

'Risk and Resilience in Higher Education in Improving Practice and Generating Knowledge'

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Abstract

This address acknowledges the assertion of the conference organizers that we must participate fully in the knowledge explosion and a society of global interaction, by focusing on the following questions that we have been asked to address:

What risks do our students face, as they embark on the trajectory of higher education? In what ways is risk-taking inherent to higher education? What risks face each of us, in our specific roles? How can we, and our students, learn to respond to risk with resilience?

Responses to these questions will be given from accounts, including my own, of how the enquiries of students in Higher Education from different cultural contexts can take sources of uncertainty into consideration during the generation of their own living educational theories (see <http://www.actionresearch.net/living.shtml>).

As explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and in the learning of the social contexts in which we live and work, these theories enable doubt, vulnerability and risk to be recognised not as a basis for fearful paralysis, but as generative for improving practice with caring dynamic relationships (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Hence they can transform our perceptions of what counts as educational knowledge in Higher Education.

Multi-media visual narratives will be used to communicate what I mean by speaking of 'inclusional embodied values in new living standards of judgment'.

Introduction

I shall begin by thanking the organizers of the 2009 HELTASA conference here in the University of Johannesburg for the invitation to present a keynote on risk and resilience in higher education for improving practice and generating knowledge. I have felt inspired by your hospitality, the quality of the other keynotes and presentations, and the attentiveness of the public relations students from UJ who have done so much to create a feeling of community in the

conference. I liked the welcome from Professor Rensberg when he said that we 'don't take your presence for granted'. In the keynote I want to focus on the importance of recognizing each other's presence, life enhancing energy, values and understandings in bringing our embodied knowledge into the universities as legitimate knowledge. I'd also like to build on Joy Mighty's keynote when she ended with a challenge to each of us about the actions we are taking and especially about 'when' we are going to act. In presenting this keynote I also want to risk what Mark Schofield advocated in his keynote in moving from being a 'Sage on the Stage' to being a 'Guide on the Side'.

If the technology works – and there is always the risk that it doesn't – I want to show you my view of you, the audience in the auditorium before turning the camera on myself as you focus on the individual on the 'stage'. Your collective embodied knowledge, the knowledge as educators you could bring into the public domain and extend the influence of your educational values and understandings far exceeds my own, as an individual. Yesterday we heard from the four colleagues who had received a national award for their teaching and learning in higher education. Much of my address is focused on the importance of making public such embodied knowledge. Vanessa Burch spoke to her questions, 'What do I do?', 'What do I care about?' and of her passion to enable her students to control their own learning. Adri Beylefeld explained how she had made public her learning and embodied knowledge and emphasized the importance of this public sharing of our knowledge as educators in improving practice. When you have time I'd like you to look at the titles of all the presentations in the programme and then focus on the only 'I' question in the programme from John Ruiters, 'How can I as an educational advisor develop a critical understanding of resilience through my interactions with three financially at-risk students?'

I'm also hoping that the keynote can be seen as a contribution to responses to Brenda Liebowitz's Presidential Address to HELTASA on the 26th November, of the importance of a social justice approach to social development. Brenda also focused on the importance of documenting and sharing our learning so that it does not get lost.

My challenge to myself in this keynote is also focused on my learning to be in the process of sharing some understandings of improving practice and generating knowledge that I hope you will find useful through asking, researching and answering such 'I' questions.

Part of my learning to be is to use technology in a way that helps to hold open a creative space and encourages individuals to share the narratives of their educational influences as gifts through the internet. You can participate in a such a space and access such gifts from <http://www.actionresearch.net> . Here is a creative space you all have access to in the practitioner-researcher JISCmail forum. JISC stands for the Joint Information Systems Committee. Mark has been active in supporting this government funded organization that gives UK academics unprecedented access to the creation of e-forums of their choice. You can join this from the What's New section of my website – as well as accessing

my notes for this keynote.

You can also access the gifts from educators like ourselves who have engaged in self studies of enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' from a range of cultural contents in masters and doctoral enquiries.

In this keynote I wish to retain a focus on the following statements from the conference organizers:

In the constantly evolving landscape of Higher Education, students, academics, and policy makers are continuously challenged to take risks, and to find ways of overcoming risks, not least by becoming resilient. The conference will explore risk and resilience as core concepts of the international higher education sector, and specifically as core to the experience of first year students. South African Higher Education stands presently at a particularly 'risky' juncture: the National Senior Certificate is still largely unfamiliar to us, while ever more students, and particularly first generation students, are entering Higher Education; economic collapse brings with it increasing financial stringency; at the same time we must participate fully in the knowledge explosion and a society of global interaction. What risks do our students face, as they embark on the trajectory of higher education? In what ways is risk-taking inherent to higher education? What risks face each of us, in our specific roles? How can we, and our students, learn to respond to risk with resilience?

Over the past 42 years of professional engagement in education I have researched the growth of my own educational knowledge in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Given the title of my address on risk and resilience in higher education in improving practice and generating knowledge, I want to include risk and resilience in a self-study of my own higher education in both improving practice and generating knowledge over these past 42 years of professional engagement in education. If you wish to engage with this self-study I have documented and analysed it in three publications (Whitehead, 1993; 2004; 2008b) that you can access freely on the Internet from Appendix One.

I shall now address four questions asked by the conference organizers.

- i) What risks do our students face as they embark on the trajectory of higher education?
- ii) In what ways is risk-taking inherent to higher education?
- iii) What risks face each of us, in our specific roles?
- iv) How can we, and our students, learn to respond to risk with resilience?

1) What risks do our students face as they embark on the trajectory of higher education?

I like the way Erich Fromm (1960, p. 18) describes a choice facing human beings in his 'Fear of Freedom'. Fromm says that if a person can face the truth without panic they will realize that there is no purpose to life other than that which they

create for themselves through their loving relationships and productive work. He says that we are faced with the choice of uniting with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work or of seeking a kind of security that destroys our integrity and freedom. One of the greatest risks that our students face as they embark on the trajectory of higher education are pressures in the socio-cultural context to conform to authoritarian governance that can stifle academic freedom, questioning creativity, social justice and a love of educational learning.

I am stressing the importance of educational learning because not all learning is educational. Individuals and societies can learn to conduct themselves in ways that can treat other human beings as less than human, as history shows with devastating repetition. I was born in England in 1944 in a raging world war with crimes against humanity. Increasing reflection on this has made me particularly sensitive to the importance of making sure that learning is educational in the sense of carrying hope for the future of humanity rather than perpetrating crimes against humanity. A recent visit to the memorial in Bloemfontein to the women and children who died in the concentration camps in South Africa established by the British during the Boer War has highlighted for me the risks of a failure to ensure that learning is educational. Hence the greatest risk facing students embarking on higher education continues to be the one of a failure of the individual and the culture to ensure that learning is educational.

One of the greatest risks faced by students in higher education is that their lecturers do not recognise the danger of replacing the practical principles used by the students to explain their learning, by the concepts from the theoretical abstractions in their propositional theories.

For example I like the way Tannen demonstrates and awareness of this danger in responses to the 'comically inept solemnity of a conceptual investigation of love':

"The article is called "A Conceptual Investigation of Love" and begins by lamenting the fact that such a subject as love receives so little attention from Philosophers in the writer's tradition. The analysis proceeds:

Having defined the field of investigation, we can now sketch the concepts analytically presupposed in our use of 'love'. An idea of these concepts can be gained by sketching a sequence of relations, the members of which we take as relevant in deciding whether or not some relationship between persons A and B is one of love. These are not relevant in the sense of being evidence for some further relation 'love' but as being, in part at least, the material of which love consists. The sequence would include at least the following:

- i) A knows B (or at least knows something of B)*
- ii) A cares (is concerned) about B*
A likes B
- iii) A respects B*
A is attracted to B
A feels affection for B

iv) A is committed to B
A wishes to see B's welfare promoted.

The connection between these relations which we will call 'love-comprising relations' or 'LCRs' is not, except for 'knowing about' and possibly 'Feels affection for' as tight as strict entailment. (Newton-Smith, W. pp 118-119,1973)

The analysis continues in the same vein, prompting the question: How has such comically solemn ineptitude become possible? For it isn't as if this comes out of the blue; the philosophical climate is such that if one chooses to write on such a topic as love - more the kind of thing that Iberians are expected to do - there are strong forces leading one to do it in the style of the quoted passage." (Tannen, 1980, p. 459)

The risk of using abstract concepts that become divorced from human experience in students' learning can be overcome using the TASC approach developed by Wallace (2000) in her work in Zwa Zulu Natal. TASC stands for Thinking Actively In A Social Context and has been used in my own work with young and older researchers from 5-65 years old.



The risk to our students is that their learning experiences in higher education are not educational in that they fail to emphasise the inclusion of love (Lohr, 2006; Walton, 2008) and compassion (Naidoo, 2005) in an individual's higher education.

I shall return to the risk that students' learning is not educational when responding to question 4) below.

2) In what ways is risk-taking inherent to higher education?

In the present social movements of globalization in economics and

communications it is clear that higher education around the world is being influenced by economics. One has only to look at the present crisis in the control of capital through international banking, the impact on production in different economies, rising unemployment and cuts in social services such as health and education to experience at first hand the influence of economic and socio-cultural forces in higher education.

Different cultures are responding differently to the risks and opportunities of global communications through the internet. We live in a time of unprecedented access to information and knowledge and this carries a threat to those societies that wish to remain closed to such influences.

Given the present economic and socio-cultural influences in higher education, risk-taking is inherent to higher education if one holds the view that higher education should include educational learning that carries hope for the future of humanity and our own. Having followed the recent history of South Africa I recognise the tensions between developing an economy that provides employment and the revenues to invest in education, health and other social provision and developing higher education in a way that provides for a skilled workforce and the necessary motivation and commitment to meet the challenges that can only be met by a strong and sustained commitment to community service. I draw on Sen's economic theory of human capability to emphasise the importance of including values that carry hope for the future of humanity in moving beyond an economic theory of human capital:

"...what, we may ask, is the connection between "human capital" orientation and the emphasis on "human capability" with which this study has been much concerned? Both seem to place humanity at the center of attention, but do they have differences as well as some congruence? At the risk of some oversimplification, it can be said that the literature on human capital tends to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting production possibilities. The perspective of human capability focuses, on the other hand, on the ability-the substantive freedom-of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have. The two perspectives cannot but be related, since both are concerned with the role of human beings, and in particular with the actual abilities that they achieve and acquire. But the yardstick of assessment concentrates on different achievements." (Sen 1999, p. 293)

The main risks inherent in higher education concern the skills and understandings being developed in higher education. Whilst I believe that the skills need to be appropriate for economic development it is my contention that the understandings need to include a commitment to community service to enhance the quality of life of those most disadvantaged in the present circumstances. The risk is that the learning of the skills becomes divorced from the energies of mind and values that are necessary to guide the technical skills and that the learning becomes an unwitting agent of advanced capitalism. Whitehead (1929) warned of the danger of prolonging the imposition of technical skills in relation to higher education as early as 1929 in his work on

The Aims of Education. The risk is that the elimination of energy-flowing values from social theories of education can serve the interests of advanced capitalism. I mean this in the sense of eliminating from educational discourses forms of accountability that include the values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

There are also tensions between the expression of academic freedom to question received wisdom within the law and an employer's demand for loyalty. Academic freedom to criticize one's employer can conflict with loyalty if one feels it necessary to criticize one's employer. In the UK we have a case involving the sacking of a scientific adviser to the government who has studied addictions to cannabis, alcohol and tobacco and concluded that the government's policy on the classification of cannabis is mistaken. His exercise of his academic freedom to question the government's policy has led to his sacking. One of my own students risked his employment when he discovered a large difference of many thousands of pounds difference between what a local authority claims that they were spending on resources in schools and what was actually being provided. He showed great courage in making public the false claims whilst overcoming challenges to his continuing employment.

Je Kan Adler-Collins (2007) has analyzed the risks, together with his resilience, in developing and implementing a curriculum for the healing nurse at Fukuoka University in Japan. Adler-Collins analyses his learning as he encounters cultural differences between his upbringing and higher education in the UK for his masters and doctoral degrees and the expectations on an academic in higher education in a Japanese University. He examines his learning and responses to these differences as he brings a curriculum for the healing nurse that includes the healing power of touch into a cultural context that does not have a history of valuing such a curriculum. For those interested in spiritual resilience Adler-Collins integrates his understandings of Buddhist ways of being into his living theory of his educational influences in learning.

3) What risks face each of us, in our specific roles?

Given my belief in the uniqueness of our living theories in which we include our responses to the risks we take, I cannot speak for you in terms of the risks you take in your specific roles. But I can talk with the authority of experience of my own responses to risks in improving practice and generating knowledge.

Our risks are all different. They are influenced by our unique biographies and social contexts. A recent visit to the Kibera slum in Nairobi highlighted the influences of poverty and AIDS in a project being co-ordinated by Strathmore University. Wood, Morar, & Mostert, L. (2007), Wood, & Webb, (2008) and Wood (Ed., 2008) have also worked in AIDS related contexts and explored a living theory approach to transforming education in a South African context.

The risks and resilience of researchers on such projects are very different to my own as I focused on legitimating the living standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996) in living educational theories in the Academy, from the economic security

and well-being of a tenured position at the University of Bath.

In the risks faced by each of the living theory researchers below they have included their recognition of doubt, vulnerability and risk, not as a basis for fearful paralysis, but as generative for improving practice with caring dynamic relationships. In legitimating their original contributions to knowledge the Academy has accepted transformations in perceptions of what counts as educational knowledge in Higher Education.

I am not expecting any other reader to read all of these doctoral theses and one M.Phil. As a supervisor (with the exception of the theses of Barry Hymer and Swaroop Rawal) I have had the privilege of reading them all. They each represent a minimum of 5 years part time study by practitioner-researchers into their own practice and knowledge creation. The live urls take you to the Abstracts and contents of each living theory.

The living theories were produced in a range of cultural contexts from Alaska, Japan, Ireland, the UK and Canada. They each include stories of risk and resilience in higher education into improving practice and knowledge-creation. Of particular relevance to the South African context may be Eden Charles' thesis into bringing Ubuntu as a living standard of judgment into the Academy. Moira Laidlaw's (1996) thesis was a great influence in my own understanding of living standards of judgment. It was Moira's insight that developed my own understanding that it wasn't only important to clarify the meanings of standards of judgment in the course of their emergence in practice. It was vital to understand that the standards of judgment were themselves living and evolving.

If you are a tutor in higher education I think Mary Hartog's (2004) thesis will be of great interest. Mary received a national teaching award for the quality of her teaching and in her submission for the award drew evidence of her educational influence in her students' learning from her thesis on *A Self Study Of A Higher Education Tutor: How Can I Improve My Practice?*

In reading Eleanor Lohr's (2006) title 'Love and Work', you may be surprised to see love being included in living standards of academic judgment. A moment's reflection, on what you might be risking by seeking to bring love at work into your university as a living academic standard of judgment, will give some understanding of the courage of researchers who insist on recognizing the motivating power of love in their explanatory principles.

Jacqueline DeLong (2002) focused on the development of culture of inquiry, as she understood the importance of embedding ideas within the culture to enhance the possibility that they could be sustained and continue to evolve. Je Kan Adler-Collins (2007), working and researching in a Japanese University developed and implemented a curriculum for the healing nurse. This involved the creation of a safe space for experiencing therapeutic power of touch in a culture of nursing that did not use the therapeutic power of touch.

In producing her multi-media, living theory masters dissertation [Christine Jones \(2008\)](#) felt vulnerable in moving from a traditional form of academic representation to an inclusional academic form, in her enquiry, 'How do I

improve my practice as Inclusion Officer working in a Children's Service?' Christine exercised her originality and courage in producing a dissertation that brings her embodied knowledge as Inclusion Officer into the academy for legitimation.

I have included in Appendix 3 a list of the gifts of the living theory accounts, with the live urls giving you access to the Abstracts and Contents.

4) How can we, and our students, learn to respond to risk with resilience?

Learning to respond to risk with resilience is a characteristic of all living educational theories. The learning involves a strengthening of resolve to live one's values and understandings as fully as possible. It includes a deepening understanding of the socio-cultural influences that can constrain or provide opportunities for enhancing the flow of these values and understandings.

One of the latest living doctoral theses to explicitly address the issues of risk and resilience is that of Joan Walton (2008) in her enquiry, *Ways of Knowing: Can I find a way of knowing that satisfies my search for meaning?* I particularly like her living standard of judgment of a loving dynamic energy with spiritual resilience.

My own learning has included becoming more open to the affirming and life-enhancing energy of others. If I focus on the risk of embarrassment, as a continuous experience in working for the University of Bath as my employer, I recognize that my own resilience owes much to the affirming and sustaining support of others.

I am thinking of the affirmations such as I received in 'Jack Whitehead Validations' (Pound, Laidlaw and Huxtable 2009). This complete surprise was presented to me to mark my 65th Birthday on the 29th August 2009 and the end of my 36 years as a full-time academic in the School/Department of the University of Bath. [Robyn Pound, Moira Laidlaw and Marie Huxtable](#) brought together reflections from those I have worked with over the years in what I experience as a life-enhancing pooling of energy, values and understandings. Whilst others acknowledge my influence in their lives and learning, I am sustained in my commitment to what I do by their recognition and valuing of what I do. Part of my learning in supervising Mary Hartog's doctoral enquiry was in developing a greater understanding of 'Women's Ways of Knowing' with an emphasis on relational epistemologies and care for the other. I am aware of both the relational ways of being and the care for the other shown by the three women who edited 'Jack Whitehead Validations' as well as the other contributors.

My employment at the University of Bath has been protected by tenure from 1977. This means that I have had economic security for almost all my working life at the University. Hence I have not felt that a fear of a potential loss of employment has constrained the exercise of my academic freedom. I have however felt continuous embarrassment as an employee of the University. I wish

to make a clear distinction between the University of Bath, as a place of secure employment that required my loyalty as a condition of my employment and made judgments that created this continuous embarrassment, and a creative space for the free development of my research programme together with its public communication and the wonderful feeling of living a productive life.

In my previous publications I have explained my educational learning in responding to risk with resilience in the face of threats to: my employment before being offered tenure; not being permitted to question the judgments of examiners, the disciplinary power of the University; the rejection of an application for promotion. Once tenure protected my employment these experiences were matters of embarrassment rather than more serious responses in terms of fear of loss of employment or threats to my mental health and the termination of my research programme.

What has been most important in my educational learning to respond to risk with resilience has been openness to the state of being affirmed by the power of being itself. In using this language I draw on the work of Paul Tillich (1962, p. 168) but give the words a different meaning. As a Christian theologian Tillich related this affirmation to God. For me, my resilience owes much to remaining open to a flow of life-enhancing energy of the kind I experience in natural phenomena such as the sunset below.



I have also learnt to value the inspiration of others as they learn to respond to risk with resilience and share their accounts with myself and others (McNiff,

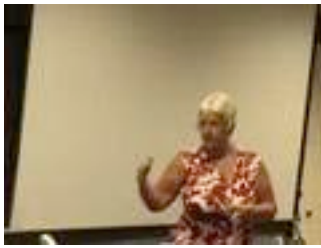
2007). I know that trust in oneself and others are sometimes difficult to establish and to sustain. Yet I do agree with the Jewish Theologian Martin Buber when he writes:

“The relation in education is one of pure dialogue.....Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists – that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists, meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth. (Buber, 1961, p.125)

I experienced such trust in the British Educational Research Association keynote symposium in September 2009 on *Explicating A New Epistemology For Educational Knowledge With Educational Responsibility*. There were contributions from Jane Renowden, Chris Jones, Marie Huxtable, myself, Christine Jones and Margaret Farren. Here is a page from my own contribution that focused on visual data from each of the presenters. What I have in mind when I refer below to the relational dynamic that explanatory principles will need to include is the quality of trust in our relationships as we each contribute to the symposium:

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

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



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yND2Ra7vdhQ&feature=related>

Christine Jones describing the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark at the Guildhall Bath on the 4th July 2007.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEr6JpichlQ>

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



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNjnmjHQrBY>

Jack Whitehead presenting a keynote at the International Conference of Teacher Research in April 2008 in New York.



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

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



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

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



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mG1KK8VEIzk> “

What the visual data shows is the expression of life-enhancing energy with values in the educational practices of all the contributors. Learning to feel part of an inclusional, collaborative, creative community of enquirers (Huxtable, 2009) helps me to strengthen my resilience in continuing to take risks in my higher education.

Here is one risk that I think is worth taking in the probability that it will alienate many of my academic colleagues including many of those I have worked with at the University of Bath. The risky point I want to make is related to something that was done by academic-researchers to practitioner-researchers in the 1960s to the 1980s in the UK and is still being done by many academic-researchers around the world.

In the 1960s-1980s the dominant view of educational theory in the UK was known as the disciplines approach. In this approach it was held that educational theory was constituted by the dominant disciplines of educational of the day of the history, philosophy, sociology and psychology of education. Paul Hirst, one its main proponents when he wrote in 1983 that much understanding of educational theory will be developed, recognized a mistake in this approach:

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

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

The seriousness of this mistake was that the practical principles in the embodied knowledge of teacher-researchers such as myself were to 'be replaced' by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. Generations of practitioners have experienced their embodied knowledge devalued by such a mistake in the Academy.

My experience of a working life in higher education is that there is a neglect being shown by adherents to disciplinary knowledge in relating their knowledge to the education of teachers in the creation of educational theories that can explain educational influences in learning. I am also thinking here of the humility distinguished by Martin Buber:

"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 'hierarchical' recognition is subordinated." (Buber, p 122, 1947)

I have experienced a neglect (Rayner, 2009, Appendix 2) of the significance of the practical principles used by individuals to explain their practice, by examiners and members of research committees who do not appear to comprehend the nature of appropriate standards of judgment for evaluating the quality of the representations of the embodied knowledge of educators or their explanations of educational influence. In 1991 I experienced such neglect on the part of a research committee of a UK university that required the removal of 'I' from the title of a doctoral enquiry before it could be accepted. There was a certain amount of ridicule involved in the change of mind of this committee.

Educational Researchers who insist that educational theories should explain the educational influences of individuals, in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations, continue to risk engagements with the colonizing power of adherents to disciplinary approaches to educational theory that are grounded in a 2,500 year old dispute between dialectical and propositional thinkers. In my view the exercise of this colonizing power is often accompanied by a lack of awareness of the colonizers that they are unwitting agents of advanced capitalism.

My anxiety for the future of the contributions to educational knowledge is grounded in the kinds of publication that are now judged at the highest level in research assessment exercises. My anxiety is that they these will continue to reproduce the mistake in the old disciplines approach to educational theory and 'replace' the practical principles in the embodied forms of knowledge of educators and other practitioner-researchers by their own abstract generalizations from their dialectical or propositional theories. My anxiety is that such publications show no comprehension of the inclusional nature of the practical principles of educators (Rayner, 2009a & b, Appendix Four). By this I mean that they show no comprehension of the embodied principles that show a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as connective, continuous, reflective and co-creative (Rayner, 2005) that flow with a life-enhancing energy.

Again, at the risk of challenging the ideological hegemony of the oppressive apparatus of academic discourse about educational theory, I shall focus on the possibility that the embodied expression of Ubuntu ways of being in South Africa, could be at risk of being distorted beyond recognition in the logic and language of Western Academic traditions. I shall focus on this possibility by addressing the question,

How do I express and communicate embodied values of Ubuntu in an explanation of their educational influence in my own learning and in the learning of others?

On a visit to the South African Universities of the Western Cape, Stellenbosch and the Free State and to the Novalis Ubuntu Institute in Cape Town, during February/March 2006, I had the opportunity to extend and deepen my understanding of Ubuntu. In Stellenbosch University I met Lesley Le Grange and was most impressed by the way he introduces his ideas on African philosophy of education and writes about Ubuntu (Le Grange, 2005):

"I go along with Usher (1996: 38) that the self that researches has an autobiography marked by the significations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and so on. I perform my work from a particular standpoint(s) or perhaps vantage point(s). Much of my work is written from the standpoint of a Black South African who has experienced first-hand the brutality of apartheid. Out of this experience I have developed sensitivities to the effects of all forms of oppression, including Africa's suffering in Guattari's (2001) three ecologies (mental, social and environmental), as a consequence of colonialism. I refer here to suffering evidenced by the wounded psyches of many Africans, the breaking down of kinship networks and the erosion of a large part of Africa's (bio) physical base." (Le Grange, p.126).

I agree with Le Grange that the self that researches/writes does not do so from nowhere, but performs their work from a particular (dis) position or perhaps (dis) positions. I agree that the authenticity of research work depends crucially on the use of reflexivity: both personal and epistemic/disciplinary reflexivity. Hence, I too will begin by demonstrating an awareness of my autobiography as well as with the discourses taken up through interaction with (Western) disciplinary knowledges that are influencing what I do and the ways I understand what I do (p. 139).

Much of my work is written from the (dis) position a white English man who was exposed to (Western) disciplinary knowledge in a free system of education in the UK through primary, grammar and university between 1959-1965. I have also had the opportunity between 1973-2009 to develop a vocational commitment to education and educational theory in a productive life with material well-being and economic security at the University of Bath in my work as a Lecturer in Education. This work includes tutoring master's students in their educational enquiries and supervising masters dissertations and doctoral research programmes.

In the course of this life I have encountered power relations that have evoked emotional distress, anxiety and tensions together with responses that have served to develop and strengthen my commitment to live my values as fully as I can (Whitehead, 1993, 2004, 2008, 2009a & b). I am thinking of my values of freedom, justice, love, educational enquiry, knowledge-creation, living educational theory and a productive life. Thankfully I have not experienced at first hand the physical brutality of a racist regime of apartheid. I will return to the embodied meanings of these values and their educational influences in my learning as I share my understandings of the significance of Ubuntu for educational research and theory.

My interaction with (Western) disciplinary knowledge includes a first degree in chemistry and physics, an academic diploma in the philosophy and psychology of education, a master's degree in the psychology of education and a doctoral degree in educational theory. In 1971, after studying the dominant disciplines approach to educational theory, I rejected its fundamental assumption that educational theory was constituted by the disciplines of the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education. My rejection was based on the understandings I had developed in my classroom practice as a teacher that no one else's theory, either individually or in any combination could produce an adequate explanation for my educational influence in my own learning or in the learning of others. This recognition changed my sense of vocation from being an educator to becoming an educational researcher and contributing to the generation of educational theories that could provide adequate explanations for the educational influences of individuals in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations. The present phase of my research programme includes the enquiry, *how do I express and communicate embodied values of Ubuntu in an explanation of their educational influence in my own learning and in the learning of others?* I am exploring the possibility that meanings of Ubuntu could provide a vitalizing and humanizing influence in the generation and testing of living educational theories. As part of this exploration I am including below a video narrative of my educational practice in a workshop and conversation in South Africa.

For Le Grange, Ubuntu, like all other African cultural values, has circulated primarily through orality and tradition. He says that it's meaning is interwoven in the cultural practices and lived experiences of African peoples. He is concerned that Ubuntu has been abstracted from its geographical and cultural situatedness and been placed in written discourses that form sites of contestation around Ubuntu. Le Grange also suggests that it is important to understand that Western knowledge systems/philosophies only have the appearance of universal truth because of colonialism and imperialism (p.135).

"I am also concerned about more subtle forms of colonization as knowledge is produced and rapidly disseminated across the globe in contemporary society. I am particularly concerned with a danger that indigenous ways of knowledge/African philosophies might become assimilated into an imperialist archive in the light of complex globalization processes currently prevalent. My usage of the term 'archive' is borrowed from Foucault (1972). Smith (1999:44) points out that western knowledges, philosophies and definitions of human nature form what Foucault (1972) has referred to as a 'cultural archive'." (p.136)

Given that my intention is to produce an **educational text** I want to avoid any unconscious or conscious complicity of assimilating Ubuntu within an imperialist archive. Like Le Grange I believe that it is the deconstructive/reconstructive potential of Ubuntu that needs to be explored and become part of our conversations and discourses. Le Grange's work is focused within/on a (South) African philosophy of education. I think his ideas have global significance. I agree with him that in

(South) Africa, where indigenous knowledge systems reside among the majority of its people and Western philosophies remain dominant through new forms of colonization latent in processes such as globalization, an African philosophy of education is vital (p.138). I think we share the belief that it is not only in (South) Africa that an African philosophy of education is vital. I believe that its global significance will spread, as its humanizing implications are more widely understood. I think this is consistent with Le Grange's interest in decentring Western philosophy by showing that it is a situated philosophy that has moved from its site(s) of production to other places not necessarily because of its superiority of universalism, but rather because it was aided and abetted by military power, imperialism and colonization (p.137).

In his use of the arguments of Giddens (1990) about globalization as an effect of disembedding knowledge Adams refers to his notion of reflexivity as the process of adapting knowledge for use in a new or distant context (Adams, 2005, p. 140). I am using these meanings of disembedding knowledge and reflexivity in exploring the possibility and desirability of developing living educational theories with Ubuntu in new and distant contexts from the sites of their original genesis.

In a visit to the Novalis- Ubuntu Institute, directed by Ralph Shepherd, in Cape Town I met Joan Conolly of Durban University of Technology. She gave me a copy of her paper on *Memory, Media and Research: Mnemonic Oral-style, Rhythmo-stylistics and the Computer* (Conolly, 2002). Conolly makes the point that "academic research is historically a scribal/literate exercise of a specific and high order, for a number of reasons". She says that "scribal literacy fixes large amounts of information outside of the human author(s) for dissemination across time and space" and that "it also allows the revision of a text before transmission, thus providing for refinement and concision of complex thinking, as well as allowing the modification and further refinement, revision and concision of the text even after its original transmission." For Conolly, "scribal literacy allows the identification and prescription of appropriate genres or structures by group consensus, where the decision-making group is that body of people closely associated with the production of writings in the relevant genre". She says that "it also allows the writing to exist on paper independently of its author, and for this reason becomes a defined and identifiable entity in its own right, which can be analysed and critiqued independently of its author(s) and in and on its own terms; (...) scribal literacy frees human memory from the task of extensive record keeping, the benefits of which are ambiguous and debatable".

While for Conolly "the scribal record captures and records aspects of the linguistic elements of the performance, i.e. the actual words are recorded, it does not", she believes, "record the dynamic vitality of the performance as an indivisible whole manifest in: the kinesthetic features, i.e. movement and gesture; the spatial features, i.e. line, form, shape; the paralinguistic and non-verbal aural features, i.e. non-verbal sounds, pitch, inflection, timbre, emphasis, vocal modulation; the temporal features, i.e. pace, pause; the interactive features, i.e. the responses of the audience":

The gestual-visual/oral-aural mode is more immediate and spontaneous than the literate mode. Its immediacy arises in the first instance from the performer's relationship with him/herself, the performance, the space and time in which the performer performs and from the face-to-face interaction between performer and audience during the performance. This influences the spontaneity of the performance: the performer can adjust his/her performance immediately according to his/her own responses with him/herself simultaneously with the responses from the audience. In effect, it can be argued that each performance is the unique product of the interactions within the performer and between performer and audience, and is therefore the product of simultaneous personal introspection and group authorship. In this wise, multiple authorships and occasions of authorship are intrinsic features of the oral tradition. A record of such a group-authored performance is only complete, faithful and authentic if it accounts for the performed text within its performance context and taking the audience engagement into account.....

In the video-narrative below that includes a videotape of me engaging with values of Ubuntu with participants in an action research workshop, I am seeking to use gestural-visual/oral-aural and scribal text to communicate my understandings of what I am doing in this educational practice with Ubuntu.

In his work on Ubuntu, Bhengu (1996) points out that a primary characteristic of African 'being' is its inclusiveness. Drawing on African Theology he points out that *Ubuntu* is a dynamic concept: it means all humans not only African humans (p.50). Hence in seeking to relate with Ubuntu I am seeing myself as existing within a dynamic form of inclusiveness. In saying this I will take care to avoid the dangers pointed out by Bhengu:

"... there is every danger of Ubuntu being hijacked and trivialized. The concept of Ubuntu can also be bastardised into an exclusively racial concept.... At present, the term Ubuntu is being bandied around carelessly. Some people ridicule the whole concept of Ubuntu so that it will eventually lose its meaning and essence, simply because, in their view, any thing that is African has no value. However, we Africans, because we are serious about building a sustainable democracy, still offer Ubuntu ideas as the answer to our problems." (Bhengu, 1996, pp. 54-55)

Shepherd (1996) in his Epilogue to Bhengu's book says that what is needed now is a new consciousness or revelation in which the Spirit of Ubuntu becomes the leading image of social development. He stresses the need for radical personal transformation so that Ubuntu shines through all that we think and feel and do in our interaction with our fellow human beings (p. 57):

"For centuries, Africa has been raped by an unconscious humanity in which millions of its people have been sold into slavery, its animals decimated and its minerals used to create the wealth of the Western world. Materialism has been furthered through what Africa has had to offer the world. The pain of a continent in despair could and

hopefully will be the birth pains of a new consciousness. May the Spirit of Ubuntu be reborn consciously in all of us." (Shepherd, 1996, p.58)

In my experience I undergo personal transformation as my perceptions change in relation to the values and understandings I use to account to myself for the life I live in terms of my learning. I am thinking of such accounts as explanations for my learning that include assessing what I do and why I do it in terms of my values and understandings. In their work connecting education transformation with assessment and Ubuntu, Beets and Louw (2005, p.187) emphasize that the nature and purposes of assessment should not be approached in a technicist way. They say that assessment, as the key to focused development and growth of the learner, demands an involved relationship: it is not only about making a judgment, but rather about being with the learner every step of the way and being prepared to recognize learning difficulties in a respectful and dignified way and through genuine sharing of acquired knowledge and skills guiding the learner with compassion to the achievement of the intended outcomes.

So, viewing myself as the learner I am seeking to express, understand and communicate my assessment of what I am doing, in the educational practices shown in the video-clip, in terms of Ubuntu.

The video-clip, taken by Joan Whitehead, is from a workshop on action research with Jean McNiff and Joan Whitehead at the University of The Free State on the 28th February 2006. I am engaging with the meanings of Ubuntu in a text by Beets and van Louw (2005) on Education Transformation, Assessment and Ubuntu . I am suggesting and advocating that the participants explore different ways of representing the embodied meanings of the values they are living. I am identifying these values as values of Ubuntu. Here is an image from the clip with the text in hand, the url for accessing the video-clip and a transcript of what I am saying:



The video-clip is 17.8 Mb and 3mins 29 seconds. It plays in QuickTime from:
<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/jwubuntucd.mov>

Here is the transcript and I will focus below on expressing my meanings and understandings of the educational influence of a life-affirming energy with Ubuntu. I have edited the transcript slightly because of the need for punctuation in paper text.

*The Chapter is by Peter Beets and Trevor van Louw that you have actually in front of you in the two pages. It is from a chapter on education transformation, assessment and Ubuntu in SA. And I'm just curious about the values that are being outlined where both authors say that the first two values where we have got humanness and then they have got this in brackets about the warmth tolerance understanding peace humanity now just think what big ideas those are, what huge values those are and that we embody and that we try to live and that you might be able to bring more fully into the world the living meanings of those from within your practice. At the moment they are just words on a page. In brackets it says the first two values **humanness** in brackets, warmth tolerance understanding peace humanity and **caring** and under caring we have empathy, sympathy helpfulness, friendliness.*

Now, those are hugely important embodied values, which I find that as you talk... as you come to share ... your interest in the research these are qualities, which I think you live. But the word here on the page doesn't get close to communicating the meaning and so this is what I'm suggesting that you might like to explore - different ways of representing the embodied meanings that you are living. So, I just want to go on ... it goes towards the bottom of the page to talk about again the core value of respect, meaning dignity obedience and order. It talks about over the page about the last two values of sharing about this idea of giving unconditionally of redistribution and crucially I put on the web Marian Naidoo's thesis about compassion which has got in the brackets if you look just there love cohesion, informality, forgivingness, spontaneity.

Now it feels to me that by taking the meanings of these embodied values that you live, seriously, in the sense that you will research them not just as words on the page like that but as embodied values that even now as I am speaking to you I hope that I am communicating to you a kind of life affirming energy that I feel that just by being in the room with you. Having heard the wonderfully passionate commitment that you have to improving education you have enlivened me so that my feeling of life affirming energy, which I am, genuinely feeling is coming out of the relational commitment that I think you have for your passionate engagement to improve your practice. Now, it is only by getting the visual representation for example that Joan is now video-taping what I am saying, and that I am hoping when I review the video tape, that I'll see myself living out some of the values that I believe. But there is no way I could put that on a page of text and communicate some of the qualities that I've been experiencing with you.

On viewing the videotape I experience and see myself expressing the life-affirming energy that I associate with the expression of loving what I do. What I am doing is communicating something I value to a group of educators in a way that is advocating enquiry into a process that I believe carries hope for the future of humanity. I am connecting the values of Ubuntu to this hope. In the context of this workshop I am drawing insights from the ideas of Peter Beets and Trevor van Louw on the values of Ubuntu, and advocating an action research process of enquiring into living these values more fully in our practice and of sharing our accounts of our learning. This is what I am doing myself in the production of this video-narrative. In sharing this video-narrative I am aware of Eisner's (1993) call to extend the range of representations in our educational research. I also recognize the problems of establishing the validity of an individual's interpretation that Eisner (1997) draws our attention to when he focuses on the problems and perils of alternative forms of data representation.

Returning to Conolly's points above, I have focused on bringing together a scribal record that captures and records aspects of the linguistic elements of a performance and the gestural-visual/oral-aural record of the video-clip that communicates more of the dynamic vitality of a performance. In presenting a video-narrative I am seeking to demonstrate that this can include both the scribal record of a traditional scholarly engagement with ideas together with the dynamic vitality of Ubuntu. I believe that this dynamic vitality of Ubuntu includes a relational flow of life-affirming energy with an educator who loves what he is doing.

While recognizing the importance of community in Ubuntu it may seem perverse to focus on the individual 'I' in the question *How do I express and communicate embodied values of Ubuntu in an explanation of their educational influence in my own learning and in the learning of others?* I justify this focus on the 'I' because of Shepherd's stress on the need for radical personal transformation so that Ubuntu shines through all that we think and feel and do in our interaction with our fellow human beings (Shepherd, 1996, p. 57). As I have shown in the video-clip, and in my public acknowledgement of the importance of the relational dynamic of Ubuntu in the flow of life-affirming energy, the 'I' is not a discrete and autonomy individual, but a unique individual who exists in relationship with others. In answering the question, *how can we, and our students, learn to respond to risk with resilience?* I am drawn to the following statement of intent in the new Ed.D. (professional doctorate) programme being developed by Liverpool Hope University in the UK:

"This programme is designed so that at Doctorate level the student is an active participant in developing her/his own knowledge, with a responsibility to share this with others. The programme will focus on improved professional practice and personal growth. These are not to be conceptualised as separate, but together the result of sustained reflection and study in which there is an expectation of creating professional knowledge and improving practice. A Doctor of Education should consistently improve professional practice.

The coherence in this programme is to be found in the lived experience of the student. While there will be progression in the knowledge and intellectual environment to which the participants are exposed, the essential progression is to be found in the ways in which the participant builds her/his learning through reflection and practice. That is what distinguishes this as a professional doctorate. It is essential therefore that this experience can be developed alongside a supervisor who will have the skills and abilities to engage in a developmental process of learning, practice and reflection. The significance of the inter-disciplinary nature of the participants is, at least in part concerned with their abilities to share the lived professional practices across the cohort.” (Liverpool Hope University, 2009, pp. 5-6)

I think that we can learn to respond to risk with resilience by sustaining our commitment to seeing the coherence of an individual's higher education in terms of the lived experience of the individual with our narratives of learning and knowledge-creation through reflection and practice. I am thinking of lived experienced that is open to the flow of life enhancing energy and values that carry hope for the future of humanity and our own.

Concluding thoughts

So, in concluding my most recent thoughts on risk and resilience in higher education in improving practice and generating knowledge I wish to focus on the heart of my answers to the questions:

i) What risks do our students face as they embark on the trajectory of higher education?

The greatest risk is that the power relations in a culture of conformity will stifle the students' creativity, integrity and freedom in making a choice to respond to their lives and the world with the spontaneity of love and productive work.

ii) In what ways is risk-taking inherent to higher education?

Given the globalization of movements of capital with control being exercised in the interests of a minority with damaging results for the humanity of the majority, risk taking is inherent in protecting higher education to ensure that it carries hope for the future of humanity and our own.

iii) What risks face each of us, in our specific roles?

These are unique to each individual and are influenced by the unique constellations of the values associated with our biographies, and our historical, social, economic and cultural contexts. I have drawn your attention to the evidence-based living theories of individuals who have remained open to the possibilities that life itself permits. Their living theories show how they have resisted, through forms of creative compliance, cultural influences that could stifle their creativity and

expressions of freedom, justice, care, compassion and love of knowledge-creation and enquiry.

iv) How can we, and our students, learn to respond to risk with resilience?

I have drawn attention to the presentations in the BERA keynote symposium of 2009 on [*Explicating A New Epistemology For Educational Knowledge With Educational Responsibility*](#). Each presentation, taken individually and as a contribution to the theme of the symposium explains how we are sustaining our commitment to living and evolving our values and understandings as fully as we can. We explain how we are enhancing our educational influence in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations, in which we live, love and work.

I am suggesting that we make increasing use of our access to global communications and I will finish by showing you how to access the practitioner-researcher JISCmail forum as one forum through which we could sustain and extend our conversations. You can access and join this forum from the What's New section of <http://www.actionresearch.net> as well as accessing the living theory accounts I have referred to in this presentation. All the living theories have been offered on the Internet as a gift for you to access. I'm hoping that you might feel a shared sense of educational responsibility to share your own living theories as you research your own practice and knowledge-creation from within your unique contexts in South Africa. You could for example share your research accounts in the [*Educational Journal of Living Theories*](#). Dr Margaret Farren of Dublin City University has just written the foreword for the latest issue, due to be published next week, in December 2009, and I am hopeful that we will see some of your contributions appearing in future issues of this multi-media international Journal. Of anyone I know in higher education, Margaret Farren impresses me the most as she continues to answer the question about learning to respond to risk with resilience with her students. I do hope that you will access Margaret's work through her writings (Farren, 2005) and through her web pages at <http://webpages.dcu.ie/~farrenm/>.

I stress the importance of Margaret's work because I believe that her expression of Celtic spirituality and her pedagogy of the unique will resonate with the values and understandings that move your passionate commitment to education and to many of your students and colleagues.

Many thanks for this opportunity to share ideas with you and to participate in the 2009 HELTASA conference.

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Appendix One

The first publication is the 1993 *The Growth of Educational Knowledge: Creating Your Own Living Educational Theories*. This documented my research into reconstructing educational theory within sociocultural contexts between 1971-1993. The contexts include my responses with others to attempts to terminate my employment, to refusals by the University administrators to permit questioning of examiners' judgments of doctoral theses under any circumstances and to a disciplinary hearing, which attempted to uphold a claim that my activities and writings were a challenge to the present and proper organization of the university. You can access here, this narrative of risk and resilience in the improvement of practice and the generation of knowledge:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jwgek93.htm>

The second publication is the 2004 paper in the e-journal Action Research Expeditions, *Do Action Researchers Expeditions Carry Hope For The Future Of Humanity? How Do We Know? An enquiry into reconstructing educational theory and educating social formations.*"

Part One of this publication contains the analysis of the first publication.

Part Two of this publication considers the growth of my educational knowledge between 1993-2004 as I continue to create my own living educational theories in the company of others who are sharing enquiries in their AR Expeditions. The presentation includes visual narratives and hyperlinks to multi-media accounts through the Internet

At the heart of the publication is a process for clarifying the meanings of embodied values in the course of their emergence in practice and for transforming embodied values into living and communicable standards of educational judgment. I shall be stressing the importance of this process when I consider below the importance of ways of being and knowing.

The presentation also includes an analysis of ways of influencing the education of social formations in AR Expeditions through the creation and testing of living educational theories in a range of cultural and social contexts using multi-media representations. You can access this narrative at:

<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/jack/jwareoct04.pdf>

The third publication is the 2008 keynote presentation to the International Conference of Teacher Research on Combining Voices in Teacher Research, New

York, 28 March 2008 on “*Combining Voices In Living Educational Theories That Are Freely Given In Teacher Research.*”

In this keynote I share four ideas that may be helpful in combining our voices as researchers in higher education in order to extend our educational influence and make original contributions to educational knowledge.

The first idea is that multi-media forms of representation are enabling teacher-researchers to represent and understand qualities of recognition in their educational relationships with their students. I am thinking of educational relationships that flow with the recognition of life affirming energy and a relationally dynamic awareness. These tend to be masked or omitted from much writing on education and about educational research.

The second idea is that we can generate our living educational theories as explanations of our educational influences in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work and offer them as gifts to others.

The third idea is that we can combine our voices in enhancing our educational influence through producing and communicating our educational theories in the [living boundaries of cultures in resistance](#). (Whitehead, 2008).

The fourth idea is that while we live with the relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries that Rayner (2004) refers to as inclusionality, our present ways of representing our educational knowledge in the propositional and dialectical theories legitimated in the Academy, and in established and renowned internationally refereed journals, tend to mask this relationally dynamic awareness. They also mask or omit the educational significance of our flows of life-affirming energy.

Multi-media narratives of living educational theories are shown to reveal the meanings of such flows of energy and values. When combined in the living boundaries of cultures in resistance they can be a transformatory influence in educational change. You can access this narrative at:

<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/aerict08/jwict08key.htm>

In the video of the keynote below I can be seen to be rechanneling responses of anger into the energy-flowing value of loving what I am doing in improving my practice and generating knowledge. You can access the video at:

mms://wms.bath.ac.uk/live/education/JackWhitehead_030408/jackkeynoteict08_0308large.wmv

Appendix Two

Neglect

Alan Rayner, November 2009

At last I know
What's been wrong for me
That absence of care
Which leaves you wondering where you are
As the wind howls
Through broken windows to your soul
Framing a derelict construction
In the backyard of inattention

At last I know
What's been wrong for us
That plain-speaking nonsense
Which leaves out what's within us
As the mind growls
Against the disruption of its face
Painted on the wall that stands
In the foreground of rejection

Where two sides can never meet
Each seeking the other's complete defeat
In hollow victory
Where wind howls
As mind growls
Against the dying of the light

Until, at last, a loophole's found
Where lonely figure finds its place
In ground
Where deserted ground extends its space
Through figure
Each finding life
In the care of the other
Where what's good for the life and love of both

Is good for the life and love of each
Despite appearances that seem to teach
The need to preserve against the other's reach

Appendix Three

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Appendix 4

Alan Rayner's reflections on Inclusionality

“In natural inclusionality all form is understood as *flow-form*, an energetic configuration of space in figure and figure in space. And a simple truth underlying the form and logic of natural inclusionality is that *space does not stop at boundaries*.” (Rayner, 2009)

Rayner, A. (2009) What is Inclusionality? Retrieved on the 23 October 2009 from http://www.inclusionality.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=2

“At the heart of inclusionality, then, is a simple shift in the way we frame reality, from absolutely fixed to relationally dynamic. This shift arises from perceiving space and boundaries as continuous, connective, reflective and co-creative, rather than severing, in their vital role of producing heterogeneous form and local identity within a featured rather than featureless, dynamic rather than static, Universe.”

Rayner, A. (2004) INCLUSIONALITY: The Science, Art and Spirituality of Place, Space and Evolution. Retrieved 23 October 2009 from <http://people.bath.ac.uk/bssadmr/inclusionality/placespaceevolution.html> (Modified by pers.comm. 2009)

On 21 Nov 2009, at 14:55, in response to a draft of the keynote presentation for the HELTASA conference on the 27th November 2009 Alan Rayner (BU) wrote:

“Dear Jack,

I think it would be worth drawing attention to the fact that 'risk'/'vulnerability' = 'uncertainty' is implicit in all natural form as flow-form - an energetic configuration of space in figure and figure in space, and that the abstract rationality of the 'disciplines approach' is a vain attempt to neglect the limitless presence of receptive space. (cf attached chapter from 'Natural Inclusion' and the 'en trance' of 'limitless pool'). I think this would add a fundamentally important insight to what you are saying. The presence of transfigural space (space throughout, not just around/within the figure) is what gets omitted from both holistic and reductionistic intransigent theories of 'wholes' and 'parts' / 'one and many', yet is vital to the very possibility of fluidity and creativity. It is this profound error of omission that I keep risking drawing attention to, and that so alienates (offends the complacent, locality-negating non-humility of) those who make it (along with the vast majority of people who 'seek to rule' - have dominion over - 'other').

Love
Alan”