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Whitehead, J. (1998) How do I know that I have influenced you for good?

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How do I know that I have influenced your learning for good? A question of representing my educative relationships with research students.

Paper presented at the Second International Conference of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices Group of the American Educational Research Association, Herstmonceux Castle, U.K., August 1998.

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As a University researcher I see my work in terms of making distinctive and original contributions to educational knowledge and theory through the self-study of my professional learning as I ask, answer and research questions of the kind, 'How can I live my values more fully in my practice?' and, 'How can I help you to improve your learning?'. The first kind of question has enabled me to place my educational research in its workplace context with an analysis of my learning which has included power, economic and political relations (Whitehead 1993). I ask the second kind of question in my educative relationships with my research students. I include within my university teaching, my supervision of research students who themselves must, in successfully completing their degrees, make significant contributions to knowledge for a Masters research degree and an original contribution to knowledge for a Ph.D. degree.

In addition to my work at the University of Bath, both in the Department of Education and the School of Management in the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP, 1998), I support the development of action research with students and staff at Kingston University Department of Education. This is possible because of payments for my time made from Kingston to Bath University. For the past four years the work has included six, two day programmes of tutorials, workshops and seminars, organised by Pam Lomax (Lomax & Evans, 1996), each year.

I came to Bath University in 1973 with the central aim of reconstructing educational theory so that it would have the capacity to produce valid explanations for the educative influence of teachers with their pupils. My dissatisfaction with the dominant educational theory of the time was that it was held to be constituted by the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education. This view, known as the 'disciplines' approach did not appear to me to have the capacity to produce a valid explanation for my educative influence with my pupils as I asked, answered and researched questions of the kind, 'How do I help you to improve your learning?'.

I can summarise the last 25 years of my research in terms of three ideas. The first is that in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?', 'I' exists as a living contradiction in holding values and experiencing their denial at the same time in asking the question. The second is that 'I' as a living contradiction is motivated to improve what he or she is doing in action reflection cycles where the tension of the contradiction stimulates the imagination to create an action plan, actions are taken and data gathered to make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions. The concerns, plans and actions are modified in the light of the evaluations. The third is that the descriptions and explanations for their own learning which individuals create, constitute their own living educational theories. These explanations, explain a present practice in terms of an

evaluation of past practices and understandings and in terms of an intention to create something better which is not yet in existence.

Each individual who asks me to supervise their research programme, knows that these three ideas are fundamental to my educative relationships. The fourth idea which I also believe is fundamental to these relationships is drawn from Martin Buber's 'I-You' relation. He writes about the special humility of the educator (Buber 1947) which enables the educator to subordinate his or her hierarchical view of the world, to the educational needs of the student.

So, in asking my question, 'how do I know that I have influenced your learning for good?', I am addressing myself. The 'you' I have in mind are the research students who have successfully completed their, M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees with the influence of my sole or joint supervision over the past two years. I am thinking of the successful submissions of Pat D'Arcy, Kevin Eames, Jacqui Hughes, Moira Laidlaw, Moyra Evans, Erica Holley and Hilary Shobbrook. I hope the other research students contributing to this symposium from Kingston and Bath will question the following claim to educational knowledge. I am also hopeful that everyone will examine the four ideas above to see whether they are appropriate, inappropriate or need extending in an attempt to improve the quality of my educative relationships.

The meaning of the word 'good' in my question is ambiguous. I am using it in two senses. The first is in the sense of a permanent change. Once learning has taken place in the creation of significant and original contributions to knowledge I am meaning that an irreversible change has taken place. The individual is changed for 'good'. My second meaning carries values. In this second sense I am interested in knowing that my educational influence has done some 'good' in the sense of helping to make something 'better'. I see my educative relationship in terms of helping 'you' to live life well as I work with you in an enquiry which is grounded in living your values more fully in your practice. It is also focused on helping you to make an original contribution to educational knowledge in the living theory you create to describe and explain your own learning.

So, how do I know that I have influenced your learning for good. The first reason is that you acknowledge my influence in the creation of your successful contribution to knowledge. The acknowledgements in the front of theses might sometimes be taken to be nothing more than a courtesy. In my experience of the above research students, they all tend to speak their minds, they certainly tend to speak truth to power and do not tend to write what they do not believe. Now let me see if I can justify making a claim to know that I have influenced the learning of all the above research students for good, in its second, value-laden sense.

With each research student I have focused on the importance of including their own 'I' in their enquiry and in their Dissertations and Theses. I am open to criticism here if you do not believe that the dominant regimes of truth in our Universities are doing a disservice to you and your original contributions to knowledge when they attempt to insist that research proposals, transfer papers and theses should be written in the third person.

With each student I have focused initially on moving through an action reflection cycles of the kind, I have a concern when some of my values are negated in my practice; I imagine what I can

do and construct an action plan; I act and gather data to enable me to make a judgement on my effectiveness; I evaluate the effectiveness of my actions and understandings; I modify my concerns, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluations.

I am open to criticism here if this action-reflection cycle is experienced as a 'method' which is imposed and which stifles the imagination and creativity of the researcher. I try to help researchers to avoid such an experience by stressing the importance of producing an autobiography of learning in which they explain their present practice in terms of an evaluation of past practices and an intention to create a better future which is not yet in existence. That is, I stress the importance of creating their own living educational theories which, by their nature - the contain 'I' as living contradictions, cannot be reduced to the conceptual forms and frameworks of any pre-existing theory. The main reason why living theories cannot be reduced to traditional forms of theory is that the propositional logic which is used to 'structure' such theories removes contradictions between statements. For a more detailed justification for the removal of contradictions from traditional theories see Popper (1963).

The final part of my claim to know that I have influenced your learning for good is in relation to what I will call my ontological authenticity. At sometime in the course of your enquiries, you have explained your learning in terms of your values, actions and understandings. You have expressed your values in relation to the meanings of your existence. We have talked about the importance of our different spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values, as well as our political, economic, emotional and cognitive values. I associate our educative relationships with the processes of learning to live our values more fully, with developing our understandings and with creating our own living educational theories. In working to influence your learning for good, I am thinking of our learning, individually and together as 'we' express more fully the values of compassionate understanding, loving affirmation, freedom, justice and democracy in our lives and workplaces.

What I believe I have done is to express my own life-affirming faith and spirit of delight in my existence, in my productive work in education, and in my relationship with you, while professing no theistic faith in the certainty of my own death. I think my life affirming spirit has communicated to you my enthusiasm and positive feeling of affirmation in your creative spirit, whatever its base, and in you and your work in the creation of your Dissertations and Theses. I think an important communication/communion has taken place in our educative relationships as we have engaged in the creative tension and struggle out of which you have communicated your original synthesis which has give the fundamental form to your thesis. In moving this belief into my claim to know that I have influenced your learning for good, I do not have sufficient evidence to substantiate it from your Dissertations and Theses. I think this is partly a problem with text-based communication which appears limited as a medium for communicating the meanings of the spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values which are embodied in practical forms of life. Asking, answering and researching questions of the kind, 'how do I know that I have influenced your learning for good?', has brought me to the limits of my present understanding. What I am committed to exploring over the next decade are the multi-media forms of representation for communicating the meanings of such values in educative relationships in a way which will help to strengthen claims to educational knowledge of the form, 'I know that I have influenced your learning for good?'

In case you are wondering whether or not I address traditional forms of knowledge in my supervision I do stress the importance of engaging with ideas from the appropriate professional and academic literature. So, for example, each researcher must demonstrate an extension in their cognitive range and concern over the course of the enquiry, through engaging with the ideas of others. I stress the importance of recognising the significance of power relations in the enquiry and in analysing how the social influences of governmental, economic rationalist policies influence the enquiries. However, I want to stress that my aim is to help to create a new discipline of education which is grounded in the forms of research-based professionalism shown in the Dissertations and Theses on my Action-Research and Living Theories Homepage (see below). My primary aim is not to contribute to the theories from the traditional 'disciplines' of education. I want to show that there is a discipline of education, to add to the 'disciplines' of education which can be established by all those who are creating their own living educational theories. I value the 'disciplines' of education and acknowledge their significance in taking forward my own disciplined educational enquiry and living educational theories in practical questions of the kind, 'how do I live my life well?'; 'how can I live a good and productive life?'; 'how can I improve my practice?'; 'how can I help you to improve your learning?'.

In answering my question, 'how do I know that I have influenced your learning for good?', I have focused on representing those educative relationships which I experience and understand within my responsibilities as a supervisor. In making my claims I have drawn on evidence in the public domain from the original contributions to educational knowledge made by my research students. I am hoping that in your responses you will help me to understand better how to bring more fully into the world the values, understandings and living theories which can take forward enquiries of the kind, 'How can I live a good and productive life?', in the context of a commitment to education.

References and Notes

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Dissertations and Theses of Pat D'Arcy (1998), Kevin Eames(1995), Jacqui Hughes (1997), Moira Laidlaw (1996), Moyra Evans (1995), Erica Holley (1997) and Hilary Shobbrook (1997), see the Web at address: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw>

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Whitehead , J. (1998) "The importance of loving care and compassionate understanding in conversations which sometimes become infused with irritation, frustration and anger.": Conversations & Correspondences with Dr. Pat D'Arcy.

Paper to the International Teacher-Researcher Conference, La Jolla, April 1997.

Presented at the International Conference of Teacher Research at La Jolla California, April, 1998.

Date: Mon, 30 Mar 1998 14:11:49 +0100 (BST)
From: Jack Whitehead <edsajw@bath.ac.uk>
To: Tom Russell <russellt@educ.queensu.ca>
Cc: fsquire@oct.on.ca, john.loughran@education.monash.edu.au
Subject: Re: LaJolla

Hi Tom, John & Fran - Tom, you asked for a couple of pages of data to share with the group at LaJolla - here's some correspondence with Pat D'Arcy in which she berates me for the nature of my response to her writing. If it isn't too long I'd like to share it with the group to highlight some of creative potential of recognising and responding to the experience of experiencing oneself as a living contradiction in one's supervisory relationships. Jack.

"The importance of loving care and compassionate understanding in conversations which sometimes become infused with irritation, frustration and anger."

Tom has focused my attention on:

The creation and facilitation of educational conversations that respect diversity in the creation of common goods in our teaching and in our educational research communities.

I like his phrase 'respecting diversity in the creation of common goods'. Here is an extract from an e-mail sent to me by Pat D'Arcy one of our group at Bath. Pat's Ph.D. submission is entitled 'The Whole Story.....'. It is focused on the importance of making engaged and appreciative responses to pupils' stories. In my responses to her research writing, her stories, I always gave what she calls my "Yes, but..." response. I want to highlight this correspondence because it focuses on an area of my practice in which I am not communicating my respect for diversity in the creation of common goods. What I think I fail to do is to show that I value Pat's achievement, before launching into my 'Yes, but...' response. I think the way that the group at Bath has significance for understanding the importance of loving care and compassionate understanding in the creation of common goods is that our faith in each other and our work enables us to sustain our conversations in the face of our experiences of the denial of such fundamental values. I think Pat is right at the end of her latest

letter to me to say that she is still waiting to see if I have learnt anything from her. If she had seen me chairing two validation groups at Kingston University with Cathie Prest and Michael Luetchford - two research students at Kingston - I think she would have seen a failure on my part to have learnt the lesson about the importance of engaged and appreciative responses. Yet, I did recognise this as a problem, a year earlier, in a joint presentation with Jackie DeLong to AERA in 1997 (DeLong & Whitehead 1997). I say this to emphasise that not all action research accounts are 'victory narratives'. Some of my own involve some 'painful' learning, especially when they are grounded in the experience of having helped to create some pain and distress, not to mention despondency and rage in others. Feel Pat's irritation in 'ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS from you! in her letter below.

Pat to Jack

"I've called this on my 'save as' file 'Yes, but...". It's an attitude of mind that runs contrary to everything I've been trying for in my enquiry - ie. to shift from that analytic 'Yes, but...' to a response which seeks to recognise what has been achieved and to be explicit about those achievements in a way that motivates the writer to write some more and to develop her ideas and feelings further. It's the typical kind of written response that teachers make to a completed piece of work, it's the kind of response that I received from Alan S and from Stephen R after my presentation - and ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS from you!

Now it's not that I'm opposed to criticism or that I cannot see it's value. Ben wanted me to respond analytically and critically to his writing, as well as with engagement and appreciation. And to link that with Stephen's point, I freely acknowledge that explaining to a writer what aspects of the way her text was written made it difficult for you, the reader, to share the experience, can also be helpful and constructive. But not as an INITIAL response - and only after a respectful trust has been built up between writer and reader in an educational context which always links future possibilities with present achievements.

The 'Yes, but...' syndrome also tends to direct the respondent's attention very rapidly to whatever follows the 'but', acknowledging only briefly whatever it is that the 'Yes' refers to - a few sentences maybe, or a paragraph at most. My research has made me realise how much more the reader can find what is actually THERE if she is willing to engage with it, instead of shifting her attention to whatever lies beyond. And being explicit about what has actually been achieved, is just as demanding as being explicit about what is yet to be achieved. I'm not talking about the kind of uneventful 'Very nice dear' kind of response, or even 'That was smashing, terrific, tremendous'. Professionally, writing an appreciation

which seeks to comment on those aspects of a narrative which ENABLED the writer to enter into the experience, is analytically demanding - but for aesthetic, not efferent purposes. Aesthetically speaking, engagement needs to precede appreciation; without that active entering in to the story that is told, analysing the WAY it is told becomes a coldly efferent task which by-passes the MEANING - as I feel you mostly by-pass the meaning that my enquiry holds for me.

Jack 30 March 1998 "The irritation in the 'always, always, always' was more than matched by my initial fury in receiving the blasts in the CAPITALS. The crucial transcendence of the fury, for me, comes in the recognition that my primary purpose, in helping Pat to take her enquiry forward, is to help her live her values more fully in her practice. I see the good she does in responding to teachers' writings and pupils' stories. I identify with her moral sensitivity in her response. By focusing on these qualities while at the same time experiencing my fury I find humour in the contrast, in my laughter, the fury subsides and I find it possible to make a response which is received and responded to with some ease, rather than irritation."

Jack to Pat - drawing on Pat's letter above:

Pat

> I was looking forward to seeing what your response would entail, in
> which you were keen to respond to Hilary in the same kind of way -
sharing
> back with her your experience of her experiences as a frustrated
learner,
> trying to make sense of a set of abstract criteria. But so far, this
> response has not been forthcoming, at least not to me!

Jack

the paper responding to Hilary, in a way influenced by your guidelines, it should be in the post. It was sent first class, but I do know our postal staff have cut collections because of staff shortages.

Pat

> But that's only part of why I'm feeling fed up and disappointed and, yes,
> confused all over again. I really don't know how you want me to change or
> add to my thesis and I certainly don't find it hilariously funny as you
> seem to do. I can picture your smiling face and hear your chuckle as though
> this were the most amusing thing in the world, and it infuriates me! I wish
> I could use italics for stress, but as I'll be sending this by e-mail I
> know they won't appear. So you'll just have to call up my voice and then it
> will be easy I think to hear where the intonation or the volume rises...

Jack

I've no thoughts about how I want you to change or add to your thesis. There is something you might enjoy doing and that is to treat yourself, in responding to another reading of your thesis, to the experience of the good quality educational response in your own guidelines. By doing this I think you may understand something I've experienced in reading your thesis as both a story of your own learning and as a story of how teachers could make a more educational response to pupils' stories than those they will make if they stick to government guidelines. I've tended to stress the importance for your readers of understanding both contributions.

Pat to Jack - next day:

Jack - thank you for making an immediate (and measured!) reply to my outpouring yesterday. I started it by saying that I was taking a leaf out of Hilary's book but I should have remembered her other leaf, which was never to send anything in the heat of the moment. I guess I'm more impulsive than she is, then I live to regret it later...

First of all, I do want you to know that mostly I love the way that you beam at everybody, including me; it was just that I really was feeling totally disconcerted about your suggestion that I wasn't finished yet - that if I could only get the hang of it, something really important would emerge that would somehow transform my whole thesis - and that did and does worry me, because I honestly can't perceive what that elusive 'it' is. I thought when I wrote my final chapter Does It Matter? that in expressing my values about making meaning there very directly, that would do the trick in addressing whatever it was you wanted me to address. Then when I added my thoughts on 'What kind of narrative is this and how do I want it to be read?' that would do the trick but somehow it was never enough for you to be happy to say OK, for now that's it.

From: Pat D'Arcy <edppmda@bath.ac.uk>

To: edsajw@bath.ac.uk

Subject: your TR paper

26/3/98

Jack asked me if he could quote and comment on my 'Yes but...' e-mail to him last October and I said 'Fine, as long as I can add my comments too.' Never let it be said that dialectic is a one way process!

First - I have never regretted choosing Jack as my supervisor, even though there were educational issues about which we didn't always see eye to eye such as teachers experiencing themselves professionally as 'a living contradiction' [too reminiscent for me of the doctrine of original

sin...]. But essentially I thought - and still think that we share the same values which involve a respect for all learners, whatever their age and a recognition that the dynamic of teaching never ceases to involve the dynamic of learning.

My thesis involved an enquiry into the nature of the personally meaningful responses that teachers could make to stories written by their pupils. Ironically, my problem as a student researcher was that although the responses that Jack made to my analyses of these responses [typified as 'engaged' and 'appreciative'] may have been personally meaningful to him, to me they always seemed to sidestep what I had considered to be important. I found that extremely frustrating, as though we were both working to different agendas which led to this 'Yes, but...' attitude on his part.

The fact that I could make this outburst in my e-mail to him, in one sense is a mark of the trust that I had in Jack - I could let him know how I felt rather than bottling it up or simply grumbling to a third party.

However, I do want to make two brief points about Jack's response:

First, it is 'dispassionate' - it avoids any reference to the upset and the anger I was expressing. Jack has since told me that he also felt furious when he read my outpouring but chose to suppress this by throwing the ball back into my court and asking me to make the kind of response to my work that I had been hoping to receive from him:

'There is something you might enjoy doing and that is to treat yourself... to the experience of the good quality educational response in your own guidelines.'

Secondly, he does not address in any detail the 'Yes, but...' issue which I have come to regard as an important issue for all teachers, both as it affects their power relationship with their students [could do better, you haven't got to where I want you to go] and more positively, the extent to which explicit recognition can usefully be given to what the student has already formulated.

If teaching and learning truly are inseparable, then the partnership between teachers and pupils, supervisors and supervised, should be one in which both parties reach fresh understandings and learn something new from their joint endeavours. I have yet to discover whether Jack [as well as me] has learnt anything as an educator of which he was not already aware, as a result of our liaison over the past five years. I would love to think that it has been mutually beneficial!

4.5

Whitehead, J. (1999) Creating a new discipline of educational enquiry in the context of the politics and economics of educational knowledge.

Paper presented at the BERA symposium at AERA Montreal, April 1999.

Creating a new discipline of educational enquiry in the context of the politics and economics of educational knowledge.

Jack Whitehead, University of Bath, UK

Paper Presented at the BERA symposium at AERA, Montreal, April 1999.

In making my contribution within this symposium on 'Creating Educative Community through Educational Research', I am seeking, in the here and now, to strengthen my community relations with my co-presenters from Kingston University, Zoe Parker, Pam Lomax and Moyra Evans. I am also extending an invitation to you to help to take my enquiry forward and to strengthen my contributions to educational knowledge and theory. I also want to stress the importance for my enquiry of another educative community of professional educators associated with the Department of Education of the University of Bath who are supporting each other's self-studies as they ask, answer and research questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. (You will find details of this group and their work on the Action Research webpage, <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw>).

In this symposium I want to establish my credibility with you as a professional educator. I also want to outline how a new discipline of educational enquiry can be created in the context of the politics and economics of educational knowledge. I see the significance of this new discipline in terms of its ability to include both the living educational theories created by professional educators and the theoretical frameworks created by researchers from other disciplines of education such as philosophy, economics and politics. Through my research I am seeking to understand how and why I influence the educational development of others in the way I do. As an educational researcher I want my self-studies of my life as a professional educator to contribute to the educational knowledge base of my subject, education. I know this may sound strange to those of you who see yourselves primarily as educational researchers whose contributions to educational knowledge are made in different ways. However, I am going to consider the possibility that the self-studies of professional educators may be making original contributions to educational knowledge and theory in a way, which can acknowledge the value of such differences and draw on insights created by them.

In doing this I want to avoid some of the problems associated with the proliferation of new paradigms of educational research. Donmoyer (1996) has described some of these problems in terms of 'Balkanisation' where groups belonging to particular 'paradigms' are no longer in dialogue with each other or seeking to understand each others' perspectives. I want to avoid such problems by inviting you, as educational researchers and/or professional educators to respond to the following account of my self-study as I asked, answered and researched questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?', in the context of my supervision of teacher-researchers in their research programmes. In other words I am inviting you to criticise a description and explanation of my own educational development in my professional learning as I engage in a self-study of my own life as a professional educator. I am hopeful that this process will appeal to researchers of all kinds who are engaged in understanding education and who believe that their research may have something significant to say to those who, like me, are engaged professionally in education and teaching. Let me say something about the context in which I work.

What I think distinguishes my work as a professional educator from other professionals such as architects, lawyers or doctors is that I work with the intention of helping learners to create themselves in a process of improvisatory self-realisation (Winter 1998). Stressing the improvisatory nature of education draws attention to the impossibility of pre-specifying all the rules which give an individual's life in education its unique form. As individuals give a form to their lives there is an art in synthesising their unique constellations of values, skills and understandings into an explanation for their own learning. I am thinking of the art of the dialectician described by Socrates in which individuals hold together, in a process of question and answer, their capacities for analysis with their capacities for synthesis.

My sense of vocation in relation to education has remained with me over the past 30 years and I now want to share something of my professional learning as I have asked, answered and researched questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?', 'How do I help you to improve your learning?' in the economic and political context of my workplace. In the enquiry below I will be focusing on my educative relationship with Kevin Eames in the process of enabling him, as his university supervisor, to make his own original contribution to educational knowledge. I am also aware of bringing into my 'I-You' relationships, my learning and my loving spirit which I see reflected in Martin Buber's spiritual and poetic work *I and Thou* and in his ideas on the relation in education (Buber, 1947).

In the process of writing this paper I hope to demonstrate what I am meaning by a new discipline of educational enquiry. What I have in mind is a discipline, whose rules are the embodied values, such as 'loving spirit', 'freedom', 'responsibility' and 'justice', which the individual uses to give purpose and to make meaning of their life in education. In other words, this new discipline of educational enquiry is constituted not solely by linguistically defined rules and the conceptual theories and frameworks of the traditional disciplines of education. It is constituted by the values which are embodied in what is being done by professional educators and their students in particular contexts.

The development of my understanding of this new discipline has been influenced by communities of professional educators. They have helped me to articulate my present understanding so that I can say that the new discipline is grounded in the creation, by professional educators, of autobiographies of their learning. The unique forms of the autobiographies are created by the particular constellation of values, skills and understandings which are synthesised by individuals through time and practice in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'.

In asking such questions I often experience myself as a living contradiction in the sense that 'I' hold together both the experience of holding certain values and the experience of their denial. The unique forms of autobiographies of 'living contradictions' are characterised by both inner and outer dialogues. Dialogues with oneself ('intra') and with others ('inter'). The logical form of the dialogues can be characterised as 'dialectical' where intra-subjective reflections and inter-subjective reflections can be understood in terms of asking, answering and researching questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice?'. The way in which this new discipline of educational enquiry can contribute to educational knowledge and theory is through the descriptions and explanations which individual learners produce for their own educational development.

I have termed such theories 'living theories' (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998) in that they understand and explain a present practice in terms of both an evaluation of a past practice and an intention to create something better which is not yet in existence. It is because they contain an intention to project oneself into creating a future which is not yet in existence that I have called the theories, 'living theories'. The creation of such living theories can be focused on the individual teacher with a particular pupil, a class, a department, a school, a board, a university, a provincial government, a state system and/or an international community.

I think it is important to fully acknowledge the way in which the creative and productive lives of other educators and researchers have helped to form my own. I could not have articulated my beliefs above without the contributions of others. Because a full acknowledgement would involve even greater detail than the pages of text below I must be satisfied, given my time constraints here, to mention briefly some of their contributions.

Zoe Parker's (1999) ideas on the 'autobiographies of learning' which begin her paper to this symposium seem to me to be at the beating heart of the new discipline of educational enquiry: What Parker means by the phrase 'auto/biography of learning', is the story she can tell, from the inside, little and particular, of her life as a learner. As she says:

"I am learning to be a professional educator; to be a researcher and learner; to be a better person. The construction of an educative form of auto/biography embodies my enquiry as I turn my thoughts and feelings into text. My research is into how I can best tell the story of myself as a learner. As I construct the narrative of my enquiry, I discover myself more fully. The most hidden and secret values, which drive, inspire and inform me, begin to reveal themselves as the text grows and changes. As I construct

the text, I shape my identity and sense of self and call back into consciousness memories of my history of being in the world.” (Parker, p.1 1999).

Peter Mellett (1994) has also charted his autobiography of learning over four years through a series of action research questions of the kind, ‘How can I improve the quality of my life?’. He describes the evolution of his understanding of dialogical encounter and explains how his enhanced understanding enables him to express and understand himself.

Moyra Evan’s work is most significant for the creation of a new discipline of educational enquiry because she researches what she is doing as a school vice-principal with ‘system’ responsibilities for staff development. She researches her influences through her use of ‘story’ (Evans, 1998) and through the ‘emotional support’ the members of a school-based action research group give towards each other. The collaborative research between Moyra Evans and Pam Lomax (Lomax, Evans and Parker, 1997) is also significant in the creation of a new discipline because of the way they have developed and researched a partnership between Denbigh School and Kingston University to support the development of an action research approach to school-improvement and the professional development of teachers in the context of the politics and the economics of educational knowledge.

I will be referring to Pam Lomax’s (Lomax, 1999, Lomax & Whitehead, 1998) contribution to my own educational development in the section below when I consider my educative influence with Kevin Eames.

To members of my educative community in Bath, which includes Kevin, I owe insights into the significance of bringing spiritual values (Cunningham, 1999), such as ‘loving spirit’, more fully into my explanations of my educational influence. To Moira Laidlaw (1996) I owe the insight that the values I use, to give meaning and purpose to my life as a professional educator, are themselves living and changing in the course of their emergence in practice. These values are the ‘living standards’ of judgement which I use to be accountable to myself and others in testing the validity of my explanations for my own learning. For over a decade Jean McNiff’s action research and writings have provided inspiration for countless action researchers in the U.K. and in numerous international contexts. In her latest work on Action Research, A Methodology of Care (McNiff 1999) Jean writes:

“We take care in our own way of being, knowing that we must embrace our connectedness with each other and the rest of creation, knowing that it is our responsibility as educators to respond with thoughtfulness and compassion.” (McNiff, p.51, 1999)

I wish to hold myself accountable in my educative relations as a professional educator to a discipline of education which is grounded in such values.

Let me see if I can show you what a new discipline of educational enquiry means to me in my educative relationship with Kevin Eames. I want to focus on my educative influence with Kevin as he created his own discipline of educational enquiry within a dialogical and dialectical synthesis of his own unique constellation of values in asking, answering and researching questions of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’. I also want to focus your attention on my own learning as I am seeking to address the questions: How do we display what we have learned? What forms can we trust? What modes are legitimate? How shall we know? (Eisner, 1997).

In attempting to answer these questions I am seeking an appropriate way of representing my educational influences and my claims to know these influences in my work as a professional educator. In offering you the text below I am displaying my learning since my last address to AERA (Whitehead 1998) by showing how I am seeking to explain my educative influence through the ‘voice’ of those I am influencing. This point is important to me because I do not want to analyse the work of others in a way which explains my influence in a way which ‘violates’ their sense of their own integrity in their ‘voice’ and text.

I recognise that whilst I might sometimes do this in my educative influence with others (D’Arcy 1998, Delong & Whitehead, 1998) I want to fulfil my responsibilities as a professional educator in a way which does not violate the integrity of the other learner.

Explaining my educative relations with Kevin Eames

Kevin Eames is Head of the English Department at Wootton Bassett School in Wiltshire, England. His Ph.D. Thesis on 'How do I, as a teacher and an educational action-researcher, describe and explain the nature of my professional knowledge?' is accessible on the web (Eames 1995). In the edited extracts from this thesis below I participated in the dialogical and dialectical form of his description and explanation of his professional learning as he engaged with the experience of existing as a living contradiction within an educative community. I participated in his experience of existing as a living contradiction when, during a presentation on dialectics, he recognises that he is denying his understanding of dialectics in his propositional form of communication.

In seeking to present evidence of my educative influence I recognise that I am doing something unusual for a university researcher. I am making a claim to have influenced the educational development of another professional educator in the process of my supervision of his research programme. I am offering my claim to have influenced Kevin's learning largely through Kevin's analysis from his Ph.D thesis. In doing this I am seeking to emphasise that the evidence for my claim to have influenced the education of another can be seen within the other's 'voice'. This seems an important educational point to make. Because education, for me, is essentially a process of self-creation, I cannot claim to have educated anyone with the exception of my self. Yet I do believe that I influence the education of those I work with. However, because of my belief that education is essentially a process of self-creation I must show my influence from within the process of another's self-creation.

I am offering the extracts below in the loving spirit of Buber's I-You relation where he writes of the special humility of the educator:

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

I want to emphasise that the dialogues below actually took place within an educative community. It should not be forgotten that the dialogues below are extracts from a wider conversation with others and that my influence with Kevin as being expressed together with the influence of others. The educative influence I have in mind developed from Kevin's experience of himself as a living contradiction. This 'moment' was dramatic as Kevin describes below his experience of recognising that he was failing to communicate his dialectical understanding from within the propositional form of his address. In the conversation which followed Kevin developed his understanding that propositional forms of theory can be held within a dialogical and dialectical discipline of educational enquiry.

The reason I have chosen to present the particular extract below from all the material available to me is because I think it shows me influencing the learning of another in moving towards an understanding of the ways in which the dialogical and propositional logics of education can be held together in an educational enquiry. In previous publications I have focused on the value of academic freedom (Whitehead 1993) and in future publications I hope to address the spiritual, aesthetic and ethical qualities of the values of 'loving spirit, 'justice', 'care and compassion using multi-media communications in image-based research (Prosser 1998). The focus of my present analysis is my valuing of:

- 1) the logics of educational knowledge;
- 2) the importance of contradiction in educational enquiries;
- 3) the importance of understanding educational enquiry as a living process of transformation which cannot be captured solely within an idea of 'structure' or 'framework';
- 4) the significance of recognising that important human values, which motivate and form part of educational explanations, cannot be communicated in a solely linguistic form.

I believe that my explanation of my educational influence with Kevin, in the sense of being able to answer a question of 'how' I am influencing Kevin in the way I do, involves Kevin's reflexive abilities as he

appreciates and engages with my meanings. In his commentaries below, Kevin shows the influence of my meanings on his own. My explanation involves both an 'intention' in terms of the above values which is not pre-specified - the values emerge in the course of the conversation - and the 'active engagement' by Kevin in seeking to understand the significance of my meanings in his enquiry. To highlight the points in Kevin's enquiry, where I think you will feel, see and understand my influence, in terms of the above four values, I have put a star * and a number in brackets which refers to the above values.

Claiming to know my educative influence with Kevin Eames

On 17.12.91 and 19.12.91 Kevin took part in three conversations which changed his ideas on how he regarded educational knowledge, and on how he saw it as a dialectical form of professional knowledge. The first conversation took place on the afternoon of 17.12.91 with ten people in a research group at Bath University. Kevin had been invited to talk about his research into professional knowledge. He started his presentation with the following quotation, to locate his account of the logic of educational knowledge in relation to the work of the philosopher of education, Paul Hirst (Hirst & Peters, 1970).

In Hirst's view, educational theory is 'concerned with determining rationally defensible principles for educational practice'. He argues that 'the adequate formulation and defence of these principles (rests) not simply on appeal to the disciplines, but on a complex pragmatic process that uses its own appropriate practical discourse'. Thus, he places 'the practitioner's view' as central, and applauds the recent 'focus on the actual practices of education, and the discourses practitioners use'.

However, although he senses that the logic of educational theory is bound up with 'the practitioner's view', and 'the actual practices of education', he confesses himself 'uncertain' as to 'how best we might give an account of the logic of such discourse and its principles'.

After this, Kevin gave a fifteen minute summary of his work on dialectical logic and listed the following questions:

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

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

As I was giving the presentation, the conviction that there was something wrong grew on me. I became increasingly aware that what I was saying missed the richness of the evidence I had been looking at The OHTs (like the ones immediately above) were abstract, dessicated, lifeless - the opposite (*2) of what I felt (and had stated explicitly in the earlier chapters) that a dialectical process should be. So I stopped. I said:

The meaning of what I'm trying to sketch out cannot be contained within the propositional form of some guy standing in front of a machine and putting pictures on to a piece of paper. I suppose I was using a propositional form, but I feel that it's a most inadequate account of it so far.

He then sat down and joined in the discussion which followed. The discussion was taped, and Kevin uses the dialogue with his commentary below to describe the ways in which he believes his understanding was changing.

The conversation includes Pat D'Arcy - Kevin's English Advisor, Mary Tasker - University Lecturer in Education, Peter Mellett - an M.A. Student and me. The following extracts and commentaries are edited selections from Kevin's Ph.D. Thesis. To avoid confusion **I want to stress that all the commentaries which follow the transcripts of each of the three conversations are written by Kevin.**

Conversation I

“After the opening presentation, Pat began the conversation, by picking up a point I had made about the appropriateness of the dialectical form - as I understood it then - to be considered as a professional form of knowledge for teachers.

Pat: From what Kevin was saying, it seems to me that he was saying it is the most appropriate form - not just, how can this form be used alongside many other forms... His intention, as I understand it, is to say that a dialectical form of working towards new perceptions is perhaps the most appropriate.

Kevin: Spot on, but I think the next question from that is, 'Why is that an appropriate form for teachers to use?' And, I suppose, 'What does it look like?' is a subsidiary question, because it doesn't matter a damn what it looks like; it's what it does.

*Jack: I'm not sure. It's the 'it' I have a problem with - 'What is it?' - the dialectical form - it - has been developing through the centuries, and we've just seen the death of the Marxist dialectic, which was the major step forward after the Hegelian dialectic, and what Marx did, for Hegel, was to put the last criterion in, which was practice. What Marx did was to say that Hegel's dialectic was much too abstract, and it needed to be concretised, to be focused on practice (*1). Now, what you've done is taken a list of criteria, and applied them, almost in a traditional Marxist model, so I do think it matters what form we are now giving to that dialectic.*

Peter: The form does matter... I'm interested in the process that constitutes a dialectical form.

Comments.....Jack's intervention was significant. I realise now that he was indicating to me the error in how I was thinking about dialectics. I was reifying 'it', so that it remained a concept 'out there', rather than a form expressed through the process in which I was engaged (*2). As a result, I had been 'applying' my view of 'it' in a mechanistic way to my own practice, and had failed to communicate the meaning of dialectics as I had experienced it.

Extract Two. Mary then took up and developed the notion of dialectics as a system or structure:

Mary: 'Dialectic' has this connotation of 'system'.

*Jack: If you think of dialectic as a process of change, then you can resist the imposition of a system or a structure... (*3) We have the chance, through asking questions of the kind, 'How can I improve what I am doing?' ... (with) the individual taking some responsibility for what they are doing, we might have the possibility of creating a different kind of dialectic, which has the power to transform practice (*3). But it's cloudy, as you say. It's not well-formed yet.....*

Mary: ...What both of you are doing, is questioning yourselves. You're doing what Socrates said everyone must do all the time... Surely we're all agreed with that? I have to say that the building up into a system seems to be reifying, putting out there into some abstract domain, what we all do, those of us who are reflective and self-critical, as part of our professional job.

Kevin: This reification is something I've been conscious of in trying to define for myself what dialectics is. I think we need to look almost beyond the definition in itself, to think about, 'Why bother? How do we use it?' Now, there's something in there about the relative status of kinds of knowledges... Teachers' knowledge is of lower status than, say, university (academics') knowledge - particularly in the eyes of people who teach in universities... I've got things from the Bassett Research Group, where people say... 'What goes on in my classroom isn't going to be of interest to them, is it?' 'I/them' - this kind of terminology suggests the kind of difference -

Pat: It's a question of purpose and audience.... If teachers are setting out to inform other teachers as the main reason for conducting their investigation, ...we have to differentiate between audiences - other teachers or university boards who will award accreditation.

Jack: What about power, though, Pat? Where's the status? ...The knowledge-base is not grounded upon the practice of the teacher, but it's still very much a form of knowledge within universities. And the medical

profession and the legal profession built up their case lore into very high status knowledge, whereas I don't think that we have that.

Comments..... I failed to respond to the full significance of the comments made by Jack, as well as by Mary.

...Jack took up my point about the relative status of different kinds of knowledges, and described the absence of the teacher's perspective in present thinking on educational knowledge. I must address the issue of status - and the power that accompanies status.....

(Another) issue was raised also by Jack, when he suggested to Mary that we should see dialectics as a 'process of change', rather than as 'a system or a structure'. The point he was making is fundamental to my present view of educational knowledge (* 3) - although I didn't recognise it at the time, because we were all still at various stages, I think, of groping towards something that we perceived dimly - a form of knowledge which has 'the power to transform practice' - but which we were unable to formulate concisely. As Jack said, it was still 'cloudy. It's not well formed, yet.' I must try to define the form of educational knowledge which I hold in my present view - to make it less 'cloudy'. In doing so, I will try to bring into an organic whole my present concepts of dialectics, of process, and of practice (* 1, 2 & 3).

CONVERSATION II

This conversation took place later the same afternoon (17.12.91). Those present were Pat D'Arcy, Moira Laidlaw, Peter Mellett, and Jack Whitehead - participants from the previous group who wanted to continue the earlier conversation. During the second conversation, we returned to earlier themes, and developed them further. I want to illustrate what I learnt by commenting on extracts, showing my growing understanding and outlining any issues which I will have to address.

In the following extract we returned to, and developed further, the issues from Conversation I - the relationship between dialectical and propositional forms of knowledge, and our attempts to define more clearly what a dialectical form of educational knowledge might look like.

Jack: *All the theories that are produced by traditional forms of research are propositional (*1). They are always given in the form of statements, which have got a truth content to them. People like Karl Popper, who attacked dialectics, on the grounds of contradiction, say that any theory which contains contradiction, is entirely useless as a theory.*

Pat: *Are they denying the relativity of truth? Is there some sense of the absoluteness of truth, there?*

Jack: *No, you build up a system of justifiable beliefs about something, so it's not a question of absolute truth. What you've got at the moment is based upon falsifiability. So you've built up that system of justifiable belief, so...the beliefs are actually presented in the form in which you'd talk about your theory. Now, Kevin's point about the 'it' - when he said, 'How do I present it, other than propositional?' - because he said 'it' -*

Moira: *And he also said, 'Present.'*

Jack: *He also said, 'Present' - it's then Peter's point. Unless you can actually show from the inside what you are actually doing, you are constrained by the propositional form. Whereas there is an alternative (*1).*

Pat: *(Yes, but) I think it is unhelpful to polarise propositional and dialectical. They are both necessary, in different ways, depending on the context.....*

Kevin: *...There's a sort of dialectical process going on there. My growing understanding is expressed in a propositional form - or is it? It's footprints. I can look back, and see those reified footprints (*1), those things, those 'its', and this is where I've come to. ... I'm about halfway through that MacIntyre book, and that sense that he's putting forward, of dialectical development of craft knowledge within a community. I got to that bit last night.*

Jack: *Yes. But unless you put it in those terms that Peter was saying, which will actually transform the nature of your text - you've pushed us, within this. First of all there was this aridity, in a way, because you*

*grasped the dialectics within a traditional form (*1). You moved us partially through that in your dialogues with Pat, and Georgina Hendy, and the (others) - yes? And then, today, I think that insight of Peter's on the tape - when Peter brought us up short, Mary interjected, and Chris and Gill took it up - I think you've got, participating within a dialogue of question and answer The crucial thing for me is the dialectical form (*1) . Hasn't a transformation occurred between the statements Kevin put on the overhead transparency at the beginning of that last session - now, there is something else which he needs, which will transform (*3) the way in which he presents his notion of the form of the dialectic, because ... the quality of the questions and responses being engaged in now - the very points that Pat was raising about a certain kind of openness - where you responded to Peter at the beginning - 'Yes, I see it in a new way' - because of what Peter was saying about experiencing things from the inside, whereas what you were doing in our session before was defining 'it' from the outside. I think you've got, within the form of this conversation, the very criteria you will need to show what you mean by a dialectical form (*1).*

Comments. I think there are three elements I'd like to note in this extract. First, there is the relationship between propositional and dialectical knowledge. Pat began by arguing that an element of propositional knowledge is essential, even within a dialectical form, such as an action/reflection cycle ('the planning, the doing, and then the reflecting on how those two are related to each other'). She saw both forms of knowledge as being valuable, in their 'different ways'. I made an attempt to formulate my own view of the relationship between the two forms of knowledge, which drew on what Pat had said, for I felt then, and I still feel, that propositional knowledge is important within a dialectical form.

I was, at the time, struggling with the uncomfortable feeling that, after what I had learnt from my experiences that afternoon, I had wasted my time in writing the previous chapters of my inquiry because, as Jack said, I had 'grasped the dialectics within a traditional form', and there was the 'aridity' which had been demonstrated that afternoon, when I sensed the inadequacy of my presentation, and when the teachers present had felt 'discouraged' and 'alienated' by it. Accordingly, I tried to construct a metaphor which would, I hoped, make a synthesis between dialectical and propositional forms by explaining how the chapters I had written previously, though they expressed my understanding of dialectics, as demonstrated in my own teaching, and in dialogues with other educators, in a traditionally academic, propositional form, were of use since they enabled me to reach the position I was in at that time. At this present time of writing, however, I find the metaphor unsatisfactory, since it brings to my mind an image of solitary footprints across a desert, and, as I now realise from the experience of these conversations, a dialectical form of educational knowledge cannot take place without other people - without a social context. Ironically, while at the time I was searching for a metaphor to describe the synthesis of dialectical and propositional knowledge which I had experienced, I was within the very process of dialogue which would bring my previous propositionally-expressed knowledge to its dialectical fruition (*1).

The second element I'd like to comment on, here, is the way in which the discussion, for the first time, began to explore the nature of the dialectical knowledge that our community was working within. Such a form involved valuing questions to be followed up with an open mind (*1), without necessarily knowing where you're going to end up. You can't 'decide beforehand'. There needs to be an 'openness' to other people, which leads to changed understanding. It's process-based, and organic, and it's the process which is educative. The process is also supportive, without an individual desiring to exercise his or her own power. It's in this extract, too, that I first mentioned Alasdair MacIntyre's 'Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry', which I was in the course of reading, on Jack's recommendation. This book had started to focus for me ideas about the characteristics of a dialogical community, and it will be of importance in a later chapter. However, it's an example, here, of the way in which my dialectical understanding was influenced by a text expressed in a conventional, propositional form. - which illustrates Pat's point earlier in these comments. In fact, these conversations, taken as a whole, not only describe the characteristics of a dialogical community, but are an example of how such a community works.

The operation of a dialogical community raises the third element I'd like to note in this extract. If the conversations as a whole illustrate the characteristics of a dialogical community, and this extract shows how we tried to define it, I should be able to derive a description of the form from the 'transformation' which Jack noted (*3) in my own understanding, as a result of my participation in those conversations. However, when I try, later on, to '(present my) notion of the form of the dialectic', I need to avoid the mistake I made earlier, in reifying my understanding in a propositional form, with disastrous consequences

for my intentions to communicate with the teachers present earlier that afternoon. I've got to define the form I believe educational knowledge takes 'from within'; as part of my definition, I've got to show it in operation, to acknowledge the living reality of the dialectical form within which I exist, by showing how my understanding has been shaped by my dialogues with other competent practitioners.

CONVERSATION III

The final conversation I recorded took place on 19.12.91. Those present were: Erica Holley and Andy Larter, from Greendown School, and Jack Whitehead.....This is what I learnt.

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

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

Andy: I'd just have to take slight issue with that. You've got to have what we're doing now - to have your ideas challenged within that reassuring framework -

Kevin: I was taking that as read! I feel as if I've come out with - a good kicking - within that framework.

*Jack: There's something about that framework, though - the technical term is 'ontological security' - that notion of being accepted by the other, which really does give you that fundamental security in the ground of one's own being. Now, what Andy is talking about is challenging ideas in a way that doesn't really attack the security you feel, then your point, which threw me, was the notion of disciplined framework. I can't see what that means, or even whether it is taking place within a disciplined framework. I'd much sooner look at it as a process of change and transformation (*3), but it's not chaotic. There is some order and discipline there -*

Kevin: Rather than disciplined - 'ordered'?

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

Kevin: - Constraining -

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

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

*Jack: For me, even the term 'dialogue' is getting in the way. There's something beneath the notion of dialogue, which was something to do with what Erica was saying about taking risks, about revealing who you feel yourself to be (*4). So remember to be careful about using a term to communicate - which doesn't enable you to communicate, as directly as you can the meaning of the experiences you have had. And if you can take today, and the one on Tuesday, you'd be very close to presenting that process in action... You'd help people to get on the inside of that process of change and development which is educational and constitutes educational knowledge.*

Comment. This extract came towards the end of the third conversation, and shows how, as a consequence of what I had learnt over those few days in December, I was able to make a clearer formulation than previously of the way educational knowledge is shaped. It develops over time; it happens through dialogues within a community; there's a tentativeness about it, and an openness to the thoughts of others about what you're saying to them. It's not a full definition that I was putting together, of course, but the elements I touched on will need to be considered when I try to draw the threads together in the next chapter.

Significantly, the formulation I advanced was responded to by Andy and Jack, who succeeded, by doing so, in moving my thinking on a stage further, giving a small-scale demonstration of the process at work. Andy refined the idea of a 'reassuring framework'; I had assumed, without making it sufficiently clear, that within such a framework, there would necessarily be challenges to the ideas put forward, although such challenges would take place within a context of, as Jack said, 'being accepted by the other'. That context makes it more likely, I believe now, that the challenges will be listened to, understood, and accepted, since they are offered within dialogue, rather than from a desire to exercise power and gain superiority - Peter's point from Tuesday afternoon.

Jack was right to challenge my use of 'framework'. What I meant was some kind of supporting device, which gives order to the way in which educational knowledge develops, for it is not haphazard or incoherent. However, I accept Jack's point that the notion of a framework is too 'limiting' (*3), in that it has a mechanistic quality that doesn't fit with the 'openness' of what I am trying to describe. I am happier with my reformulation - 'shape of rationality' - in that I believe what I am trying to describe is a process with particular qualities. It's not hard-edged, but it has form. It's also not random or chaotic, but is intelligently systematic. It's the way educators understand, communicate and take action.

Jack made the point, also, that I should beware of letting the terms I use get in the way of communicating 'as directly as (I) can the meaning of the experiences (I) have had.' I will bear that in mind (*4), while also trying to cope with what I've learnt on the whole journey."

As Kevin describes and explains his own professional learning in coming to a transformed understanding of the nature of a dialectical form of educational knowledge, he is, in my terms, creating his own living educational theory. I also believe he is helping to establish a new discipline of educational enquiry of the kind defined by Lomax in this seminar and demonstrated by Eames above:

An aspect of educational action research that interests me concerns learning. I see learning as the outcome of a dialectical process that leads to change. I think that there are two aspects to this - (a) the way we learn through representing our meanings to ourselves and (b) the way we learn by representing our meanings to others. I see this double dialectic of learning as an intra-subjective dialectic which occurs when we represent an idea to ourselves, maybe in a piece of writing, in a lesson plan or an action that we capture on video and this representation of our own idea confronts what we know and challenges us to re-think and as an inter-subjective dialectic which occurs where we share our representation of our idea with others and their affirming or questioning response to our communicated meaning challenges us to see something else. The double dialectic of learning highlights what I see as the two essential elements of a new discipline of educational enquiry for evidence-based professionalism: personal development and critical community. (Lomax, p. 5, 1999).

What I hope to have communicated in the paper so far is a justifiable belief that the self-studies of professional educators can make original and substantial contributions to educational knowledge and theory. What I now want to do is to engage with contributions to the other disciplines of education in a way which shows that these contributions can be integrated within the narrative of my own education. This section is important to me because of my need to stress the importance of the traditional disciplines in the creation of a new discipline of educational enquiry.

*** Engaging with the other disciplines of Education**

Before I show how my educational theorising as a professional educator can engage with the politics and economics of education, I want to show something more of my own professional learning as I extend my cognitive range and concerns. This extension was one of the criteria used by Richard Peters (1966) in defining education. The context of this extension is my engagement with some philosophies of education presented at a symposium on Philosophy and Educational Research at the British Educational Research Association Conference in September 1998. I am thinking particularly of Schostak's (1998) questions concerning a return to the living in education and concerning freedom; Biesta's (1998) stress on the importance of location; Safström's (1998) point about responsibility and the need for post-modern curriculum theorising; Fielding's (1998) emphasis on the value of community; Bridge's (1998) concern

with the validity of truth-claims; Elliott's (1998) concern with evidence; Griffith's (1998) stress on the value of justice.

My mode of address is important at this point. In order to retain my sense of the integrity of my discipline as an educator I need to break with the traditional conventions on how to engage academically with ideas of other researchers as disembodied theoretical frameworks which are subject to various methods of validation. I am engaging with these ideas to see if they can become part of my own education and my life as an educational researcher and professional educator.

In developing my ideas on the living philosophies of educators I have focused on university and school teachers' capacities to create their own living theories in the process of asking, answering and researching questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. The idea that each individual can create their own living educational theory has attracted other educational researchers (Pinnegar & Russell 1995, Lomax 1998a, 1999). I particularly want to refer to the work of Tom Russell of Queen's University in researching his own practice collaboratively with his students (Russell and Bullock 1998). This work certainly requires students to have the courage to engage with the fundamentals of teaching. It has a similar dialogical form to Laidlaw's (1996) presentation of her living theory, within which the values, skills and understandings, which help to constitute the professional knowledge-base of teaching, can be seen to emerge from her educative relationships. In conclusion I want to mention the educational significance of the world wide web for my research.

The action research homepage at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw> has enabled me to share the above research theses, dissertations and ideas with a much wider audience than would have been possible only a few years ago, when they would only have been available on the University Library shelves of the University of Bath. The recent addition of a 'Chat Room' is enabling researchers to share their engagements and appreciations (D'Arcy 1998) of the above dissertations and theses and to communicate directly with the teacher-researchers in taking their ideas forward. This form of communication is also contributing to my sense of belonging to an educational community. In exploring the implications of the creation of living educational theories, for the development of the living philosophies of educators, I hope that I can contribute to the continuous revivification of the philosophy of education in the minds, practices, feelings and cultures of teachers as we work together to create a research-based profession of education.

In creating my own living educational theories (Whitehead, 1989) and sharing the ideas of 'living' theories' with my students and others, I see how important it is to enable researchers to feel confident that they can 'return to the living'. My commitment resonates with John Schostak's (1998) question, 'How does one make a return to the living in education?', and I believe my practice of freedom within my discipline of education does, as he says, involve the initiation of a series of actions or events which then can either be abandoned or projected forward as a lived condition. It is in this play of possibility that freedom is experienced, not as a simulated exercise, but as living beings, who, like all living things, are subject to death. With Feyerabend I believe that the meanings of values such as freedom can only be understood in the course of their emergence in practice.

In my educational enquiry, 'How do I improve what I am doing?', I exist as a value-centre, as a centre of consciousness where my "I" has no beginning and no end. In this I believe with Bakhtin in existence as dialogue:

"The only way I know of my birth is through accounts I have of it from others; and I shall never know my death, because my "self" will be alive only so long as I have consciousness - what is called "my" death, will not be known by me, but once again only by others... Stories are the means by which values are made coherent in particular situations. And this narrativity, this possibility of conceiving my beginning and end as a whole life, is always enacted in the time/space of the other: I may see my death, but not in the category of my "I", For my "I", death occurs only for others, even when the death in question is my own." (p.37. Holquist, 1990)

I also identify with Benhabib's use of a discourse theory of justification in establishing the validity of truth claims, her vision of an embodied and embedded human self whose identity is constituted narratively and her emphasis on seeing a moral point of view as the contingent achievement of an interactive form of rationality rather than as the timeless standpoint of a legislative reason. (Benhabib, S., p.6 1992).

In my attempts to communicate the nature of living educational theories and a new discipline of educational enquiry I stress the commitment of the action researcher to engage in a self-study of their own life in a particular location. In this I feel the support of Gert Biesta's (1998) enquiries, 'Where Are You? Where am I?' and his question below which stresses the importance of focusing on the location where 'I' of myself comes into presence:

"we should shift our attention from a perspective on the subject as a what, as a substance with an identity, to the question of the subject as a singular who. However: because any attempt to give an answer to this question runs the risk of falling back into an articulation of the what of his who, I have suggested that we should take one step further and focus on the place, the location where the subject comes into presence. What, then, is revealed if we follow this path?"

As I answered this kind of question in a self-study of my teacher-educator practices in the University of Bath (Whitehead, 1993) I felt the need to reveal what I meant by my responsibility as a professional educator. I use this value as a standard of judgement for testing the validity of my claims to educational knowledge. I have tried to show above how I lived this responsibility in my educative relationship with Kevin Eames as I insisted that I could not claim to have educated Kevin but that I could claim to have influenced his education as a form of improvisatory self-realisation. The recognition of this form of responsibility has been expressed most eloquently by Carl Safström (1998) when he draws on Levinas' (1994) idea that a precondition for conceiving the relationship between subjects in terms of communication is to abandon the search for security and self-coinciding and to substitute the idea of an ego identical with itself with a relation to the other in terms of responsibility.

In creating a new discipline of educational enquiry on the base of holding oneself accountable in terms of values as standards judgement, I accept the need to answer questions about how one might test the validity of the claims to knowledge which are made from within the discipline. I accept David Bridges' (1998) point that, as an educational researcher I am engaged in the articulation of propositions, in relation to my questions, which assert the truth or falsity of what I have to say and that I am operating with identifiable theories of truth. I recognise the importance of providing appropriate evidence to justify my claims (Elliott, 1998) and of establishing appropriate standards of judgement for examining practice-based Ph.Ds (Hughes, Denley and Whitehead 1998) and in the problems of testing the validity of the living educational theories constituted by the autobiographies of learning (Parker 1998, 1999). In my discipline as an educator I draw on Polanyi's (1958) decision to understand the world from his own point of view as an individual claiming originality and exercising his judgement with universal intent. From this base in Personal Knowledge I offer my accounts of my learning to 'validation' groups of my peers and ask that they apply Habermas' four criteria of validity as I seek to reach an understanding with them. I ask them to test the validity of my account in terms of its comprehensibility, the adequacy of the evidence I present to justify my propositional claims to knowledge, the clarity and justification of the values I use to constitute my account as 'educational' and the authenticity of my account which shows that over time, in practice, I can be seen to be exploring the implications of holding the values I claim to be living by.

In stressing the importance of social validation I am brought back to the theme of this symposium on creating community through educational research. I do agree with Michael Fielding (1998) when he says that we are in a crisis of intellectual and imaginative nerve which currently afflicts policy makers, teachers in schools, and the research community alike. He is concerned that the school effectiveness and school improvement movements appear to be articulating the moribund categories of a frightened, unimaginative society. I also agree with his emphasis on the need to develop an alternative perspective, which is focused on the centrality of community in human affairs in general and education in particular. For me the focus point of his ideas is that personal relations of community are expressive of who we are as persons and have no purposes beyond themselves, *'purposes are expressive of personal relations, not constitutive of them'*. In stressing the importance of who we are as persons I feel close to Wilson's and Wilson's (1998) point about the subject-matter of educational research that in our educational research we should be focusing on the personal qualities of educators. I trust that you will see this emphasis in my willingness to hold myself to account in relation to the values I use to give my life, as a professional educator, meaning and purpose.

In thinking about the values which are at the heart of my life both as an educator and citizen I recognise my commitment to justice. Morwenna Griffiths (1998) has helped to focus my attention on helping researchers

who want justice to argue among themselves in such a way that they are united, in spite of their differences against those who do not see themselves as working for justice, primarily, but rather, say, for efficiency and enhanced economic performance through education.

I agree with Griffiths' analysis about the importance of attempts to draw on theory and philosophy to help members of the research community to gain in reflexivity and clarity about the possibilities of empowerment and voice, and about the different assumptions about power which underlie them.

In the creation and testing of living educational theories I accept the gains in such reflexivity and clarity as part of an individual's education. In developing my philosophies as an educator I hope to integrate these insights from Griffiths' philosophical analyses of education within enquiries of the form, 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?' and 'How do I help you to improve your learning?'. I am thinking of forms of integration which show my practical engagement, as an educator, with power relations in the process of asking, answering and researching such questions.

Of particular importance here is my educative relationships and community with my professional colleagues, Pam, Zoe and Moyra. We have analysed our research into an attempted collaboration using e-mail. This attempted collaboration succeeded in the sense that we analysed our failure but left me feeling, frustrated, irritated and angry with my co-participants. This account is due to be published in *Educational Action Researcher* during 1999 and I am hoping to return to some of the issues raised in this research in terms of the relationships we expressed in our different valuing of power, justice, love and care in the creation of community through our research.

In judging the quality of my educative relations and my claims to educational knowledge I accept the importance of establishing the nature of my educative influence through my students' voices and sense of empowerment. I hope this has been seen clearly above as I analysed my philosophies as an educator from the ground of my educative relationship with a practitioner-researcher. I intend to continue to extend my understanding of the philosophies of education by engaging with the contributions to the 1998 BERA Symposium on Philosophy and Educational Research and participating in a proposed philosophy seminar at BERA 1999.

*** Engaging with the politics of economics of educational knowledge**

I now want to turn to the politics of educational knowledge and relate my ideas on the creation and testing of living educational theories to their legitimisation in the Academy in Ph.D. degrees. I want to focus particularly on the idea of 'unconscious incompetence' (Denley, 1998) in relation to examiner's judgements on those educational action research theses, which are essentially studies of singularity (Bassey, 1995).

In a paper on the legitimising of an educational action research thesis for the award of a Ph.D. degree, Hughes and Denley analyse their experiences of a Ph.D. viva of Hughes' Ph.D. Hughes draws attention to the examiners' comments:

"She has undoubtedly learned a lot about her practice through the exercise, but the outside world learns little, because the interventions are specific to a particular context We would learn more by comparing and contrasting aspects of practice in different contexts than from a study of the experience of just one worker". (Hughes, Denley & Whitehead 1998, pp. 434-435).

Given that the study was an educational action research study in the sense that it was a study of the professional learning of one worker in a particular context, the above examiner's comments demonstrate that there were genuine academic differences in philosophical approach or paradigms - this is one of the criteria which can be used to request a review of the results of an examination in the regulations of the University of Bath.

In his analysis of the examiners' recommendations on a resubmission Denley writes:

"The recommendations from the examination almost suggested that Jacqui's work should be reconceptualised and made to fit into another paradigm, rather than being examined against criteria appropriate to its own".

In writing about the viva Denley writes:

“What I had not expected was that this examiner’s methodological stance would have such a profound bearing on events. The concerns raised indicated a lack of understanding and a questioning of the adequacy of or even a disrespect for action research as an appropriate approach to address the sort of question relating to practice which Jacqui had formulated. I had expected, naively, that the examiner, if not actually sympathetic to the methodology, would at least be open to it..... I experienced a shift from thinking that I was ‘consciously competent’ to realising that I was in fact ‘unconsciously incompetent’ at the time of Jacqui’s first examination through my naivete in failing to appreciate the political dimension in the legitimisation of educational knowledge.” (Hughes, Denley & Whitehead, p. 443, 1998)

I think a focus of attention in the politics of educational knowledge is now on image-based research (Prosser, 1998) and the ways in which the new technologies enable the grip of print over educational research and theorising to be broken.

I now want to turn to the economics of education and to focus on the idea of a ‘sophisticated theory of education’ :

“No sophisticated theory of education can ignore its contribution to economic development” (Halsey, Lauder, Brown and Wells, p. 156. 1997).

Whilst I do acknowledge the importance of economic forces in my own educational theory I do also want to acknowledge the existence of sophisticated theories of education which ignore their contribution to economic development. I have supervised educational researchers whose educational theories have focused on the spiritual, aesthetic and ethical qualities in enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I help you to improve your learning?’ . I can well imagine sophisticated theories of education, which help individuals to remain life affirming in the face of the certainty of their own death, but which ignore their contribution to economic development. In making these points, in relation to the implications of the creation of living educational theories for the economics of education I want to emphasise the importance of a serious engagement with the living educational theories of professional educators as they seek to help their pupils to improve their learning.

I wonder whether economists (or other social scientists) who claim to be analysing ‘education’, yet who omit any engagement or appreciation of the living theories of professional educators, are in danger of continuing the reification of ‘education’ through their propositional theories? Are they not ‘masking’ the dialogical and dialectical educative processes which give, ‘Education’, the ‘Global Economy’ and the ‘Labour Market’ their life and vitality? As Kevin Eames explained above, his understanding of the nature of educational knowledge deepened from the ground of his experience of being a ‘living contradiction’. This learning emerged from the recognition that he was attempting to communicate the dialogical and dialectical nature of educational knowledge from within a solely propositional form of address.

In extending my cognitive range and concern in relation to the economics of educational knowledge I feel an affinity with John Raven (1995) who writes:

“The role which the public service plays in wealth creation is far too great to be adequately directed and supervised by multi-purpose elected assemblies. It is on public servants themselves - and not governments - that we must focus. We need to change our expectations of them and we need to develop better arrangements to direct and monitor their work.” (Raven, p.10, 1995).

I think the following quotation, although rather long, is worth including:

“It will be shown that our quality of life depends hardly at all on the quantity of manufactured goods we possess. It depends on such things as the quality of our relationships, our opportunities for accomplishment, and the extent to which we feel we have been able to influence what happens in our organisations and society. It depends on our opportunities to contribute in ways which please us or extend us. It depends on the human scale, levels of amenity, and more general livability of our cities, our personal security, our ability to give and receive help and our security for the future. It depends on our freedom from demeaning inquisitions into our private lives by ‘welfare’ agencies, and harassment

by tax collectors or the police. It depends on whether we have sufficient security to be able to think about the future without fear and to think creatively about the steps needed to create a desirable future. It depends on whether we are allowed to take the kind of action which is needed to create a secure future - something our current welfare legislation denies the 'unemployed'.

In later chapters we will discover that one reason why the market mechanism is incapable of recognising - let alone delivering - most of the potential sources of life satisfaction mentioned in the last paragraph because they cannot be monetarised. And most of those it can recognise - like security - can only be purchased collectively, not individually. Since our quality of life depends hardly at all on the factors with which the market engages it is obvious that it could be greatly enhanced at the same time as our consumption of resources and the impact which such consumption has on the global environment was greatly reduced." (Raven, p.5, 1995).

Conclusion

In conclusion I am suggesting that those who wish to be acknowledged as professional educators have a responsibility to create educational communities within which they can construct an appropriate professional knowledge-base for education. One way I am suggesting that this can be done is for professional educators, from all sectors of education, to engage in self-study research in asking, answering and researching questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?', both in relation to our educative relationships with our students and to the traditional disciplines of education. In other words in the new discipline of educational enquiry proposed here, professional educators can create their own professional knowledge-base and living educational theories. We can do this by integrating, within our self-studies of our educative influences with our students, our professional learning as we engage with ideas from the philosophy, psychology, economics, politics, sociology, history and management of education. In this way it may be possible to transcend 'Balkanisation' in educational research in a community of professional educators and researchers who come together to assist each other to take their educational enquiries forward in the spirit of their new discipline as they engage with other learners in answering questions of the kind, 'how can I help you to improve your learning?'

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