

## **Developing research-based professionalism through living educational theories**

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I want to thank the organisers of this Conference of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland for inviting me to give this address. Such opportunities have played a fundamental part in my productive life in education. The discipline of writing for an audience and to a deadline has always helped to take my enquiries forward. However, I feel I should warn you of my history of disasters in my lectures and workshops on action research. In 1985 I felt elated when a large local authority asked me to tutor more than 70 advisory teachers to support action research approaches to professional development in schools around Bath. I began a session to a roomful of gloomy faces. They had all received their termination notices that morning. This highlights the form of rational educational policy making favoured by English politicians. You spend money on policy formation and then sack the people you need to implement the policy. Last February, I began a similar action research workshop with principals and administrators in the Grand Erie Board in Ontario. In contrast to the previous session I was welcomed by a roomful of delighted and happy individuals. It is difficult to describe the euphoria. Initially, in my conceit, I put it down to the idea that I was such a popular international figure that they were simply looking forward to hearing my talk. Then they explained to me that they had just heard that morning the good news that if their age and length of service came to 85 they could retire without penalties to their pension because the government wanted to take some 15,000 teachers out of service. The moral of these stories is that there appears to be a connection between my talks on action research and teachers leaving the profession. I hope to reverse this trend today.

In particular I want to share with you my learnings over the ten years 1988-1998. In 1988 I presented my Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association on **Research-Based Professionalism** (Whitehead 1989a) and wrote my paper on **Creating a Living Educational Theory from Questions of the Kind, 'How do I improve my Practice?'**. (Whitehead, 1989b)

For those of you who are not familiar with the ideas of research-based professionalism and of living educational theories it may be helpful if I say that, for me, research-based professionalism refers to the process of enhancing teacher professionalism through constructing our professional knowledge-base from our self-studies of our own professional practice. Living educational theories are, for me, the descriptions and explanations which individuals offer for their own professional learning as they ask, answer and research questions of the kind, 'how do I improve what I am doing?'. Living theories are different from the traditional kind of theory in which the explanations are presented in terms of general concepts. Living theories are part of the way individuals create their own form of life. They are living because

of the way they explain a present practice in terms of an evaluation of the past and in terms of an intention to create something better in the future in one's own practice. The fundamental explanatory principles are not presented in abstract, linguistic concepts, they are presented as values, embodied in one's practice and embedded in a particular social contexts. Their meanings emerge through practice and require, for their communication both ostensive and linguistic definition. In other words we both 'show' and 'tell' when we try to communicate the meanings of the values which constitute our relationships as 'educative'.

In today's address I want to bring the two ideas together in a new synthesis on Developing Research-Based Professionalism through Living Educational Theories in the context of:

**1) Creating a Teaching Council in Ireland: Learning from the Work of the Teacher Training Agency in England and Wales and the Ontario College of Teachers in Canada.**

**2) Legitimizing teachers' professional knowledge in partnerships between Universities, Professional Development Centres and a Teacher's Council.**

**3) Demonstrating the potential of the internet for professional learning:**

I now want to develop these ideas in more detail.

**1) Creating a Teaching Council in Ireland: Learning from the Work of the Teacher Training Agency in the U.K. and the Ontario College of Teachers in Canada.**

The 1995 White paper on Charting our Education Future acknowledged:

“a unanimous acceptance of the need for a cohesive policy on, and a comprehensive programme of, in-career professional development of teachers, related to the long-term development of the teaching profession and the education system generally.” (D.O.E., 1995, p.126)

The concept of the teaching career and career-long professional learning is seen as the key to improving education. The 1998 report of the Department of Education and Science's Steering Committee on the Establishment of a Teaching Council contains a commitment to:

*accredit and review national inservice initiatives designed to support new policies and programmes.* (D.E.S., 1998. p. 27).

I want to focus on the importance of accrediting the knowledge of professional educators.

I imagine that many members of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland have supervised students for initial teacher awards and the awards of Master of Education, Master of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy or for the newer

Ed.D. degrees. The presentations for such degrees in **Education** are often text-based dissertations and theses, bound for display and placed on library shelves. I imagine that some of you, like me, have been awarded advanced qualifications in Education **without having to provide any evidence that we have influenced the education of anyone.**

### **Learning from the Teacher Training Agency**

In England and Wales the Teacher Training Agency has produced a framework for the professional development of teachers. At the present time it includes some 63 standards of practice which novice teachers must meet for them to be awarded their credentials of Qualified Teacher Status. It also includes the national standards for Subject leaders, for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and for Headteachers. A General Teaching Council is in the process of being established and a College of Teachers has recently been created from the College of Preceptors and The Education Council. These developments give some indication of the importance being given to the professional development of teachers in England and Wales. This concern is accompanied by a major recruitment crisis. The professional status of teaching ( and I include pay within this) is not sufficiently high in England and Wales to attract sufficient numbers of good quality entrants into the profession and to retain the numbers we need. It will require a major cultural shift to change the public perception of teaching as a profession. Quotes from Ted Wragg (1998) highlight the problem when he talks of:

*“... the zombie method of training heads or teachers, whereby complex human behaviour is atomised into discrete particulars, or “competencies”. This mechanical approach, much favoured by the hapless Teacher Training Agency, is an unmitigated disaster..... The tyranny of brain-corroding bureaucracy must end.... Most important of all is to support creativity and imagination, collegiality and trust, not just foster the mechanical implementation of dreary, externally driven missives.”*

I hope that, in Ireland, you will avoid some of the problems associated with the way the TTA has set out its standards in its professional framework. Jim Graham (1998) in an excellent article on teacher professionalism has added his voice to the growing criticism of the negative influences of the TTA when he says:

*For teacher professionalism, the over-prescribed, centralist regulation by the TTA established a technicist model of teaching at variance with the autonomy, flexibility, collegiality necessary to create the learning organisations required to socialise the new generation of knowledge workers. (Graham, p. 17, 1998).*

In contrast to the errors of the TTA I want to recommend the work of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) as it develops its standards of practice. Explicitly influenced by action research approaches (Squire 1998), OCT appears much more aware of the need to view standards of professional practice in terms of the living values which teachers use to give meaning and purpose to their productive lives in education.

Fran Squire works with Linda Grant of the Ontario College of Teachers on the development of standards of practice. Her enquiries, are focused on the questions,

*What implications arise when standards of practice are linked to action research endeavours?*

*How do we keep the spontaneity and individualism inherent in action research as we establish criteria for its recognition in the educational community?*

The reason I think that the work of Fran Squire, Linda Grant and the OCT is so important is that they are developing, to use Jean McNiff's phrase, a 'generative' form of action research. Unlike the Teacher Training Agency, they appear to understand that the standards of professional practice are the living values used by teachers in their educative relationships with their pupils. OCT is a learning organisation which is enquiring into the process of relating standards and professional learning in relation to the creation of a professional learning community which is concerned with the development of required professional knowledge.

In some ways the development of the research-based professionalism I have in mind is more developed in Ireland than in other parts of the world and in some ways it is less developed. As Hyland and Hanafin (1997: p. 162) have said:

*'Action research has gained considerable ground as a model of teacher professional development internationally, although it has made relatively little impact in Ireland apart from its introduction into some accredited university/college courses and various curriculum projects (Leonard, 1995). One example of action research used for in-career development in Ireland is the Marino Institute of Education Action research Pilot Project which comprised nineteen case studies'*

(McNiff and Collins, 1994).

Action Research is well developed in the work of Jean McNiff and the teacher-researchers she has been supporting. In her 1994 book, edited with Una Collins on 'A New Approach to In-Career Development for Teachers in Ireland', Jean describes the initial phases of the work of teacher-researchers as their enquiries begin and are supported over time. In July 1998 I attended a celebration in Bristol, following the graduation ceremony of the University of the West of England. Some 15 Irish teachers were awarded their Masters Degrees for their action research programmes in which many had embraced a living theory approach to their professional development. The Irish teachers, with Jean as their main tutor, found it necessary to move outside Ireland for the accreditation of their academic self-studies of their professional learning. In gaining this accreditation I believe these Irish teachers are contributing to the construction of a knowledge-base for professional educators. Gaining this recognition through an English university highlights a difficulty in the Irish context of a lack of support for legitimating action research studies in some Irish Universities and I now what to focus on the issue of legitimating teachers' professional knowledge

## **2) Legitimating teachers' professional knowledge in a partnership between Universities, Professional Development Centres and a Teacher's Council.**

At the same time the degrees were being conferred on Irish practitioners at the University of the West of England, a colleague in another university had sent me an action research dissertation which had been given a very low mark by an internal examiner. He asked for my advice because his own judgement on the dissertation was much more favourable. The internal examiner's judgements were to me, clearly being made from within a different paradigm of the kind which has been analysed in the issue of the Journal of In-Service Education to be published next month (Hughes, Denley & Whitehead 1998), and I advised my colleague to seek the judgements of other experts in the field of action research to see if it might be in the students' interest to question his colleague's judgement. Before he did this the external examiner's report had arrived, full of praise for the action research study and the dissertation received the high mark it deserved. For those interested in the way a view of 'education as text' and a 'cleverness' in manipulating linguistic concepts can blind examiners to the educational knowledge of professional educators in action research accounts, I recommend the afterword to Kevin Eames' Ph.D.. This is on the Action Research Homepage at the above address.

To give some further indication of the problems which can surround action research enquiries I recall a letter received by a student at a U.K. University from its research committee. This University had a good track record of successfully completed M.A. action research studies. The research committee had written to the research student, who had submitted a proposal for an MPhil./Ph.D. programme, to ask that the personal pronoun 'I' be removed from the title of the enquiry! For those who understand the importance of 'I' appearing in action research enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?', the request revealed the bias, prejudice or inadequate assessment of members of this research committee.

I was delighted to see one action research study reported by Dublin City University in their Conference Proceedings of the Third European Conference on Integrating information and Communications Technology in the Curriculum. I know Maggie Farren at Dublin City University is providing much needed help for practitioner researchers who wish to gain accreditation from an Irish University for their action research studies. The one action research study however, was within some 30 quantitative studies.

What I now want to do is to draw your attention to the kind of educational action enquiries which have already led to the awards of M.Phil or Ph.D. degrees. The teachers have created their own living educational theories in which they describe and explain their own professional learning as they ask, answer and research the following kinds of question:

**A) 'How can I help my pupils to improve their learning?'**

**Dr. Moira Laidlaw**

**B) 'How can I help to establish action research approaches to professional development in my school?'**

**Dr. Kevin Eames, Dr. Moyra Evans**

**C) ‘How can I support teachers in establishing action research approaches to professional development in their school in a way which can help to improve the quality of pupils’ learning?’**

**Dr. Jean McNiff**

**Prof. Pam Lomax**

**D) ‘How can I fulfil my system’s responsibility for staff appraisal, staff and/or curriculum development?’.**

**Jackie Delong & Dr. Ron Wideman**

**Erica Holley**

These questions have been asked in local, regional, national and international contexts and supported by centres of professional development. Your Professional Development Centres are ideally placed to support such enquiries and I know such programmes have been developed for teachers of Drama in Cork. The teachers’ accounts below show what has been learnt in answering these questions. I have no intention of ‘speaking for’ the individuals below. They have all done this for themselves. My purpose, through showing you this series of Overhead Transparencies and saying why I value their work so highly, is to see if I can captivate your imagination in a way which will motivate you to access their work.

**A) ‘How can I help my pupils to improve their learning?’**

**Dr. Moira Laidlaw**

*(1996) How can I create my own living educational theory through accounting to you for my own educational development?* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath. Examiners: Profs. Morwenna Griffith and Richard Winter.

1998 ‘In Loco Parentis with Sally: A matter of fairness and love’. Discussion paper for the Chat Room on <http://www.actionresearch.net>

Moira Laidlaw is an English teacher in a Bath comprehensive school. The general prologue to her doctoral thesis is a most inspiring piece of reflective writing on her experience of being a teacher. Moira uses Coleridge’s Poem of the Ancient Mariner to help to communicate the spiritual and moral values she brings into her educative relationships with her pupils. In creating her living educational theory she demonstrates how educational standards of judgements are themselves living and changing within the educative relationships themselves as she works at helping her pupils to improve their learning.

**B) ‘How can I help to establish action research approaches to professional development in my school?’**

**Dr. Kevin Eames**

*(1995) How do I, as a teacher and an educational action-researcher, describe and explain the nature of my professional knowledge?* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath. Examiners: Profs. Chris Day and David Sims. The afterword is a particularly powerful

expression of how a teacher-researcher can contribute to transcending the truth of power in the Academy.

I don't often refer to researchers' work as heroic but I do think Kevin's work is worthy of particular mention. In 1987 Kevin gained his M.Phil. degree from the University of Bath. He had not been permitted to register for a Doctoral programme until he had been awarded his M.Phil. degree on the sole ground that he was doing his research through action research! Kevin obtained his M.Phil. then registered for his Doctorate which he was awarded in 1996. His Ph.D. Thesis is a remarkable achievement and shows how a teacher-researcher can contribute to the legitimation of a new discipline of educational enquiry. His publications are also significant for the way in which they show how school-based teacher-researcher groups can be sustained over several years. Kevin's work has been influential in the development of action research approaches to teachers' professional development in Ontario.

Kevin's publications include:

1987 The Growth of a Teacher-Researcher's Attempt to Understand Writing, Redrafting, Learning and Autonomy in the Examination Years; M.Phil., University of Bath.

1988 Evaluating a Teacher-Researcher's choice of Action Research' in Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. Vol. 13, no.3, pp.312-218.

1990 'Growing Your Own: The Development of Action Researchers Within An Action-Research Approach to Whole-School Development.' British Journal of In-Service Education, Vol. 16, No.2.

1993a 'Action research in schools: Into practice' in British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment, Vol. 3, No.3, pp. 29-33.

1993b 'A dialectical form of action research-based educational knowledge: A Teacher-Researcher's view', in Ghaye, T. & Wakefield, P. (Eds) (1993) C.A.R.N. Critical Conversations: A Trilogy, Book One, The Role of Self in Action Research; Hyde Publications, Poole, Dorset.

### **Dr. Moyra Evans**

Moyra Evans is a Deputy Headteacher at Denbigh School in Milton Keynes.

The reason I believe that Moyra's contributions are so valuable in legitimating the knowledge base of professional educators is not only because of the originality of her contribution to educational knowledge in her Ph.D. Thesis. It is because of her work as a deputy head and supervisor of the Diplomas and Masters Degrees of her staff in association with Kingston University. The latest group of teacher-researchers include the following enquiries:

***How can I work with members of the English team in order to improve exam results at KS3? Sheila Baldwin.***

***How can I develop effective learning strategies with my Year 11 GCSE French group? Clayton Hughes.***

***How can I work with the Deputy Head of Year and Year Team in order to become a more empowering teacher. David Sulley.***

***How can I make a personal career development plan and prepare myself for the next stage of my career? Diane Lewis.***

Moyra's publications include:

Evans, M. (1996) *An action research inquiry into reflection in action as part of my role as a deputy headteacher. (See Chapter 8 - Creating my own living educational theory)* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kingston. Examiners: Profs. Jean Rudduck and Michael Bassey.

Using Story to Promote Continuing professional Development for Teachers. *Journal of In-service Education*. vol. 24, No.1, 1998, pp. 47-55.

Shifting the Leadership focus from Control to Empowerment - a case study. *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 17, No.2, 1997, pp. 273-283.

**C) 'How can I support teachers in establishing action research approaches to professional development in their school in a way which can help to improve the quality of pupils' learning?'**

**Dr. Jean McNiff**

Jean has been particularly influential in a range of local and international contexts in developing action research approaches to teachers' professional development and the processes of improving the quality of pupils' learning. Without Jean's enthusiasm and commitment, to generative forms of action research and the creation of living educational theories, the ideas would not have spread through a range of national and international contexts. Her spirit has been an inspiration and I want to acknowledge a huge debt of gratitude. The Symposium on Education for Mutual Understanding, to which she contributed at the British Educational Research Association in Belfast in August 1998, with colleagues from Queens University and elsewhere, was a highlight of the conference.

Jean's publications include:

1989 *An Explanation for an Individual's Educational Development Through the Dialectic of action Research*; Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath

1992 *Action Research: Principles and Practice*, London; Routledge.

1993 *Teaching as Learning: an action research approach*, London; Routledge.

1994 (Ed. with Una Collins) *A New Approach to In-Career Development for Teachers in Ireland*, Bournemouth; Hyde.

1996 (with Lomax & Whitehead) *You and Your Action Research Project*, London; Routledge.

**Prof. Pam Lomax**



Pam is Professor of Educational Research at Kingston University and this year's President of the British Educational Research Association. Her Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association on *Working Together to Create Community Through Research*, contains an excellent bibliography of her writings and a description of the support developed by Pam and her colleagues in creating the Kingston Hill Action Research Group. Working with Moyra Evans they developed the award winning partnership between Denbigh School and Kingston University as they worked together to support the creation of a teacher-researcher group at Denbigh School. Pam's proposal on Creating Educative Communities through Educational Research has been accepted as the BERA Symposium at the American Educational Research Association in Montreal in April 1999 and the papers will be available on the Action Research Homepage in April.

Working with Pam has been a great sustaining force and some of the results of our collaboration have recently been published in the paper:

The process of improving learning in schools and universities through developing research-based professionalism and a dialectic of collaboration in teaching and teacher education, 1977-1997, British Journal of In-Service Education, Vol. 23, No.3.

**D) 'How can I/we fulfil my/our 'system' responsibility for teacher development, standards of practice, staff appraisal or curriculum development?'**

**Jackie Delong and Ron Wideman,**

Jackie and Ron, working in the context of Ontario, show what can be achieved in a partnership between staff working in a School Board (Grand Erie) and a University (Nipissing). Their publications include:

Delong, J & Wideman, R. (Ed) (1997) Action Research: School Improvement through Research-Based Professionalism. This Action Research Kit, which includes a video and introductory text by Jean McNiff, highlights the experiences of educators participating in the process of action research in Ontario classrooms, schools, and boards of education. The approaches being developed by Jackie and Ron view action research as learning in action; as an on-going cycle of acting, reflecting and revising which is focused on improving practice; as working best when a teacher has a critical friend of a staff group with whom to share; as a way in which teachers can take change of their own professional growth; which is committed to improving the quality of student learning.

The Grand Erie Board in which Jackie works as a Superintendent of Schools and Peter Moffatt is the Director of Education will be trialing the new standards of practice being developed by the Ontario College of Teachers.

Jackie's and Peter's publications include:

Jackie Delong and Peter Moffatt, (1996) Building a Culture of Involvement, ORBIT, Vol. 27, No.4.pp.33-36.

## Erica Holley

Erica Holley is Head of Upper School of Greendown Community School, in Swindon, U.K.

Holley, E. (1997) *How do I, as a teacher researcher, contribute to the development of living educational theory through an exploration of my values in my professional practice?* M.Phil. Theses, University of Bath. Examiners: Dr. Paul Denley and Dr. Tony Ghaye. In one section of her dissertation Erica shows how she responded to 'managerial demands' that she 'appraise' staff in relation to linguistic lists, through a collaborative form of peer appraisal which was focused on a mutual concern to help each other to improve the quality of pupils' learning.

Erica's achievement is all the more noteworthy as she sustained her commitment to her enquiry through the time when the economic rationalist policies of a Conservative Government were creating enormous pressures on teachers through the cutbacks in the support services of our local authorities.

Having focused on the practitioner researchers whose work I am commending to you I now want to concentrate on the processes of legitimating the living educational theories which have been created and embodied in most of their work and which help to guide them. In particular I want to focus on the nature of the living values or standards of judgement which the teacher- researchers have used to validate their claims to professional knowledge. I also want to explore the implications of legitimating living educational theories as teachers' professional knowledge in partnerships between the Academy, Professional Development Centres and a Teacher's Council.

Because of the ferment in academic life, related to what has become known as the postmodern condition, I feel the need to locate my ideas on reconstructing educational knowledge in relation to this condition and in relation to the nature of the values used by teacher-researchers in creating and testing their professional knowledge.

In his important report for the University of Quebec in 1979 on 'The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Lyotard (1984) describes this condition as a 'scepticism towards Grand Narrative'. In advocating that each individual creates their own living educational theories in their autobiographies of their learning, I do locate myself in a postmodern context. Yet, I also want to hold on to some of the values of a Grand Narrative. For example, the world is gripped by the globalisation of capital movements. The Chicago academics who founded the Fund for Long Term Capital Management have played the 'free market' and lost billions of dollars as they moved them around the world in search of the maximisation of profits with no concern for the effects of such large global movements of cash on the economies of the countries concerned. The Grand Narrative of Capitalism does provide me with some valuable understandings of some of the economic and political forces which are influencing what I am able to do in education. I see no difficulty in holding on to both a sense of the postmodern in the creation of living educational theories and the integration,

within these living theories, of insights from Grand Narratives in the form of conceptual abstractions in propositional theories.

Indeed, I find analyses, such as those offered by Jim Graham (1998), both helpful and disturbing. I find it helpful to be able to understand how teacher professionalism has been one of the key arenas in which the contradictions of economic and social change have been played out in a series of crises of control for the state (p.11). I find the analysis offered by my colleague Hugh Lauder (Brown and Lauder, p.6, 1996) on Fordism, Neo-Fordism and Post-Fordism most persuasive as it helps me to understand my present disquiet with the policies being pursued by our New Labour Government, a government I voted for and fought hard to see elected. I share Graham's concern that far from being a radical transformation to recognise the importance of teachers as professionals in the premier division of international economic and social activity, the current policies are, *'locked in the Tory legacy of blinkered bureaucratic myopia essentially committed to maintaining traditional patterns of power and control at the expense of precisely the social and economic objectives they propose to achieve'* (p.12).

Whilst I find such Grand Narratives provide me with helpful insights, I often find myself disturbed by the way some of their totalising conclusions appear, within their powerful rhetoric, to embrace a concern with the local and living, yet manage to obliterate any evidence of this concern within the totalising structures of their language. A characteristic they share with traditional forms of theory. It may be helpful at this point if I share some of ideas which led me to reconstruct my view of educational theory.

A focus for my own learning about the nature of the knowledges and theories created by different educational researchers occurred in 1971, whilst doing some classroom research for my masters degree. I was trying to understand how to answer and research my classroom questions of the kind, 'how do I help you to improve your learning?', in relation to my pupils. At the beginning of my enquiry, largely through the influence of my physical science degree programme, the cognitive psychologists and the linguistic philosophers tutoring me, I held the view that educational theories were constituted by general forms of conceptual, abstract explanation. From the general form of explanation I believed a theory could produce a valid explanation for the actions of individuals or groups. I believed that educational theory was constituted by such general forms of explanation in the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education (Peters 1966, Hirst & Peters 1970). I also believed that statements of fact and statements of value formed independent realms of discourse and that contradictions must be eliminated from correct thought.

As I was conducting my classroom enquiries with my pupils I came to question these fundamental assumptions in my view of educational theory. Through focusing on my enquiry, 'How do I improve my practice?', and being open to the influence of Michael Polanyi's (1958) ideas in *Personal Knowledge*, I came to see, with the aid of video-tapes of my practice that 'I' existed as a living contradiction in my claim to know what I was doing as I worked at my classroom enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. I also understood that I created matters of fact, in moving my classroom

resources to support enquiry learning, from matters of value, as I worked at enabling my pupils to form their own questions and at providing the resources which would enable them to answer them.

These insights helped me to see that my living educational theories were not constructed in the form of the conceptual or propositional frameworks of the traditional disciplines of education, but were living forms of explanation. By this I mean that the explanations were embodied in my present practice in terms of an evaluation of my past and in terms of an intention to create something better in the future. The explanatory principles which constituted my explanations as 'theory' were the values I used to give my life its meaning and purpose and whose meanings emerged through action. The communication of these values to others needed both ostensive definitions, related to practice, and value-words such as loving care, freedom, justice and democracy. One of the problems with text-based theses which are bound on library shelves is that our written language cannot carry our non-verbal communications. Yet, I imagine that we would all acknowledge the importance of non-verbal communication. I do support Elliott Eisner's (1993) call for us to extend the forms of representation we use in communicating our educational research and claims to educational knowledge. Michael Schratz and Ulrike Steiner-Löffler (1998) Rob Walker and Ron Lewis (1998) have shown the potential of such extensions through their use of photographs and the use of the world wide web. I will come back to this point when I look at the potential of the Internet for communicating to each other our educational research and standards of judgement.

In 1989 the publication of Richard Winter's *Learning from Experience* helped to take my ideas forward on the ways in which the 'rigour' of action research accounts could be enhanced through the use of dialectical and reflective critiques, the use of multiple resources and a plural structure, highlighting risk and emphasising the processes of theory practice transformations. Richard also helped to take my ideas forward in his keynote address to the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) Conference in November 1997 where he developed the idea that theories in action research could be seen as forms of 'improvisatory self-realisation'. This idea fitted well with my commitment to supporting action researchers in the creation of their own living theories. You can access Richard's keynote address from my homepage link to the CARN Homepage.

I also want to thank John Schostak of the University of East Anglia, whose enthusiasm for the work of Seyla Benhabib (1992, p.6), stimulated my reading of her work on situating the self and helped me to see more clearly the importance of discourse in establishing the validity of my truth claims and the importance of narrative in constituting my identity and values base through self-study.

In making these points about different kinds of educational knowledge and theory I agree with David Bridges (1998) that, as an educational researcher I am also 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. Where I need to extend my understanding is in relation to the appropriate forms of representation of the spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values which help to constitute my educational enquiries, my educative relationships and my truth

claims. I also need to deepen my understanding of how knowledge-claims which contain such values can be tested for validity and legitimated.

The importance of such research can be seen in the problems of establishing appropriate standards of judgement for examining teachers' professional learning. Throughout my academic life I have met colleagues who simply accept that they have the competence to make these judgements. Until 1991, in my University, their academic judgements were protected by the regulations, against being questioned under any circumstances. Thankfully, this no longer applies and questions are permitted on the grounds of bias, prejudice and inadequate assessment. Kevin Eames is a teacher-researcher who included correspondence on this issue as an afterword to his Ph.D. Thesis on the professional knowledge-base of teaching. I have already recommended his work to you.

John Elliott (1998) who has been doing much to support action research in Ireland, draws on the work of the Ford Teaching Project to show how a professional knowledge-base can be constructed through action research, as teachers engage in standards-setting. I accept his recommendation that teachers engage in a form of 'creative compliance' in relation to external standards setting. He advocates that the teaching profession responds to external requirements by developing the capacity to accommodate and creatively reinterpret the external standards as part of the profession's well articulated and publicly defensible standards framework.

I view each of the 'living theory' accounts, on the Web at the above address, as a contribution to the creative re-interpretation of such professional standards of practice and judgement for the teaching profession.

In making these points, about legitimation and values as standards of judgement, I do not want to ignore the importance of researching the influence of power relations on the processes of legitimation and validation. Morwenna Griffiths (1998) has focused on helping researchers who want justice to argue among themselves in such a way that they are united. I agree with Morwenna's 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. If you do adopt your own living theory approach to professional development I would urge you to integrate insights from Griffiths' philosophical analyses of education within your 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 our practical engagements, as educators, with the power relations associated with legitimising and validating our knowledge in the Universities in the process of asking, answering and researching such questions.

I will emphasise this by focusing on the action research thesis of Jacqui Hughes and the circumstances surrounding its examination.

Hughes, J. (1996) *Action Planning and Assessment in Guidance Contexts: How can I understand and support these processes?* Ph.D Thesis, University of Bath.  
Examiners: Profs. Ian Jamieson and Michael Bassey,

The analyses of her learning and the learning of her supervisor and tutor as they developed their understanding of some of the power relationships surrounding the legitimisation of this educational knowledge will be published in December 1998:

Hughes, J., Denley, P. & Whitehead, J. (1998) How do we make sense of the process of legitimising an educational action research thesis for the award of a Ph.D. degree? - a contribution to educational theory, in the Educational Action Research Journal.

This paper stresses the importance of engaging with the power relations within one's own workplace when such relations appear to support the truth of power rather than the power of truth. The paper also raises the issue of the 'unconscious incompetence' of academics in the context of supervision and examination.

I have developed this analysis in more detail in the two papers to BERA 98. The first (Whitehead 1998a) was presented as a 'victory' narrative to the Symposium, Philosophy and Educational Research, convened by David Bridges. The second (Whitehead 1998b) was presented as research as 'ruin' to the Symposium Educational Change in Higher Education, convened by Roger Murphy. Both of these papers can be downloaded from my Action Research Homepage in the menu section on Writings related to my Work/ BERA and AERA presentations.

I will conclude this section with an emphasis on the importance of Professional Development Centres for providing appropriate opportunities for teachers to extend their professional learning. Here are some details from a Portfolio Assessment programme for teachers' professional development I have been involved in with Professional Development Centres in England:

### *Learning Outcomes*

*i) The participants will learn how to gather evidence of their professional development as they work at questions related to improving the quality of pupils learning.*

*The evidence in the portfolios will be drawn from data such as:*

- \* prior professional development;*
- \* pupils' test scores;*
- \* pupils' work which shows their learning;*
- \* contributions to departmental or school policy;*
- \* autobiographical accounts which reveal professional values and commitments;*
- \* action plans;*
- \* data from classroom, school and other activities used as evidence in a description and explanation of your professional learning;*

- \* *an annotated bibliography of your professional reading;*
- \* *critical familiarity with relevant research;*
- \* *application of research evidence in your school based project;*
- \* *video-tapes and other visual and audio records of classrooms and other professional practices;*
- \* *evaluations of actions in terms of values, skills and understanding;*
- \* *new action plans which show a modification of concerns, action plans and actions in the light of the evaluations;*
- \* *evaluations from colleagues which show how you have validated your c  
claims to understand your professional learning as you  
influence/improve/understand your pupils' learning;*
- \* *evidence from another colleague's portfolio which shows how you are i  
influencing their professional development in the process of helping  
pupils to improve their learning;*
- \* *creative use of a variety of media for analysis and sharing of work in  
progress e.g. hypertext.*

*ii) The participants will learn how to construct a portfolio in a form which shows and explains the relationships between the professional learning and the processes of improving the quality of pupils' learning.*

Participants in this progress have been given information on how to access the above teacher-researcher accounts from the Internet and I now want to consider the potential of this medium for teachers' professional learning.

### **3) Demonstrating the potential of the internet for:**

**i) Constructing, communicating and testing teachers' professional knowledge.**

**ii) Defining and communicating the values used by teachers for evaluating the validity of their living educational theories. I am thinking particularly of the different meanings of the spiritual, aesthetic and moral values which can be communicated through multi-media presentations.**

The power of the internet is part of a global transformation in communications. I am thinking both of its help in communicating teachers narratives and its potential, with the expanding band widths, to carry video-images as well as words, pictures and sound.

The dramatic increase in users of the internet is a phenomena of our time. Let me just see how many of you have browsed the internet or downloaded material from the internet. When I asked this question of my novice teacher groups two years ago, only 2 out of 30 had this experience. This year all 50 had used the internet in these ways. When my son Jonathan created my action research web-page in March 1995 there were almost 1000 logins during the first year and some 2000 in the second year. So far this year it is over 5000. The web is full of innovation. If you look at David Geelan's Ph.D. Theses from Curtin University you will see how the internet can be used to assist in the construction of Theses and Dissertations as well as to take educational enquiries forward. If you look at the Pepsi Cola homepage you will see

how the multi-media technology could be used to extend our understanding of how to integrate film, sound, graphics and text within the narratives of our educational journeys.

My own interest in the internet is now focused on its capacity to communicate the spiritual, aesthetic and moral qualities in educative relationships. I have been helped in this growing awareness by Helen Hallissey, an Irish drama teacher who has been exploring the value of drama in developing pedagogy across the curriculum. Helen has been working with a Professional Development Centre in Cork and has been most influential in showing me the power of images for communicating feelings in educative relationships.

Let me just give you an example of the new power of communication provided by CD-Roms and the WEB. These CD-Roms contain the contents of my action research homepage and Tom Russell's homepage at Queen's University in Kingston Ontario. Just by dropping the main file onto a netscape icon you have access to all the information on my web page. The growth of the on-line journals is also a great support for teacher-researchers. From my action research homepage you can go to other sites of interest including such on-line journals.

Just imagine the different meanings we will be able to communicate with the aid of video-images. If you access the picture of Jane Verburg, a teacher at Oldfield Girls School in Bath in my paper to BERA 98 (Whitehead 98a) I wonder what you will see and feel is being communicated to her pupil at this moment? The spiritual energy I feel in my educative relationships is communicated to me through Jane's being as she shows her delight in being with her pupil.

Loving care, the values of freedom and justice, as they are embodied in teachers' lives, do not shine through the linguistic checklists of standards of practice of the TTA. They do however shine through the general prologue of Moira Laidlaw's Ph.D. which was viewed by her external examiners as amongst the best pieces of reflective writings they had read. As The Teachers Council in Ireland works on the procedures for accrediting teachers' professional learning I am suggesting that it will enhance professionalism and morale in teaching by awarding professional recognition to these values as fundamentally important in the lives and professional learning of teachers and educators.

What the Internet is enabling us to do is to build up our case studies and studies of singularities as we describe and explain our professional learning as we ask, answer and research questions of the kind, 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?'. It is enabling us to create valid explanations for the educative influences of teachers with their pupils (Holley 1997) in ways which can embrace the qualities more usually communicated through the expressive arts. I fear however, that the possibilities of the technology in helping to create new forms of educational knowledge and theory is running ahead of our capacity to accredit and legitimate teachers' knowledge in the Academy as we remain bound to our text-based cultures.

In conclusion, in sharing my learning over the past decade and some of my hopes for the next decade, I would say: learn from the partnerships created by Jean McNiff with



the University of the West of England and between Moyra Evans at Denbigh School and Pam Lomax at Kingston University. These kinds of partnership are the bedrock of professional development because they focus on the generative capacities of teachers to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the professional status of teaching. They rest on the enthusiasm, commitment and care of teachers for their pupils and their education, and the sustained commitment of providers of in-service support for professional learning in Professional Development Centres.

Then comes the need for sustained support for professional and academic recognition through accredited programmes of Education which also lead to the recognition of professional educators. I have suggested that the Irish Education System has much to learn from the Teaching Training Agency and the Ontario College of Teachers. I am thinking of learning from what Ted Wragg has referred to as an 'Unmitigated Disaster' in approaches used by the TTA. I am thinking of learning from what I have referred to as the creative and generative capacities of the Ontario College of Teachers. I am sure you will find a uniquely Irish way of creating and sustaining partnerships between your Universities, Professional Development Centres and Teachers' Council for the professional development of teachers in a way which will have wider significance in our international contexts. It maybe that the Teachers Council will be the first such body to recognise the professional learning of teachers in terms of initial accreditation as a Teacher, followed by opportunities to develop as Teacher-Educators, Master-Educators and Doctor-Educators. Whatever arrangement you come to, for enhancing professionalism in teaching, I feel sure that you will create a network of support for teachers' professional learning which will be focused on what I imagine is the shared concern of helping pupils to improve the quality of their learning.

I want to acknowledge the importance of the following organisations in providing forums for the public presentations of my papers. Without these forums I doubt if I would have had the motivations to gather my ideas together and to take my enquiries forward. I also know the importance for my productive life and enquiries of my colleagues in our Monday evening teacher-researcher group and of the company of Sarah Fletcher, Jen Russ, John Fisher and Carmel Smith in our Department of Education.

**TAKING CHARGE OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE WITH ACTION RESEARCH**  
A keynote address to the Annual Conference of the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education at Warwick University, U.K. on 11 October, 1998.

**THE EDUCATIONAL THEORIES OF AN EDUCATOR AND SOME PHILOSOPHIES OF EDUCATION.** A revised paper following a presentation to the Symposium convened by David Bridges on Philosophy of Education and Educational Research at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association in Belfast 27-30 August 1998.

**EDUCATIONAL THEORIES OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION: ROBUSTNESS IN THE ROMAN RUINS.** A paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association in Belfast 27-30 August 1998, to the Symposium on 'Educational Change Within Higher Education' convened by Roger Murphy.

**ACTION RESEARCHERS CREATING THEIR OWN LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORIES** - A paper presented to the Action Research SIG session 9.45 of the American Educational Research Association Conference in San Diego on 14/3/98.

**CREATING LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORIES THROUGH PARADIGMATIC AND POSTPARADIGMATIC POSSIBILITIES.** A paper presented at the BERA symposium at session 39.38 of the American Educational Research Association Conference in San Diego on 16/3/98.

**EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH AND YOU.** A keynote address to The Ontario Educational Research Council Conference on 5/12/97 in Toronto.

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