creative computing include the expression of the individual child's creativity, the development of the skills they need to accomplish what they want to do, and their participation in peer learning. The values of being a parent educator include the expression of a loving responsibility for both the well-being of their children and their productive work in creative computing.

## References

Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>