Generating Educational Theories That Can Explain Educational Influences In Learning

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Abstract

For centuries, the knowledge that has been used to enhance professionalism in education has been presented to the Academy for legitimation in bound volumes of mainly words on pages of printed text. The language and logics of these texts have been dominated by the Aristotelian logic with its law of contradiction to eliminate contradictions from correct thought, and to a lesser extent by a dialectical logic with the inclusion of the nucleus of contradiction in correct thought. In these texts educational theory is presented within conceptual frameworks in which explanations for the educational influences of individuals in learning are tested for validity through the application of an explanation, derived from the general explanation in the theory, to a particular case.

Different forms of explanation are offered here to enhance professionalism and generate educational knowledge. These explanations are grounded in the belief that the embodied knowledge of many educators could be made explicit to recognise the accomplishments of master and doctor educators. The explanations are generated by individuals in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' working within communities of practice and knowledge-creation.

The explanations offered below include multi-media presentations using digital technology to look at the practical principles in the explanations given by individuals for their educational influences in learning. The practical principles are grounded in energy-flowing values with an awareness of the influence of the relational dynamics of complex ecologies (Lee and Rochon 2009). I call such explanations living educational theories to distinguish them from the theories of education derived from the traditional disciplines of education.

The primary contribution of these presentations to the theme of the symposium is in the explication of the units of appraisal, standards of judgment and living logics in an epistemology for living educational theories with educational responsibility.

Introduction

As a student of education between 1966-7, on my initial teacher education programme at the University of Newcastle, I produced my first study of education entitled 'The way to professionalism in education?' My interest and passion in contributing to enhancing professionalism in education have continued with a sustained focused on the creation of educational theories that can validly explain the educational influences of individuals in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations.

This presentation draws on my learning from a 36 year old educational research programme into the nature of educational theory at the University of Bath between 1973-2009. It has particular significance for me because my tenured contract with the University was completed earlier this week on the 31st August and I began a new three year contract as a Visiting Fellow on the 1st September. Hence I can now start this new phase of my educational research at this keynote symposium with a review of my learning about educational theory over the course of my research programme.

Participating with me (Whitehead, 2009c) in this symposium are Margaret Farren from Dublin City University in the Chair, Christine Jones, an Inclusion Officer from Bath and North East Somerset as Discussant and Jean McNiff (2009) from York St. John University, Jane Renowden 92009) from St. Mary's College and Marie Huxtable (2009b), a Senior Educational Psychologist from Bath and North East Somerset, as co-presenters. We have worked together over several years and shared ideas in what I see as a community of practice and knowledge-creation.

In organizing this presentation I shall:

i) Explain the significance of grounding it in communities of practice and knowledge-creation.

ii) Give reasons for focusing on educational influences in learning with educational responsibility.

iii) Present meanings of the practical principles that can constitute explanations of educational influence using digital technology in multi-media narratives.

iv) Present the units of appraisal, the living standards of judgment and the living logics that help to constitute living educational theories with educational responsibility.

1) The significance of communities of practice and knowledge-creation

My educational research programme has always been grounded in communities of practice and knowledge-creation. It originated in a conflict I experienced in 1971 whilst studying educational theory at the Institute of Education of the University of London and teaching full-time as a Head of the Science Department of Erkenwald Comprehensive School in Barking. My studies of educational theory on the Academic Diploma programme were influenced by the view that

educational theory was constituted by the philosophy, sociology, psychology and history of education. This continued into my studies for the MA in the psychology of education between 1970-72. This 'disciplines' approach to educational theory was generated and sustained by a community of practice and knowledge-creation at the Institute. However, in 1971 I began to question this assumption of the 'disciplines' approach to educational theory. No matter how I applied the conceptual frameworks of the disciplines of education, individually or in any combination, something was missing from the explanations. I could not derive from these theories a valid explanation for my educational influences in my own learning and in the learning of my pupils.

Reading Polanyi's (1958) Personal Knowledge helped me to understand that what was missing was my explanation for my educational influences in learning as I asked, researched and answered my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Having recognized this error in my assumptions about educational theory I came to the University of Bath in 1973 to see if I could contribute to the creation of forms of educational theory that could produce valid explanations of educational influences in learning.

In recognizing the importance of communities of practice and knowledge-creation in the generation of valid explanations I want to stress the importance of the theme of the 2010 American Educational Research Association Conference on *Understanding Complex Ecologies In A Changing World*.

In a paper proposal for this AERA conference entitled *Understanding Complex Ecologies In A Changing World For Improving Practice And Generating Educational Knowledge*, Jean McNiff and I (Whitehead & McNiff, 2009) explain the importance of recognizing the importance of complex ecologies and diverse cultural influences in explanations of educational influences in learning. We take our lead from Lee's and Rochon's introduction to the theme for AERA 2010 where they say that:

"... *opportunities to learn within and across both formal and informal settings occur in the complex ecologies of peoples' lives, not isolated in a single setting such as a school or family. These complex ecologies include people's participation within and across multiple settings, from families to peer and intergenerational social networks, to schools and a variety of community organizations; and participation within and across these settings may be either physical or virtual.*" (Lee and Rochon, 2009).

To help with the communication of the significance of a relationally dynamic awareness in explanatory principles that have been influenced by participation across different settings, here are some still images leading to video-clips of each of the participants in the Symposium. These are intended to show our embodied expressions of energy-flowing values, as explanatory principles in different contexts, that are influenced by unique constellations of historical and sociocultural pressures. For example, when I make a claim below to know something about the explanatory principles Chris Jones uses to explain her influences as Inclusion Officer, I will draw your attention to the historical influence of an experience of 'feeling mortified', from Chris' primary school, in her decision to become a teacher with a passion for relating to pupils, 'in the

right way'. The diversity of influences from our sociocultural contexts embrace our work in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the USA and South Africa.

What I want to accomplish in showing you the visual data below is to focus your attention on the diversity of our historical and sociocultural contexts and the complexity of the ecological influences that may need to be taken into account in explanations of our educational influences. I want to focus your awareness on the relational dynamic that explanatory principles will need to include.

Here is the visual data:

Jane Renowden, How do I create my living educational theories of practice? BERA 08

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yND2Ra7vdhQ&feature=related
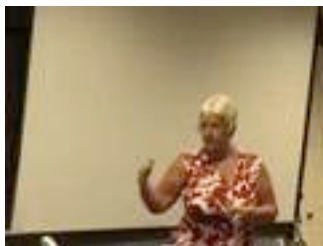
Christine Jones describing the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark at the Guildhall Bath on the 4th July 2007.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEr6JpIchlQ

Marie Huxtable at BERA 08 on loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility.

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

Jack Whitehead presenting a keynote at the International

Conference of Teacher Research in April 2008 in New York.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXLqGAAK-D0

Jean McNiff in 2008 sharing information on her support for action research in global contexts (including Khayelitsha in South Africa) with colleagues at St. Mary's College.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsbelPVpUC8

Margaret Farren (far right) with an action research group at Dublin City University.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mG1KK8VElZk

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As I focus below on educational influences with educational responsibility, the meanings of practical principles, and the units, standards and logics of the new epistemology, I am asking you to bear in mind that the video-clips are showing you some of the living spaces, with their diversity and ecological complexity, from which our explanations of our educational influences are emerging. I cannot overemphasise, as I explain below, the importance of comprehending the importance of a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries in understanding this ecological complexity (Rayner, 2006).

1) *Reasons for focusing on educational influences in learning with educational responsibility*

I have two main reasons for choosing to focus on educational influences in learning. The first comes from my desire to acknowledge the importance of the creative responsiveness of the other, in their own learning, in what counts for me as an educational influence. The second comes from my resistance to the idea of causal determination in my educational influences in the learning of another. For me to recognize an influence as educational I need to see that whatever I might do with another person in an educational relationship, that there is a creative and critical response by the other in what they are learning from what I am doing.

I feel supported in my focus on influence by Said's (1997) use of a quotation from Valéry:

No word comes easier or oftener to the critic's pen than the word influence, and no vaguer notion can be found among all the vague notions that compose the phantom armory of aesthetics. Yet there is nothing in the critical field that should be of greater philosophical interest or prove more rewarding to analysis than the progressive modification of one mind by the work of another. (p.15)

My choice of focus on educational responsibility comes from my sense of vocation in education. Working as an educator with my students or as an educational researcher in contributing to educational theory I accept an educational responsibility towards the other. What I mean by this responsibility in my educational relationships with my students has been influenced by the ideas of Martin Buber.

Buber says that if an educator should ever believe that for the sake of education he or she has to practice selection and arrangement, then he or she will be guided by another criterion than that of inclination, however legitimate this may be in its own sphere; he or she will be guided by the recognition of values which is in his or her glance as an educator. But , says Buber, *even then the selection remains suspended, under constant correction by the special humility of the educator for whom the life and particular being of all the pupils is the decisive factor to which his or her 'hierarchical' recognition is subordinated.* (Buber, p 122, 1947)

Working as an educational researcher my sense of educational responsibility has been influenced by a decision to recognise the importance of personal

knowledge. This is the decision to understand the world from my point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising my personal judgment responsibly with universal intent (Polanyi, p. 327). I distinguish what counts as educational research from education research through the expression of an educational responsibility. I see the responsibility of researchers in disciplines of education to their discipline, as distinct from my educational responsibility as an educational researcher.

The significance of placing educational responsibility at the heart of my educational research can be related to Biesta's (2006) idea that we come into the world as unique individuals through the ways in which we respond responsibly to what and who is other. Biesta argues that the responsibility of the educator not only lies in the cultivation of "worldly spaces" in which the encounter with otherness and difference is a real possibility. I agree with Biesta that this *extends to asking "difficult questions": questions that summon us to respond responsively and responsibly to otherness and difference in our own, unique ways.* (p. ix)

My focus on explaining educational influences in learning with educational responsibility includes the assumption that we are all unique human beings. Farren (2005) has emphasized this in her research into the pedagogy of the unique. Our constellations of values and understandings help to distinguish our uniqueness. The uniqueness of our lives and learning have also been influenced by the unique constellations of historical and sociocultural contexts in which we live and work.

My purpose in sustaining my research programme into educational theory is grounded in the belief that professionalism in education will be enhanced by the recognition and academic legitimation of the unique expressions of the embodied knowledge of master and doctor educators in their living educational theories. I recognise the following educators, amongst others, as doctor educators because they have produced explanations for their educational influences worthy of the award of a doctoral degree.

The five doctoral degrees of primary school teachers from the Republic of Ireland, awarded by the University of Limerick were supervised by Jean McNiff. Because the role of Higher Education, in supporting teachers in making public and evolving their embodied knowledge as educators, is not always appreciated, it is worth stressing the significance of this support in the creation of the teachers' community of practice and knowledge-creation. The two doctoral degrees of the secondary school teachers awarded by the University of Bath were supervised by myself and I provided similar support to Jean in making public and evolving the embodied knowledge of the doctor educators:

[How Do I Come To Understand My Shared Living Educational Standards Of Judgement In The Life I Lead With Others? Creating The Space For Intergenerational Student-Led Research.](#) (2008) Karen Riding's PhD thesis (University of Bath)

[How Do I Contribute To The Education Of Myself And Others Through Improving The Quality Of Living Educational Space? The Story Of Living Myself Through](#)

[Others As A Practitioner-Researcher.](#) (2008) Simon Riding's PhD thesis (University of Bath).

[Helping Eagles Fly - A Living Theory Approach](#) [to Student and Young Adult Leadership Development](#) (2008) Chris Glavey's PhD thesis (University of Glamorgan)

[Towards A Living Theory Of Caring Pedagogy: Interrogating My Practice To Nurture A Critical, Emancipatory And Just Community Of Enquiry](#) (2007) Mary Roche's PhD thesis (University of Limerick)

[A Living Theory Of A Practice Of Social Justice: Realising The Right Of Traveller Children To Educational Equality](#)(2006) Bernie Sullivan's PhD thesis (University of Limerick)

[My Living Theory Of Learning To Teach For Social Justice:](#) How Do I Enable Primary School Children With Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) And Myself As Their Teacher To Realise Our Learning Potentials? (2007) Caitriona McDonagh's PhD thesis (University of Limerick)

[My Living Educational Theory Of Inclusional Practice](#) (2007) Margaret Cahill's PhD thesis (University of Limerick)

[Working With Collaborative Projects: My Living Theory Of A Holistic Educational Practice](#)(2006) Máirín Glenn's PhD thesis (University of Limerick)

I shall now turn to the meanings of the practical principles with their energy-flowing values that can constitute explanations of educational influence. It is understanding the nature of these practical principles that contributes to establishing a new epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility.

3) *Meanings of the practical principles that can constitute explanations of educational influence*.

Of key significance in understanding the nature of practical principles, in explanations of educational influence, is that education is a value-laden practical activity (Peters, 1966). To explain the educational influences of these activities we need to understand the practical principles that move or guide the activities. For example, I am moved to act in support of academic freedom when I feel that this freedom is denied. I can explain what I am doing in terms of the motivating influence of the practical principle of academic freedom. I can also explain (Whitehead, 1993) what I am doing in terms of my understandings of the historical and sociocultural influences that are working to support the negation of academic freedom and those that are working to enhance the realization of academic freedom.

In my early experiences in 1971, of feeling that a mistake was being made in the disciplines approach to educational theory, I could not clearly articulate the reasons for this mistake. I had to wait for Paul Hirst's (1983) explication of the mistake for me to be able to understand the mistake in terms of the practical principles that can explain educational influences in learning.

Hirst explained the mistake when he said that an understanding of educational theory will be developed:

"... in the context of immediate practical experience and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices.

In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate." (Hirst, 1983, p. 18)

What I had experienced, in my continuing professional development at the Institute of Education, was the pressure to replace my practical principles, the energy-flowing, values-laden principles I used to make sense of what I was doing with my pupils and in my professional learning, by the principles with so called 'more fundamental, theoretical justification'.

In contribution to the explication of a new epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility I want to introduce some meanings of the energy-flowing values in the explanatory principles and in the standards of judgment that distinguish educational explanations of educational influence from other forms of explanation. The introduction uses ostensive expressions of meaning as well as lexical definitions of meaning. By the ostensive expression of meaning, I mean that, using video-clips of practice, I point to where I experience an empathetic resonance with my own meanings and check the validity of my response with the other. By lexical definitions I mean that meanings of words are defined in terms of other words.

I now want to use digital technology in visual narratives to show my understanding of practical principles that can explain educational influences in learning. Using the e-version of Research Intelligence Huxtable (2009a) has given a more detailed demonstration of how the use of digital technology with visual narratives can be used to communicate meanings of energy-flowing and values-laden explanatory principles.

The following video is from a talk I gave on Ubuntu at the University of the Free State, South Africa on the 28th February 2006. The digital technology allows the 3:29 minute clip to be played quickly forwards and backwards in a way that communicates the relationally dynamic nature of the event. Individuals are

existing within this living educational space (Riding, 2008) as I express my understandings of the energy-flowing values of Ubuntu. At 2.42 minutes I am explicitly expressing my own life-affirming energy with values.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkKyeT0osz8

I want to emphasise the importance of understanding the influence of communities of practice and knowledge-creation in the expression of my energy-flowing values of Ubuntu as explanatory principles. Eden Charles (2007) introduced me to the idea of Ubuntu in relation to his explanatory principles of moving beyond decolonization with guiltless recognition and societal re-identification in his doctoral thesis. Jean McNiff organized the workshops and lectures in a visit to South Africa that enabled me to share ideas on action research and living educational theory. In talking about living standards of judgment I have been influenced by the original ideas of Moira Laidlaw (1996) in her doctoral thesis. I say this to acknowledge the multiple influences in my own learning from belonging to a community of practice and knowledge-creation.

I now want to focus on the significance of such expressions of energy with values in living educational spaces in communicating meanings of practical principles. I am thinking of practical principles that acknowledge the influence of diverse cultural contexts and complex ecologies through the relationally dynamic awareness of inclusionality (Rayner, 2009). I use Rayner's understanding of inclusionality as the expression of a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as continuous, connective, reflective and co-creative.

For Rayner (2006) the key to moving into this relationally dynamic awareness lies in finding ways that enable our selves and others to 'see through' the visual illusion that leads us mentally to isolate what we observe from what includes what we observe, including our selves. Bateson (1987) advocated a similar move in his steps to an ecology of mind. I have integrated this insight in another publication in the development of a living theory methodology (Whitehead, 2009).

Drawing on Jones' research I now want to present the evidence-based claim that the relationally dynamic qualities of practical principles, together with their energy-flowing values can be recognized and communicated with the help of digital technology. The inclusion of e-media in research degrees of the University of Bath was permitted in 2004 by a change in regulation governing the submission of research degrees.

Jones (2009) has used digital technology in her multi-media enquiry for her masters degree at Bath Spa University on,

'How Do I Improve My Practice As An Inclusion Officer, Working In A Children's Service?' .

Jones communicates her meanings of inclusion in expressing her energy-flowing educational values as she explains her educational and systemic influence in enhancing inclusion within schools in Bath and North East Somerset. The multi-media dissertation includes the clip below of an explanation of when Chris decided to become a teacher after feeling mortified by a primary teacher's response.

As Chris explains on the video-clip why she decided to become a teacher I feel an empathetic resonance (Sardello, 2008)[1] with both Chris' expression of being mortified and her passionate response to 'do it the right way'. Chris energy-flowing value to 'do it the right way' resonates with my own expressions of a life-affirming energy and values-based desire to make appropriate educational responses with my students.

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[1] I first encountered the idea of empathetic resonance in the writings of Sardello (2008). For Sardello *empathetic resonance*, is the resonance of the individual soul coming into resonance with the Soul of the World. (p. 13). By *empathetic resonance* I am meaning a feeling of the immediate presence of the other in communicating an energy-flowing value that the other experiences as ontological in the sense of giving meaning and purpose to their life.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXvrgS5xjdY

I have checked with Chris that we are sharing a recognition of her expression of a life-affirming energy when she expresses her desire to 'do it the right way'. I am claiming that such flows of energy with values can be comprehended by ourselves and others as explanatory principles in our explanation of educational influence in our own learning and in the learning of others.

I will not have time during this presentation to check the validity of my interpretations of the energy-flowing values that are used by other participants in this symposium as their practical principles. However I do have time to state my responses to the above video-clips in which I draw on my experience of empathetic resonance. Making these claims public means that their validity can be tested. I am thinking of my responses to Jane Renowden in which I experience her energy-flowing value of accountability as a practical principle. I experience Margaret Farren's expression of her celtic spirituality as a practical principle, I experience my own expression of life-affirming energy with Ubuntu as a practical principle. I experience Jean McNiff's energy-flowing value of being a global citizen as a practical principle. I experience the practical principles of Marie Huxtable's expression of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility.

As I communicate the meanings of the practical principles that can constitute explanations of educational influence I am aware of how much I have learnt about these principles from the doctoral researchers I have worked with.

Over the past 14 years my research supervisions have included some 27 successfully completed living theory doctoral theses, including my own. The living theories have been generated within the influence of complex ecologies

and diverse cultural settings in China, USA, Canada, Japan, UK, the Republic of Ireland and India. You can access these in the [living theory](#) section of http://www.actionresearch.net .

I include a list of these theses (Appendix 2) for you to access at your leisure from the live urls in the references. Each researcher gave great attention to their Abstract. These are short enough for you to read quickly and appreciate the originality of each researcher in clarifying the meanings of the value-laden practical principles they use in their explanations of their educational influences in their own learning and in the learning of others. Each of their living educational theories are unique. However, I believe that as you engage with their theses you will experience, through your empathetic resonance, the meanings of energy-flowing values in their practical explanatory principles that carry hope for the future of humanity and our own.

My learning from these research programmes of these doctoral researchers, together with my learning from my own, informs my understanding below of the units of appraisal, the living standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996) and the living logics that can help to make explicit the new epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility (Whitehead, 2009a & b).

4) *The units of appraisal, the living standards of judgment and the living logics that help to constitute living educational theories with educational responsibility.*

In an epistemology, as a theory of knowledge, it is important to understand what is being judged in terms of its validity. This is the unit of appraisal. It is important to understand how it is being judged. This refers to the standards of judgment. Logic is fundamental to an epistemology because this is the mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rational (Marcuse, 1964, p 105).

There has been a 2,500 battle between logicians who advocate either propositional or dialectical logics. The battle has focused on the issue of contradiction.

In answering his question, 'What is Dialectic?', Popper (1963) rejected dialectical claims to knowledge as, *'without the slightest foundation. Indeed, they are based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking'* (p.316).

Popper demonstrated, using two laws of inference, that if a theory contains a contradiction, then it entails everything, and therefore, indeed, nothing. He says that a theory which adds to every information which it asserts also the negation of this information can give us no information at all. *A theory which involves a contradiction is therefore entirely useless as a theory* (p.317).

On the other hand Marcuse (1964) claimed that propositional theories masked the dialectical nature of reality with its nucleus of contradiction. In one of the most impressive displays of understanding dialectical logic, Ilyenkov (1977, p. 313) was still left with the problem of contradiction when he asked, 'If an object exists as a living contradiction what must the thought be (statement about the object) that expresses it. Ilyenkov did not have the benefits of digital technology

that enables individuals to focus on the living logics in their lives and in the explanations of their educational influences in learning. Ilyenkov was contrained by the limitations of communicating meanings within statements on pages of printed text.

In the generation of an individual's living educational theory the unit of appraisal is the individual's explanation of their educational influence in learning. This can be an explanation of the individual's educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and/or in the learning of social formations.

The standards of judgment are living in the sense of including energy-flowing values that contribute to the practical principles we can use to explain our educational influences. Each individual has a unique constellation of these values. They are embodied in what the individual is doing. They are influenced by the complex ecologies in which the individual lives and works. Their meanings can be clarified and evolved in the course of their emergence in practice. They are also 'living' standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996) in the sense that they can evolve in the course of their clarification. To prevent the living standards from becoming seen as 'discrete' entities, rather than 'distinct' relationally dynamic expressions of energy-flowing values, I emphasise the importance of visual narratives (Jones, 2009; Riding, K., 2008; Riding, S., 2008) in retaining this relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries (Rayner 2006).

To fully appreciate the significance of living standards of judgment in the new epistemology for educational knowledge I think that you may need to engage with the visual narratives of living theorists such as Naidoo (2005), Farren (2005) and Charles (2007). They use video-clips of themselves to communicate the meanings of their embodied, energy-flowing values in their living standards of judgement. Naidoo uses video to communicate the meanings of a passion for compassion. Farren uses video to communicate her meanings of a web of betweenness with her celtic spirituality and pedagogy of the unique. Charles uses video to communicate the explicit meanings of living Ubuntu as a standard of judgement in an explanation of moving beyond postcolonialism through guiltless recognition and societal re-identification. Ubuntu originated in Africa and is a way of being that recognizes 'I am because we are'.

Each individual lives with a unique constellation of embodied values that they can clarify and communicate to others as the living standards of judgment they use in their living theories. In these theories the individual both holds themselves to account for living their values as fully as they can and evaluates the validity of their knowledge-claims in their living educational theories. One of the significant contributions a community of practice can make to the knowledge-creation is in enhancing the validity of the researchers' explanations. This can be done my members of the community of practice acting as a validation group through asking questions derived from Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity such as:

i)   How could be comprehensibility be improved?

ii) Is there sufficient evidence to justify the assertions?

iii) Is there an awareness of the normalizing influence of the historical and sociocultural context?

iv) Does the account provide evidence of a sustained commitment, over time and interaction, of a desire to live values and evolve understandings as fully as possible.

The idea of a living logic is fundamental in explicating the new epistemology for educational knowledge. Living logics, in the sense of modes of thinking that are appropriate for comprehending the real as rational, can be understood with the help of visual narratives in the generation of living educational theories. The explanations of educational influence of self-study researchers are rarely if ever, smooth stories of self. They contain some narrative wreckage and the creative and improvisatory responses of individuals to difficult experiences. In criticizing Popper's logic of scientific discovery, the nobel prize winner, Medawar (1969) explained that

"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).

For Medawar 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. He says that 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*. (Medawar, 1969, p. 59)

Through generating and sharing our living educational theories (Whitehead, 2009b) that offer valid explanations of influences in real life, I believe that educational researchers are contributing to enhancing the flows of energy and values that carry hope for the future of humanity. I think that it is worth repeating that I am hoping that you are persuaded of the validity of the new epistemology and that making such contributions to education constitutes a worthwhile form of life.

There are several ways in which we could continue an educational conversation on the issues raised in this symposium. We could make responses to the Open Dialogue contributions in Research Intelligence, by Bruce-Ferguson, (2008); Whitehead, (2008a&b); Adler-Collins (2008); Laidlaw (2008) and Huxtable (2009a). If you are not already a participant you could join the 2009-2010 practitioner-researcher conversation in the JISC Forum at

https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=practitioner-researcher&A=1

We could help each other over the coming year to enhance our educational influences in our practice, to generate educational knowledge and to submit proposals on our contributions to educational knowledge for BERA 2010. I do hope that we find a way to continue to share our ideas and to extend our educational influences over the coming year and beyond. Through extending, deepening and communicating our knowledge-creation in our communities of practice I believe that we will enhance professionalism in education in both our local and global contexts. This belief is evidence-based as I hope that I have just shown and shared in my learning from the 36 year educational research programme at the University of Bath. I value highly the opportunities provided by BERA annual conferences and this keynote symposium in particular, for sharing and evaluating the validity of these ideas on explicating a new educational epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility.

Last Saturday on the 29th August 2009 – my 65th Birthday - I received an unexpected gift that has relevance for this presentation. Robyn Pound (2003), a Health Visitor and friend whose doctoral research programme on alongsideness at the University of the West of England I responded to, brought round a book with the title Jack Whitehead Validations (Pound, Laidlaw & Huxtable , 2009). This beautifully bound book contained some 57 contributions from individuals who had responded to a letter from Robyn and Moira Laidlaw that included the suggestion:

".... We suggest a short piece of not more than 100 words explaining what Jack and living theory means to you."

The contributions communicate affirmations of the energy and values that distinguish my pedagogy and ideas. Collectively they provide a most impressive public validation of my belief in the significance of creating and sharing our living educational theories as explanations of our educational influences in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations. I am thinking of the significance in terms of living a loving and productive life whilst engaged in ontological enquiries of the kind, 'How can I enhance a meaningful life in the world with others?' and in practical questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'.

The successful proposal for this keynote symposium

Background to the research

There has been much discussion in BERA and AERA about the appropriate standards of judgment for evaluating the quality and validity of the educational knowledge generated by practitioner-researchers.

The 1988 BERA Presidential Address focused on the development of a research-based approach to professionalism in education through the generation of living educational theories. By 2008 over 30 living theory doctorates had been legitimated in the Academy with new units of appraisal, living logics and standards of judgment, in explanations of educational influences in learning.

The research answers the call made by Schön (1995) for the development of a new epistemology for the scholarship of teaching and by Snow (2001) to develop methodologies for making public the professional knowledge of teachers.

Foci of the enquiries.

There are three research questions addressed in this presentation:
1) Can the explanations produced by individuals to explain their educational influences in learning be used as appropriate units of appraisal in the generation of educational theory?
2) What are the logics of the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in their own learning?
3) Which living standards of judgment for evaluating the validity of explanations of educational influences in learning have been legitimated in the Academy?

Research methods

The appropriateness of the action reflection cycles used in the generation and development of living educational theories rests in showing their usefulness in clarifying the meanings of ontological values in educational relationships and in forming these values into living epistemological standards of judgment.
Visual narratives are used in multi-media explanations of educational influences in learning.

The methods for enhancing the robustness of the validity and rigour of the explanations include the use of Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity and Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigour.
Lather's (1991) catalytic validity is used to justify claims about the educational influence of the ideas generated in one context for individuals working and researching in different contexts in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Croatia, India, China, Japan and South Africa.

Theoretical frameworks

Answers to the research questions include the following analytic frames. Adler-Collins' (2000) safe space; Bernstein's(2000) mythological discourse; Biesta's (2006) language of education; Bourdieu's (2000) ideas of habitus and social formation; Charles'(2007) guiltless recognition and societal reidentification; Delong's (2002) culture of inquiry; Farren's (2005) pedagogy of the unique and web of
betweenness; Habermas'(1976, 1987, 2002) notions of social validity, learning and the inclusion of the other; Hymer's (2007) idea of giftedness; Ilyenkov's(1977) dialectical logic; Lohr's (2006) love at work; McNiff's(2006) my story is my living educational theory; Merleau-Ponty's(1972) notion of embodiment; Rayner's(2006) idea of inclusionality; Vasilyuk's (1996) psychology of experiencing; Whitehead's (1989) idea of living educational theories; Laidlaw's (1996) idea of living standards of judgement; Winter's (1989) criteria of rigour.

|Contribution to new educational knowledge

1) The generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge (Whitehead, 2008 a &b) .
2) The explication of a living theory methodology for making public the embodied knowledge of professional practitioners.
3) An understanding of educational theory as the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in learning.

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Appendix 2

List and Access to Doctoral Theses

(Note –Holley's M.Phil. dissertation has been included because of its focus on living theory. The theses of Hymer and Rawal are included for the same reason and were awarded by the Universities of Newcastle and Worcester respectively).

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