

**Educational Influences in Learning  
with Visual Narratives**

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**Abstract**

In this presentation, we intend to show, through the use of digital video, our understanding of ontological values of a web of betweenness and pedagogy of the unique (Farren, 2004) as they are lived in practice with students, in this case, practitioner-researchers on award bearing programmes. We both work with a sense of research-based professionalism in which we are seeking to improve our educational practice with our students in action research enquiries 'how do I improve what I am doing?' The visual narratives, in the form of digital video clips, of our educational practice, include our engagement with practitioner-researchers as we seek to understand our educational influences in their learning so that we can "influence the education of social formation" (Whitehead, 2004a & b). This relates to the idea of social formations as defined by Bourdieu (1990) and points to the way people organise their interactions according to a set of regulatory values that can take the form of rules. In studying our own education practice, with the help of digital video, we hope to influence the education of social formations so that others will begin to question their underlying values, assumptions and epistemologies that inform their practice. The purpose of this paper is to communicate to a wider audience and network with other higher education educators through visual narratives of our work in higher education. There is a

lack of research in how educators in higher education are influencing the education of their students. This area of research is one which we develop through this paper.

## **Introduction**

In this paper, we intend to show, through use of digital video, our understanding of spiritual and ontological values of a web of betweenness and pedagogy of the unique (Farren, 2004), as they are lived in practice with students. Pedagogy of the unique refers to the unique contribution that each participant makes to a knowledge base of practice. The web of betweenness refers to our belief that we learn in relation to one another and how Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can bring us closer to the meanings of our educational values as they are lived in practice. The web of betweenness and pedagogy of the unique both complement each other in that they connect the individual and social dimensions of learning. The first two video clips show Margaret with a group of her Masters students in a validation group meeting, the third video clip shows Jack in a supervision with a PhD student.

A validation group is a group of peers convened to help strengthen the validity of an account of learning and to help with suggestions about how an enquiry might move forward. Through digital video clips of validation meetings, Margaret hopes to show how a web of betweenness, in the validation meeting, is characterised by a process of democratic evaluation where the unforced force of reasonable response holds sway in the conversation. The pedagogy of the unique is characterised in the recognition that each individual has a particular and different constellation of values that motivate the enquiry and a different context from within which the enquiry is developing. The video clips show the relational dynamic of the different contributions to the validation discourse in the web of betweenness and the engaged and appreciative responses of each individual to the others' contribution.

## **Format of paper/presentation**

We start by showing you what we do in our educational relationships and by showing that we share our understandings of a spiritual and ontological value of a web of betweenness and a pedagogy of the unique (Farren, 2004) through our collaborative ostensive definitions of our meanings with the help of video-clips with Margaret and her students, with Jack in a doctoral supervision with Jackie Delong, with Peter Mellett and a group of practitioner-researchers celebrating Jackie Delong's doctoral graduation, with Moira Laidlaw and her students. Moira is another teacher in higher education, who is a full-time voluntary service overseas advisor to China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching at Guyuan Teacher's College (Laidlaw, 2004). We recognise that beginning with images and video-

clips requires the use of the very technology our paper is addressing and that this limits the communication of our meanings to those with access to the technology. As we are claiming that the use of this technology can transform understandings of the nature of educational standards of judgement, this is unavoidable! You will need Real Player to view the clip of the validation group with Marian and Quicktime to view the other clips. (.rm at the end of the url shows that you need RealPlayer; .mov shows that you need Quicktime).

The first two video-clips shows the validation group meeting with Margaret and participants on a masters programme at Dublin City University.

<http://webpages.dcu.ie/~farrenm/chrisvalidatear.rm>

<http://webpages.dcu.ie/~farrenm/chrisjack.rm>



The purpose of the validation group meetings is to provide practitioner-researchers with the opportunity to present his/her research to others in the group in order to strengthen the validity of the accounts and to benefit from the ideas of others on ways to move learning forward.

The second video-clip shows Jack at work in a doctoral supervision with Jackie Delong, a Superintendent of Schools in the Grand Erie District School Board in Ontario.



The purpose of showing this clip is to emphasise the importance, in the web of betweenness of educational relationships, in the expression of life-affirming energy through laughter.

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/multimedia//jimenomov/ajwjdwis.mov>

The third video-clip shows Peter Mellett talking with a group of practitioner-researchers who have been invited to celebrate Jackie Delong's graduation for her Doctorate at the University of Bath on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002.

<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/pm181204colson.mov>

Peter is seeking to communicate the importance of music in the communication of achievement between Stephane Grapelli and Django Reinhardt in their improvisation 'Minor Swing'. We believe that Peter is expressing a flow of love and understanding consistent with his Father's influence (see below for further details of this influence). The 'eruption' of humour towards the end of the clip shows the flow of life-affirming energy through the boundaries of the relationships into a community celebration that is focused on Jackie Delong's achievement. The purpose of this clip is to emphasise the importance of expressing pleasure, through laughter, in both our webs of betweenness and pedagogies of the unique in our communities of practice.

The fourth video-clip shows Moira Laidlaw at the end of a Year 3 English Methodology Class at Guyuan Teachers College expressing a loving flow of life-affirming energy through the boundaries of her relationships with her students as they move past her out of the room.



This interpretation of Moira's expression of her ontological values has been agreed with her.

<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/mlendSorenson.mov>

If you haven't the technology to play the clip you may be able to view some of the still images taken from the video during and at the end of the class:

<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/moira151004/moira151004.html>

We will be saying more about how we are seeing the living boundaries of her educational relationships, and our own, as connective, reflexive and co-creative as we draw insights from Alan Rayner's (2004) ideas on inclusionality.

We also wish to emphasise how much we agree with Colin Smith's ideas on the significance of sharing living educational theories when he writes:

*"A practitioner's living theory can make valid contributions to educational knowledge (Whitehead, 1989). However, in Whitehead's original conception living theories are largely individual products. A contribution is made to the debate on facilitating teaching-research partnerships by suggesting that the staff and pupils in a school can share a living theory as a form of learning and teaching policy. How a school staff came to develop such a policy is described. The policy is compared with features of living theories to substantiate this claim. The testing of the shared living theory takes place through the normal development processes of the school. A model is also presented showing how this may facilitate closer, two-way relations between academic theory and practitioner theory. Using this model facilitates cooperation between teachers and researchers in working together to support teacher and school development while also sharing the task of increasing educational knowledge." (Smith, 2003, p. 157)*

We will be drawing on the living educational theories of individuals as they account for their enquiry learning. We will also be emphasizing the importance of sharing living educational theories in the education of social formations and each other in our webs of betweenness and

pedagogies of the unique. We value both our unique identities and our sense of being connected with others.

In our pedagogies of the unique we connect with the distinct qualities (but not discrete) that characterize each individual as unique. In our webs of betweenness we feel the flow of values and energy that characterize both our shared humanity and our unique constellations of values and beliefs.

### **Defining webs of betweenness and pedagogies of the unique**

We recognise differences in the expression of the spiritual energy that characterises our contributions to our webs of betweenness. Margaret is influenced by a Celtic spirituality of the quality described by the Irish theologian John O' Donohue as a web of betweenness.

*“The ‘web of betweenness’ is still there but in order to become a presence again, it needs to be invoked. As in the rainforest, a dazzling diversity of life-forms complement and sustain each other; there is secret oxygen with which we unknowingly sustain one another. True community is not produced. It is invoked and awakened. True community is an ideal where the full identities of awakened and realized individuals challenge and complement each other. In this sense individuality and originality enrich self and others” (O' Donohue, 2003, p.133).*

In her research-based practice, Margaret seeks to suggest that the communications rich characteristics of ICT can re-create in new forms the powerfully interactive traditional world whose passing O'Donohue laments and justify applying O'Donohue's term. She demonstrates how ICT and emerging media technologies can support a dialogic-collaborative approach to learning and bring us closer to the meaning of our educational values as they emerge in the course of our practice (Farren, 2005)

Jack's feels the flow of a life-affirming energy that he experiences as flowing from the cosmos. He is also influenced in his contribution to our web of betweenness by his recognition of a desire in himself and others to live values that carry a loving hope for each others' humanity. He associates this loving hope of relationship with Martin Buber's poetic communication of the meaning of 'I-You' relationship. Jack understands Martin Buber's monotheistic connection of 'I-You' relationships with the relationship with God in 'I-Thou' relationships, but being resistant to the submission implicit in theistic relationships, mono or poly, Jack values the humanistic qualities in the flow of loving hope in 'I-You' relations in our web of betweenness:

“Those who pronounce the severed I, wallowing in the capital letter, uncover the shame of the world spirit that has been debased to mere spirituality. But how beautiful and legitimate the vivid and emphatic I of Socrates sounds! It is the I of infinite conversation, and the air of conversation is present on all its ways, even before his judges, even in the final hour in prison. This I lived in that relation to man which is embodied in conversation. It believed in the actuality of men and went out toward them. Thus it stood together with them in actuality and is never severed from it. Even solitude cannot spell forsakenness, and when the human world falls silent for him, he hears his daimonion say You. *How beautiful and legitimate the full I of Goethe sounds! It is the I of pure intercourse with nature. Nature yields to it and speaks ceaselessly with it; she reveals here mysteries to it and yet does not betray her mystery. It believes in her and says to the rose: "So it is You" - and at once shares the same actuality with the rose. Hence, when it returns to itself, the spirit of actuality stays with it; the vision of the sun clings to the blessed eye that recalls its own likeness to the sun, and the friendship of the elements accompanies man into the calm of dying and rebirth.*”

*Thus the "adequate, true, and pure" I-saying of the representatives of association, the Socratic and the Goethean persons, resounds through the ages.* “ (Buber, p. 117, 1970)

Through the influence of Paulus Murray’s insights into the ‘we-i’ relationships of the African Cosmology of Ubuntu, Jack sees Margaret’s relationships, more so than his own, as expressing the qualities of ‘we-i’ relationships in our web of betweenness:

“In my educational enquiries I am seeking to support the enhancement of the flow of the values of Ubuntu from the ground of living my postcolonial spiritual values in my educational relationships. However, I do understand Paulus Murray’s point about my ‘I’ feeling very Western and European while to get closer to the values of Ubuntu I will need to understand a sense of self that is closer to African and Arab cultural expressions of ‘i in we’:

*“I live within an extended Arab/Omani/British family where 'we' is used only when 'I' see's the other in Ubuntu, in extended family connection, in a solidary space where we feel at one in terms of identity and integrity. This feels so very different to your formulary above. For this 'we' to happen there has to be an eastern/southern "solidary logic" at work which is fundamentally communicative, rather than a Western/northern "atomistic logic" at work that is fundamentally ex-communicative.”*(Murray, 23/08/04, e-mail).

For Murray the practical spirit of Ubuntu flows from a sense of ethno-community where 'we' comes into existence when my 'I' alongside lots of other 'I's is subordinated to 'we-i'. The moment 'we' happens is when my 'i' fully understands (and values, appreciates and accepts) the

responsibilities for how my identity and integrity is embraced within the 'we' of the extended family, and this is the first step in an ethno-community held in Ubuntu or similar cosmology. Murray believes that the 'i' in eastern and southern cultures is an 'i' that is 'we-i'. He says that the Western and European 'I' has to learn how to let go of 'I' as a procedure to be satisfied before making the move to 'we', which usually entails agonising over one's space, one's autonomy, one's sense of identity. In eastern/southern indigenous cultures the movement in 'we-i' space is seamless.

I am sure that I will have to address the problem that the values in a Western 'I' do not migrate easily across cultural borders, east and south, and that the values of Ubuntu or similar cosmologies that hold the values of 'i in we' do not migrate easily across cultural borders, north and west. My belief in the educational possibility of the generativity of bringing these values alongside (Pound, 2003) each other in speaking 'cross-culturally' is grounded in the evidence provided in the doctoral thesis of Ram Punia (2004) and in Marian Naidoo's (2004) writings from her doctoral enquiry 'I am because we are. How can I improve my practice? The emergence of a living theory of responsive practice'. My belief in the generativity of bringing these values alongside each other is also grounded in the scholarship of educational enquiry of Peggy Leong, the Manager of the Academy of Best Learning in Education (ABLE) in Singapore. Leong's dissertation on The Art of an Educational Enquirer (Leong, 1991) remains one of the most inspiring texts I have read from a practitioner-researcher who understands and can live values of inclusionality while engaging with tensions and conflicts between different cultural contexts." (Whitehead, 2004)

We now want to focus on our shared meanings of a pedagogy of the unique, that have emerged from Margaret's doctoral enquiries.

### **A pedagogy of the unique**

Margaret has focussed on the development of her meanings of a pedagogy of the unique in her doctoral research programmes and writes about this in the Abstract to her doctoral thesis:

*"My thesis explores the growth of my educational knowledge, as higher education educator, over six years of self-study. I develop my 'pedagogy of the unique' by using a living educational action research approach, that allows me to create and test my own living educational theory. I explain my educational influence in my own learning, the learning of others and in the learning and*



*education of social formations. The context of my research is in collaboration with practitioners on an award bearing MSc in Computer Applications for Education and MSc in ICT in Education and Training Management.*

*I have clarified the meaning of my values in the course of their emergence in my practice-based research. The embodied values that have emerged in the course of my practice have been transformed into living standards of judgement as they have emerged in practice. My living standards of judgement include a 'pedagogy of the unique' and a web of betweenness. The web of betweenness respects the unique contribution of each person, how we learn in relation to one another and how ICT enables us to get closer to communicating the meanings of embodied values. This reflects my belief that education is dialogic in nature. It also reflects my understanding of education as power with, rather than power over, others. It is this power with that I have tried to embrace as I attempt to create a learning environment in which I and practitioner-researchers can grow personally and professionally. The web of betweenness has been sustained and upheld by a shared intent on asking, researching and answering the question; how do I improve my practice?*

*As a researcher, I have supported practitioners in bringing their embodied values and expertise into the public domain as they design, develop and evaluate multimedia and web based artefacts for use in their own practice contexts. This has also involved the supervision of Master degree action research enquiries. This is a professional journey that has involved risks, courage and challenge, but I have learned that in creating my pedagogy of the unique, I learn and grow, recognising the contribution I myself make as an individual, and also recognising the contribution dialogue and collaboration with others achieves" (Farren, 2005).*

In defining pedagogy, we use Basil Bernstein's language:

**Pedagogy** is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator - appropriate either from the point of view of the acquirer or by some other body(s) or both (Bernstein, 2000, p.78).

We also use his distinction between explicit, implicit and tacit pedagogic relations:

*When I talk about pedagogy, I am referring to pedagogic relations that shape pedagogic communications and their relevant contexts. Three basic forms of pedagogic relation may be distinguished, explicit, implicit and tacit. Explicit and implicit refer to a progressive in time pedagogic relation where there is a purposeful intention to initiate, modify, develop or change*

*knowledge, conduct or practice by someone or something which already possesses, or has access to, the necessary resources and the means of evaluating the acquisition. The acquirer may or may not define the relation as legitimate, or accept as otherwise, what is to be acquired. Explicit or implicit refers to the visibility of the transmitter's intention as to what is to be acquired from the point of view of the acquirer. In the case of explicit pedagogy the intention is highly visible, whereas in the case of implicit pedagogy the intention from the point of view of the acquirer is invisible. The tacit is a pedagogic relation where initiation, modification, development of change of knowledge, conduct or practice occurs, where neither of the members may be aware of it. Here the meanings are non-linguistic, condensed and context dependent; a pure restricted code relay. An example would be modelling, perhaps the basic pedagogic mode; primary in the sense of time and primary in the sense of durability. The primary modelling where both transmitter and acquirer are unaware of a pedagogic relation must be distinguished from secondary modelling which is a deliberate and purpose relation only for the acquirer. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 200)*

### **Creating and sharing our living educational theories through our webs of betweenness and pedagogies of the unique**

The 'our' in 'our living educational theories' is more extensive than the living educational theories of Margaret and Jack. It includes the living educational theories of those whose research we have supervised and whose living theories have been legitimated in the Academy. We have provided access to these theories through the internet (Farren, 2004; Whitehead, 2004b)

Participants on the M.Sc E-Learning produce multimedia accounts learning in developing their own 'living educational theory'. In her abstract, Yvonne Crotty (2005) shows how she made use of multimedia accounts of learning to express and communicate her living standards of judgement.

*“The focus of my research is the development of a video artefact that represents the non-national students in my school. A recent survey carried out in the school reported traces of racism among the staff and students. My rationale for developing the video was to provide the opportunity for non-national students to communicate and share their culture to a wider audience. The unique features of video gave the student the opportunity to reflect and improve on her own performances. In my enquiry, I trace the developments in my own learning as I plan, produce and edit the visual narrative 'A Picture Paints a Thousand Words', in collaboration with the students. Through being a participant myself in the process of learning, I was able to encourage and support student learning. My research consists of two action research cycles. In cycle one, I demonstrate how I guide and encourage each student to present herself, through the use of video. In cycle two, I provide evidence to show how the video has influenced the learning of a wider*

*audience. My educational values of creating a safe environment where students feel valued, appreciating the different forms of intelligences and using music as a way of breaking down barriers have been lived out through the production of this visual narrative” (Crotty, Y. 2005).*

The accounts of learning that constitute the living educational theories all refer to the use and development of an action research methodology in which individuals express their concerns when their values are not being lived as fully as they desire. A possible way forward is imagined in an action plan, data is gathered in the action and evaluations made of the effectiveness of the actions in living the values more fully. Concerns, plans and actions are modified in the light of the evaluations. An account of the learning is produced that is submitted to a validation group in order to strengthen the validity of the account and to benefit from the ideas of others on ways in which the enquiry could move forward.

This use of action reflection cycles and validation groups is part of a process of clarifying the meanings of the embodied values that form explanatory principles in the account of learning. In the process of clarifying the values in the course of their emergence in practice, they are transformed into living epistemological standards of judgement that can be used to evaluate the validity of the account of the learning. Understanding these transformations, from the experience and clarification of the ontological values, that give meaning and purpose to one’s productive life, into living and communicable standards of educational judgement, is fundamental to the creation of a new epistemology of educational knowledge. The multi-media accounts of educational practice enable visual narratives to create new meanings of living educational standards of judgement through the action research processes outlined above.

Perhaps one of the most convincing pieces of evidence we have seen to support this view is Eleanor Lohr’s (2004) prologue to her draft Ph.D. ‘Love at Work’.

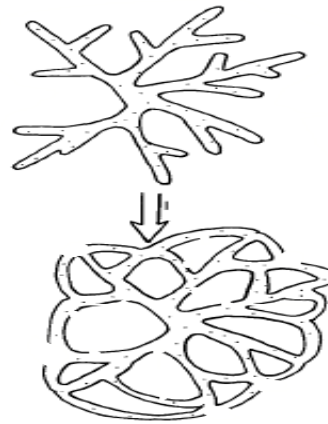
<http://www.jackwhitehead.com/elFront%202.htm>

In her visual narrative of her relationship and discourse with her husband Paul, Eleanor communicates what she is meaning by her expression of love at work. The visual record of the verbal and non-verbal communications is necessary to the communication of her meanings. Without the visual record, significant meanings cannot be communicated through text alone.

### **Extending our webs of betweenness, pedagogies of the unique and living educational theories through the flow of our communications in the labyrinthine channels of communication of the internet**

In placing this presentation in our web-spaces we are aware that our meanings can flow through the multiple channels of communications offered by the labyrinth of the internet. They can connect with your own meanings, just as yours can do with ours and through the mediation of our

originalities of mind and critical judgments they can influence our learning. Our understandings of these multiple channels of communication has been influenced by the biological concept of anastomosis in the sense of the natural connection between two tubular structures. Karen Teeson a doctoral researcher at the University of Bath, introduced this idea in a presentation on her research. We are working with an image of the second diagram below which shows the transformation from connecting tubular structures into interconnecting and branching channels of communication through which our ideas can flow through the internet.



We are seeing the labyrinthine channels of communication offered by the internet as an unprecedented opportunity to share our values, hopes and ideas and to learn from each other.

In our webs of betweenness we are working with a commitment to inclusionality. By this we mean, following Alan Rayner (2004a), that we are working with a relational dynamic awareness of space and boundaries that are connective, reflexive and co-creative. We see the boundaries of our webs of betweenness as carrying a flow of communications that can evoke and resonate with your own loving hope and life affirming energy as we express our own with their flow through space. We are also working with Rayner's (2004b) idea of a complex self in the sense of a fully contextualized understanding of 'self-identity', based on the reciprocally coupling of our distinct but not discrete inner and outer spatial aspects through our 'dynamic self boundaries'. We are aware that a metaphor such as web of betweenness may unfortunately lead to an overemphasis on a 'threads of connectivity' visualization in recipients minds, rather than stressing the importance of the feeling for labyrinthine connective space. We see both our connecting threads and our feelings for labyrinthine connective space as necessary in communicating the inclusional idea that it is space that connects, through its relationally dynamic intermediating boundaries.

## **Enhancing the flow of life-affirming energy and living educational theories in the education of individuals and their social formations**

By placing our ideas into the flow of the communication channels and boundaries of the internet we are seeking to contribute to the enhancement of the flow of life-affirming energy and living educational theories that characterise the educational development of individuals and their social formations. In doing this we want our living educational theories to be as fully contextualised as possible in the flow of economic, political and cultural influences. We see the value of accounting for our lives and learning to ourselves and to others not only in terms of the pleasure of feeling the interest of others in ourselves and our interest in their lives. We see the value of accounting for our learning in a process of democratic evaluation as offering the opportunity of enhancing the validity of our accounts by not persisting in error, and by sharing a range of possibilities for moving our own enquiries forward as we seek to live our values as fully as we can.

## **Evaluating the validity of each others' accounts and helping to move enquiries forward**

The first video-clip shows Margaret with a group of participants on the masters programme in a validation group. A validation group is a group of peers convened to help to evaluate the validity of an account of learning and to help with suggestions about how the enquiry might move forward. The first video-clip was taken at the end of the validation meeting. Chris asked for clarification on the action research cycles. The presence of the other participants helped Chris to see how his learning could relate to the action research cycles. The explosion of laughter, at the end of the meeting, reflected Chris' acceptance of belonging to an action research community and the quality of empathy binding the group together. The web of betweenness in the validation meeting is characterised by a process of democratic evaluation where the unforced force of reasonable response holds sway in the conversation. The pedagogy of the unique is characterized in the recognition that each individual has a particular and different constellation of values that motivate the enquiry and a different context from within which the enquiry is developing. The video-clip shows the relational dynamic of the different contributions to the validation discourse in the web of betweenness and the engaged and appreciative responses of each individual to the others' contribution. The second video-clip was taken during a videoconferencing link up between participants on the masters programme in DCU and Jack Whitehead at University of Bath. The videoconferencing validation meeting further challenged the participants to consider the data they needed in order to present evidence that they had improved student learning. The

validation meeting, through videoconferencing, represented part of Margaret's endeavour to live her own values of collaboration and dialogue in the learning process through use of technology.

The next video clip shows Jack with Jackie Delong in a supervision session during 2001 before the submission of the doctorate in 2002. The clip was made at the end of a week during which both Jack and Jackie had experienced some tensions in dealing with Jack's criticism of an earlier draft of the thesis Abstract. Space doesn't permit here a detailed analysis of the responses to the criticism and the resolutions at the end of the week, expressed in the shared laughter in this second clip. A more detailed analysis can be found in the multi-media account: "How Valid Are Multi-Media Communications Of My Embodied Values In Living Theories And Standards Of Educational Judgement And Practice?"

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw//multimedia/jimenomov/JIMEW98.html>

This account is also included in Action Research Expeditions of October 2004 in Part 11 of the multi-media presentation on: 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 at:

<http://www.arexpeditions.montana.edu/articleviewer.php?AID=80>

(Whitehead, 2004b)

### **Expressing, defining and communicating a loving flow of life-affirming energy in educational relationships**

Video-clip 3 was one of those fortunate occurrences. Jack had switched his camera off at what he thought was the end of the lesson as the students were about to leave Moira's lesson. He then saw Moira going over to the door and he turned the camera back on. We both feel that the clip shows something about Moira's relationships with her students that is educationally significant. In the flow of the relationships as the students stream past Moira, we see Moira communicating with her students in a way that resonates with our understandings of our webs of betweenness and pedagogies of the unique. Moira signals for Tian Fang to join her right at the end of the clip and congratulates her on her participation in the lesson. Moira's response is unique to Tian Fang and is an expression of what we are meaning by a pedagogy of the unique. We have agreed with Moira that we can define the qualities she is expressing in her educational relationships in this clip in terms of a loving flow of life-affirming energy. We are affirming such loving flows of life-affirming energy as one of our own ontological values and living educational standards of judgement.

Here is an extract from an essay by Guo Yanyan, a student in the class writing about the significance of Moira smiling in her class. We do not want to reduce Guo Yanyan's meanings to the phrase 'loving flow of life-affirming energy', yet we do want to connect such meanings to the living flow of life-affirming energy that we experience Moira expressing as both an embodied value and living standard of judgement in her educational relationships:

I love your smile. It lights me up. Because of your smile I have the courage to teach a class. I am so happy with my achievement because I never did it before. I greeted my 'students' with a smile because you did that for us and it has changed my life. There was a happy and relaxed atmosphere in the class. Thanks to your smile I overcame my nervousness and taught. (*Guo Yanyan, English Methodology Essay, December 2004*)

### **Expressing affirmation with Peter Mellett and Jackie Delong on the legitimization by the University of Bath of Jackie Delong's Living Educational Theory for her Doctorate**

Video-clip 4 shows Peter Mellett's explaining his use of the music of Stephane Grapelli and Django Reinhardt in their 'Minor Swing' and their expression of affirmation in their own achievement at the end of the piece, to evoke his feelings of affirmation for Jackie Delong's achievement in her doctorate.

The feeling of sharing the pleasure in this celebration of Jackie's achievement may be experienced at the moment of the laughter when Peter explains to the group that they should listen attentively for the last note and Margarida asks how she will know it is the last note if she hasn't heard the piece before! In our affirmation of Jackie Delong's achievement we believe that we are sharing in a double sense of affirmation of the kind that Marx described in his earlier writing as distinguishing a productive life in what it means to produce something as a human being:

*Suppose we had produced things as human beings: in his production each of us would have twice affirmed himself and the other. In my production I would have objectified my individuality and its particularity, and in the course of the activity I would have enjoyed an individual life, in viewing the object I would have experienced the individual joy of knowing my personality as an objective, sensuously perceptible, and indubitable power. In your satisfaction and your use of my product I would have had the direct and conscious satisfaction that my work satisfied a human need, that it objectified human nature, and that it created an object appropriate to the need of another human being. I would have been the mediator between you and the species and you would have experienced me as a reintegration of your own nature and a necessary part of yourself; I would have been affirmed in your thought as well as your love.*

*In my individual life I would have directly created your life, in my individual activity I would have immediately confirmed and realized my true human nature. (Bernstein, 1971, p. 41)*

Jackie summarised the achievement of her thesis in her Abstract:

**How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my own living educational theory?**

*One of the basic tenets of my philosophy is that the development of a culture for improving learning rests upon supporting the knowledge-creating capacity in each individual in the system. Thus, I start with my own. This thesis sets out a claim to know my own learning in my educational inquiry, 'How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools?'*

*Out of this philosophy emerges my belief that the professional development of each teacher rests in their own knowledge-creating capacities as they examine their own practice in helping their students to improve their learning. In creating my own educational theory and supporting teachers in creating theirs, we engage with and use insights from the theories of others in the process of improving student learning.*

*The originality of the contribution of this thesis to the academic and professional knowledge-base of education is in the systematic way I transform my embodied educational values into educational standards of practice and judgement in the creation of my living educational theory. In the thesis I demonstrate how these values and standards can be used critically both to test the validity of my knowledge-claims and to be a powerful motivator in my living educational inquiry.*

*The values and standards are defined in terms of valuing the other in my professional practice, building a culture of inquiry, reflection and scholarship and creating knowledge. (DeLong, 2002)*

In the quote from the early writings of Marx, our only point of difference is where he says that in producing something as a human being, one individual can directly create the life of another. In our educational philosophy we see that the originality of mind and critical judgement of individuals must mediate between what we do and what the others learn. So, our influence does not directly create the life of another. Our educational influence in the learning of another is mediated by their originality of mind and critical judgement for us to recognise our influence as educational.

Jackie's achievement includes the evidence of her own web of betweenness and pedagogy of the unique as she supports the educational enquiries of the teachers in the Grand Erie District School



Board. She adds significantly to these ideas in her thesis with her political and economic understandings, of the educational significance of the development of a culture of inquiry with teachers and students in the processes of improving learning, contextualised within educational administration and leadership of a District School Board. Evidence of the influence of this culture of inquiry in teachers' accounts of their own learning can be seen in the volumes of *Passion in Professional Practice*.

- Volume 1 - <http://schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppi/index.html>
- Volume II - <http://schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppii/index.html>
- Volume III - <http://schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppiii/index.html>
- Volume IV - <http://schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/piv/index.html>

In watching the video-clip as Peter contributes to the celebration of Jackie's achievement, we are both aware that Peter is expressing qualities of love and understanding that his Father expressed. Peter's Father had a most significant experience during the 1939-1945 war in Europe. He was captured by German soldiers and walking through a field of dead German soldiers he felt that he might be killed. This experience had a transforming influence on his commitment to enhance his expression of love and understanding which he did with his own children. Peter shares this commitment with his Father. In his Masters Dissertation 'Making the Break' Peter documents his own learning as he moved from a commitment to technical rationality to more dialogical and dialectical forms of communication, enquiry and understanding. Here is the foreword in which Peter acknowledges the influence of John Wisdom:

### **“Foreword**

John Wisdom: obituary in *The Independent* 15th December 1993

Photograph: A lean open face with a broad smile; cloth cap, muffler and raincoat against a background of hay or straw bales.

‘... His book *Paradox and Discovery* (1965) ... continues his work of showing that philosophy can advance and deepen our understanding, not in the ways with which we are familiar in logic and the sciences, but in a way that good literature does. His last book, *Proof and Explanation* (1990), ... is concerned with the nature of reasoning inside and outside philosophy ... He argues for the fundamental character of the particular case in all forms of reasoning, such as a mother refers to in explaining things to her child. He argues for the priority of "mother's method" over "father's", where the father resorts to general principles in his explanations. It is the mother who has to come to the rescue when the child asks for an explanation of the father's general principles - what they

mean and why the child should believe them. ... He did not lecture from notes and brought his students into dialogue with what he was saying. ... Wisdom's philosophy was neither the study of arcane facts, nor the pursuit of complex theories; rather, anyone who has reached a certain linguistic level has, he believed, the capacity both to raise central philosophical doubts and to take steps towards settling them. Wisdom called these processes "provocation and pacification". Unlike Wittgenstein, he stressed the insight (rather than the craziness) that informs even - or perhaps especially - the most paradoxical and most notorious philosophical ideas. ("There is good in them, poor things"). Philosophy thus calls for a perturbation of our apparently stable conceptual schemes, and an uncomfortable deconstruction of what we know; but also for a reconstruction through which the relations between neighbouring conceptual areas are redescribed, and that which we have already known is seen anew. ... psychoanalysis, another enquiry through which that which we in a sense have always known is regained, but with greater vividness, particularity and authenticity. In both philosophy and psychoanalysis there is resistance to such knowledge, and to the exploratory use of free associations of ideas which may feel dangerous or mad. Wisdom ... drew out of his students these often inaccessible thoughts. He was truly Socratic. ...'

This outline of Wisdom's philosophy describes the place from which I now attempt to write." (Mellett, 1995)

### **Concluding comments**

What we are seeking to do in this present communication is not only to express and define our living educational standards of judgement. We believe that we have shown that it is possible in particular contexts to live these values in practice. Because we believe that the world would be a better place to be, for the majority of people, if such values could be lived more fully in a range of different contexts, we are hoping that what we are showing captivates your imagination to extend the possibilities that are open for you to explore. In other words, following Joan Whitehead (2003), we are seeking to make the possible probable.

Our use of the digital information and communications technology of the internet is most significant in our ideas of how to make the possible, probable. We believe that the visual narratives of our own educational practices show what is possible in our different contexts to live values that we identify for ourselves as giving meaning and purpose to our lives and that carry our hopes for the future of humanity. Without any colonial intent that we are aware of, we believe that the world would be a better place if such loving and productive values were more widespread. We are placing these ideas in the interconnecting and branching flows of communication in the channels of the internet. In doing this we believe that the ideas could

captivate the imagination of readers such as yourself. We also believe that our embodied values and flows of life-affirming energy will resonate with your own in a way that serves to enhance your own expression of these values and energy in your educational relationships. Through sharing our accounts of our own learning in our living educational theories we believe that we are also showing how we are contributing to the education of the social formations in which we live and work. In doing this together we feel stronger than we do when working as separate individuals and appreciate the communion in our webs of betweenness that respect and celebrate each others differences in our pedagogies of the unique.

What we are hoping is that you will feel moved to respond to our ideas so that we can evaluate the validity of our ideas in relation to your own beliefs and commitments and can be helped to understand how we might further enhance our contribution to living more fully the values that carry hope for the future of humanity, and our own.

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