

## Foreword

Jack Whitehead

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I want to frame this foreword within the commitment and scope of EJOLTS to publish explanations of the educational influences of practitioner-researchers that focus on ontological questions, life-affirming energy and values such as love, freedom, justice, compassion, courage, care and democratic evaluation.

I also want to relate this foreword to a keynote symposium of the 2009 British Educational Research Association on [Explicating a New Epistemology for Educational Knowledge with Educational Responsibility](#) to the Theme of the 2010 American Educational Research Association Annual Conference on [Understanding Complex Ecologies in a Changing World](#) and to the theme of [A Creative Approach to Teachers' Education](#) of the International Conference in Požega from the 28-30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

All the contributors to this issue have explained their educational Influences in their own learning and in the learning of others with their ontological values. They have contributed their living educational theories to the knowledge-base of education. Each contribution highlights the importance of ontological values as explanatory principles in their work in education. These contributions to a new epistemology for educational knowledge with educational responsibility are focused on relationally dynamic standards of judgment and highlight the importance of visual narratives for communicating this knowledge.

The standards of judgment are formed within the complex ecologies of diverse cultural contexts with the purpose of enhancing the educational opportunities and experiences of young people.

Without sacrificing scholarly criticism each contribution bears witness to the importance of the creativity of teachers in enhancing the creative responses of students in taking responsibility for their own learning.

Sally Aston focuses on her contribution to student teachers' critical development with an emancipatory pedagogy through design and technology. Sally develops a critical and emancipatory pedagogy to enable students to make decisions as global citizens. I particularly liked the activity where participants compared the factors they considered when purchasing a food product at the beginning and end of the course. The participants show an increased critical awareness of how decisions and choices they make can influence change in society. This is a vital contribution to educational knowledge. Sally also shows how critical friends in a validation group scrutinize the evidence and validate her claim that 'I know ways to influence learning in terms of increasing knowledge, understanding, awareness and critical consciousness of some aspects of global citizenship through design and technology.'

Marie Huxtable focuses on developing talents to create and offer knowledge of the self and the world as educational gifts. Through the creation and offering of her multimedia living theory account as a gift Marie holds herself publically accountable for improving her practice by creating a multimedia living theory account as an ecological, living approach to accountability and evaluation. Marie makes a most significant contribution to the epistemological of educational knowledge by showing how multi-media narratives can communicate the meanings of embodied and ontological values as explanatory principles. You can access the approach advocated by Marie at: <http://www.jackwhitehead.com/huxtable/mh2009beraRI107.pdf>.

Vehid Ibraković and Branko Bognar focus on creativity in teaching plant production. They show the importance of the collaboration between a teacher and a school pedagogue in a doctoral research programme and then in their continuing collaboration in a project on "The development of creativity in the lifelong education of teachers".

Vehid includes different techniques to stimulate creativity, such as Provocation, Brainstorming, Mind Maps, Five Ws and an H, and Random Stimuli. He uses these creative techniques to encourage his students to create ideas rather than to use well-known facts regarding plant production. It is the process of helping students to create their own ideas that can break the damaging imposition of detailed regulations on young people's ways of thinking.

Maria James focuses on developing a living theory of theopraxis in improving her practice as a professional educator in religious education. Maria presents a relational pedagogy through the way she communicates the educational nature of her practice. Maria engages with the politics of educational knowledge and shows how she enhances her critical judgment in contributing to the development of a new epistemology of educational practice. Maria does this by theorising her practice as theopraxis. By theopraxis Maria means an explanation for how she is generating living theory of faith-based practice.

Marie shows how she has learnt to teach in ways associated with life affirmation and transformation whilst she rejects certain normative methodologies linked with faith-based practice. I find Maria's insights about faith-based practice most inspiring as they encourage me to continue to question the 'normalising' assumptions in the cultural influences that continue to exert some constraining pressures on my creativity.

Dot Jackson focuses on her learning to inspire and support her primary education students' creativity in design and technology whilst finding the courage to move from craft to creativity in primary design and technology. Dot develops new, supportive pedagogies to encourage students' independent creativity. She shows how she has enabled students to move from a safe practice of reproducing products, for which she uses the term 'craft', towards a more risky practice of creating original designs.

Dot explains how she made changes informed by her dynamic reflections towards her own living theory of creative practice. These changes provided a critical 'creative ecosystem' for the co-creation of knowledge.

I like very much Dot's use of a river delta as a visual metaphor for her transformational learning as her enquiries develop and branch out in various directions. The metaphor helps to emphasise the importance of complex ecologies in developing systemic influences whilst our enquiries flow in the general direction of new understandings and knowledge creation.

I would like to end this foreword with a personal note of thanks to all the contributors to this issue. I am writing this on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009 – the last day of my tenured contract as an academic at the University of Bath, where I have worked in education for the past 36 years. I now move on to a three year contract with the University as a Visiting Fellow. Over the last 36 years I have focused on helping practitioners to bring their evolving embodied knowledge into the Academy for legitimation as a way of transforming what counts as educational knowledge. The contributions to EJOLTS reinforce my belief in the significance of practitioner-researchers to both improving the educational experiences and opportunities of young people and to creatively enhancing the knowledge-base of education.