

How can I produce a web-accessed video to educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time at Club level in Special Olympics?

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Abstract

This report presents an action research enquiry using the avenue of living educational theory to examine how I expanded my practice as a volunteer in Special Olympics to develop as a non formal educator within this context. I describe how I embraced my own values in education during this study and chose to be led by them as I attempted to understand how my values influenced my learning and the learning of others.

I designed two action reflection cycles of enquiry from June 2010 to June 2011 whilst working with my local Special Olympics Club in Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland. In Cycle 1, I record my experience in the production of a commemorative DVD of the Club's participation in the Special Olympics Ireland Games held in Limerick in June 2010.

In Cycle 2, I draw on my experiential learning from Cycle 1 and focus my research enquiry on the production of an educational web accessed video called Changing Lives. This video was divided into six segments so that it could be integrated into the induction module of Special Olympics Irelands online Moodle learning management system.

I show how the use of video and visual methods can provide practical, evidence based explanations of practice from the volunteer action sphere in Special Olympics.

Keywords: Special Olympics; Volunteer; Web-accessed; Video; Action Research; Living Educational Theory

Prologue

Special Olympics describes itself as a global *movement*, and its roots were formed in 1962 when Eunice Kennedy Shriver became angered by the injustice, indifference and exclusion in the world towards people with special needs especially her sister Rosemary. Tim Shriver describes in Video 1 how his mother took action by setting up a sports camp in her backyard in Maryland USA opened to people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics was later founded in 1968.



Video 1. [Eunice Kennedy Shriver with her sister Rosemary](#)

More than 40 years later, I can testify to the positive impact and liberating experience this lady's legacy has had on my sister Denise pictured with me on the left in figure 1. Unfortunately Denise only encountered Special Olympics as an athlete in her adult years with Drogheda Special Olympics Club (DSOC).



Figure 1. My sister Denise and I

As a volunteer the opportunity to jointly celebrate in the triumph of any athlete's sporting achievement brings me great joy, knowing that I might have played even just the smallest part in it. The celebration is of particular consequence when I've sometimes been humbled to witness the countenance of an athlete's personal struggle, courage and perseverance in an environment that encourages sportsmanship, athlete leadership and unity among its members.

As a family member of an athlete, I have acquired the capacity to understand the potential complexity and conceivable depth of these struggles. I therefore, appreciate the ethos created for the athletes in Special Olympics and the unconditional acceptance of each person as a unique and intelligent being with a focus on the athlete's ability not his/her disability.

Special Olympics is built upon a foundation of values reflecting the *soul*, of the organisation. The ultimate stated aim according to the [2011-2015 Special Olympics Strategic Plan](#) is to produce the "best possible athlete experience."

Eunice Kennedy Shriver undoubtedly made an enormous difference in her lifetime. I believe that her action-oriented approach is still valid today to drive change and foster sustainable capabilities through the release of knowledge within the Special Olympics Community.

My enquiry began by asking the simple question "how do I improve my practice as a volunteer in Special Olympics?" As I explored the implications of this question, the meanings of my values as explanatory principles in why I am doing what I am doing were crystallised as I witnessed them emerge in the course of my practice. The significance of my academic contribution is to an understanding of the expression of embodied meanings as explanatory principles to which I hold myself critically accountable. Therefore in the pursuit of clarifying these meanings in the course of their emergence for you the reader, I have not relied on words alone i.e. expressing meaning purely in the form of theoretical or linguistic concepts. Instead I have used visual representations and I believe I am therefore offering a different expression of being 'critical', to that usually used in academic papers. I hope that the course I chartered in my enquiry towards my own visual literacy as I addressed my concerns in my practice has allowed me to adequately express those embodied meanings by making them in some way explicit through the medium of video.

1. Introduction

I currently work as a Human Resources Manager in an Irish Multinational organisation. However in 2009 my intellectual passions drove me to develop myself as an educator and I therefore undertook the [MSc in Education and Training Management \(e-learning strand\)](#) which is a two year part time, taught programme of applied study in Dublin City University.

I joined Drogheda Special Olympics Club (hereafter DSOC) in 2006 when my sister became an athlete. In total, DSOC has a membership of 45 athletes and 30 active volunteers and is one of 411 Irish clubs in the programme. This was the context I chose to make my

educational enquiry because I felt it would allow me to deepen my contribution as a volunteer in a meaningful way to the Club.

My enquiry led me to produce an educational web accessed video artifact called Changing Lives, which was divided into six segments so that it could be made available to all registered volunteers on the Special Olympics Ireland Moodle learning management system.

Education is a heavily value-laden activity (Whitehead, 1989) and therefore, I chose to embrace my values and be directed by them as I moved through my enquiry. This was performed using the methodology of action research and more specifically living educational theory, which places the living “I”, at the centre of my enquiry (McNiff and Whitehead, 2009). This report will ultimately suggest how experiential learning through action research can be used to enable transformation using video technology in Special Olympics, based on the evidence from my own lived experiences.

1.1. What was my concern?

It can take up to 4 months (due to the police vetting process), for the application of a person aged 15 or over to be processed in order to become a volunteer with Special Olympics in Ireland. Once registered, volunteers may then decide to contribute their time to specific events such as the Special Olympics regional or Ireland games or they could for example join a local Club and assist with the provision of sports training.

My concern was that registered volunteers did not have sufficient means available to understand the extent of the volunteering opportunities that lay beyond the realm of sports coaching at Club level. This concern was based on conversations I had with individual volunteers who decided not to return to DSOC after a short time because they could not see where they fit in. Also, conversations with family members of the athletes and volunteers led me to understand that people with slightly reduced mobility did not even consider there was anything they could do in a volunteering capacity as it was a *sports* organisation.

In my own experience these opportunities were only revealed to me through a sustained commitment to DSOC over the four year cycle of competition. During this period I also learned that to achieve growth, the Club must be attentive to the ideas, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit of its volunteer community usually resulting in a host of volunteering opportunities.

I recognised that although information did exist to educate the self directed volunteer in relation for example to role descriptions, it was primarily contained in a 96 page Club handbook available from the Special Olympics Ireland website. In my experience many volunteers did not seek out this resource or simply did not have the will to read this lengthy document. Instead, I observed that volunteers rely initially on the basic induction and code of ethics training provided by Special Olympics Ireland and the local sports partnership bodies respectively which is scheduled twice to three times per year in each region. However, the most common way for a volunteer to learn the specifics about volunteering in DSOC was to join up and learn on the job which is what I did.

There is only so much information that a volunteer can pass on verbally whilst standing for example at the side of a basketball court during a Club training session and

therefore I learned a lot through observing the more experienced volunteers in action and asking questions. It also took me some time to get to know the athletes especially those with particular speech difficulties and truthfully I was nervous initially that I would do something wrong. However, I was made feel very welcome and eventually I felt part of the Club and so did my sister Denise.

Time is a key concern in relation to training and education in my experience of volunteering. All volunteers contribute their time of their own free will and are unpaid in DSOC for the work they do. Volunteers may have a full time job external to the Club, a family, a college course or commitments to other voluntary organisations, particularly if they are also a parent to one of our athletes. Therefore everyone must juggle their free time around making a commitment to such an active Club. This is also why traditional classroom based training can be difficult to implement in practice; I have experienced several attempts to organise volunteer club management courses which ended up being cancelled because of a lack of uptake by the volunteer members. The difficulty is not so much a lack of interest but scheduling conflicts with the volunteers.

1.2. Why was I concerned?

My values in education are passion, honesty, inclusion and enjoyment. My personal concern was that I was experiencing a *tension* (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006) because I held these embodied values but my existing volunteer role bore no obligation as an educator. Therefore, to explore how I might share my *personal knowledge*, (Polanyi, 1958) I needed to expand the scope of my practice and acquire the authority to develop as a non formal educator in a research context.

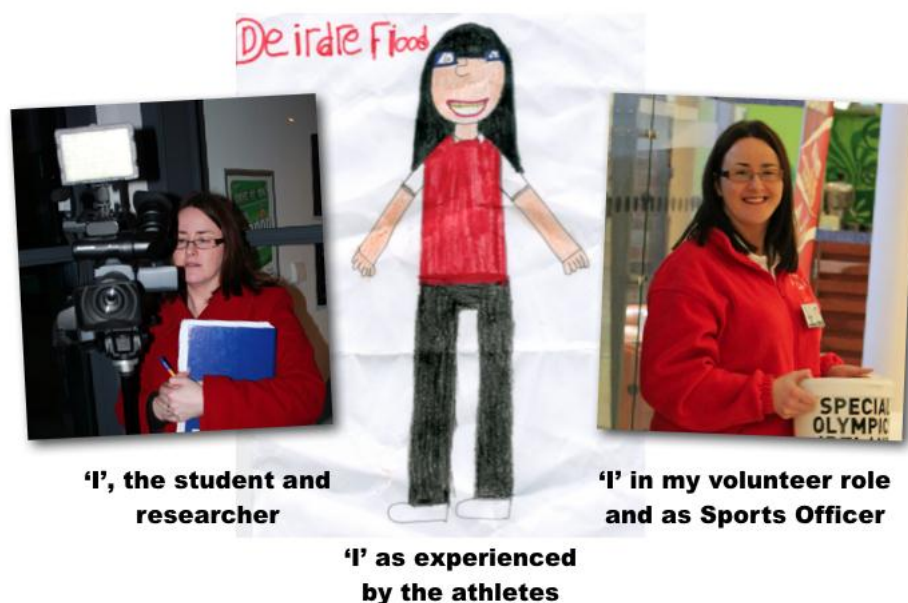


Figure 2. Triad of the living “I” in my research

To describe how I viewed myself in my practice as a volunteer following this decision, I acknowledge three significant layers of “I”, at the centre of my enquiry as depicted in Figure 2. First and foremost I was a general volunteer and I did not want to withdraw fully from the way the athletes experienced me at the Club training sessions because I enjoyed the direct interaction with the athletes. I was also still committed to working with the coaches in my committee role as Sports Officer for the group of athletes aged 18+ who attend our Monday night Club. The third layer was now the “I” as a student and researcher. However, this triad of the living “I”, did speak in harmony (McNiff and Whitehead, 2009).

1.3. What could I do about it? My research focus

I determined that there was a real need for DSOC to find a more effective way to educate new volunteers on demand in relation to the basics of how DSOC functions. Most importantly this introduction to the Club would have to communicate the spectrum of opportunities for volunteering no matter how little time a person might have.

As a student, I had directly experienced the benefits of using video in my own learning environment with my peer group on the Masters in Education and Training (e-learning strand) in DCU. Therefore, I began to consider how I might conceptually relate this to fill the need I had identified in DSOC. I imagined that, if I could capture all the activities DSOC might get involved with over the course of a full year and condense all this through the medium of video to just a few minutes, I would grab the volunteer’s attention. I could then provide an opportunity for a volunteer to experience a virtual visit to our Club over a one year period in the hope that I could demystify what volunteers actually do in their situated context. By fast tracking beyond the initial Club training sessions a volunteer may spot an area of interest which could lead that person to establish a pattern of volunteering that they would be willing to commit to.

My research focus evolved into the question “How can I produce a web accessed video to educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time in Special Olympics at Club level?” This specific question was carved out and refined as I connected with the literature and reflected on my actions and prior learning in DCU and DSOC.

2. Video and learning in the voluntary sector

2.1. Learning situations

I have used the structures for validating prior learning in the voluntary sector to illustrate the type of learning situations that can occur in this area. For example, Youthpass is an instrument used to recognise learning outcomes achieved through the European Voluntary Service (EVS). According to Nevin-McMahon, Cepin and Bergstein (2010), EVS enables young people to conduct voluntary work in a country other than their own for up to 1 year. An example of a group EVS project was the Special Olympics World Games in Ireland during 2003 in which, 165 volunteers from 15 EU countries participated.

Nevin-McMahon, Cepin and Bergstein (2010, p. 14) identify three types of learning situations within EVS.

- 1) *Formal learning* is planned, structured and regulated from the outside and involves standards of certification. In DSOC formal learning may be experienced by the provision of training in sports coaching certified by the National Governing Bodies e.g. Basketball Ireland. This form of volunteer training is also recognised by the 2010 Irish report on volunteering for the European Union conducted by Gilmore, Hankey and Kirke (GHK).
- 2) *Non Formal Learning* is voluntary and planned i.e. intended by the learner and assisted by others. I would place the Special Olympics Ireland induction programme for volunteers in this category.
- 3) *Informal Learning* is not planned, it is unpredictable and the learning outcomes gained may not be recognised until long after the situation has passed. Most of my learning in Special Olympics at Club level developed through this mode i.e. on the job.

In EVS, Nevin-McMahon, Cepin and Bergstein, (2010) determine that the *characteristic of learning*, is drawn from experience and support Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning which states that learning "is best conceived as a process not in terms of outcomes" (p. 26).

2.2. Experiential learning

Kolb (1984) cautions that experiential learning is often seen as "too pragmatic for the academic mind" (p. 3), yet it he posits that it is based on the intellectual traditions of social psychology (e.g. Kurt Lewin, 1890-1947), philosophical pragmatism (e.g. John Dewey, 1859-1952) and cognitive psychology (e.g. Jean Piaget, 1896-1980) as depicted by the themes in Figure 3.

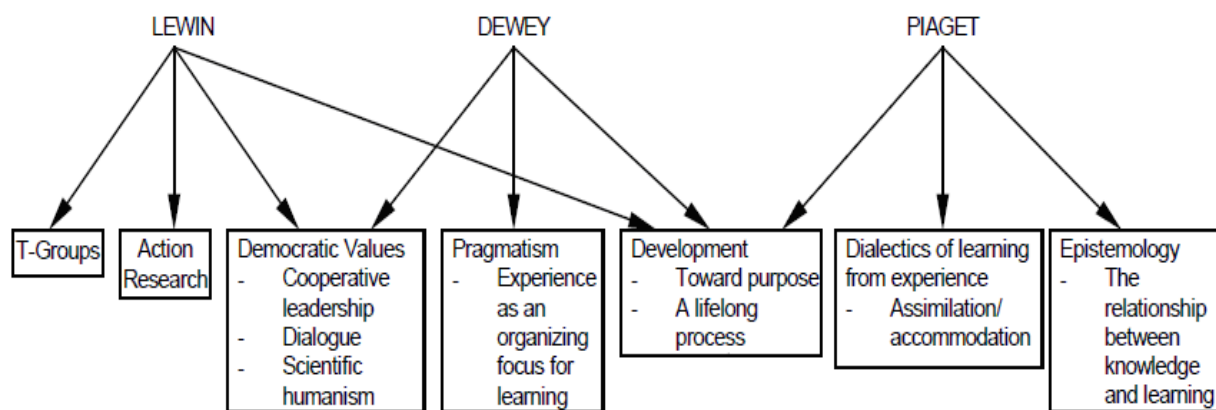


Figure 3. Seven themes that inform programs of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984, p. 17)

The premise of Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning is that learning and knowing require both the ability to grasp or *figuratively represent*, an experience and transform that representation either in the person's mind or by taking action. This model appears as the central reference in the literature on experiential learning but its criticisms

are directed mainly towards its simplicity (Jarvis, 1987; Rowland, 2000; Moon, 2004; Beard and Wilson, 2006; Newman, 2007) and also its lack of social interaction (Jarvis, 1987; Holman, Pavlica and Thorpe, 1997, Miettinen, 2000).

Jarvis (1987) argues that learning may not always occur e.g. where the experience is taken for granted in a social living context or when the gap between a persons stock of knowledge and their socio-cultural milieu (environment) may be too great to be “bridged by reflection” (Jarvis 1987, p. 83). In my context I would consider a volunteer being asked to work using online social or multimedia with no prior experience of computing technology as an example of the gap being too great in one episodic experience to be bridged by reflection. I recognise that individuals may be fuelled by negative attitudes or emotions (Beard and Wilson, 2006) from their initial experience and this could lead to rejection of the additional learning opportunities needed for learning to occur through experience. This rejection according to Cunningham (2007) can result from the fact that the learner’s bad experience leads them to believe that learning is not possible. His suggestion therefore is that much of our learning needs to be based on the theories and evidence from others rather than directly experiential (ibid.). The provision of these secondary or *mediated experiences*, may be provided through the use of video presentations according to Jarvis, Holford and Griffin (2004). Video also represents one method in a range of contemporary techniques that can stimulate the senses which Beard and Wilson (2006) advise plays a significant role in unlocking learning potential. Therefore, a much broader definition of Experiential Learning (EL) is offered by Beard:

EL is a sense-making process of learning that actively and reflectively engages the inner world of the learner as a whole person (physical-bodily, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually) with the intricate *outer world* of the learning environment (nature, place, social, political). (Beard, 2009 p. 3)

2.3. Use of video in education within the voluntary sector

Research in the voluntary sector in the UK conducted by Overton and Hills (2010) indicates that learning technologies are becoming an important component to enable the delivery of critical skills. The actual benefits reported include improved flexibility of learning, improved access to learning, cutting costs, improved induction processes, addressing needs of new learners and increased reach. However the study, which represents 83 participating organisations, indicates that video is in use by only 7% of the participants with cost and setup cited as possible reasons. However, low cost models for creating video are starting to appear e.g. since March 2011, a charity organisation called “KnowHow Non Profit,” in the UK have been facilitating the production of low cost online educational videos to increase the knowledge and skills of people in this sector.

2.4. Influence of video as a medium in learning

Schramm (1973), Gagné (1970), Clark (1983) and Colvin-Clark and Mayer (2008) maintain that if learning occurs as a result of exposure to media (e.g. video), the learning is

caused by the instructional method embedded in that media presentation not from the media itself. However, Kozma (1994) argued that the contribution of specific capabilities and attributes of media to cognitive learning and the social processes by which knowledge is constructed should be examined. Colvin-Clark and Mayer (2008) posit that not all media can deliver all instructional methods. Koumi (2006) agrees with this position and further claims that Clark’s (1983) studies were flawed because of the lack of control of production quality and lack of professional competence in the video production team. Basically, the research did not attempt to exploit the full potential of each medium’s capability. Koumi (2006) identifies 27 video techniques and teaching functions that exploit video’s distinctive strengths as outlined in Table 1. The techniques are broken down into three areas i.e. distinctive ways to assist learning, providing vicarious experiences, nurturing motivation and feelings which I believe strengthens the medium of video to be used for experiential learning.

Koumi (2006) along with Merriënboer, Bastiaesn and Hoogveld (2004) suggest that different capabilities of each medium and technological developments may in fact drive new innovative instructional methods.

Focusing on instructional learning, Colvin-Clark and Lyons (2011) determine that leveraging graphics for such learning depends on three interactive factors outlined in Figure 4 i.e. the features of graphics, the goal of the instruction and the difference in prior knowledge of the learner.

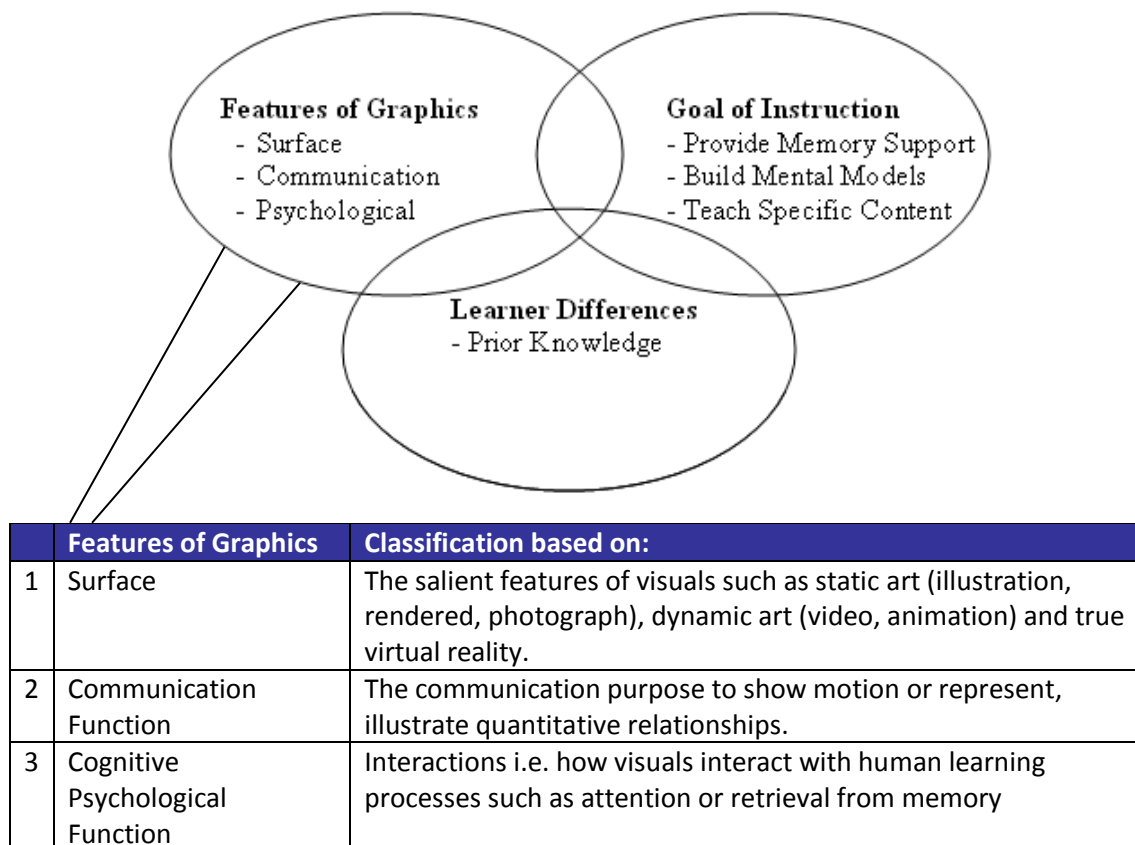


Figure 4. Functions of visuals (Colvin-Clark and Lyons, 2011)

Table 1. Techniques and teaching functions that exploit video's strengths (Koumi, 2006)

1) <i>Distinctive ways to assist LEARNING and (item 9) SKILLS development</i>	
1	composite pictures , e.g. split screen, S/I
2	animated diagrams exploring processes
3	visual metaphor/symbolism/analogy
4	modelling a process by a simplification
5	illustrating concepts with real examples
6	condensing time by editing real life
7	juxtaposition of contrasting situations
8	narrative strength of TV's rich symbol system
9	demonstration of skills by an expert (e.g. craft, physical, reasoning, social, verbal)
2) <i>Providing (vicarious) EXPERIENCES by showing otherwise inaccessible:</i>	
1	dynamic pictorial change or movement
2	places e.g. dangerous/overseas locations
3	viewpoints e.g. aerial, big close-up
4	technical processes or equipment
5	3D objects, using movement or juxtaposition
6	slow/fast motion
7	people/animals interacting, real or drama
8	one-off or rare events (include archive film)
9	chronological sequence and duration
10	resource-material for viewers to analyze
11	staged events , e.g. complex experiments, dramatized enactments
3) <i>NURTURING (motivations, feelings)</i>	
determination, motivation, activation	1 stimulate appetite to learn, e.g. by revealing the fascination of the subject.
	2 galvanize/spur into action , provoke viewers to get up and do things
	3 motivate use of a strategy by showing its success, e.g. exam techniques
appreciations, feelings, attitudes	4 alleviate isolation of the distant learner by showing the teacher or fellow students
	5 change attitudes , appreciations, engender empathy for people
	6 reassure , encourage self-confidence
	7 authenticate academic abstractions by showing their use in solving real-life problems

However, although there are benefits to using video in education I am aware that improper use of technology may defeat learning as Colvin-Clark and Mayer (2008) explain that *technophiles*, are people who will use all the technology features available to them and overload the learners processing capabilities and at the other extreme *technostics*, are people who ignore the media capabilities completely. This can result in *edutainment*, treatments or at the opposite extreme a complete lack of visuals producing a “wall of words” (Colvin-Clark and Lyons, 2011 p. 362).

2.5. My way forward

Although I have set out this literature review as a backdrop to my action research enquiry I actually did not engage fully with a particular instructional method or model until after I had completed an exploratory cycle of action research. Therefore, in my first cycle I needed to find out if video was something that would be even feasible to introduce in an educational context in DSOC and from a production perspective if I had the skills to be able to deliver it.

3. Methodology

3.1. Action research

My decision to use an action research approach resulted from a critical engagement with the methodology specific to the traditions of Kurt Lewin, which evolved from the paradigm of critical theory. However, I was ultimately drawn to the transformational potential (McNiff and Whitehead 2006) of action research.

My desire to frame my research as a self-study within the experiential learning context of action research led me to distinguish my methodology further by choosing living theory.

Living theory is defined as: “An explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they live and work” (McNiff and Whitehead 2006, p. 104).

My ontological and epistemological perspective can be placed within the naturalistic realm. Therefore, this approach allowed me to make sense of my reality, construct knowledge and derive meaning through my lived experience. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) promote that practice is a form of real-life theorising. When we have gathered data and evidence to support our sense making claims these become our *theories of practice*, otherwise known as our *living theories* (ibid.).

Whitehead (2008) claims that a task of living theory as a methodology is to find appropriate ways of representing the flows of *life-affirming energy*, with values as explanatory principles in narratives of educational influences in learning. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) describe how living theories are perhaps most adequately represented through multimedia rather than more traditional forms of representation as they show the real lives of people and how they interact with each other.

The Masters programme exposed me to various forms of multimedia and to the creative potential of digital technology in education: storyboarding, website development, [podcasting](#), [vodcasting](#), [animation](#), comic strips, journaling and digital video. I have opted to use the latter two learning technologies throughout my report to construct visual explanations of my real life practice and my interaction with the members of DSOC to support my claims to knowledge.

3.2. Values as standards of judgment

My course also provided me with the educational space to articulate and clarify the educational values and concerns that give meaning to my life and work. My value of hope was drawn from my initial assessment of my ontology in relation to education and my desire to pin a multiple of values related to making a difference, to a particular source value that would be all encompassing. However, I became uncertain whether this value which I had made explicit, fully expressed the strength of my conviction, and the driving force behind my desire to improve my practice.

I discovered through a validation meeting with my supervisor Yvonne Crotty, in March 2011, that what was clearly emanating from me as I talked about my research experience was a genuine sense of passion. I later reflected on this feedback and noted the following:

I was looking at my values as just descriptors of what I value, I didn't think about the intention or process of how I pursue the manifestation of those values in my life as being something of value to me too. (D. Flood, personal communication, April 2, 2011)

I therefore see *passion* as a more tangible agent, a carrier of my value of hope, yet very much something I value in its own right.

Polanyi (1958) aptly describes my value statement as it relates to passion i.e. "Heuristic passion seeks no personal possession. It sets out, not to conquer but to enrich the world" (p. 3412-3426). Once my curiosity is piqued, my intellectual passion takes over with a strong desire to primarily understand but also to master my subject. This passion for learning acts as a precursor for a passion to share that knowledge, to make a difference and hopefully enrich the world within my sphere of influence.

I value *honesty* because it compels me to work on recognising my authentic interior reality, a sense of self-truth, which I rely on to provide me with the purest form of learning. Honesty also provides intolerance to arrogance and self-deception. However, I allow for my truth when externalised to be tempered at times by compassion. Nevertheless, some of my most vivid learning experiences have come from an honest encounter with a person or situation. Occasionally, this has created conflict but where there is conflict there is also an opportunity for real resolution or simply acceptance of the existence of another person's truth.

I also value *inclusion*. In Special Olympics, inclusion is a huge part of the value system on which the organisation is built. However, at the same time, I must recognise its necessary limitations e.g. the volunteer vetting procedure can lead to exclusion of individuals from the

organisation itself. Therefore, in stating I value inclusion I am specifically referring to my ability to embrace difference in an educational context and negotiate inclusive practices that nurture reciprocal and respectful learning relationships. I acknowledge also that I am constrained by my ability to recognise exclusion in my context.

In addition, I value *enjoyment* in education because it means I engage with the subject easily and I value the benefits it brings. A depressant of my enjoyment occurs when the skill or challenges are pitched too low or too high which leads to boredom or at the opposite end of the spectrum, anxiety - particularly if it involves deadlines. In between these extremes I can identify with the work of Csikszentmihalyi (2002) and his concept of the flow channel i.e. the experience of “optimal fulfillment and engagement.” With regard to my influence on others, this value drives me to try to create a positive learning experience for other people to enjoy.

3.3. Values in the context of my learning in Dublin City University

The objectives of the Masters in Education and Training (e-learning strand) programme provided an opportunity for me to assimilate the literature on education and integrate it with the development of a media artifact designed to promote visual literacy using an action research approach. The creative scaffolding provided by my lecturer Yvonne Crotty (later my supervisor), allowed me to progressively increase my skills in using multimedia technology whilst pushing me to meet a graduated scale of complex learning challenges, led by my own creativity. These assignments were also weighted whereby they had to enhance the learning of my peer group too.



Figure 5. Taking a break in the animation process to enjoy the work of my classmates

An example of an optimal learning experience for me or *flow*, (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) was a very enjoyable video animation assignment. This is evidenced by the photograph in Figure 5 and by the level of visual detail captured in my reflexive journal [extract 17](#).

I have likened Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow, to the work of Ken Robinson who draws on personal passion and describes how a person can be in their *element*: "The element is the meeting point between personal passion and natural aptitude, which simply means doing the thing a person loves to do" (Robinson and Aronica, 2009, p. 470).

Crotty (2009, 2010) promotes inspiring creativity through visual literacy in education and draws on this concept of flow, and the element, in her work which my experience as a student validates.

I also experienced Farren's (2006) *pedagogy of the unique*, which allowed me to recognise the tacit knowledge we each hold in relation to our own practice based on our unique constellation of values.

I slowly became aware of how the meaning of my embodied values were implicitly embedded in my work and could be interpreted through my creative multimedia assignments as I learned in relation to my peers.

Honesty found a structured outlet for me in the validation process for my peer group who safely understood that any criticism I levied had constructive intent and I believe that I received the same standard in return.

3.4. Ethics

Ethical concerns were addressed in my research by securing written permission from Special Olympics Ireland, DSOC committee and during the data collection process from the individual volunteer members who participated. I made a submission to the DCU Ethics Committee and I issued a copy of the plain language statement and informed consent form to the volunteer members in the club. Special Olympics Ireland also confirmed that my research would fall under the waiver agreements signed by volunteers and athletes with regard to use of visual images etc. I also secured location release forms for all video work and the required approval for use of logos used in my multimedia tables.

Prior to the Club sessions commencing in 2011, the Chairperson of DSOC expressed concern via email that the athletes who have reached the age of consent would not understand the plain language statement in its current form. In response to this, I prepared a newsletter style ethics document (Figure 6), which replaced the plain language statement.

This newsletter was a supplement to my delivery of an informal verbal ethics presentation in the Club gym on the 24-Jan-11. I recorded the raw footage on video and although the sound is not perfect in the unedited clip i.e. video 2, I believe it is sufficient to show how I obtained the verbal consent of the athletes aged 18+ and how the athletes engaged with this process.

2 4 T H J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 1

Drogheda
SPECIAL OLYMPICS CLUB

NEW ONLINE VIDEO PRODUCTION



Hi Everyone

Welcome back to our first training night of the New Year. I hope you are all rested and rearing to go!

I am going to be working with the volunteers and Special Olympics Ireland over the next weeks to produce a video which I hope to put on the internet and this Newsletter will explain what its all about!!

Best Regards

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'CHANGING LIVES'

The name of the video (at the moment) will be called 'Changing Lives'. The purpose of the video is to train volunteers on the many ways they can help out at our Club or indeed any Special Olympics Club in the country.

As you know I've taken lots of pictures and videos in the Club and at the Games in Limerick in 2010 and I'm hoping to include some of this in the project. The final video will be made available **on the internet** and it will form part of my research for my schoolwork for college. I am finishing a Masters in Education and Training in Dublin City University and this video project will be used as part of my final exams.

So, I just wanted to let you know that once again I will be

video recording the members of our club during our training sessions for the next few weeks and would really appreciate your help and co-operation on making sure we show everyone how great our Club and its members really are.

The final video will only be about 10mins long and I will have to interview some of the volunteers as part of my research.

However, if any athlete has any suggestions or questions in relation to the video please do let me know. I would be happy to hear anything you have to say.

Equally, if anyone does not want to be featured in the video please just let me know and I will arrange this.

'You may be recognised'

Just letting you know that my course demands that my research will be made public on the internet. Therefore, as a result someone may recognise you!



Figure 6. Newsletter style ethics statement



Video 2. [Verbal ethics presentation to the senior club athletes](#)

3.5. Data collection methods

I gathered data for the content of the video from interviews, conversations, emails, phone calls and DSOC committee meetings. I agree with Buckingham (2009) that research on visual media should employ visual methods and I regularly recorded visual evidence of the data collection process itself and I used video to communicate with the volunteers.

The action reflection cycle was deployed as a method, which was loosely guided by McNiff and Whitehead's (2006a) action planner and therefore it involved the stages of observe, reflect, act, evaluate, modify and move in new directions.

In June 2010 I setup an online blog so that I could record my reflexive journals over the summer in an external environment from the college in agreement and at the suggestion of my lecturer Yvonne Crotty. My journal provided an interface to record my inner dialogue and engagement with the literature, whilst I reflected on what I was experiencing as I was experiencing it. A [public version of this blog](#) in Figure 7 contains selected extracts of my journals which I have referenced throughout this paper.

Journal 'extracts', referenced from the personal reflexive journal of Deirdre Flood as part of a Masters in Education and Training (elearning strand) in Dublin City University, Ireland. Supporting the research paper entitled 'how can I create a web accessed video that will educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time at Club level in Special Olympics?'

TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2011

Extract 17: From 08-Jan-11

ANIMATION NOTES FROM DECEMBER.

Before Christmas I had the opportunity to work with Mary McFadden on an animation project in relation to journalling. I created a character called Dorothy in the picture below (from a yellow paper bag and my first aid kit and designed and worked on the set. Mary helped to script the storyboard and everything else and we set to work.

BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2011 (17)
 - ▼ May (17)
 - Extract 17: From 08-Jan-11
 - Extract 16: From 06-Mar-11
 - Extract 15: From 19-Feb-11
 - Extract 14: From 15-Jan-11
 - Extract 13: From 19-Feb-11
 - Extract 12: From 12-Feb-11
 - Extract 11: From 29-Jan-11
 - Extract 10: From 29-Jan-11
 - Extract 9: From 07-Nov-10
 - Extract 8: From 30-Oct-10
 - Extract 7: From 29-Jan-11
 - Extract 6: From 14-Nov-10
 - Extract 5: From 02-Oct-10
 - Extract 4: From 03-Jul-10
 - Extract 2: From 19-Jun-10
 - Extract 1: From 19-Jun-10
 - Extract 3: From 26-Jun-10

Figure 7. Screenshot of my public blog

3.6. Validating the evidence

To establish validity and rigour in my research I ensured that the evidence generated was subjected to personal and social validity as provided by (McNiff and Whitehead, 2009). I drew on my *personal knowledge*, (Polanyi, 1958) and my intellectual commitment to critical reflection to determine personal validity using my espoused values as standards of judgment against how I saw them emerge in my practice. My systematic entries into my reflexive journal based on my lived experience were instrumental in providing the evidence and reflective space to enable this to happen. I presented my work in person to the full validation group in DCU on the following dates i.e. 16-Feb-11, 03-Mar-11, 12-Apr-11, 19-May-11 and 28-May-11. Mr. Jack Whitehead was also present at my validation meeting on the 28-May-11 in DCU and Video 3 below presents an excerpt of his feedback following my research account.



Video 3. [Validation meeting May 2011 - Feedback from Jack Whitehead](#) (Crotty, 2011)

On 23-Jun-11 I uploaded my completed Changing Lives, video segments ([Appendix A](#)) to the DCU Moodle forum and received final feedback from my validation group over Moodle. I also engaged in several Skype sessions with my supervisor Yvonne Crotty, having clearly communicated my standards of judgment. I drew from Habermas (1976) (as cited in McNiff and Whitehead, 2009) procedures of comprehensibility, truthfulness, authenticity and appropriateness in relation to my claims to knowledge. Also I believe that rigour in my process was strengthened by the fact that I undertook an exploratory or reconnaissance action research cycle before attempting to bring about an intervention as supported by Dick, Passfield and Wildman (1993). My enquiry was also conducted in a very systematic way and my prolonged and sustained engagement with the participants of my enquiry from June 2010 to June 2011 I believe also builds credibility.

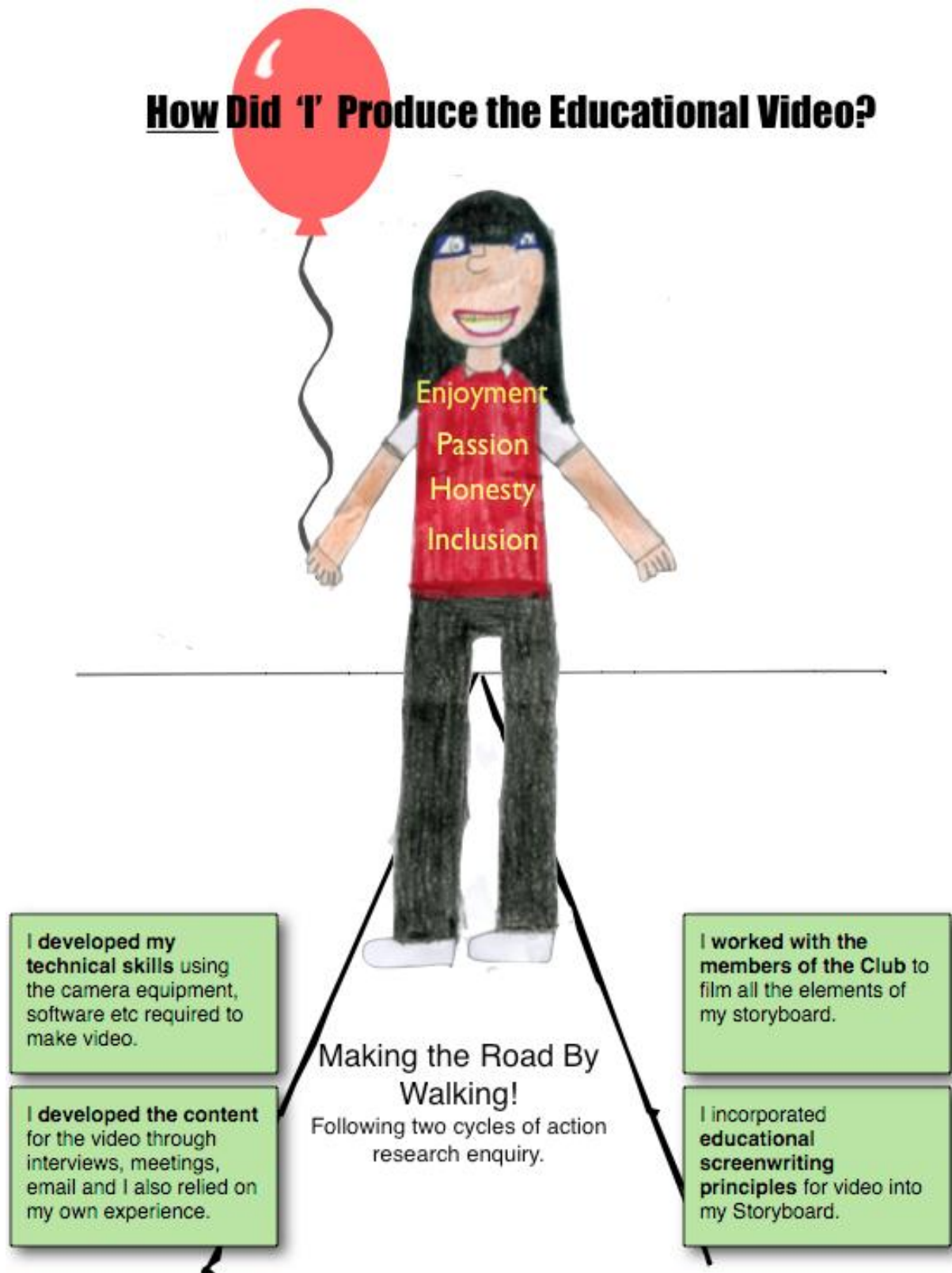


Figure 8. My implementation and evaluation expressed as “Making the road by walking”

4. Implementation and evaluation

Horton and Freire (1990) adapted the phrase “making the road by walking,” from a proverb by the Spanish poet [Antonio Machado](#). The analogy for me sums up how my claims to knowledge were developed through self-reflection on action in DSOC as I carried out my enquiry. The drawing of me as a volunteer in Figure 8 was a gift from an athlete in our Club. I have added my *road*, to the picture and my espoused values in yellow text. The four green blocks in this picture represent the specific actions I took towards answering my research question and will be examined in this section.

My full enquiry took place over a period of just over 1 year from June 2010 to June 2011 and I engaged in two action reflective cycles.

4.1. CYCLE 1 (Jun-10 to Aug-10)

4.1.1. *Observe and reflect*

My first cycle of action observed my passion as an amateur educator-producer to increase my technical competence in making a digital video. I started during my summer break from college and during this time I wanted to advance my knowledge on using camera equipment, software for making video, formatting, copyright permissions etc. At this stage I also did not know if video was a suitable way to communicate with the members in DSOC.

I was motivated by the fact that in June 2010, fifteen of the athletes from DSOC were scheduled to compete in the Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick. As this event only happens once every four years, I wanted to capture the Club’s experience so I decided to create a commemorative DVD. I chose DVD as the mode of distribution because I was certain that all members would have access to view the DVD. Therefore this cycle was exploratory and I recorded all my observations in my reflexive journal.

4.1.2. *Activity 1: Recording video in Limerick*

My digital camcorder was purchased just a few days before traveling to Limerick. I learned the basics of its operation and read the Special Olympics Ireland media policy. On arrival at the opening ceremony I started video recording all the events.

4.1.3. *Activity 2: Sharing video on Facebook*

Whilst in Limerick, I uploaded short video sequences each night to a [Facebook](#) page created by one of our volunteers.

The page attracted 57 members and the responses to my video posts included:

Response 1: Only just caught up on all the footage and pictures from yourself and Jane feels like I was there now! They all did soo well - thanks for the updates on facebook - great idea.

Response 2: ... We saw the videos of the opening ceremony, thanks for that, because we feel we are there...' (personal communication)

In my journal I considered that there were a lot of people from our Club who could now access and use this form of social media and how effective the videos seemed to be at connecting people with what was happening using *vicarious experiences* (Koumi, 2006).

4.1.4. Activity 3: Reflections and making the video storyboard inclusive

When I returned home from Limerick to begin the editing process, I considered that producing a commemorative DVD that celebrated the athletes who took part in the competitions, would exclude the remaining athletes in the Club by default. I reflected on this in journal [extract 3](#) and decided to modify my original storyboard by introducing two new video sequences on the DVD using additional footage I took of these athletes and photographs donated from parents and volunteers.

4.1.5. Activity 4: Athlete interviews

I used video to capture interviews with some of the athletes about their time spent at the Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick and in journal [extract 2](#) I express some of the production difficulties I experienced.

For example, I learned that the arrangement of the visual elements such as lighting, location, position of the athletes, camera angle etc. in producing video is important to *visual rhetoric* (Foss, 2005) or suggested meaning in visual communication. From the audience's perspective, a high angle camera shot (looking down) can create a feeling of vulnerability for the subject (Van Sijll, 2005). This I believe is evident when comparing Figure 9 to Figure 10 despite the fact that the athletes are smiling in both pictures. I didn't use this video material because the opposite meaning is what I wanted to achieve.



Figure 9. Athlete interview 1
(Poor lighting & framing)



Figure 10. Athlete interview
(Unintended meaning – vulnerability)

4.1.6. Evaluation

4.1.6.1. Activity 5: Public evaluation “Movie night”



Figure 11. Photograph during the break at the Movie Night

The movie night took place in a local college on the 28-Jun-10. I invited everyone to attend i.e. athletes, family, volunteers and friends to watch the 45 min DVD. Figure 11 represents a photograph of the setup taken by a parent on the night. I am standing at the top of the room dressed in red.

I did not take my camera with me that night in case people would be worried that their reactions were being recorded and they wouldn't enjoy the experience as much. However, I did observe the laughter and cheers as the group relived the event and I documented this in my journal [extract 4](#).

The movie night allowed me to publically ask (twice) if anyone had any problems with the way I had portrayed them so that I had time to make changes before distributing the DVD. There were no issues at all and in fact I felt it was a very positive and enjoyable experience with many parents who had not experienced the event itself, telling me they felt that they had actually been there after watching the DVD.

4.1.6.2. Activity 6: Evaluation from a parent's perspective

In September 2010, I met with one of the parents who had attended the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick and had watched the DVD.

This parent showed evidence of critical thinking and reflection in relation to the content of the video recording on DVD with regard to the way athletes in her experience are generally portrayed in the media in Special Olympics. She had only ever observed athletes with Down Syndrome in the marketing campaigns of Special Olympics. Therefore, this parent attributed this as the reason Special Olympics would not be appropriate for her son who did

not have Down Syndrome but did have an intellectual disability. I have recorded my reflection on this experience in journal [extract 5](#).

Ramirez Martinell (2010, p. 135) describes that this capacity to trigger reflection is what makes video relevant for learning purposes and this experience also taught me to be sensitive to the concern brought up by the parent in my work.

4.1.6.3. Personal evaluation and validation

Recording the experiences in my online journal accommodated my reconnaissance in the action-reflection cycle. By reflecting on these journal entries I was able to distinguish my espoused *theory of action*, from my *theory-in-use*, at the time (Argyris and Schön, 1978).

I could personally validate that my educational influences affected my action. For example, my passion for obtaining and sharing knowledge had driven me to undertake this cycle of action in the first place. Honesty influenced my decisions from an ethical perspective in seeking out the media guidelines from Special Olympics and ensuring I had screened the movie to all members before duplicating the DVD's. Enjoyment was factored into my decision to leave the camera at home on the Movie night to try to enhance the experience for the Club members. My desire to be inclusive forced me to modify my video storyboard when I realised I was excluding the members who did not qualify to compete in the 2010 Special Olympics Ireland Games in Limerick.

In Table 2 that follows, I have outlined the technical experiences I obtained from this cycle.

The commemorative DVD project is also a perfect example of how ad hoc volunteering opportunities can be created for individuals and external organisations to contribute to Special Olympics e.g. Arvato Digital Services in Ireland duplicated the DVD free of charge.

4.2. Cycle 2 [Sept-10 – June-11]

4.2.1. *Moving in a new direction: Observations from Cycle 1*

Through my experiential learning in Cycle 1, I clearly understood from the evidence I had collected that an affordance of video as a medium was its ability to provide vicarious experiences, the feeling of 'being there'. I also learned that video had the power to trigger critical reflection in the viewer and how authoring a visual sequence by choosing the wrong mix of camera angle, lighting etc had transferred meaning in a way I had not intended. I was also resigned to the fact that DVD's were not a time or cost effective way for the Club to produce and share video artifacts.

I became hopeful when the [DSOC Team Limerick group](#) on Facebook attracted 57 members made up of athletes, volunteers, friends and family. The fact that so many members of DSOC could access and view the videos using social media was sufficient evidence for me that online video distribution presented a real option for learning as it was now accessible by our members. I could now consider the production of a web accessed video.

Table 2. My technical learning in Cycle 1.0.

Cycle 1 - My technical Learning



Using reasonably good equipment improved my results from a technical perspective. My experiential learning over four days of filming and 250 hours on the project increased my operational knowledge of the equipment and the process of making a video in Special Olympics dramatically.

The cycle of action lasted from June to August 2010.



Special Olympics
Ireland
Drogheda Special Olympics Club

Me



I also learned the importance of improvisation and negotiating access in order to get my shot. I didn't have the luxury of pitching a 'spot', with the other photographers (pictured right) as I had to move between several locations in order to capture all 15 athletes competing in four different sports. The athletes and volunteers kept me informed and called me on my mobile phone if there was a change of schedule or medals were being presented.







An advantage of distributing the digital video on DVD was that I could synchronise the athletes favourite music to the video. I therefore went through the process of purchasing a limited manufacture licence from the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society of Ireland which allowed me to manufacture 250 DVD's with 25 mins of chart music. Phonographic Performance Ireland also kindly granted an exemption based on the Clubs status as a charity.



I edited the video using a consumer Apple product called Imovie 09. I learned about the title safe area of a video frame and the impact of overscanning, aspect ratios and encoding when producing video for a TV!



Another Apple product called Keynote 09 allowed me to add text to slide presentations alongside the video itself and import for editing in Imovie. The Apple Garageband sound editing software was also used.

I had a lot of difficulty with formatting for DVD but eventually I used Roxio Toast Titanium 10 to encode the video file so that it fit onto a DVD and played correctly.

To output 250 DVD's from my Mac computer would have taken a long time so I approached a DVD manufacturing Company and after completing the copyright pack and submitting the relevant permissions, Arvato Digital Services agreed to produce the DVD for free.



BERTELSMANN

A local printer also donated his services towards the project by printing up the covers for the DVD's . I distributed the final product to the athletes, volunteers and families, free of charge, in September 2010 following a 'movie night' so that everyone could watch the DVD together.



CYCLE 1 - ACTION COMPLETE

4.2.2. Reflections on planning

Alessi and Trollip (2001) describe that the frustrations caused by long delays waiting to view online video material “may negate any benefits that video brings.” Although this assessment was made 10 years ago, my experience is that viewing difficulties still exist and the difficulty nowadays is mainly driven by new higher definition video formats. I therefore wanted to account for this in my enquiry.

Consequently, my research question for Cycle 2 evolved into “How can I produce a web accessed video to educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time in Special Olympics at Club level?”

Whilst addressing my research concern I will discuss the four main areas of action that I focused my enquiry on as outlined in Figure 8, all of which contribute to *How*, I produced the educational video. Also, to assist with timelines etc and providing additional visual explanations and insight, I have produced visual multimedia tables describing some of the individual activities for each area in more detail.

4.2.3. Area 1: Activities towards establishing an educational video framework.

Further to review of the literature in Section 2, it was September 2010 before I explored a number of instructional methods as part of my Educational Applications of Multimedia module on the Masters programme. All eight members of my class were required to individually research and produce a vodcast on a particular model e.g. [ADDIE \(1975\)](#), [Kemp Design Model](#) etc. My contribution was based on *Gagné’s Nine Events Of Instruction*, and my vodcast can be accessed through journal [extract 9](#). This was a *complex learning* task (Merriënboer, Bastiaens and Hoogveld, 2004, p. 14) because it stimulated me creatively as a student to interpret the essence of the instructional model and integrate that into a worked realistic example expressing it through the medium of video podcasting. Although the subject of the vodcast was not based on DSOC, a couple of the volunteers from DSOC assisted with this project by allowing me to take the photographs I needed. The resulting artefact was then added to an e-learning knowledge base for the benefit of all members of the group. Assignments such as this formed a *building block* (Crotty, 2009) to my visual literacy and provided me with a way to evaluate my learning as I received feedback from my peer group in DCU. I could also begin to see and understand how the embodied educational values of each individual in my DCU peer group manifested in the creative approach each person took to their final video production. My value of enjoyment was evident in mine!

The design model I chose to work with in cycle 2 of my enquiry was Koumi’s (2006) pedagogic framework of narrative screenwriting principles as outlined in Table 3. I chose this design model because it is specifically tailored for producing educational video, it incorporates generic elements of other instructional design models and it considers the capabilities of the medium itself in the production process. Part (a) of this model considered how the video would be used i.e. who my target audience would be, the context and the teaching intentions. When I worked with part (b) of this model its flexibility allowed me to incorporate other multimedia principles e.g. Colvin-Clark and Mayer (2008).

The analysis and planning stage in Part (a) of Koumi's (2006) model, forced me to make some big decisions particularly in relation to the learning context. I consulted Asensio and Young's (2002) framework named the 3 "I"s which explains how the educational value of video increases with the interplay of the image, interactivity and integration depicted in Table 3. I understood from this framework that distributing the video and integrating it on the web would maximise its potential educational value. Through my collaborate efforts with Special Olympics Ireland I could achieve this outlet for my Changing Lives video if I designed it so that it could be easily incorporated into the induction module of [Special Olympics Ireland Moodle learning management system](#) which was only launched at the end of 2009.

Table 3. Asensio and Youngs 3 I's framework

Value	Technology	Locus of control	Pedagogic perspective
Image	Film, television, videotapes	Teacher	Transmission model
Image + interactivity	Videodisks, digital desktop video, multimedia, CD-ROM	Student	Constructivism model
Image + interactivity + integration	Web and streaming media	Distributed	Collaboration, contextualisation, community

It was beyond the scope of my enquiry to consider the full integration of the video into the Moodle induction module but I agreed with the training manager, Anne Hughes to divide up the video into six short segments to assist with this process at a later time.


I have also mapped out my interpretation and application of Koumi's (2006) model (Table 4) both Part (a) and Part (b) in the Tables that follow i.e. Tables 5 (p. 51) and 6 (p. 52) respectively.

Table 4. Koumi's (2006) pedagogic framework of narrative screenwriting principles

(a)	<i>How will the video be used?</i>	<i>Examples</i>
By whom	A. TARGET AUDIENCE	Second year graduates
In what context	B. LEARNING CONTEXT AND COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING	Supplementary video notes
For what purpose	C. TEACHING INTENTIONS	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cognitive Learning Outcomes 2. Provision of Experiences 3. Nurturing (motivations, feelings) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Argue a scientific theory 2. Take viewers on a virtual field trip 3. Influence attitudes
(b)	<i>Pedagogic screenwriting structure for each chapter</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Make them want to know	1. HOOK (capture and sustain attention)	Shock close-up of moist human brain Narration; <i>This is a real human brain</i>
Tell them what you will do	2. SIGNPOST (information about what's coming)	Scene: four monkeys eating. Narration: <i>let's concentrate on social behaviour.</i>
Do it Pedagogically	3. FACILITATE ATTENTIVE VIEWING	Presenter says: helium in this balloon, carbon dioxide in this one. What will Happen when I release the balloons?
	4. ENABLE INDIVIDUAL CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE	e.g don't blanket the shot with words - leave slack for contemplation
	5. SENSITIZE	e.g. timely occurrence of music
	6. ELUCIDATE	e.g. uncluttered, simplifying Graphics
	7. TEXTURE THE STORY	e.g. vary mood, gravity
	8. REINFORCE	e.g. repetition from a different angle
Tell them what you have done	9. CONSOLIDATE/CONCLUDE	e.g. summarize key features, helping viewers to stand back from the story
Connect it	10. LINK	e.g. link each chapter to the next one

Table 5. Implementing part (b) of Koumi’s (2006) pedagogic framework from Table 4

Part (A) Usage Dimensions Koumi (2006)



**Special Olympics
Ireland**
Drogheda Special Olympics Club

Applying Part (A) of Jack Koumi’s framework!
How will the video be used?

By whom	A. TARGET AUDIENCE
In what context	B. LEARNING CONTEXT AND COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING
For what purpose	C. TEACHING INTENTIONS 1 Cognitive Learning Outcomes 2 Provision of Experiences 3 Nurturing (motivations, feelings)

I also relied on Colvin Clark and Lyons (2011) guidelines on graphics for learning along with Colvin Clark and Mayer’s (2008) cognitive multimedia principles. These contributions helped me to understand for example where I should position text on the video in relation to the action and how best to design an information slide that could be narrated over.

(C) TEACHING INTENTIONS

1. Cognitive Learning Outcome: Overall the volunteer will understand the many ways they can contribute their time at Club Level in Special Olympics.
2. Provision of concrete vicarious video experiences (Koumi, 2006 p 34) based in the realism of the club environment. This includes a short time condensed exploration of all the sports offered by the Club and a visit to the Club itself.
3. Nurturing confidence building so that volunteer will consider taking action.

(B) LEARNING CONTEXT

The video will be segmented into six self-standing short (up to 5 mins duration) digital videos designed for non-stop viewing on the Special Olympics Ireland Moodle learning management system.

The videos will be incorporated within the online induction module accompanied by online notes. Viewers will have interactive controls for starting and stopping the video. This will maximise the value of ‘image’, ‘interactivity’, and ‘integration’ (Asensio and Young, 2002)

(A) TARGET AUDIENCE

Volunteers who have already registered with Special Olympics Ireland and are aged 15 + years.

Previous experience: None

Access
All volunteers must have access to the internet to view the video.

‘Framework used for
‘Changing Lives’,
Educational Video

Table 6. Implementing part (b) of Koumi's (2006) pedagogic framework from Table 4

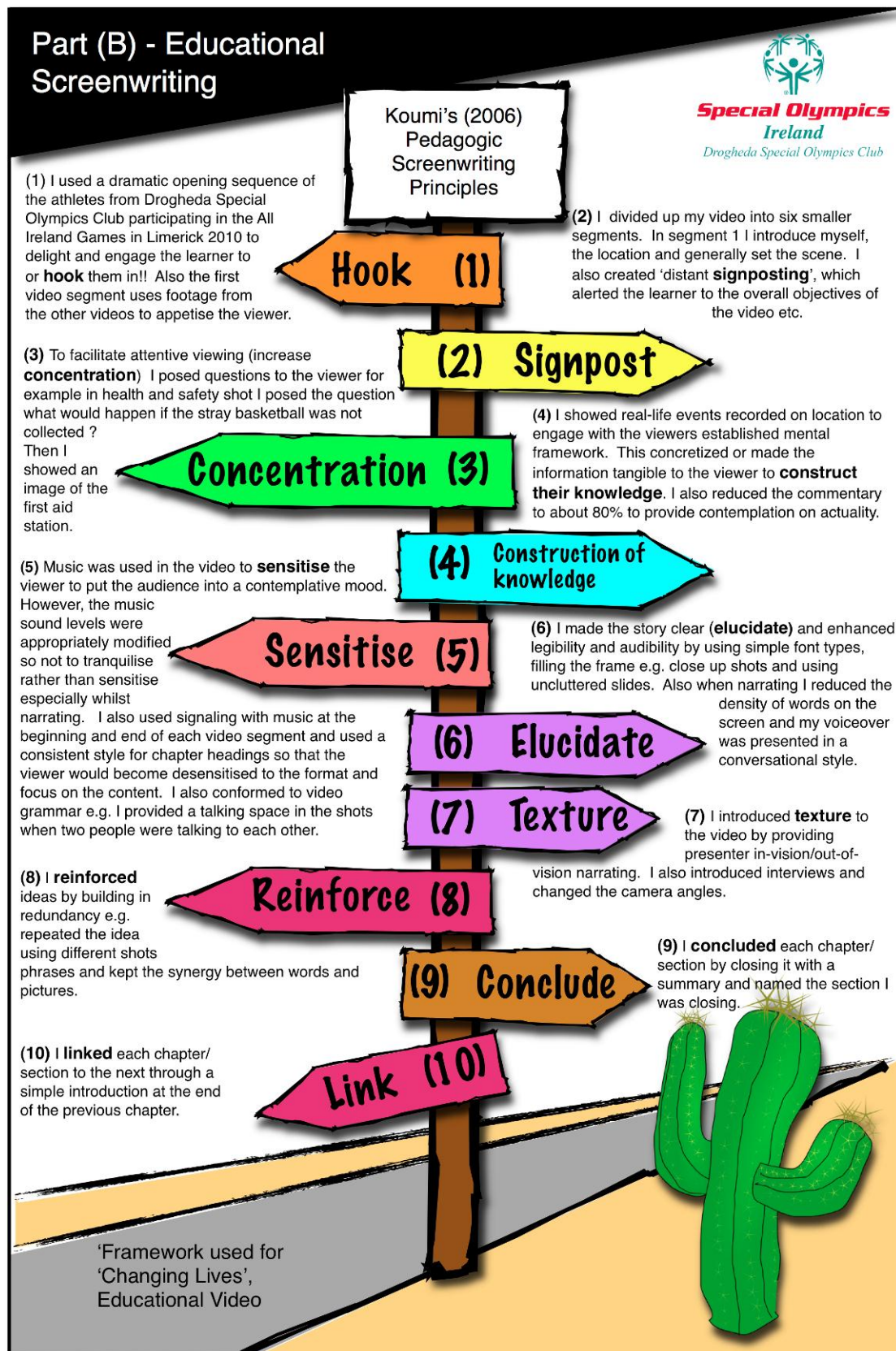


Table 7. Consultation meetings leading to the development of video content in Cycle 2

Data Collection Content



Special Olympics Ireland
Drogheda Special Olympics Club

01-Nov-10
I contacted the Training Manager in Special Olympics Ireland by initially responding to an email survey on their Moodle system. I put forward my suggestion about the creation of a video artefact.



05-Nov-10
First phone call of many with the Training Manager who told me about Special Olympics Irelands' plan to develop training video resources with DCU students for upload to the online Moodle learning management system. My proposed research was a perfect

09-Nov-10
I met with Elizabeth Doyle the Club Chairperson (pictured left) of DSOC to discuss the concept and ideas for content for the educational video.





15-Nov-10
I attended the traditional induction training class Anne Hughes (Training Manager SOI) delivered in our area. I met Anne for the first time and had a general conversation about my research proposal.

25-Jan-11
Having read the literature and completed my proposal etc., I reviewed my research in detail with Anne Hughes using a large printed copy of my video conference poster assignment to guide us through. Meeting lasted 3hrs (Pictured left)



Nov 2010 - Jan 2011
I reviewed the literature on educational video, prepared my research proposal, video pitch, storyboard, ethics statement and a sample open and closing sequence for the video using footage from the Special Olympics Ireland Limerick Games which I had taken in June 2010. I also prepared a visual conference poster as part of my assignments. During this time I engaged in informal conversations with volunteers about the video.

31-Jan-11
I met with William Tuke (pictured right) from the DCU School of Communications who answered my technical queries.



VOLUNTEER MEETINGS FEB-2011









18-MAR-11
Review of sample video footage to finalise content and agree scripts for interviews. Meeting attended by both Elizabeth Doyle (Club Chairperson DSOC) and Anne Hughes (Special Olympics Ireland Training Manager) pictured right. Final approval received in June 2011.



4.2.4. Area 2 – Activities in gathering video content.

In Table 7 (p. 53) I have depicted a time stamped series of meetings that represent some of the collaborative efforts that supported the development of the video content. These meetings ensured that the video content was not just formed based on my own experience but was representative of the Club members and Special Olympics Ireland. I initially met with the Chairperson to articulate the actual need in the Club and generate concepts for the video that would address this need which I documented in journal [extract 6](#). We agreed that in order to prevent the research process from becoming a burden on the volunteers I should engage the members on an as needed basis. My research proposal was later approved by the training manager in Special Olympics Ireland ([documented in journal extract 7](#)) with whom I collaborated to ensure that the video would interlace with the e-learning strategy under draft in Special Olympics Ireland.

I later invited all volunteers who held a specific operational role to suggest how I might best represent that role in the video. For example, the Safety Officer suggested that the most visual way to present his role on the committee would be to video record him checking the emergency exits and organising a fire drill which is depicted in Figure 12 below.



Figure 12. Still shot from Changing Lives video of Safety Officer role

Sometimes the volunteer's involvement provided new developments in my storyboard in areas that initially appeared closed. For example, I knew I would be prohibited from taking a video camera into the public swimming pool area but two volunteers named Anna and Deirdre worked with me to produce a short segment located 1 min 29 seconds into Video 4 below consisting of a talking head shot about their Swimming Club and a group shot of the athletes before they entered the pool area. This creative workaround ensured that the video content was very inclusive of all groups in DSOC. Anna's feedback having

watched all of the final videos (listed in [Appendix A](#)) included “That was an excellent show of all the happenings in our club... you have left nothing out” (Anna H.E., personal communication, July 2011).



Video 4. [Changing Lives video production 2 of 6](#) (Flood, 2011)

4.2.5. *Area 3: Activities to enhance my technical learning for web accessed video*

In Cycle 2 I was primarily driven by the instructional message and the expression of meaning in relation to the content and not by what I wanted to experiment with technically using video. For example in Video 5 (below), the inception for the idea of the still shot presented was made at a meeting with the Training Manager of Special Olympics Ireland in January 2011. Whilst producing this video segment, I wanted the audience to get a sense of the independent activity performed by the volunteers in each role on the committee and yet ensure that the viewer understood the volunteer roles were part of an inclusive and cohesive team. I wanted each shot to be dynamic on the grid so I created nine video clips and played them simultaneously so that it might provide a sense of realism and energy about the roles i.e. working on a committee is not just sitting around a table having meetings. However at the time I storyboarded this shot I did not actually know how I was technically going to produce nine videos running on the one screen all at once and I had to close the knowledge gap to make this vision happen.




Video 5. [Committee roles from Changing Lives video production 4 of 6](#) (Flood, 2011)

I have provided an overview of my technical learning and the software and hardware I used to produce the educational video called Changing Lives, in Table 8.

A meeting with William Tuke in the School of Communications in DCU provided me with practical recommendations for camera settings and encoding formats based on my specific inventory of equipment and software which I describe in journal [Extract 10](#). William also reviewed the shooting guidelines with me for web-accessed video that I had obtained from the literature (Marriott, 2011). I have provided examples of some of my actual efforts towards these guidelines in Table 9.


Table 8. My technical learning in Cycle 2a

Cycle 2 - My Technical Learning




Special Olympics
Ireland
Drogheda Special Olympics Club

The cycle of learning lasted from Sept 2010 to Jun 2011.






In this cycle I operated more advanced camera equipment for interviews in particular. However I also used my own camera.



I had the opportunity to learn how to make a fig-rig which I later taught my husband to do for me!! The above picture is of me holding the prototype model whilst filming in the Club!


I used a greenscreen for my introduction to the video. It also allowed me to record in the volunteer's homes and later replace the background.




Mr William Tuke from the DCU School of Communications, taught me how to best use the video equipment and software available to me for producing a web accessed video!! Also I received tips on video compression using a product called DV Kitchen.


Canon EOS 550D still camera




Macbook Pro 5.5



+



+



=


Video output in full HD.

I continued to use Apples suite of software products as described in Cycle one but I upgraded to the most recent version.


- 1) iMovie11 version 9.0.2 (video editing software)
- 2) Garageband 11 version 6.0.2 (create music)
- 3) iPhoto 11 version 9.1.1 (photo editing software)
- 4) Keynote09 version 5.0.5 (presentation software - which I also used to modify photographs and other images)

I also learned how to use a Telestream product called Screenflow to record screencasts i.e. digital recordings of a computer screen.



I purchased Royalty Free Music from a Company called The Footage Firm.



I started really learning Final Cut Express towards the end of my project when I wanted to introduce split screen effects etc.



I created six video's for upload to the Special Olympics Ireland Moodle Website. Special Olympics Ireland plan to integrate the videos into a new elearning initiative which is estimated to be available in August 2011!

CYCLE 2 - ACTION COMPLETE

<https://moodle.specialolympics.ie/moodle/>

Table 9. My technical learning in Cycle 2b

Web-Accessed Video



Special Olympics
Ireland

Drogheda Special Olympics Club

1 Stick to Closeups

Sometimes this created difficulty as I was trying to capture a sport which required a full body shot. However, were possible I followed this rule for example for the health and safety shot I put the closeup of the basketball in the context of the training session.



2 Keep The Content Of The Frame Neat



From This

To This



I found that whilst trying to keep the content of the frame neat, the gym was a very sterile location and I lost some colour e.g. in the above pictures of our Safety officer completing his report.

3 Good Audio

I didn't have a boom microphone available to me and the acoustics in the gym were really poor so I couldn't record anyone speaking in the gym itself. Therefore, I designed my storyboard with narration in mind.

4 Keep The Camera Steady

I used a tripod most of the time however for some shots I needed more flexibility, therefore I used a fig rig (circle object) to help stabilise the camera and for the line up shot I asked a colleague to push me along in a wheelchair to give a provide a smooth tracking motion shot!




5 Film at The Highest Quality

I started filming in full HD widescreen on my camera after I spoke with William Tuke who introduced me to some powerful software for encoding and compressing video for the internet e.g. Sorenson Squeeze however a cheaper product was DV Kitchen!





Marriott (2011)



4.2.6. Area 4 - How I worked with the club

The active involvement of the entire Club was a gradual process. After I had a viable storyboard informed by the literature and approved in principle by DSOC and Special Olympics Ireland, I started working with the members to produce the video. Table 10 (p. 60) provides a summary of some of the ways I was able to do this e.g. using video to assist in the verbal delivery of the ethics statement, the informal meetings to explain the equipment I was using, the use of newsletters etc.

I also orchestrated a *film night* which was an inclusive measure to capture all the volunteers on camera and it also served to capture certain shots needed to complete my storyboard. Rather than describe the film night I have created two videos so that I can share this experience to some degree.

The first video (Video 6) describes my rationale for the film night itself and it also takes the viewer through the level of analysis and very detailed planning that we performed as a team to ensure the athletes had a positive experience. Zuber-Skerritt (2002) identifies *enjoyment* as one of the success criteria for Action Research in relation to collaborative teams. Enjoyment manifested itself in the team in the form of a collegiate spirit, which generated fun towards attaining our shared goal and I think this is evident from the still shot used to represent Video 6 below.



Video 6. [Planning the film night](#) (Flood, 2011)

The second video ([Video 7](#)) in relation to the film night (Flood, 2011) depicts how we put our plan into action. What I see when I view this video is the synergy between the volunteers and the athletes and the sense of teamwork that extended fluidly from the planning team to the broader volunteer group on the film night itself. I experienced a fun atmosphere and I know the athletes enjoyed the activities as this was evident by their smiles and expressed gratitude especially after we finished the Michael Jackson Thriller dance when two of the athletes thanked me and gave me a hug [location 5:32]. I see my values of inclusion and honesty in evidence too e.g. the meeting with the athletes where I explained what I was hoping to do and invited the athletes to ask questions and participate. The video also shows some of the suggestions from the planning team being put into action e.g. the unconventional use of the wheelchair to keep the camera steady [location 2:51].

Table 10. Multimedia table – Working with the Club

Cycle 2 - How I worked with the Club!



1



I delivered my **ethics statement** using video footage of my opening and closing sequence.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewi1MomzF-E>

2



From distraction to action!
It was not always easy to get the video shot I wanted as sometimes I had a few distractions. Click on the hyperlink to access Susie's video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4irfqNv40>

3



I used **newsletters** to update the Club on what I was doing.

4



In the above picture I am **explaining** to the athletes what a fig-rig (circular object) is and how I will be using it with my camera to film in the Club! A fig-rig basically provides support and stability for the camera. Also it allowed me to move the camera around e.g. low shots without me physically having to get down on the ground!

5



Not everything went to plan. Check out the **Outtakes** video link!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcLrjHb-Weg>

FILM NIGHT - HOW WE DID IT!



VIDEO 1: Production Planning

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0XxqnVUJzw>

VIDEO 2: Film Night

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yaNYMc4W3g>

Educational Journal of Living Theories 4(1): 25-78, _____

Working with the Club to produce the six video segments for the Changing Lives, production for Special Olympics Ireland also required reflection in action e.g. one night I arrived at a volunteer's house where we were scheduled to have a Club committee meeting. When I arrived I noticed the table was full of cups of tea and cakes and my instinct was to clear down the table to keep the content of the video frame neat (see Figure 13). However upon reflection I wanted the viewer to see an honest representation of how we normally conduct our committee meetings so I broke the shooting guidelines and we had our tea and our meeting.

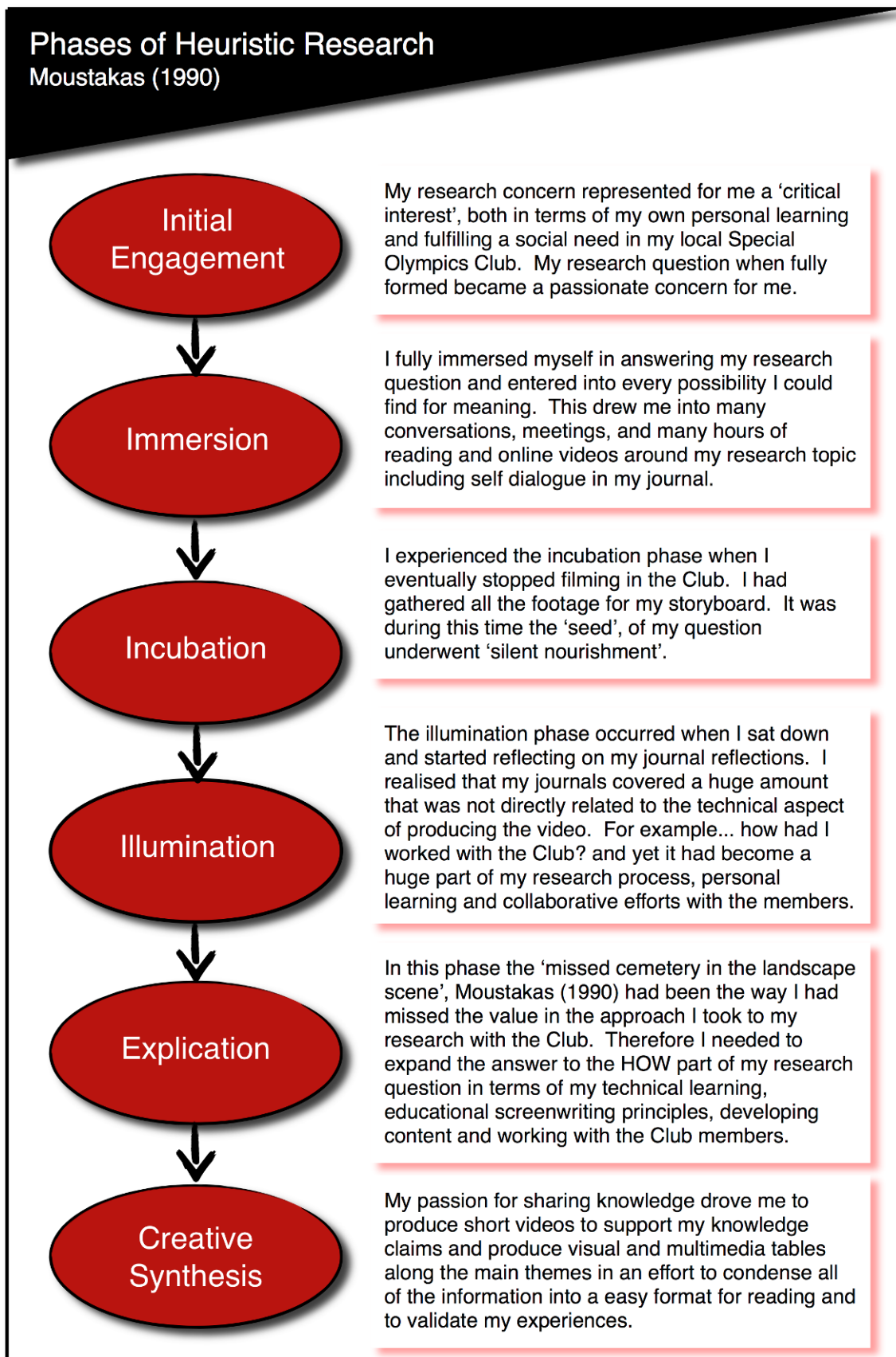
I learned whilst working with the Club members that by disengaging with the action in front of the camera I tended to blend into the background where I was able to record more authentic behaviour of the members. However, I never filmed covertly and I discovered that the sustained presence of the camera each week built up a level of immunity to the novelty of being recorded on video. I also believe that the members were willing to tolerate the presence of the video because they trusted that the work I was doing would be of benefit to the Club in the longer term. This is evidenced after the fact by an email from a volunteer who commented "I hope I never see you at the club again with any kind of a camera, but on a more serious note when I saw the finished product it was worth every minute" (Sean C., personal communication, July 2011).



Figure 13. Photograph of DSOC committee meeting in action

4.2.7. *Reflecting on action in Cycle 2*

The word *heuristic* refers to "a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9).

Table 11. Mapping my experience to Moustakas (1990) phases of heuristic research

My search to find meaning in my experiences was governed by my passion for learning and it fuelled a *heuristic enquiry* where I used critical reflection *on* and *in* action to determine further investigation and analysis. Table 10 provides an overview of how I was able to map my experience using this methodology. I focused my investigation on directing my educational values towards creating and maintaining what Schön (1971) describes as a *stable state*. A stable state in my context was therefore maintained by focusing on the production *process* and pedagogical design of the Changing Lives video rather than the *outcome* (Schön 1971) of the video itself which was a variable I could not control for within the scope of my enquiry.

However during the social validation process with the members of DSOC, my DCU peer group and the Training Manager in Special Olympics Ireland, I did receive promising feedback on the educational impact of the Changing Lives videos. In [Appendix C](#), I have categorised some of the responses from these sources against my original teaching intentions and recognise that a full evaluation towards my original concern would require another cycle of action possibly extending beyond DSOC.

My discovery was that I had taken for granted the value that my *personal knowledge* (Polanyi, 1958) of the elements described by Schön (1971) as the *conditions* (e.g. history, culture, relationships etc.) and *stance* (e.g. values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions) in DSOC had contributed to my enquiry. Therefore driven by my values of honesty, passion and inclusion, I extended my original conception from the literature of what the process of producing an educational video artifact actually meant in Special Olympics.

In reality this moved me beyond my experience on the use of pedagogic instructional and screenwriting principles etc. and I now included recurrent themes from my journals such as “how I worked with the Club members” to produce the Changing Lives video. Although this may seem very practical I believe that it forms a necessary bridge between the theory and therefore the elements of *technical rationality* in my enquiry to the more *indeterminate zones of practice* described by Schön (1987, p. 94) as the *swampy lowlands*. It was in this latter zone of practice that the volunteers contributed most to my enquiry e.g. by assisting with the planning and execution of the film night, the Swimming Club sequence etc.

With this broader position still fitting inside the original framework of my enquiry, I was faced with the insight of tacit knowing which is described by Polanyi (1966, p. 4) as “we know more than we can tell.” I instinctively believed that to share that knowledge using only the written form with a limitation on words, would be an inadequate way of trying to make explicit my tacit and personal knowledge. My experiential learning throughout my enquiry had also opened my self expression of meaning to a visual form. I agreed with Baker (2011) that this conversion of dynamic tacit knowledge to a static form of representation such as video was important for future innovation to take place in the area of non formal learning in Special Olympics.

The creative synthesis stage in my heuristic enquiry led me to produce not only the original Changing Lives video artifact which was divided into six parts ([Appendix A](#)) but also supporting video material from all the evidence I had collected for my journals on how DSOC members had worked with me. I now wanted to share this new knowledge that we had generated by working as a team and when the Training Manager in Special Olympics Ireland reviewed the film night videos she commented “...it is a fantastic aid to anyone who might

want to do the same thing or just be planning a shoot in another capacity” (Anne H., personal communication, Jun 17, 2011).

Volunteers in DSOC learn experientially and informally most of the time, so I wanted to create the feeling of informality in the mediated experiences I created on video almost the same way I might talk to a volunteer if they had visited the Club itself. That’s why I presented myself as a volunteer guide in the Changing Lives video (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Presenting myself as a volunteer guide in Changing Lives video

5. Conclusions and final reflections

5.1. My Learning

Prior to undertaking my Masters Programme in DCU, I had never made a video production nor did I even own a camcorder. I can therefore identify with Smith et al. (2005) who explain that for someone in my position, learning how to compose individual shots and editing them together “entails a genuinely new way of thinking” (p. 14302). My cognitive enrichment can best be described when metaphorically drawing a parallel between visual literacy and language literacy as suggested by Dondis (1973). Therefore, during Cycle 1, I accept that I was learning the basics in visual literacy by *sounding* out what might be the equivalent of the alphabet in language literacy. In Cycle 2, using Dondis (1973) definition of visual literacy, I started to understand the means for seeing and sharing meaning with some level of predictable universality.

I was fuelled during the *process* of making the Changing Lives video because I was actively learning the entire time and when my values in education were intentionally directed towards action it produced personal creative energy expressed through passion. I also experienced enjoyment when I was able to enhance my self expression and connection with the members of DSOC using visual media to share knowledge and create meaning. I felt

even more enjoyment when I knew the members, particularly the athletes where enjoying the experiences too.

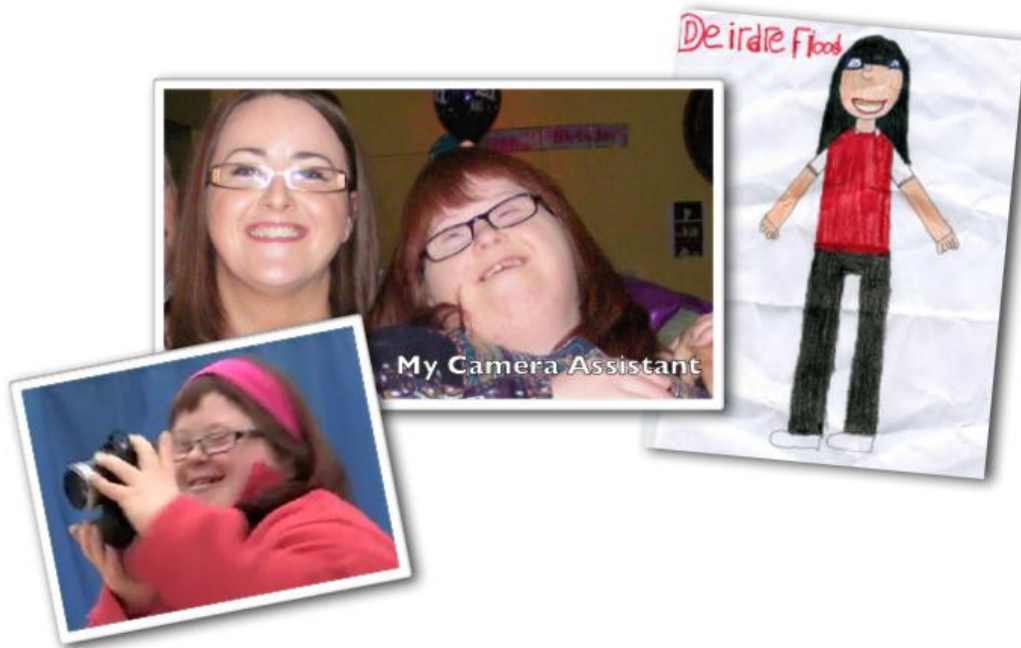
My value of inclusion required effort to truly live it in my practice and through critical reflection I was able to recognise when my practices were becoming exclusive. For example in an email to the Training Manager (Anne Hughes) in Special Olympics Ireland on the 09-Feb-11, I made the comment that “I am concerned that I am filming a lot of the same volunteers each time which doesn't actually represent the full population.” To rectify this I became very selective in the general volunteer shots to make sure that I was representing the entire Club and the film night provided everyone with an opportunity to participate.

I tried to maintain an active attitude towards my value of *honesty* during my enquiry and it was this I believe that contributed to my success in gaining support and trust from the group as I was very ethically aware of recording people and their actions. This value also helped me to hold on to a sense of realism or an honest portrayal of DSOC that I believe is apparent in the final Changing Lives, video set ([Appendix A](#)). This meant that the mediated experiences I created for the viewer were grounded in reality of what a volunteer might experience not a romantic notion of what volunteering is about. However I discovered that by employing my visual literacy skills I could enhance that reality by using the affordances of video to build emotion e.g. by incorporating the flash images, words and music in my opening sequence ([Appendix A](#); video 1 of 6) to attract attention or *hook* (Koumi 2006) the viewer. Therefore, by manipulating these visual and audio elements it allowed me to communicate a mood or emotion that was designed to support the meaning making process in an honest way.

5.2. The learning of others

5.2.1. *Athletes*

In video 7 (below) I describe an unpredictable influence I had on an athlete named Susie in Cycle 2. I learned that the distraction created by Susie in my video footage was related to her interest in the camera itself and what I was doing. I was subsequently able to include Susie in the research process in a real, productive and enjoyable way which helped her develop her own passions through practicing her camera work. I created this video clip because it captures what I mean by *distraction*, and it provides evidence of Susie's participation and of her work as part of an honest and inclusive educational relationship. Susie approved my video clip in the presence of her parents before I invited her to add her side of the story which she was very happy to do. In her video diary Susie says that she likes *cameras* and acknowledges our relationship i.e. “... my friend Deirdre Flood, she likes cameras.” She also validates her interest by adding that she is now a member of a camera Club.



Video 8. [Working with Susie: From distraction to action](#)

Having watched the video one of our volunteers concluded that “Susie's diary is very good, it gives a great picture of how happy the athletes are to get involved with this kinda stuff... her out take is very funny :-)” (Tara B, personal communication, Jul 29, 2011).

The outtake this volunteer is referring to is the short video I prepared with some of the funny clips that were recorded but not used. Watching video 8 from one minute into the timeline I believe validates how much we both enjoyed working on this short project.



Video 9. [Fun with Susie making the video](#) (Outtakes)

In general I was able to connect and impart knowledge and meaning more effectively with the athletes using video instead of using verbal and especially written language which many of our athletes have difficulty understanding. For example, I included the opening and closing sequence of my Changing Lives video during the delivery of my verbal ethics presentation to the athletes and volunteers which can be accessed from [Video 2](#) on page 16. If you play this clip you will hear the athletes respond to the video clips with the word “cool” or at one point one athlete makes reference to being “famous.” Therefore, the result of this *media influence* (Buckingham, 2009, p. 639) provides evidence of how the athletes generated their own meaning from what they apprehended from the video ([Extract 11](#)) in conjunction with my verbal explanation. You will also notice that they enjoyed watching the short video clips a whole lot more than listening to me talking!

5.2.2. *Volunteers*

I found that the experience created within the *process* of making the video was educational as it forced the group to clarify roles, tasks and duties and collaborate at times as a team to enable me to shoot my video storyboard. I also believe that my value of passion drove me to find ways to creatively transfer knowledge and provide mediated experiences using video that the group could learn from within an informal context. Over time a clear preference developed in the Club to use video in the research process. This is evidenced from the following journal extracts.

... The participants agreed that by showing the shots I had already taken and pointing out some of the difficulties with the shots, it made it easier to see what I was trying to do and what they could do to help me. (D. Flood, personal communication, February 12, 2011)

The one thing I have realised from all my research meetings with the group in my action research approach is the power of video as a communication tool. I could have talked all night about what I was trying to do but as soon as I showed the group the video they immediately understood, became interested, engaged and were motivated to help and be part of it. (D. Flood, personal communication, Feb 19, 2011)

The comment made by the Chairperson of DSOC after reviewing the final Changing Lives video set was “Thanks for allowing us all to be part of this wonderful process” (Elizabeth D., personal communication, Jun 14, 2011). I hope this validates that enjoyment was experienced in the process of making the video. However, I invite you the reader to view the Changing Lives videos in [Appendix A](#) and indeed the supporting videos in [Appendix B](#) and decide if my standards of judgment are evident in the experiences I created and captured on video. Figure 15 socially validates how others identified my values in the final product.

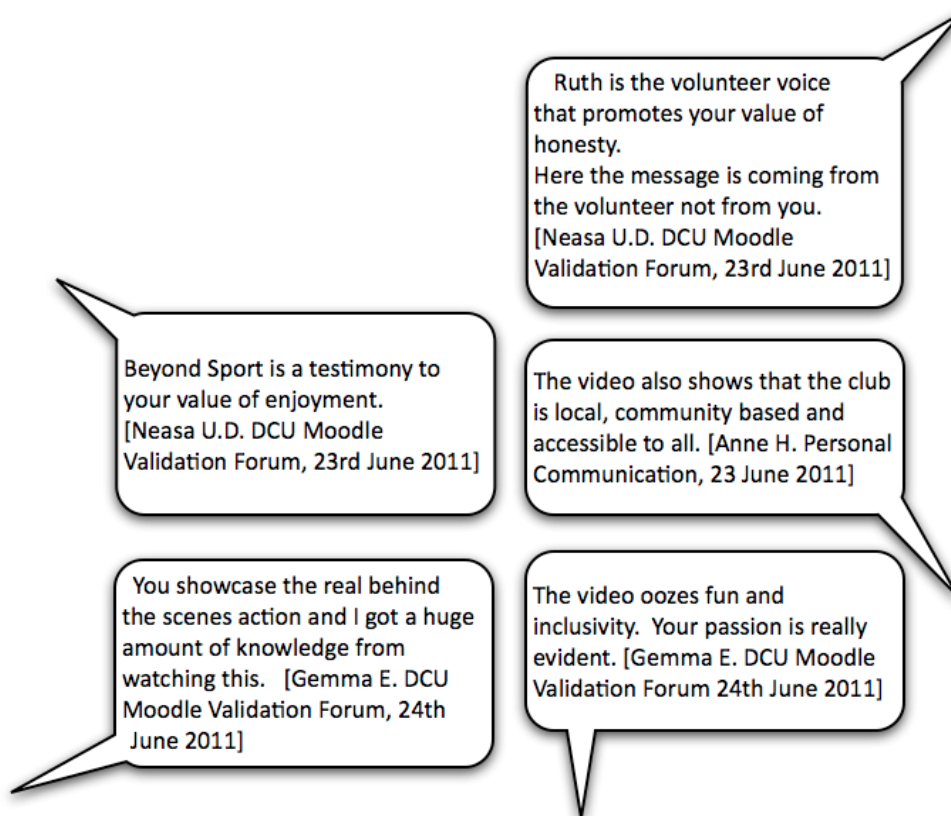


Figure 15. Evidence of my Values emerging in the Changing Lives Video

The content of the Changing Lives video in my opinion represents a transformation of not just my own experiential learning but also all the members of DSOC who made contributions to the process. It is designed to maximise the pedagogical capabilities of video as a medium to the level of visual literacy and technical proficiency that I was able to accomplish during this time. The potential educational value of creating this mediated experience has already been internally recognised by Special Olympics Ireland who have identified multiple uses for the videos as follows:

The videos will be hosted online in our Moodle learning site and also will be used in face to face volunteer rallies and volunteer/club induction... I would also hope to use the video to show clubs who are starting up some of the areas of good practice that they should adopt - for example the club management team meetings and the briefing before each training session. While these may be set out in the club handbook, seeing it actually in practice makes it more "real" for those who might otherwise struggle to visualise the process of transforming the written word to action. Equally good are the ways in which they can involve their volunteers – especially those who are not coaches - as this can be a challenge for some. (A. Hughes, personal communication, Jun 23, 2011)

5.3. A Way Forward

After careful reflection, I recognise the value of action research in Special Olympics. By its transformative nature it changes people's conditions and in the midst of the change I made in DSOC, I was able to use my ingenuity to steer me through particular difficulties and the Club members responded with equally creative solutions too. This creativity and willingness to share personal knowledge I believe is what is important to learning and building new knowledge in an informal learning organisation. After the integration and full evaluation of the Changing Lives, video artifact, I am hopeful that by using action research, Special Olympics may move in a new direction and consider using video to capture evidence of this creativity and visual explanations of practice which can be shared to build sustainable capabilities within the organisation for the future.

5.4. Conclusion

I witnessed my embodied values emerge as explanatory principles for my actions in my learning and the learning of others as I sought to find a solution which would address my original concerns. I grounded my claims to knowledge by offering evidence of my critical reflection on my lived experience and the transformation that I have witnessed in producing the Changing Lives video artifact. The Changing Lives video is designed to educate volunteers on how they can contribute their time at Club level and represents not just a resource for Special Olympics but is an example of a suitable medium to enhance the transfer of knowledge in a non formal learning environment.

Although Living Theory is a form of self study, action research is not something that a person can do on their own in Special Olympics. Therefore I was very lucky to have had the pleasure of working with such a wonderfully enthusiastic and hardworking team of volunteers and athletes who committed themselves fully to the vision of this project for over year. Their willingness to open our Club without restriction to the sustained presence of a video camera at Club sessions, events and even in their homes allowed me to capture the footage that was needed for the video production. By default I was capturing the action as the research unfolded which allowed me to share a rich source of visual elements in this research report to show the transformation.

To conclude I would like to return to my overriding value of hope and for that I will let one of the volunteers who happens also to be a parent of one of our athletes leave you with his message and feedback on the Changing Lives Videos.

Wow... You showed us how much pride you have in the Drogheda Special Olympics, athletes and volunteers. You show people that we can make a difference to the lives of people with disabilities and their families and prove that it is well worth the effort. (Jason R., personal communication, July 20, 2011)

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Appendix A

Changing Lives (Video - 21 mins in total, divided into six segments) By Deirdre Flood

The following videos will be uploaded and incorporated into the Special Olympics Ireland Moodle website in September 2011 as part of the volunteer e-learning induction training.

- **Overview** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-SfIUY1WyU> (video 1 of 6)
- **Introduction** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmJnYG7-YeI> (video 2 of 6)
- **Beyond sport** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhebRApAIF0> (video 3 of 6)
- **Committee roles** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M41U3pHtu08> (video 4 of 6)
- **Volunteering in action** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZST2lobZss> (video 5 of 6)
- **Questions?** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ8rwR4GOMw> (video 6 of 6)



Appendix B

Listing of all Video Links used in this paper in order of appearance

Videos referenced in the text		Page No.
Video 1.	Eunice Kennedy Shriver – Narrated by Tim Shriver http://www.specialolympics.org/CBS_human_highlight-reel_long.aspx	26
Video 2.	Verbal Ethics Presentation to the Senior Club Athletes http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewi1MomzF-E	39
Video 3.	Validation Meeting Feedback – Jack Whitehead http://vimeo.com/32119282	41
Video 4.	Changing Lives video Production 2 of 6 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmJnYG7-Yel	55
Video 5.	Committee roles from Changing Lives video production 4 of 6 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M41U3pHtu08	56
Video 6.	Planning the Film Night http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOXxqnVUzw	59
Video 7.	The Film Night Production http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yaNYMc4W3g	59
Video 8.	Working with Susie – from distraction to action http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4irfqgNy40	66
Video 9.	Fun with Susie making the video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcLrjHb-Weg	66

Appendix C

Post Evaluation- Feedback on Videos Produced

Part A) Teaching Intentions

Will the volunteer understand the many ways they can contribute to the Club?

Its incredible to see that you can be involved in so many different ways.
[Gemma E. DCU Validation Moodle Forum 24th June 2011]

From someone who honestly knew very little about volunteering, I have gained so much from watching your videos. They are spot on in length and the way in which they have been broken down makes you feel like you haven't been watching 21 mins.
[Gemma E., DCU Validation Moodle Forum 24th June 2011]

Regarding the videos, I felt they were a true representation of our club. I enjoyed participating in the making of them as I felt the current induction process for new volunteers did not show the complete picture of what our club and special olympics is about. For a new volunteer coming into the club, they are an excellent source for induction as it give a vol a complete insight into what a club is made up of. They may from watching them have a better idea about what area they would like to volunteer in. From watching them myself I have learnt a lot particularly about the different roles in the Club and the running of the club behind the scenes which I wouldn't have been aware of as a new volunteer. I think video technology as a learning tool for new and current volunteers or in general is an excellent idea as it helps people retain more information as opposed to a text book about the club etc. it improves learning. [Elaine M., Personal Communication 26th July 2011]

Provision of Vicarious Experiences?

Feedback on the Changing Lives video 2 of 6; I loved hearing all the fun in the background. It added to the realness of the production. It makes you feel like you are there. [Gemma E., DCU Moodle Validation Forum, 24th June 2011]

Do the videos nurture confidence building so the volunteer may consider taking action?

I know having watched all the videos if I was someone interested in volunteering to help out I would be very keen to join up after watching your presentation.
[Bernie, Personal Communication, 20th July 2011]

Commenting on the 'Beyond Sport', video 3 of 6: You are demonstrating how other fun activities can help with fitness and enjoyment. This very well may help someone identify if they could volunteer, i.e. if they have a different skill to bring to their local club.
[Neasa U.D. DCU Moodle Validation Forum, 23rd June 2011]

Part B) Evidence of Meaning Making

Triggering Emotions

Wow... You showed us how much pride you have in the Drogheda Special Olympics, athletes and volunteers. You show people that we can make a difference to the lives of people with disabilities and their families, and prove that it is well worth the effort. [Jason R. Personal Communication, 20th July 2011]

Feedback on the Changing Lives video 1 of 6; It really set the viewer up for what is to come and makes you excited about what is coming' [Gemma E., DCU Moodle Validation Forum, 24th June 2011]

I was hooked from beginning to end. No two are alike yet they all blend so well. I felt so inspired. You without doubt are living your values. [Gemma E., DCU Moodle Validation Forum, 24th June 2011]

Value of the videos in Special Olympics

Just watched it, I think it is fabulous, there is no comparison between watching this and reading a manual. [Gemma C. DCU validation Group 24th June 2011]

I think it is a great tool to use as a guide about becoming a volunteer. It will be great to be able to show examples rather than just handing them a handbook to read [Geraldine F., Personal Communication 24th June 2011]

Use of the videos will allow potential volunteers to actually see what happens in a Club and the visual aspect is more powerful than the written word or verbal description. They get to see each role in action performed by other people like themselves of all ages and abilities and get a proper sense of what is involved.

Also regarding elements of good practice .. While these may be set out in the Club handbook, seeing it actually in practice makes it more 'real', for those who might otherwise struggle to visualise the process of transforming the written word into action. [Anne H, Training Manager Special Olympics Ireland, 23rd June 2011]