

How do we Improve Research-based Professionalism in Education?-A question which includes action research, educational theory and the politics of educational knowledge.

Text of Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association at the University of East Anglia, 1 September 1988.

My purpose today is to affirm the value of BERA as a forum for testing new ideas. Ideas which claim to be contributions to educational knowledge. I will therefore offer for your criticism my own ideas on a living educational theory and my reasons for questioning the accepted canons of educational enquiry. I also believe that BERA is a forum for protecting our academic freedom to conduct educational enquiries. I thus want to consider our responsibilities when we experience academic freedom being undermined by the abuse of institutional power. Finally I will explore how BERA could extend its protection of educational values. I will argue that we should do this by leading the way in the development of a General Education Council for the research-based accreditation of in-service and initial teacher education.

These concerns indicate the scope of my address. I'll begin with a few reflections on my own experiences as a teacher and researcher. Eleven years ago I presented my first paper to BERA. It was entitled 'The process of improving education in school', and attracted one participant. Some of you who knew me then will not be surprised to hear that I proceeded to talk at my listener for some 15 minutes on my 'expert' knowledge of local curriculum development through case study. My listener then introduced himself and gently suggested that I could perhaps develop my 'sense of audience'. Hence my first claim to distinction is that I instructed Lawrence Stenhouse on case study and curriculum development!

Last year's Presidential Address was well argued, passionately committed and the most stimulating call to protect the values of the research community that I can recall. Tricia Broadfoot (1988) called for greater political involvement by researchers in confronting the potential overcoming of our educational values by industrial/commercial values. When she pointed out the damage being done by government education policy to our most precious natural resource many of us breathed a sigh of relief and sucked our lollipops in admiration as Tricia conducted both a virtuoso solo performance and at the same time protected one of the country's new generation. We were all delighted to hear that Tricia gave birth to a daughter very shortly after her address.

Tricia argued that we should emphasise a research style in which the more abstract search for generalisations does not preclude addressing the more specific questions of a particular policy issue. She argued for more comparative studies blending relevance and objectivity in order to maintain our scientific integrity.

Tricia pointed out that our research community is characterised by values, goals, ways of working and rewards which are fundamentally at odds with those of *laissez-faire* individualism and profit, market-forces and competition. I identified with her points that we form part of that scholarly community which upholds, and seeks to promulgate, the values of systematic enquiry and respect for evidence, and that in this community we are concerned with the pursuit of truth in which we seek to describe, illuminate, portray and hopefully sometimes, even explain that small section of reality that serves as the focus for our particular enquiry.

In her comments on Tricia's views, Joan Solomon (1988) agrees that researchers should address questions which are specific to current policy issues without deserting the well established canons of systematic enquiry. Joan believes that those of us who are lucky enough to have the academic independence that tenure confers, should use public critical analysis to fight for the epistemological integrity of our discipline. In this address I want to treat as problematic the 'canons of enquiry' which many researchers believe to be well established. In particular I want to raise questions about the propositional nature of educational theory and the criteria we use to judge the validity of claims to educational knowledge. In these reflections I am affirming the value of the research enterprise which is directed towards original contributions to knowledge of our subject.

I am thus sharing commitment, with Joan Solomon, to engage in public critical analysis and to fight for the epistemological integrity of our discipline, education. I want to fight for this integrity by presenting a living approach to educational theory, by challenging the canons of systematic enquiry which are, 'well established' and by presenting two cases which involve confronting the truth of power with the power of truth. In these cases I have in mind those power relations which place an examiner's academic judgement beyond question through a procedure of appointment, and those power relations which enable a university to sack a tenured academic without good cause.

I wish to relate my questions about educational theory and the nature of the canons of enquiry to Peter Chamber's (1983) point that making sense of research in personal, experiential terms seems to point the way forward. Peter explained how he experienced a gap between his research activity and his work as a teacher, administrator and participant in curriculum development and validation. He concluded that the assumptions, the traditions and the expectations built into British higher education are either mistaken or at least dysfunctional to the tasks of training teachers and advancing professional knowledge.

My feeling that something was seriously wrong with the educational theory of professional practice was aroused some 20 years ago when I compared the dominant disciplines approach to theory, with my reflections on my classroom practice. Whilst I fully acknowledge the personal benefits I gained from studying the disciplines, this approach failed to produce a description and explanation for my professional practice. As a teacher I needed to feel confident that the profession possessed an educational theory which could relate directly to educational practice in classrooms.

In constructing an alternative to the disciplines approach I have sought to show where insights from this approach can be integrated within the living alternative. This has required the rejection of fundamental assumptions. I am thinking of the rejection of propositional forms of educational theory. The rejection of the clarification of the meaning of values solely through conceptual analysis, and the rejection of a solely linguistic approach to generalisability.

I want to stress that I examined these concerns in relation to my classroom practice as I tried to improve the quality of my teaching in a school. That is, from the perspective of a teacher researcher. Although I was employed by the University of Bath as a lecturer in education, I was able to teach in a school as an extension of my method commitment with postgraduate education students.

I owe the fundamental insight on which my enquiry was based, to video-tapes of my practice. In 1972 I was provided with a video-camera by the Inspectorate and asked to explore its use in the science department of Erkenwald Comprehensive School in Barking. I don't know how many of you have video-taped yourself teaching. I found it a short-cut to insomnia. I was shocked to see myself having the opposite effect on some pupils to the one I intended without being aware that this is what I was doing. I could see myself existing as a living contradiction in my practice. A contradiction in the sense that I held together two mutually opposite values in action. The 'I', in questions concerning practical improvements, no longer seemed the unified 'I' which could be subsumed under a general concept such as person or teacher. 'I' became a living contradiction and a focus of the enquiry into my teaching.

I wanted to change my teaching with a third year science class in a Bath Comprehensive School, from a class-based approach to one which emphasised individual and small group learning. I had two main reasons for changing. The first was that the ability spread within the class made it difficult to distribute my time and expertise in a social just way within the class-based teaching. The second was that I wanted to encourage some enquiry learning and I found my class-based teaching was inhibiting this form of learning.

Video-tapes were made over an eight-week period as I reorganised the classroom with the help of resources produced by the Avon Resources for Learning Unit. My answer to the question, 'How do I improve this process of education here?', had the form of an action research cycle (Whitehead, 1977) of defining concerns, planning, acting, evaluating and modifying.

In constructing an explanation for my professional practice I found it necessary to clarify the meaning of my value of social justice by showing its emergence in action. In this respect I agree with Searle (1987) in seeing that words derive their meaning from the contexts in which they are used and that these in turn depend ultimately on forms of life. The visual records were necessary to communicate my meaning in relation to my educational values. If we are to construct a living educational theory I think we will need to build a community of shared discourse which is grounded in ostensive definitions of educational values in action (Whitehead & Foster, 1984).

Another insight I wish to share with you concerns the way we present educational theory within language. In all the texts I have read, including those of dialecticians, theory is presented in propositional discourse such as the one I am using here. Theory is seen as a set of determinate relations between a set of variables in terms of which a fairly extensive set of empirically verifiable regularities can be explained. Theory is presented within propositions which conform to the Law of Contradiction. This law excludes the possibility of two mutually exclusive statements being true simultaneously. Yet as I have already said, "I have seen myself existing as a living contradiction in my professional practice and require an explanation for this practice to contain such a contradiction (Whitehead, 1980).

The reasons I gave for my actions, in the explanation for my practice, were presented in terms of an attempt to live more fully my values. The form and content of the explanation led me to conclude that propositional forms of theory are not capable of containing a description and explanation for the educational development of this individual or for others who are existing as living contradictions (Ilyenkov, 1977) in their professional practice.

Let me be clear about the relationships between explanatory texts and present practice, in constructing a living theory. The texts are historical accounts. They describe and explain past activities. They also have a proactive function in that the evaluation of these accounts prompts a vision of the future in an imagined possibility of how present practice might be improved. We can thus make sense of the living practice through understanding the relationship between the account of the past and the vision of the future. hence educational theory is, for me, a living theory in that the explanation contains evidence of an evaluation of past practice, evidence of an intention to produce something not yet in existence and evidence of the present practice through which the intention is being realised in action (Whitehead, 1985a).

I hope that you can now see why I characterise the approach as a living approach to educational theory. It is to distinguish it from a linguistic approach which is contained within propositional relationships and captured texts on library shelves. In contrast to this I am proposing an organic view of educational theory which is living in the public conversations of those constituting professional practice. It is thus growing in the living relationship between teachers, pupils and professional researchers and embodied within their forms of life.

Questions may be raised about the generalisability of this approach. By generalisability I mean something which applies to or can be used by all. I believe that educational theory is being created

through the theorising of individuals about their own professional practice as they attempt to improve the quality of their own and their pupils' learning. To the extent that a community can be shown to be sharing a form of life in their research activities I would say that the approach was generalisable. The evidence for the integration of the above insights in the work of other researchers is now firmly embedded in MEd, MPhil, and PhD degrees. The evidence is too copious to present here but when the address is published in *BERJ* I will include an appendix of notes on this research. *BERA Dialogues* No. 1, also contains evidence on the generalisability of the approach outlined above. This evidence also demonstrates the effectiveness of relationships which link academic scholarship, professional development and the process of enhancing the quality of pupils' learning (see Appendix). I hope my address so far has fulfilled one of my responsibilities as a researcher. That is to support the power of truth by presenting ideas for public criticism. I now want to consider our responsibilities when we find academic freedom to conduct educational enquiries being undermined by the truth of power.

Let me begin by recalling my first BERA Conference. BERA '77 was memorable because of Brian Simon's Presidential call that we should focus our research on education itself. This echoed my own belief in conducting research onto educational questions of the kind, "How do I improve this process of education here?". The significance of this biographical details, when he recalled that, in the late 1940's he had failed to gain his MEd at the power house of psychometry, Manchester University's Department of Education was, however largely lost on me. I confess that I felt smugly satisfied in the knowledge that such an eminent researcher had not managed to pass his MEd whilst I had received my Master's degree from London University in 1972. Given Brian's enormous contribution to our research community you may think me arrogant in claiming to have surpassed his achievement some 21 years before my own retirement. Perhaps you won't mind too much when I say that the achievement I have in mind, which does indeed greatly surpass Brian's is in the level and scope of failure. We usually feel embarrassed about failure so I was very grateful to Jean Rudduck and David Hopkins when they presented their views on failure as a realistic practical achievement (Rudduck & Hopkins 1985).

I can now report that although I passed my MA (education) I failed to obtain my PhD on two occasions in 1980 and 1982 for my research on educational practice and its theory. Now I wouldn't like you to think these were close failures. They were total failures. The examiners agreed that I couldn't conduct an original investigation or test my ideas against those of others. They agreed that there was no matter in the theses worthy of publication and that given the choice of reducing the award to MEd, the right to resubmit or the refusal to resubmit they unanimously decided that I should not be awarded an MEd or permitted to resubmit. These judgements indicate the comprehensive nature of the failure. Now when you think of what Brian has achieved on the base of a mere failure to gain an MEd just imagine what a double Phd failure might achieve! It is this failure which led to my consuming interest in the politics of truth within educational institutions.

My examiners look like a role of honour of the educational establishment. It took some courage to appeal against the first set of judgements in 1980. I wanted to question the adequacy of the judgements of my examiners. The University informed me that under no circumstances could the competence of the examiners be questioned once they had been appointed by the Senate. This is still the position in my university. The academic judgements of examiners are placed beyond question by a procedure of appointment. Such experiences of academic judgements and the institutional arrangements for their legitimation have led to my interest in a study of my own educational development as I support the power of truth against the truth of power within our institutions of higher education.

I am curious about our responsibilities, firstly as examiners, to permit questions about our judgements on claims to educational knowledge and secondly as academic colleagues, to protect our employment as researchers. In developing my own enquiry in these areas I accept Foucault's point (1977, 1980, 1982) that the analysis, elaboration and bringing into question of power relations is a permanent political task inherent in all social existence. I believe he is correct in saying that a local,

specific enquiry can take on a general significance at the level of that regime of truth which is essential to the structure and functioning of our society.

In developing the enquiry I agree with John Elliott (1988) when he says that our visions of methodological possibilities are inevitably framed by our professional biographies. He believes that we would do well to reflect about our biographies in responding to the threat (or challenge) of the commercial culture. I would however go further than John and relate enquiry to the development of our personalities through our research. I believe that the constitution of theoretical possibilities rests upon the study of our developing personalities as we support the power of truth against the truth of power. In other words I believe that research which is educational is necessarily related to the development of the researcher's personality.

By personality I am meaning the total system of activity which forms and develops throughout our life and the evolution of which constitutes the essential content of biography (Seve, 1978). At BERA '85 I began this phase of my research describing some institutional reactions to my own actions (Whitehead 1985b). The questions I asked my audience at BERA '85 were, 'How can I challenge the use of power by a university, to confer a competence which cannot be questioned, upon examiners before they make their academic judgements?', and "How do we protect and extend academic freedom and democracy?".

The truth of power holds that no questions can be raised about the academic judgements of examiners because it is deemed that their competence is beyond question because of a procedure of appointment. I hold this to be a denial of what I understand by intellectual integrity and is opposed by the power of truth. No matter how uncomfortable I may feel when challenged, I believe that my academic judgements on my own work and that of other researchers are, as a matter of principle, open to question.

Do you believe as I do that as examiners we could not keep our intellectual integrity and at the same time accept the view that our academic judgements are placed beyond question by a procedure of appointment? If we share this belief shouldn't we be campaigning for the implementation of the Code of Practice for Higher Degree Submissions from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. In particular, shouldn't we be supporting paragraph 4, iii, which allows an appeal on the grounds that there is evidence of bias, prejudice or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners? At this time I know that Nottingham University and the Open University have, following grievances, set up appeals procedures which permit the questioning of academic judgements on these grounds. I would hope that we will all be active in our institutions to ensure that the academic freedom to challenge academic judgements is protected.

As the Education Reform Act 1988 states,

the University Commissioners shall have regard to the need to ensure that academic staff have the freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions. (HMSO, 1988)

I see the question, 'How do we protect and extend academic freedom?' as an invitation to work collaboratively at an answer. The decision of the University of Hull to give notice of dismissal, from 2 October 1988, to Mr Edgar Page, a tenured Lecturer in Philosophy, without establishing good cause should, as the AUT point out, be a matter of urgent concern for us all. The university is failing to protect the academic freedom of a tenured academic. There has been no criticism by the university of Edgar Page or his work. The AUT states that Mr Page was selected for dismissal by the 58-year-old vice-chancellor, because he was 57 years old. As the AUT says, the university will blight a creative academic's career at a fruitful and fulfilling stage (Kopp & Warwick, 1988).

Another President of BERA helped me to protect my own academic freedom when my employment was terminated in 1976. I cannot speak too highly of those qualities (Hamilton, 1985) which enabled him to empathise with my problems. Along with other academics associated with the Campaign for Academic Freedom and Democracy, he spent his valuable time in rectifying what he saw as an injustice. I will make a point which I think bears repeating later. Whether it is to protect academic values in the individual or the state we must learn how to form alliances and how to act collaboratively to overcome the negation of our educational values.

My question concerns our ability to empathise with a colleague who has both a contract of employment which involves research and a notice of dismissal. My question is: 'Could and should we not learn a great deal about ourselves as an educational research community by examining our collaborative actions in the process of ensuring the Edgar Page's enquiries are permitted to continue?' I believe we should engage in such an enquiry to overcome the negation of our values of social justice and academic freedom.

This conviction completes the first part of the address in which I wanted to affirm the importance of risking one's ideas in the public arena. The risk is in acknowledging that the ideas may be shown to be mistaken. At the same time I know that so much of my identity is at stake in the feeling, the hoping and the knowing that the ideas are contributing to knowledge of our subject, education.

I now want to move from considering our responsibilities as researchers in relation to the politics of truth, to the organisation of our research activities which are protecting educational values. I want to argue that some of our energy should be used to develop a General Education Council for the support of research-based professionalism in education, and which, during my Presidential year, I intend to support. In looking at the organisation of BERA activities I tend to categorise them into International, National, Regional, Local and Individual Initiatives. Members of the BERA Council have agreed to forge closer links with educational research associations in other countries. Tricia Broadfoot has been particularly active in this respect. Perhaps we should also provide research support to strengthen the international relationships developed by the World Education Fellowship and its publication *New Era*.

I have been heartened in the sphere of international relations by the effort being made by the German Democratic Republic to help teachers and academics from this country to study the workings of their educational system. The teacher exchanges, involving more than 100 teachers over the past two years have done much to develop our understanding of the educational system in the GDR. I hope that we will be able to reciprocate this hospitality in the coming years and perhaps engage in collaborative research into each other's educational systems. I would also like to extend a particular welcome to Professor Boris Gezshunsky of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.

In the arena of National Educational Policy BERA members have been at the forefront of debate. The symposia which enabled BERA to contribute to Government Policy have promoted the influence of educational research in improving the quality of education in this country. Ed Stones showed what could be achieved with the organisation and subsequent publication of *Appraising Appraisal*. This was the model for the BERA response on National Testing and Assessment organised by Harry Torrance (1988) last February. These symposia brought together the country's most eminent researchers in the field. They focused in a highly disciplined way on a particular issue of national significance and with great efficiency published a response which could make an immediate contribution to the debate on government policy. They fulfilled what Tricia Broadfoot called for last year when she said that we must be the champions of evidence, of clear-thinking and of objective debate.

BERA members contributed to this process at the 'Unite for Education' Demonstrative Conference, organised by Forum also last February. The aim was to demonstrate opposition to The Education Reform Bill. The proposals on the national curriculum, opting out, testing and academic freedom were heavily criticised. Michael Armstrong's (1988) critique of the underlying assumptions of the curriculum to be 'delivered' was particularly telling. I explained to the conference my own view that

the Bill was seriously flawed, as an instrument for improving education, because of its omission of a statutory right by teachers to sustained and systematic in-service education. These criticisms were sent to members of both Houses of Parliament in time to inform debate. The vital importance of a close relationship between our desire to protect academic values and political power was highlighted in the House of Lords' amendment on Academic Freedom. Success on this issue emphasised the importance of mobilising alliances with sufficient power to protect academic values in the political arena.

Tricia also focused on the importance of teachers as a potentially powerful ally in the fight for educational evidence, rather than political expediency, as the basis for policy-making. I do agree that we must lay before the public the evidence from experience and research that is the only effective research response against policies inspired by a political climate of self-seeking and natural selection.

In my judgement this response would be strengthened by a General Education Council for the accreditation of teacher education. A recent initiative almost succeeded in developing a General Teaching Council. This initiative focused upon initial teacher education and clearly built upon the experiences of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Without detracting from the initial selection and education for entrance to the profession I wish to emphasise the importance of a research-based in-service teacher education for what could be some 30 or 40 years of professional activity. The growth of Diploma/MEd/MPhil/PhD qualifications for action enquiries into the quality of classroom practice bears witness to a research-based professionalism in education. Shouldn't BERA be taking a lead in the establishment of a General Education Council with the authority to accredit both initial and in-service teacher education? Jack Wrigley (1976) has urged us not to separate ourselves from the decision-makers and planners. I believe BERA should take the initiative in promoting the development of such a Council.

Much of the energy expended by BERA members in the development of the Regional activities below has gone into supporting the practitioner research networks of our Association. I believe we should be campaigning to extend these networks into an Educational Council. Such a campaign could build on our present organisation and help to strengthen the infrastructure of our research activities which John Nisbet (1980) called for in his BERA inaugural address. This infrastructure is being built in line with Ted Wragg's (1982) request for more direct involvement of teachers and others in the educational service. Ted advocated more action-orientated research in full co-operation with local authorities, schools and individual teachers. Tricia Broadfoot placed these activities firmly in the political arena when she said that we must systematically strip ourselves of our naivety and I agree that we must individually and collectively examine what strategies we may adopt to sustain and strengthen educational research in the hostile years to come.

Some of these strategies have been outlined by Brian Wilcox (1986), in his explanation of how in Sheffield, the university, the polytechnic, the LEA and its schools have developed the firm sense of being members of a collaborative community in which research is both carried out and applied and where theory and practice influence each other. As an external examiner for the Diploma/MEd at Sheffield Polytechnic I have seen at first hand how successful these initiatives are in supporting practitioner research and in convincing teachers of the value of research in understanding and improving the quality of their practice. Teachers are being supported in the generation of a form of educational theory which can be directly related to the process of improving education within schools.

The BERA symposium on Facilitating School-Based Enquiry, organised by Gordon Bell, presented case studies of collaboration between teacher and professional researchers from Sheffield, Nottingham and Humberside. These studies supported Brian Wilcox's point that there is a need to involve key groups in LEA's more closely in the Association's activities. As Brian said perhaps we should be talking about 'advisers as researcher', 'education offices as researchers' and school psychologists as researcher'. In Avon, teacher researchers have been particularly fortunate to have

Don Foster, a lecturer in education at Bristol University, as a member and Joint Chair of the Education Committee. This link between academics, teachers, and LEA policy formation and implementation, has been crucially important in the extension of the teacher research network in Avon. The report on the 1987-88 Avon Curriculum Review and Evaluation Programme, 'Supporting Teachers in their Classroom Enquiries', contains examples of collaborative action enquiries within the authority's schools together with the details of how the practitioner researcher network is being sustained and extended. I believe that this programme shows how educational action enquiry can contribute to the realisation of humanistic values in policy formation, its implementation and evaluation. I would like to extend John Elliott's (1988) point that educational enquiry is a process of policy-making disciplined by those conditions necessary for the development of practical wisdom. I see a policy as an imagined resolution to a practical problem. The process of policy-making is but one component in many educational enquiries. I see such enquiries incorporation imaginative episodes, as well as action and educational evaluation in the development of practical wisdom. I prefer to see educational evaluation in the development of practical wisdom. I prefer to see educational enquiry as a process of knowledge generation which incorporates policy-making, rather than a process of policy-making which subsumes the educational enquiry.

Such policy related initiatives, some originated by BERA members and often sustained by them, will need to be strengthened over the coming years. Other initiatives, such as the seminar programme, Extending the Enquiry Networks, originated by David Hamilton and developed by Pam Lomax, are enabling BERA to provide regional and local support for educational researchers. Many BERA members are contributing to the Regional Initiative of the Classroom Action Research Network. Over the past year I have attended seminars at Bath, Kingston and Nottingham, which demonstrate the impressive growth of action enquiry networks.

I believe the strength of these networks justifies a campaign to attract many more schools as corporate members of BERA. Shouldn't we be making more of an effort to communicate the success of these networks to heads, governors and teachers so that they can see the relevance of research in improving the quality of education within their schools? Wide circulation of examples of successful in-service support for professional development (Bell & Pennington, 1988) could do much to show the relevance of this research to schools and hence support the idea of an Educational Council.

In addition to this work BERA members are carrying out their own, individual initiatives. For example, Michael Bassey, Professor of Education at Trent Polytechnic, has been supported by CNAA in organising seminars on the development of educational research proposals for higher degree students. Michael's seminar/workshops have focused on the explication of the standards of educational judgement and their use in criticising claims to educational knowledge. Thus helping to improve the quality of practitioner research. The seminars are most helpful to students on such courses as the MEd at Kingston Polytechnic where Pam Lomax co-ordinates an action management project in year two of the three-year course. All the students have to produce an assignment which shows amongst other criteria how they have gathered, collated and presented evaluative data for the purpose of legitimating their claims to educational knowledge. The work of Pat D'arcy, Wiltshire English Adviser, and Hylton Thomas, the headteacher of Wootton Bassett School, in supporting practitioner research between and within schools, has helped to establish an impressive range of case studies (Lomax, 1986). I believe such work offers a convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of research-based professionalism in improving the quality of education in our schools.

Whilst having strengthened many parts of the research infrastructure we are still weak in an area distinguished by John Nisbet in 1974. That is in information retrieval. We still do not have an effective data base using new technology, on educational researchers. I hope to report to BERA 1989 that a searchable data base of BERA members is operational. At the BERA seminar on Facilitating Research, a report on the Humberside practitioner network described the use of such a computerised data base on the activities of members and on relevant publications.

Looking back over the past 11 years I feel the pleasure of being and working with people who can openly share and celebrate the values of an academic community. I know that sometimes, especially in the heat of argument, we are not warmly disposed to each other. Yet as long as we retain our mutual respect and commitment to dialogue we will ensure the continued growth and influence of our work within the association.

Having drawn most of my own inspiration for this address from a woman president I recognise that I must be a disappointment to the only other previous woman president of BERA, Sara Delamont. Not I hasten to add because of my research but because of my gender.

I think we would all agree with Sara's point (Delamont, 1983) that woman's place in education is one of equality and that we must face up to the implications of understanding that this can only be achieved when man's place in the house becomes one of equality too. As Sara said, woman's place in education will be nearer when 'mothercare' is renamed 'parentcare,' just as it will be nearer when BERA elects its 10th woman president in 1994. Unless John Elliott has some urgent treatment the score in 1989 will be Women 2, Men 14. BERA is however better than Bath, statistically speaking, because in my own school of education the score is one woman member of academic staff to 18 men.

I'll leave you as you might expect with educational enquiries which I think we should all work on because of our commitment to social justice, intellectual integrity, and faith in a more peaceful and productive world. How do we live more fully our educational values in our work and other social relations? What can we do? Even as I say this I am conscious of having given an address in the propositional form when I am contradiction. As part of this contradiction I acknowledge that my partner, member of BERA and academic colleague, is looking after our two children at home whilst I am here.

I hope we can share the pleasure and withstand the pain of some collaborative research as we act to show ourselves living our educational values in practice, more fully together, and as we develop our understanding of the constraints which prevent such values being realised in action. Having 'addressed' you as custom dictates I hope we can now engage in a conversation which helps us to understand the nature of educational theory and the standards of judgement which can be used to test the validity of such claims to educational knowledge. I would like to know what you think about the idea of studying your own educational development as you encounter the politics of truth within institutions and society. I would appreciate a response which shows the strength of feeling on the need to develop a General Education Council from a research-based approach to professional development. Your response should also tell me if BERA has indeed reached the parts other ERAs have failed to reach and improved my sense of audience!

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Appendix: examples of action enquiries

(1) *Vera Coghill*

Making meaning through designerly play. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of PhD, Royal College of Art, 1987.

This enquiry begins with a review of educational action-research as it pertains to curriculum development. A process model of action-research based upon personal knowledge is presented. This model is used to research designerly play as a human skill and as a component of education in the early school years.

(2) Paul Denley, *Science Editor, Avon Resources for Learning Unit, Bristol*

The development of an approach to practitioner research initiated through classroom observation and of particular relevance to the evaluation of innovation in science teaching, PhD, University of Bath, 1988.

This study is particularly relevant for all those who are interested in forming, sustaining and extending networks of practitioner researchers. Following his examination of questions concerned with the improvement of in-service support Paul focussed on the importance of evaluative dialogues. These dialogues were stimulated by observations of classroom practice which were based on an observation schedule. The schedule was created through negotiation between Paul and the teachers.

(3) Kevin Eames, *Head of English at Wootton Bassett School, Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire*

The Growth of a teacher-researcher's attempt to understand writing, redrafting, learning and autonomy in the examination years. MPhil, University of Bath, 1987.

Kevin's enquiry (1984-87) into the development of narrative writing presents detailed case studies of the work of three of his pupils. Kevin analyses the criteria he uses to judge the quality of the writing and applies them to the work of these pupils. He is now extending his enquiry into a PhD submission on the influence of profiling on the development of pupil autonomy.

(4) Donald Foster, *Lecturer in Education, University of Bristol*

Explanations for teachers' attempts to improve the process of education for their pupils. Med (research), University of Bath, 1982.

This thesis is concerned with explanations for the lives of educators. It argues that the dominant paradigm of educational research is inappropriate as a means of generating such explanations. The problems of developing an alternative approach are discussed and a solution is proposed. The alternative approach was used to develop explanations for the lives of three science teachers who were trying to improve the process of education for their pupils. The form and content of the explanations are presented in four research reports which are supported by audio-tapes and video-tapes. Finally, the new approach is evaluated and it is claimed that the explanations generated can contribute to an educational theory which is not separated from educational practice and which can be of assistance in solving the practical educational problems faced by other educators.

(5) Martin Forrest, *Faculty of Education, Bristol Polytechnic*

The teacher as researcher-the use of historical artefacts in primary schools. MEd (taught) dissertation, University of Bath, 1983.

ABSTRACT This dissertation is concerned with improving the quality of education in schools and with the generation of knowledge of the processes by which that improvement may be engendered. A critical view is taken of the 'centre-periphery' nature of the Research Development and Diffusion model of curriculum development widely adopted by Schools Council projects and the contribution of educational research generally in helping teachers to improve their practice is questioned. The alternative model proposed follows the lines of an action research project aimed at improving the quality of learning in local primary schools, in which partnership between the external researcher and his school teacher associates is seen as of central importance.

(6) Mary Gurney, *Brockworth School, Brockworth, Gloucestershire*

Mary is preparing her PhD submission on her practice in personal and social education. Her case records contain video-tape evidence of one term's work with a group of first year pupils, together

with her analysis of the values which underpin her practice. Her case report contains a description of how she negotiated the categories which constitute a pupil profile, with the pupils. The first chapter of her submission contains an impressive justification for practitioner research. Extracts from this chapter have been accepted for publication in *BERA Dialogues* No. 1-a publication of the British Educational Research Association.

(7) *Margaret Jensen, Hardenhuish School, Chippenham, Wiltshire*

A creative approach to the teaching of english in the examination years-an action research project. MPhil, University of Bath, 1987.

Margaret's dissertation is in the form of four research reports which show her working at a creative approach to the teaching of English in the examination years (14-16). Margaret's third report contains material of value to practitioner researchers. The problems of gathering too much data, of difficulties in presentation and of difficulties in analysis are all highlighted in this report. The movement between reports three and four illustrates the importance of reflecting on the process of transformation which we undergo as we attempt to improve our practice and our understanding of our pupils' learning.

(8) *Ronald King, Lecturer at Bath College of Further Education*

An action inquiry into day release in Further Education. MPhil, University of Bath, 1987.

When the HMI report on Further Education (1984) highlighted the passivity of the students and raised questions about the dominance of 'chalk and talk' methods, Ron and a number of his colleagues were already working on changing to more active learning methods. Studies of video-tapes, together with evidence from classroom observation and interviews with lecturers and students showed some fundamental contradictions between what lecturers and students believed they should be doing and what was actually happening in practice. Working collaboratively with his colleagues Ron has analysed the attempt to develop an action enquiry approach to professional development within his college.

(9) *Andy Larter, Greendown School, Swindon, Wiltshire*

An action research approach to classroom discussion in the examination years. MPhil, University of Bath, 1987.

This is the first MPhil presentation which shows the dialogical form of question and answer in action. The dissertation demonstrates how evidence from video-tapes, audio-tapes, pupils' work, transcript material and critical evaluations of the theories of other academics, can be integrated within the form of question and answer. An example from this work has been accepted for publication in *BERA Dialogues* No. 1. This should be available from December 1988, from the British Educational Research Association.

(10) *Jean McNiff, former Deputy Head, Kingsleigh School, Bournemouth, Dorset*

Jean is also preparing her PhD submission on personal and social education. Jean's book *Action Research-Principles and Practices* is due to be published by Macmillan in December 1988 and provides a wide range of examples and information on how to move through a first action research cycle. Jean is working on the problems of presenting an individual's claim to know their own practice in a way which shows the transformation in values in a process of educational development. It contains an excellent survey of the action research literature.

(11) *Mike Parr, Bath College of Further Education, Bath Avon*

How can I evaluate my teaching in engineering technology? in: J. McNiff (Ed.) *Action Research-Principles and Practices*, London, Macmillan, 1988. Mike's account of his enquiry shows how he worked at improving the quality of education with his TEC students and what can be achieved on a nine day course spread over one year.

This report sets out to describe the developments that have taken place in the investigation I have undertaken in my own classroom practice as a Lecturer in Electronics at the City of Bath Technical College through my participation on the DES funded course held at Bath University 'Supporting Teachers in their Classroom Practice (April 1985-1986)'. It does not set out to present in detail the evidence that I have collected so far but to describe the process by which this course was able to offer me an insight into the way I might begin to develop a systematic research method appropriate to my particular classroom experiences and concerns.

(12) *George Preston, Bath College of Higher Education, Newton Park, Bath*

A review of the teaching and learning strategies used in the teaching of history at Bath College of Higher Education, MEd, University of Bath, 1987.

George's dissertation presents a collaborative action enquiry into a review of the seminars and lectures used in history teaching at the college. It is a most impressive account of how a mutually supportive group can be constructively critical of each other's practice. It shows what energy and commitment can be liberated in this process to improve the quality of education with students in higher education.