

## CHAPTER 12

# My Story Is My Living Educational Theory

Jean McNiff

This chapter aims to show the links between narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and action research, a form of research that enables practitioner researchers to tell their stories of how they have taken action to improve their situations by improving their learning. They explain how reflecting on their action can lead to new learning, which can inform future learning and action. Their stories comprise their descriptions and explanations of practice, which constitute their own living educational theories of practice (Whitehead, 1989). By offering these theories of practice, they are able to show how they hold themselves accountable for what they are doing and why they are doing it.

Telling stories and getting them listened to are, however, complex processes that involve several considerations. First, there is the business of what kind of story to tell and how to tell it. Telling a story as straight narrative is different from telling a story as a research narrative. A research narrative contains a descriptive account of the systematic nature of doing the research (Stenhouse, cited in Skilbeck, 1983), as well as an explanatory account of the reasons for the research and what the researcher hoped to achieve. Unless people are told about the research, they will not appreciate its reasons or potential significance. In his *Induction and Intuition in Scientific Thought*, Medawar (1969) says that a scientific inquiry begins with a story about a possible world that we invent, criticize, and modify as we live, so it ends by being a story of real life. On this view, research can be seen as disciplined narrative inquiry. Second, there is the business of getting people to listen to the story. This means telling a story that is acceptable in terms of normative conventions, what people expect to hear as part of the orthodox canon. Difficulties, however, now set in, because often research stories,

especially practitioners' stories about the generation of their living theories of practice, tend to step outside the orthodox canon and fall into a category of unauthorized knowledge (Apple, 1993). This can amount to an act of cultural transgression because what counts as authorized knowledge is held in place by an elaborate cultural infrastructure, also containing an editorial infrastructure, to decide which stories qualify for entry into the public domain and which are excluded. Getting a story accepted, therefore, means engaging in cultural politics as well as editorial politics. Consequently, ensuring that their work is listened to means that practitioner researchers need to raise their awareness of and engage with the issues. They need to strengthen their capacity to produce robust research stories that will withstand the strictures of cultural and editorial politics. Their stories can then be used as mediating representations that enable them to exercise their educational influence in the public sphere.

These are some of the substantive issues in this chapter. I explain how practitioners need to engage with cultural and editorial politics as they produce their accounts of practice, especially in relation to demonstrating the validity of their research. I also raise contextual questions about how validity is intimately linked with the idea of goodness, especially in terms of what counts as *good practice* and *good research accounts*. I ask whether my work and my account may be judged as good, as I question whether my responsibility is to do good in the world or tell a good story (see Coetzee, 2004). I deal with these issues in turn. First, and as part of my own research practice, I explain how and why I have structured the chapter in its present form.

I position myself as an educational action researcher, part of whose work is to tell stories of educational action research. The stories I tell are those of myself in company with others who are also telling their stories. My main theme is about how I offer explanations for my educational practices, my personal theories of practice. I show how and why I do what I do and justify my practice as good practice, including the form and content of my research report as an integral part of that practice. I maintain that an account of practice should demonstrate its own validity and the validity of the practice, in terms of whether they both show explicitly how and why they should be considered valuable or good. I link the ideas of validity and goodness. I also explain that the validity claim needs to be tested against specific personal and social criteria. I ask what, therefore, counts as a good story? If practitioners claim that their practice is good, how do they ensure that their stories demonstrate the kind of validity that will appropriately communicate the validity of their work? This is especially important in contexts of national assessment, when, for example, the U.K. Research Assessment Exercise states that work claiming to be top quality should be judged as internationally relevant in terms of its originality, rigor, and significance.

To explore these issues, I tell my own research story. The form my narrative takes mirrors the form of my inquiry, as I address these questions to understand and explain what I am doing:

- What is my concern?
- Why am I concerned?

- What kind of experiences can I describe to show the reasons for my concerns?
- What can I do about it? What will I do about it?
- How do I evaluate the educational influence of my actions?
- How do I demonstrate the validity of the account of my educational influence in learning?
- How do I modify my concerns, ideas, and actions in the light of my evaluation? (see McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, 2006).

My story is, however, a story of stories. My own story is about how I have exercised my educational influence so that people can exercise their originality and critical engagement and have their stories about the generation of their living educational theories accepted in the public domain. These stories tend not to abide by the conventions of the mainstream canon. I explain how my inquiry itself becomes part of a politics of narratives, of narrativized differences. Ultimately, it becomes a politics of ethics, because making decisions about which stories are permissible and who is permitted to tell them becomes a domain of political ethics within a wider framework of what counts as good and how it should be judged. For me, whether my story should be accepted is not a case of whether it abides by the conventions of the orthodox canon but whether the validity I am claiming for it can be justified in terms of rational inquiry.

I now set out to do this. Using the questions above as a guide to my narrative, I ask whether by asking these kinds of critical questions, I can show how I have worked systematically toward realizing my educational values and have offered sufficient evidential grounds for my story to be validated and legitimized in the public domain.

## What Is My Concern?

---

I am currently concerned about two interrelated issues.

First, I am concerned about the dominant stories in the literature, that educational research should continue to be conceptualized from the relatively narrow perspectives of traditional social science in spite of a major body of literature, comprising practitioners' stories of practice, that shows educational research also as a process of making sense of our own personal and professional lives through personal inquiry as we try to realize our values in our practices. While I recognize the major contributions of the social sciences to the field of human inquiry, I am concerned about their excluding and hegemonizing power. For example, the dominant stories from the British Educational Research Association (see Whitty, 2005) explain how educational research should continue to be the province of specialized social science researchers. A special emphasis is laid in these stories about how the criteria and standards of judgment for assessing the quality of the research, often to do with the statistical analysis of results to show the potentials of the research for generalizability and replicability, are firmly established and are used to demonstrate

the validity of the account and, thus, legitimize the status of the research and the researcher. I am concerned about how these stories can act as a force of centralized control, shutting out less powerful voices and forming a grand narrative that excludes local narratives.

Second, I am concerned about the way action research itself has been colonized and reconfigured in some quarters to fit into the dominant social sciences framework, a situation that denies the values of social justice and democratic forms of life that underpin action research and distorts its potentials for social change. The stories that communicate this kind of instrumental action research adopt the same criteria and standards of judgment as the traditional social sciences. They assume an air of the legitimate force of instruction so that the more personalized narrative form through which practitioners' educational theories tend to be communicated is frequently delegitimized and threatened. The hegemonizing power of the stories of performance management fit well within political contexts such as the United States, whose dominant policy research stories are about the implementation of actions to ensure specific end results, with substantial funding for those who conform and penalty points for those who do not.

I am expressing concern about how the legitimacy of the form of research is subject to the censoring power of those already legitimated within the field as knowledgeable experts, how their stories become a normative body of knowledge by whose standards other stories are judged, and how structural regimes of power are sustained by power-constituted strategies. I am concerned about how and why the underpinning assumptions of these stories go virtually unquestioned.

Yet because I systematically interrogate my own practice in relation to any thorny issues I raise, a new concern emerges about the ethics of my own practice. As well as positioning myself as a practitioner researcher, I am also frequently positioned as a judge. Like others in higher education, I am called on to examine higher-degree submissions or review articles submitted for publication, so I potentially become an editor-censor. This is a powerful position because I decide whether someone's voice is heard or silenced. The position also carries responsibility for ethical conduct. I have to clarify for myself and others, especially the researcher whose work is under consideration, which standards of judgment I am using and whether they can be justified as rational standards of validity and not as my own irrational prejudices. Developing such understandings is crucial if editorial practices are to maintain educational validity. Donmoyer (1996) expresses similar concerns when he asks *what a journal editor has to do* in order to act responsibly in an era of paradigm proliferation.

So I am addressing multiple dilemmas and concerns: how to combat the hegemonizing power of dominant stories that extends their continuing normativization and so potentially prevents other stories from being legitimized; how to combat trends in the field of educational action research that embed it within the dominant institutional and literary canon; how to develop new narrative forms, grounded in learning, so that the stories of practitioner action researchers can also gain legitimacy on their own terms; and when practitioners turn judges and editors, how they

can demonstrate accountability for their practices by articulating the standards of judgment they use in making their assessments.

To clarify, let me tell you a story.

I was recently sent an article for review by an action research journal. The article was well written and engaging. I was so taken with the quality of the writing that initially I could not understand my unease about the content.

The article, by a North American teacher-researcher, spoke of an intervention he had implemented in his class of second-grade students, some of whom had difficulty in word recognition. Having decided to use a reading program, he targeted five students as respondents (in this case, data sources) to see whether the intervention worked. It evidently did, and the students' scores improved on posttests.

It took time to identify the reasons for my discomfort. I gradually realized that the story was too neat. It worked on the assumption that the researcher did this so that that happened, a traditional positivist assumption of cause and effect: The research aims to show causal relationships through the input of a stimulus to ensure a specific outcome. My understanding, however, is that action research is about learning, not about controlling practices. It is about problematizing practice so that practice does not become the implementation of rules to fit action into a predetermined model. It is about asking interesting questions about whether we are exercising our influence in a way that we hope is educational, for the good. I wrote as much in my recommendations.

I was aware, as I wrote my report (and I said this to the journal editors), that I was possibly doing a disservice to the researcher because, as noted, there are distinct trends in North America and elsewhere to regard action research as just this kind of linear programming, input-output, the implementation of prepackaged action plans to ensure a neat, predetermined outcome. Because research funders, however, often require this kind of framework, to fulfill policy mandates that demand results in classrooms and the accumulation of results into a body of knowledge to act as the basis of future policy and practice, some researchers produce textbooks about using action research to achieve a specific end result. This approach can have destructive consequences. I regularly receive e-mails from action researchers around the world in terms of "I began my action research with high hopes, and now I am in despair because I am not achieving what I expected." This can be devastating when anticipated results are linked to funding and professional status.

I now appear to be contradicting myself, in relation to what I am saying in the chapter, about how some stories are censored in terms of editors' standards of judgment, and in relation to my story, about how I censor work in terms of my own standards of judgment. I could be seen as positioning myself as a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989) and invalidating my claim to be practicing in the direction of the good because I am critiquing others for practices that I engage in myself. In my example, I explained that I was judging the quality of a story of instruction. Yet I, too, produce books that advise people how to achieve their educational visions. There are differences here. There is a distinct difference between what I do as an action researcher and what social scientists dressed as action researchers do. Social scientists produce explanations that are frequently underpinned by a logic of domination

(Marcuse, 1964). Their explanations appear as sets of propositional statements that show, by the internal relationship of the statements, how they have eliminated contradictions. The explanations carry the force of instructions, telling people how to implement action steps. I work differently. I invite people to ask questions about what they are doing and decide for themselves what action to take. There is a distinct difference between the two approaches, one of which is premised on a logic that aims for closure through providing general answers to particular questions and the other on a logic that aims for open-ended inquiry through problematic questioning. There are also differences in their philosophical underpinnings. The practice of issuing instructions for implementation is grounded in Aristotelian logic, which assumes a cause-and-effect relationship with no room for contradiction. This view is perpetuated by philosophers such as Popper, who said that a logic that accepted contradiction was based on “a loose and woolly way of thinking” and that a “theory which involves a contradiction is therefore useless *as a theory*” (Popper, 1963/2002, p. 429), and by philosophers such as Peters (1966) and Hirst (1983), who wrote that research and training should be carried out under the aegis of the different disciplines of education. It also informs dominant institutional stories, underpinned by specific institutional epistemologies (Schön, 1995), about how knowledge should be seen as packages of information delivered to allegedly unknowing practitioners.

I do not subscribe to these philosophies, and I do not tell such stories. I tell stories about how I avoid telling people what to do, on my understanding that people are fully competent to make their own decisions, including whether what I have to say is right for them. I assess the quality of my educational influence in terms of whether I encourage people to make judgments that are right for them in relation to the values they espouse. I ground my practice in the philosophies of Polanyi (1958), who speaks of the vast store of tacit knowledge that people possess; Plato (see his *Phaedrus*), who speaks of the capacity of knowers to hold the one and the many together at the same time; and Chomsky (1986), who speaks of the innate capacity of individuals to create language, an idea that I develop as the innate capacity of individuals to come to know in their own original way and to generate an infinitude of knowledge. My practice is informed by the kind of ontological and epistemological values that influence the life-affirming flow of humanity in all its forms (Whitehead, 2004c). In my philosophy, deciding which values to live by is a deeply moral activity that reflects our capacities as humans to make choices and decide which are morally binding choices.

I now relate these ideas to the main thrust of this chapter, about how judgments are made about the living and written texts of human lives and about the legitimization processes involved in deciding which stories should enter the mainstream and which should not. If I am claiming to act as an action researcher with educational intent, and so practicing in the direction of what I consider to be the good, I need to look into the mirror and interrogate my practice in terms of whether I fulfill my rhetoric. I have to justify my claim to the authority of my present best thinking, which, although open to further modification and critique, has to act as the grounds for my future intentional action. I address these questions, first, by articulating the reasons for my concerns.

## Why Am I Concerned?

---

Several interrelated stories are running through this chapter about how to contribute to the legitimization of the stories of practitioner action researchers within the hegemonizing context of the legitimacy of dominant social science stories, a story that itself is embedded within a framing story about the legitimacy of those who make judgments about which stories should enter the public domain and so contribute to a valid educational research literary canon and how this links with the idea of moral practice. Many elements of these stories constitute concerns, in terms of violating my ontological and epistemological values, as I now explain.

I do not believe that people need to be told what to do. They can be advised or guided but not told. We can all think for ourselves. In the same way that we are born with the capacities to walk and talk as part of our human genetic inheritance, we are born with the capacity to think, to make choices, and to reflect critically on our actions. We are moral creatures, fully equipped to exercise our agency by acting on our decisions. In professional life, practitioners are already fully equipped to make their own decisions about practice and show how they hold themselves accountable for the consequences of those decisions. I work from a sense of self—my own and others’—that is consistent with the following:

What exactly do people mean when they speak of the self? Its defining characteristics are fourfold. First of all, continuity. You’ve a sense of time, a sense of past, a sense of future. There seems to be a thread running through your personality, through your mind. Second, closely related is the idea of unity or coherence of self. In spite of the diversity of sensory experience, memories, beliefs and thoughts, you experience yourself as one person, as a unity.

So there’s continuity, there’s unity. And then there’s a sense of embodiment or ownership—yourself as anchored to your body. And fourth is a sense of agency, what we call free will, your sense of being in charge of your own destiny. (Vilayanur, 2003, p. 1)

So it is with a sense of alarm that I read the dominant stories about policy formation and implementation and how the different social formations involved in decision making in education are perceived. It is popularly understood (see Thomas & Pring, 2004) that policymakers, researchers, and practitioners are different groups with separate roles and responsibilities, and each positions the others in relation to its perceptions of the public positioning of themselves. Each takes on its own, separate role as characters in a story told by invisible narrators. The characters do not tell their own stories but read the scripts provided by the absent storytellers. Thus, policymakers make policy; external researchers do research whose findings will inform policy; and practitioners, whose practices become the grounds for the researchers’ research, implement the researchers’ theories. The stories themselves communicate an underpinning assumption that all participants agree with and contribute to these discourses, which are then systematically communicated through the culture (Williams, 1961). Furthermore, according to books such as

Gibbons et al. (1994), each grouping grounds its expertise, and presumably its professional identity, in different epistemological foundations. Furlong and Oancea (2005) sum it up as follows:

Traditionally it has been assumed that there is a clear distinction between the worlds of research and the worlds of policy and practice, that there are “two communities.” On the one hand there is the world of research, based on explicit, systematic work aimed at the growth of theoretical knowledge. Practice and policy on the other hand are seen as taking place in the “real world,” a world based on different forms of knowledge—for example, on tacit knowledge and practical wisdom. (p. 10)

So practitioners’ knowledge, generated from their own research, counts as “Mode 2” knowledge, whereas academic-led research becomes “Mode 1” knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994).

This situation is an utter denial of my educational and epistemological values. It denies the view of personhood outlined earlier above and positions people as objects of data within other people’s stories rather than real people with real identities who are telling their own stories. I have already stated my views around the capacity of all to make informed decisions. These views are rooted in deeper ontological values regarding the precious uniqueness of each individual, an idea close to Arendt’s (1958) concept of natality. People are not born as already categorized, although many are born into social systems that automatically categorize them in terms of ethnicity, class, gender, physical ability, or any other alterity that comes to mind. These false categorizations are perpetuated by the stories that are understood as the prevailing truth. For me, to discriminate against a person because of physical *differences* is bad enough. To discriminate against them because of their intellectual capacity is, on Arendt’s and my terms, one of the most egregious forms of personal violence, and to set up a regime whereby knowledge itself is used as a marker of symbolic power is one of the most flagrant violations of the concepts of social justice.

What stories do I tell? My stories say that we are all equal as persons, and practitioners, on the understanding that those who act with deliberate social intent are involved in a practice. Furthermore, if our commitment is to social improvement, we can say we are involved in a praxis. In Groome’s terms (as cited in Glavey, 2005), we become participants in communities of praxis.

This gives me the explanatory frameworks for my inquiry—how and why I present it in narrative form. How do I demonstrate the realization of my values around the uniqueness of each individual and one’s capacity to come to know in one’s own way? How do I challenge and transform the dominant underpinning logics that perceive people as *naturally* belonging to categories that are themselves socially constructed fictions? How do I show the validity and legitimacy of the narrative form through which I communicate my inquiry, which is full of contradictions, within a dominant form of logic that rejects narrative forms of theorizing and metaphorical forms of expression that are grounded in contradictions and ambiguity? How do I show the validity of my work?

Let me give some examples of the power of the dominant form and also some examples of what can happen when this form and its underpinning power are challenged by forms that are grounded in a different kind of power.

## What Kind of Experiences Can I Describe That Show Why I Am Concerned?

---

One does not have to travel far to see the reasons for my concerns. The most cursory glance at the mainstream educational research literature will show that the majority are written in a propositional form and abide by the conventions of the traditional social sciences. Seldom does one encounter the word *I*. Yet it is widely acknowledged that world sustainability is premised on the personal commitment of citizens finding ways, in free agreement, of taking responsibility for their own futures through negotiated collaboration (Sen, 1999).

It is also not difficult to see the hegemony of the current orthodoxy by moving into the academy, especially in relation to higher-degree assessment. Many universities, including some with which I have worked, insist on excluding the personal pronoun from dissertation and thesis titles. Questions of the form “How do I . . . ?” (Whitehead, 1989) are rejected in favor of bland titles that are appropriate to forms of abstract theory not grounded in the researcher’s personal knowledge.

Closer to home, here are three examples of how practitioner researchers’ accounts have been suppressed by the imposition of dominant forms.

The two PhD theses of Jack Whitehead, who has exercised world influence in the dissemination of practitioners’ accounts of their living educational theories, were rejected in the 1980s on grounds that included a judgment that they contained nothing of publishable worth. His theses, which constituted his own living theories of practice, were unacceptable to the examiners, who were prepared neither to engage with the issues being explored or the standards of judgment used to validate his theories nor to accept the narrativized form, which placed *I* at the heart of the inquiry. The university regulations refused him permission to question his examiners’ judgments under any circumstances. Ironically, doctorates since legitimated in Jack’s university have included ideas from the rejected theses. Jack’s (1993) story in *The Growth of Educational Knowledge* can be accessed from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/bk93/geki.htm](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/bk93/geki.htm). He was finally awarded his doctorate from the University of Bath in 1999.

Geoff Suderman-Gladwell was prohibited from pursuing his classroom research by a university’s research ethics committee. He, therefore, undertook an inquiry into how he studied his own learning from the experience (Suderman-Gladwell, 2001). He wrote about his own reflections on his learning and how his learning informed new actions.

Similarly, a PhD faculty member whose studies I was supporting had his action research blocked by his university’s ethics committee. He wanted to study how he was exercising his educational influence in his own learning in relation to the learning of his colleagues, so his colleagues would become participants in his research.

The ethics committee believed this would jeopardize the well-being of his colleagues, and he was refused permission. He did not continue his research.

As well as these stories of potential ruin (Lather, 1994), many victory stories also are available about how practitioner researchers have overcome obstacles to realize their educational values and celebrate their *I* questions as they generate their living educational theories. Many of these reports are on [www.actionresearch.net](http://www.actionresearch.net) and [www.jeanmcniff.com](http://www.jeanmcniff.com). Examples from [www.actionresearch.net](http://www.actionresearch.net):

Eames, K. (1995). *How do I, as a teacher and educational action-researcher, describe and explain the nature of my professional knowledge?* PhD thesis dissertation, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from [www.actionresearch.net/kevin.shtml](http://www.actionresearch.net/kevin.shtml)

Laidlaw, M. (1996). *How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my educational development?* PhD thesis, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from [www.actionresearch.net/moira2.shtml](http://www.actionresearch.net/moira2.shtml)

Examples from [www.jeanmcniff.com](http://www.jeanmcniff.com):

Burke, T. (1998). *How can I improve my practice as a learning support teacher?* MA dissertation, University of the West of England, Bristol, UK. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from [www.jeanmcniff.com/tereseabstract.html](http://www.jeanmcniff.com/tereseabstract.html)

Ní Mhurchú, S. (2000). *How can I improve my practice as a teacher in the area of assessment through the use of portfolios?* MA dissertation, University of the West of England, Bristol, UK. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from [www.jeanmcniff.com/siobhan.htm](http://www.jeanmcniff.com/siobhan.htm)

These accounts contain some significant features:

- They are storied accounts about how practitioners can undertake their action inquiries from the grounds that their values are being denied in their practice. Each researcher imagines how to overcome the denial and systematically finds ways of doing so.
- Practitioners take as their guideline the question, “How do I improve what I am doing?”
- Practitioners develop new forms of practice inspired by educational values. They explain how they are also contributing to new theory by showing how learning from practice and systematic reflection on the learning can inform new practices.
- Practitioners come from a range of educational constituencies. Their stories are located in schools, workplaces, and higher-education settings.
- The stories explain how practitioners can become part of networked learning communities and so test their claims to improved practice and knowledge against the critical feedback of informed others.

These contradictory experiences show the reasons for my concern. The passionate inquiries (Dadds, 1994) of practitioner researchers, however, are still not fully accepted within a normative mainstream context of absent researchers' dispassionate stories. So now, following my explanatory framework, I need to say what I am doing to realize my values in practice.

I work as a professional educator, supporting practitioners' higher-degree studies. The library of the University of the West of England contains 65 validated master's dissertations completed under my supervision. I am aware, however, that I need to improve my supervisory practices, especially in relation to doctoral work, by encouraging the explicit articulation of the standards of judgment that researchers use to assess their work—that is, how they have tested the validity of their work to have that validation process legitimated in the public domain. How I can improve my practice, therefore, becomes the focus of the next section.

## What Can I Do About it? What Will I Do About It?

---

First, I outline the relationship between stories, intentions, truth, and validity.

When we tell a story, we imply that the story has a relationship with truth. The myths and legends of a culture represent deep truths about that culture (Frazer, 1963). Fairy stories contain truths about the nature and underpinning values of human relationships. Habermas (2003) draws on Husserl's (1982) insights that any act of knowing, once begun, has "an immanent relation to truth" (Habermas, 2003, p. 22). This immanent relation of intentional action to truth implies that people know what they are doing when they seek to influence the creation of themselves in company with one another. Said (1995) also develops this theme, explaining that each intentional beginning becomes its own methodology, a realization of its underlying intent. From these works, I understand how intentional action can be shown to have an immanent relation to truth by demonstrating its validity. By telling their stories, practitioners can show how their action has an immanent relation to truth by articulating explicitly how they give meaning to their lives in terms of what they consider valuable or good. They show the validity of their value-informed practices by establishing the validity of the story.

These ideas are new territory for me, and possibly also for the wider community of action researchers. Existing stories of practice in the public domain tend to be descriptions of actions without articulating their grounding in explanations for the actions. This kind of explanatory grounding is, however, essential if the procedures used to test the validity of the research are to be explicated. Furthermore, procedures for establishing the validity of the research story itself need to be explicated. All this involves consideration of two distinct though interrelated issues:

## Showing the Internal Validity of the Research

The research needs to be shown as meaningful—that is, fulfilling its original intent, in Habermas’s (1987) terms, of enabling participants to create meaningful relationships for mutual benefit, in terms of what they understand as of value or good. Creating meaning is not simply about taking action but also involves focusing on the learning that enters into the action so that the action is understood as informed purposeful practice. The relationship between learning and action needs to be articulated in stories, and the relationships between practitioners’ stories needs to be articulated when the practitioners say they are influencing their own learning and one another’s learning.

## Showing the Internal Validity of the Research Story

Telling a research story is an integral part of research practice. A story does not appear out of nowhere. It is written by a researcher who brings his or her own values to the writing process. Consequently, the story can be understood as the articulation of the values of the writer, which communicates these values through its content and form. In action research reports, the content is about accounting for oneself through a process of showing the validity of the work as it links, in Husserl’s (1982) terms, with realizing the researcher’s guiding values.

Therefore, practitioner researchers have two responsibilities: (1) to show the validity of their research through (2) showing the validity of their research report. These issues have to be made explicit, which is essential if practitioner researchers wish to be seen as competent theorists rather than skilled implementers. Furlong (2000) said this in his evaluation of the Best Practice Research Scholarship initiative, reporting that teachers tend to see their action research as a form of professional development leading to school improvement but do not appreciate the need to raise their own capacity to do research and engage in quality theorizing.

I am currently attending to this issue in my own practice. In my PhD thesis (McNiff, 1989), I evidently understood the need to articulate the criteria and standards of judgment I wished to be used to assess the quality of my account. I wrote,

So when you come to judge the thesis as a submission for an academic award, please remember that you are focusing on one central issue, one unit of appraisal; and that is my claim to educational knowledge. Am I justified in saying that I understand my own educational development? Do I defend my claim adequately by showing the processes by which I came to my present knowledge? I regard the developmental form of my thesis as part of that claim, in demonstrating in action the processes involved in my present form of life (my claim). Do you agree? (p. 4)

I had not, however, made explicit the link between values and standards of judgment, a focus that has been developed by Jack Whitehead (2004a, 2004b). From him, I have learned the significance of articulating criteria and standards of judgment in assessing research accounts. Furthermore, traditional technical rational criteria such as generalizability and replicability, inappropriate for practitioners' living inquiries, can be replaced by new criteria such as the experienced realization of one's values. Values can transform into the living critical criteria and standards of judgment whereby practice may be assessed through the critical scrutiny of others. The validity of research can be established by explaining how the researcher has realized their values and how this realization has given meaning to their lives (see Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Research stories need to show explicitly how values have transformed into living standards of practice.

It is, however, not sufficient only to make explicit the immanent relationship between the significance of the values that informed the work and the significance of how the values were transformed into living critical standards of judgment. The claim to validity itself has to be tested against critical feedback. This can take two forms: first, by subjecting the account to the test of commensurability with one's own internal commitment and, second, by subjecting it to external public critique to establish the commensurability of the research claim with publicly agreed norms of validity. The first test is grounded in Polanyi's (1958) idea of having faith in the rightness of one's capacity for personal knowledge, bearing in mind that one's personal knowledge may be mistaken—for example, it may be rooted in self-delusion. The second test is grounded in the researcher's willingness to engage with criteria such as those suggested by Habermas (1987, 2003), that the claim be made in honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness and with an awareness that it is made within a normative context. These ideas have to be relevant to practitioners if they wish to re-create their professional identities as practical theorists and not only as practitioners acting as data that external researchers can use.

These insights inform new actions, as I now explain.

## How Do I Evaluate the Educational Influence of My Actions?

---

I am explaining how I try to do what I suggest others should do. I, and others, need to evaluate the influence of our actions, to check whether we are living the values that inform our lives. Realizing our values enables us to show the validity of our work, how we understand our work as good practice. This raises for me the question of how I understand good, to explain how and why I wish my practice to be evaluated.

Like Raz (2001), I believe that abstract values become meaningful when we live them in practice. I understand good in terms of what I and others do, how we realize the values that communicate a life-affirming energy for the future sustainability of humanity (Whitehead, 2004c). The values, I hope, I demonstrate in my practice include those of freedom, creativity, critical judgment, justice, care, inquiry, love, compassion, and accounting for myself. These values also inform the writing of this

story. The realization of values, for me, constitutes good practice, and the communicative adequacy of the story constitutes a good story. I wish my work to be judged in terms of whether I tell a good (valid, meaningful) story of good (valid, meaningful) practice. I draw on another story to help me clarify the idea.

Coetzee's (2004) novel *Elizabeth Costello* tells of a woman novelist whose reputation rests on one early outstanding book. Since then, her originality has declined and lost its sparkle. The story tells how, having read a novel by Paul West about the shocking realities of the execution of Hitler's would-be assassins, she tries to prevent West from speaking about his work in a public lecture on the grounds that he will intensify people's distress. It is best that some things are kept silent, she feels. She experiences herself, in Whitehead's (1989) terms, as a living contradiction when she is torn between the values of doing good and the values of telling a story.

The answer, as far as she can see, is that she no longer believes that storytelling is good in itself, whereas for West . . . the question does not seem to arise. If she, as she is nowadays, had to choose between telling a story and doing good, she would rather, she thinks, do good. West, she thinks, would rather tell a story. (Coetzee, 2004, p. 167)

I once thought like Elizabeth Costello. I used to believe that I should do good—substantive good. I no longer think so. Life, and many good books, and conversations with friends who also struggle to give meaning to their lives have taught me that good is not substantive and cannot be imposed. From Berlin's (2002) *Freedom and Its Betrayal* I have learned that the imposition of freedom means no freedom for those on whom it is imposed, and equally, the practice of doing good can be harmful in terms of imposing one's own values, one's own understanding of the good, on others. Over time, I have come to realize that doing good means trying to live one's values and communicating what one is doing in honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness and in a form that is appropriate to the context (Habermas, 1987). For me, doing good is showing how one is living in the direction of one's values, being honest about the degree to which one is doing so, so that the quality of work can be assessed rationally. This means I have to articulate how I account for myself, which brings me to how I judge my practice and how I understand the *good* in good practice.

I understand my practice as good if I can show that I have encouraged others to exercise their originality and creativity and explicate my own processes of critical judgment, justice, care, inquiry, love, compassion, and accounting for myself so that others can tell their stories of practice in a way that is right for them. I understand that I do good work if I encourage others to account for themselves through developing appropriate conditions and relationships as the living realizations of my ontological values. Unlike Elizabeth Costello, I judge my work in terms of whether I tell a good story of good practice. Unlike her, I resist thinking in the binary divides of either/or. I understand my practice as integrated, and I link the idea of doing with the idea of communicating. Do I tell a good story that communicates how I have tried to realize my values?

To help me further in evaluating whether I have influenced others in an educational way, I draw on work already in the public domain, from practitioners whose

studies have been supported by Jack Whitehead, who communicate how they have transformed their values into their living critical standards of judgment. Church (2004), Hartog (2004), and Holley (1997) use an action research methodology to clarify the meaning of love as an explanatory principle and standard of judgment in their living educational theories of their own learning. For example, Church writes,

I show how my approach to [my] work is rooted in the values of compassion, and fairness, and inspired by art. I hold myself to account in relation to these values, as living standards by which I judge myself and my action in the world. This finds expression in research that helps us to design more appropriate criteria for the evaluation of international and social change networks. Through this process I inquire with others into the nature of networks, and their potential for supporting us in lightly-held communities which liberate us to be dynamic, diverse and creative individuals working together for common purpose. I tentatively conclude that networks have the potential to increase my and our capacity for love. (Church, 2004, p. 1)

This theme is developed by Marian Naidoo (2005), who explains how she clarifies the meaning of her loving relationships as her living critical standards of judgment in her living theory of her own learning.

I am a story teller and the focus of this narrative is on my learning and the development of my living educational theory as I have engaged with others in a creative and critical practice over a sustained period of time. This narrative self-study demonstrates how I have encouraged people to work creatively and critically in order to improve the way we relate and communicate in a multi-professional and multi-agency healthcare setting in order to improve both the quality of care provided and the well being of the system. (p. i)

I have learned, and I am developing the same practices in my work, as follows.

I support the doctoral inquiries of five practitioner researchers at the University of Limerick. Each articulates her values as her living critical standards of judgment. For example, Bernie Sullivan (2006) explains how the experience of living her values of justice has transformed into her living theory of justice. She writes in her dissertation,

I examine the influence and relevance of my practice in relation to my claim to have influenced in a positive way the educational opportunities for a marginalized group, namely Traveller children. I demonstrate how this improvement at the micro-political level has had repercussions at the macro level in terms of the achievement of social transformation. I draw on my embodied values of social justice and equality to provide the standards of judgement against which to test the validity of my claim to have improved my educational practice as well as the circumstances of my pupils. Finally, I show how, through engagement with more emancipatory pedagogies, I was able to promote a more

equitable situation within the educational system for a minority group, and in so doing, generate my own living theory of justice. (p. 46)

I support the master's and doctoral inquiries of 14 practitioner researchers at St Mary's University College, London, as part of a systematic academic staff development program. I encourage all participants to produce their living theories of practice and explain how they ground the validity of their stories within their values base. In parallel, I am developing a master's program with teachers in disadvantaged contexts in South Africa, validated by St Mary's College, encouraging them to produce accounts that show how values can be clarified and validated in the academy as living critical standards of judgment.

I write. I consistently make a case, as here, that practitioners need to rigorously evaluate their work by explaining how they transform their values into their living critical standards of judgment. To support my claim that my writing is having some influence, I produce three pieces of evidence from international initiatives.

My first piece of evidence is the story of Jacqueline Delong, whose PhD was supervised by Jack Whitehead. She explains how she exercises her educational influence as she asks, *How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my living educational theory?* (DeLong, 2002). She has influenced the growth of a culture of inquiry in her school board by encouraging practitioners to study their own practices and submit their living educational theories for higher-degree accreditation. Jacqueline and colleagues Heather Knill-Griesser and Cheryl Black have produced five volumes of teachers' accounts as they study their own practice (see Delong & Black 2002; Delong, Black, & Knill-Griesser, 2003).

My second piece of evidence is the story of Moira Laidlaw, a volunteer in China with Voluntary Services Overseas. Based in Guyuan Teachers' College in Ninxia Province (one of the most disadvantaged regions in China) and working with Dean Tian Fengjun, she has helped to create China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching. Her ideas have been taken up in other institutions in other regions. In 2004, she was awarded the prestigious State Friendship Award by the Chinese Government. In 2005, her work was recognized in the national press as "Action Research Revolutionises the Classroom" (Perrement, 2005). Moira has published the stories of the teachers she supports online (from [www.actionresearch.net/moira.shtml](http://www.actionresearch.net/moira.shtml)). Some are also reproduced in my joint publications with Jack Whitehead (see McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, 2006; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

My third piece of evidence is from two important scholarly events in 2004. The first was a symposium at the American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2004) titled *The Transformative Potentials of Individuals' Collaborative Self-Studies for Sustainable Global Educational Networks of Communication*, which Jack and I convened (see [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/multimedia/aera04sym.htm](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/multimedia/aera04sym.htm)). The proposal for the symposium was as follows:

This session aims to demonstrate the transformative potentials of individuals' collaborative self-studies for the development of sustainable global educational networks of communication. For this potential to be realised we see

certain practices as necessary. Here we explain some of those practices and how we believe we are achieving and justifying them by making our evidence base and the outcomes visible through multi media representations of our learning.

We are a group of teachers, professional educators, and education administrators, working across the levels of education systems. Each of us asks, "How do I improve what I am doing for personal and social good?" Each of us aims to generate our personal educational theories to show how we are doing so through our contributions to the education of social formations in our own settings. (p. 2)

The second significant scholarly event was a similar symposium presented at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) annual meeting (see [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw//bera04/frontbera.htm](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw//bera04/frontbera.htm)).

The fact that these symposia took place perhaps counts as evidence of the educational influence of my own and others' collaborative learning. The fact that the symposia were attended to capacity and received warm praise from participants and critical discussants supports my present claim that by working collaboratively with others, I am exercising educational influence.

At this point, I would like to comment on the far-reaching contributions of Jack Whitehead. As well as coauthoring our books, he has systematically produced influential papers that constitute a reconceptualizing of educational theory, including contributions to the *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Whitehead, 2004a) and articles for conventional refereed journals (e.g., Whitehead, 1999) and new electronic journals (Whitehead, 2004b). He consistently addresses the concerns of the British (and other) educational research communities (see Furlong & Oancea, 2005), about demonstrating the quality of practitioner research by defining quality in educational research in terms of how a researcher's underpinning ontological values can be transformed into living and communicable epistemological standards of judgment (Whitehead, 2004c). An especially valuable aspect of the electronic forms of technology with which he works is that interrelationships, which communicate the inclusional and relational nature of practitioners' underpinning logics and values, may be more adequately expressed in visual narratives than in a solely linguistic form. An archive of the visual narratives of practitioners, which communicate the meanings of inclusional, ontological, epistemological, methodological, and postcolonial living standards of judgment (Whitehead, 2005), can be accessed from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/).

One of my own aims is to produce texts that encourage people to develop their capacity for research and theory generation. Textbooks are available for practitioners, many written collaboratively with Jack, about the principles and practices of living action research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006; McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). All contain practical advice, grounded in the living case studies of practitioners.

I now turn to how I judge the validity of the story of my learning and educational influence.

## How Do I Demonstrate the Validity of the Account of My Educational Influence in Learning?

I need to consider whether this account itself constitutes a good story in terms of showing the validity of the work through the communicative adequacy of the content and form of the story. To explain this idea of communicative adequacy, I tell another story.

During the 1980s, I rejected a traditional disciplines approach to learning and instead explored a generative transformational approach that sees all things in an ongoing process of emergence (Chomsky, 1965). I link these ideas with a generative narrative form, as explained by Todorov (1990), who speaks of two principles of narrative. The first is the principle of propositional form. A text can be a “sequence of propositions that is easily recognized as a narrative” (p. 27). The second has transformational quality, where each episode contains the potential to generate the next, which, as Lyotard (1984) says, is the nature of narrative as a work of art that continuously re-creates itself through the process of communication.

Living educational theory stories self-consciously demonstrate this generative transformational potential, commenting throughout on the living process of inquiry and the underpinning living form of logic, a reflection of the researcher’s conscious commitment to each moment as holding all possible futures already within itself. Narrative forms can transform value-based commitments into their lived articulation in the form of practitioner researchers’ networks, thus eradicating the artificial divides of *them* and *us*, as mentioned earlier, or Mode 1 and Mode 2 forms of knowledge. Practitioners in higher education and in schools can communicate in face-to-face and virtual contexts and, through their printed and electronically transmitted storied accounts, show how they are learning collaboratively to exercise their educational influence in their own and one another’s learning. Examples can be found at [www.actionresearch.net](http://www.actionresearch.net), where the accounts of the 2004 AERA and BERA symposia can also be found, and at [www.jeanmcniff.com](http://www.jeanmcniff.com), where the accounts of three similar symposia presented at the Universities of Limerick (2003), Cork (2005), and Cyprus (2005) can be found. At these events, practitioners in higher-education and school settings came together to share their research stories. Their published accounts, which can be accessed from the Web sites, explain how participation in the symposia and networks and the giving and receiving of critical support has enabled them to produce their own living educational theories of practice and so reconceptualize the nature of educational theory for themselves and their wider communities.

Furthermore, I can show, through my own narrative, how I am realizing Habermas’s (2003) idea that “the student who has learned a rule has become a potential teacher. For owing to her generative ability, she can herself now create examples: not only new examples, but even fictitious ones” (p. 55). I believe I have done this, although I would not use the word “student.” I learn as much from those formally positioned as my “students” as they learn from me. We are all participants. Furthermore, they do more than create examples; they create realities.

## How Will I Modify My Concerns, Ideas, and Actions in the Light of My Evaluation?

---

I return to Elizabeth Costello and bring in Steven Spielberg, who, in an interview with *Time* (2005), speaks about his new movie *Munich*.

*Interviewer:* Do you think this film will do any good?

*Spielberg:* I've never, ever made a movie where I said I'm making this picture because the message can do some good for the world—even when I made *Schindler's List*. I was terrified that it was going to do the opposite of good. I thought perhaps it might bring shame to the memory of those who didn't survive the Holocaust—and even worse to those who did. I made the picture out of just pure wanting to get that story told. . . . I certainly feel that if filmmakers have the courage to talk about these issues—whether they're fictional representations or pure documentaries—as long as we're willing to talk about the real tough, hard subjects unsparingly, I think it's a good thing to get out in the ether. (Schickel, 2005, p. 71)

At the end of the story, Elizabeth Costello is kept waiting at the Gates until she can offer an explanatory account for her life's work. What will happen to me, especially in these contemporary days of editorial gatekeeping? What kind of explanations do I offer for my life's work? My story is that I use my educational influence to encourage others to tell their stories of practice, explain how they give meaning to their work as thoughtful and caring people, and show how they hold themselves accountable for their own stories of educational intent.

Have I done this? Have I told a good story that shows how I try to live my values and transform them into my living standards of judgment? I hope so. I hope that you, my reader, will agree that my story is of value, that it contains material from which others can learn, and that I am justified in offering my action research story as my living educational theory.

---

*Consulting Editors:* Mary Beattie, Naama Sabar, and Michal Zellermeier

## References

---

- American Educational Research Association (AERA). (2004, April). *The transformative potentials of individuals' collaborative self-studies for sustainable global educational networks of communication*. Symposium conducted at AERA, San Diego, CA. Retrieved from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/multimedia/aera04sym.htm](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/multimedia/aera04sym.htm)
- Apple, M. (1993). *Official knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berlin, I. (2002). *Freedom and its betrayal*. London: Chatto & Windus.

- British Educational Research Association. (2004). *Have we created a new epistemology for the new scholarship of educational enquiry through practitioner research? Developing sustainable global educational networks of communication*. Symposium presented at the annual meeting. Retrieved from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/bera04/frontbera.htm](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/bera04/frontbera.htm)
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin and use*. New York: Praeger.
- Church, M. (2004). *Creating an uncompromised place to belong: Why do I find myself in networks?* PhD submission, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved January 24, 2005, from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/church.shtml](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/church.shtml)
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Coetzee, J. M. (2004). *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Vintage.
- Dadds, M. (1994). *Passionate enquiry and school development: A story about teacher action research*. London: Falmer.
- Delong, J. (2002). *How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my own living educational theory?* PhD thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved November 26, 2004, from <http://www.actionresearch.net/delong.shtml>
- Delong, J., & Black, C. (Eds.). (2002). *Passion in professional practice* (Vol. 2). Ontario, Canada: Grand Erie Board of Education. Retrieved January 21, 2005, from [www.schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppii/index.html](http://www.schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppii/index.html)
- Delong, J., Black, C., & Knill-Griesser, H. (Eds.). (2003). *Passion in professional practice* (Vol. 3). Ontario, Canada: Grand Erie Board of Education. Retrieved January 21, 2005, from [www.schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppii/index.html](http://www.schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/pppii/index.html)
- Donmoyer, R. (1996). Educational research in an era of paradigm proliferation: What's a journal editor to do? *Educational Researcher*, 25(2), 19–25.
- Frazer, J. (1963). *The golden bough*. London: Macmillan.
- Furlong, J. (2000). *Higher education and the new professionalism for teachers: Realising the potential of partnership*. London: CVCP/SCOP. Retrieved November 26, 2004, from [www.edstud.ox.ac.uk/people/furlong.html](http://www.edstud.ox.ac.uk/people/furlong.html)
- Furlong, J., & Oancea, A. (2005). *Assessing quality in applied and practice-based educational research: A framework for discussion*. Retrieved May 29, 2005, from <http://www.bera.ac.uk/pdfs/Qualitycriteria.pdf>
- Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P., & Trow, M. (1994). *The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: Sage.
- Glavey, C. (2005). [Transfer paper MPhil to PhD (Dublin)]. University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, Wales, UK.
- Habermas, J. (1987). The theory of communicative action. Vol. 2: *The critique of functionalist reason*. Oxford, UK: Polity.
- Habermas, J. (2003). *On the pragmatics of social interaction*. Oxford, UK: Polity.
- Hartog, M. (2004). *A self-study of a higher education tutor: How can I improve my practice?* PhD thesis, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved November 26, 2004, from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/hartog.shtml](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/hartog.shtml)
- Hirst, P. (Ed.). (1983). *Educational theory and its foundation disciplines*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Holley, E. (1997). *How do I as a teacher-researcher, contribute to the development of a living educational theory through an exploration of my values in my professional practice?* MPhil thesis, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved December 20, 2005, from [www.actionresearch.net/erica.shtml](http://www.actionresearch.net/erica.shtml)
- Husserl, E. (1982). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy, Book I*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.

- Lather, P. (April, 1994). *Textuality as praxis*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-dimensional man*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- McNiff, J. (1989). *An explanation for an individual's educational development through the dialectic of action research*. PhD thesis, University of Bath, Bath, UK.
- McNiff, J., Lomax, P., & Whitehead, J. (2003). *You and your action research project* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2000). *Action research in organisations*. London: Routledge.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2002). *Action research: Principles and practice* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2005). *Action research for teachers*. London: David Fulton.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2006). *All you need to know about action research*. London: Sage.
- Medawar, P. (1969). *Induction and intuition in scientific thinking*. London: Methuen.
- Naidoo, M. (2005). *I am because we are (a never ending story). The emergence of a living theory of inclusional and responsive practice*. PhD thesis, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved December 20, 2005, from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/naidoo.shtml](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/naidoo.shtml)
- Perrement, M. (2005, May 10). *Action research revolutionises the classroom* (China Development Brief). Retrieved August 3, 2005, from [www.jackwhitehead.com/china/cdbmay05](http://www.jackwhitehead.com/china/cdbmay05)
- Peters, R. (1966). *Ethics and education*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Polanyi, M. (1958). *Personal knowledge*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Popper, K. (2002). *Conjectures and refutations*. London: Routledge. (Original work published 1963)
- Raz, J. (2001). *Value, respect and attachment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Said, E. (1995). *Beginnings: Intention and method*. London: Granta.
- Schickel, R. (2005, December 12). His "prayer for peace." *Time*, p. 71.
- Schön, D. (1995, November–December). Knowing-in-action: The new scholarship requires a new epistemology. *Change*, pp. 27–34.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Skilbeck, M. (1983). Lawrence Stenhouse: Research methodology. *British Educational Research Journal*, 9(1), 11–20.
- Suderman-Gladwell. (2001). *The ethics of personal, narrative, subjective research*. MA thesis, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. Retrieved November 28, 2005, from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/values/gsgma.pdf](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/values/gsgma.pdf)
- Sullivan, B. (2006). *Towards a living theory of a practice of social justice*. PhD thesis, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.
- Thomas, G., & Pring, R. (2004). *Evidence-based practice in education*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Todorov, T. (1990). *Genres in discourse*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Vilayanur, S. R. (2003). *Lecture 5: Neuroscience: The new philosophy. The Reith lectures 2003*. Retrieved May 28, 2005, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2003/lecture5.shtml>
- Whitehead, J. (1989). Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, "How do I improve my practice?" *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 19(1), 137–153. Retrieved November 26, 2004, from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/writings/livtheory.html](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/writings/livtheory.html)
- Whitehead, J. (1993). *The growth of educational knowledge: Creating your own living educational theories*. Bournemouth, UK: Hyde. Retrieved January 21, 2005, from [www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/bk93/geki.htm](http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/bk93/geki.htm)

- Whitehead, J. (1999). Educative relations in a new era. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 7(1), 73–90.
- Whitehead, J. (2004a). What counts as evidence in the self-studies of teacher education practices? In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic.
- Whitehead, J. (2004b). *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*. Retrieved November 26, 2004, from [www.arexpeditions.montana.edu/articleviewer.php?AID=80](http://www.arexpeditions.montana.edu/articleviewer.php?AID=80)
- Whitehead, J. (2004c, 16 September). *Do the values and living logics I express in my educational relationships carry the hope of Ubuntu for the future of humanity?* Paper presented at the BERA 04 Symposium, Manchester, UK. Retrieved May 30, 2005, from [www.jackwhitehead.com/jwbera04d.pdf](http://www.jackwhitehead.com/jwbera04d.pdf)
- Whitehead, J. (2005). Do these standards of judgement, used in validating explanations of educational influences from a living educational theory perspective, express a loyalty to humanity? Draft paper, University of Bath.
- Whitehead, J., & McNiff, J. (2006). *Action research living theory*. London: Sage.
- Whitty, G. (2005, September). *Education(al) research and policy making: Is conflict inevitable?* Presidential address to the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, Wales, UK.
- Williams, R. (1961). *The long revolution*. London: Chatto & Windus.