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Educators creating a knowledge-base of a profession of educators

Belle Wallace, Michael F. Shaughnessy, Marie Huxtable, Jack Whitehead

This themed issue comprises articles by educators who successfully completed the Master's units tutored by Marie Huxtable and Jack Whitehead, and they were accredited by the University of Bath (UK) between 2008 and 2010. Their articles show how, even after years of a straight-jacket in the form of targets and a UK national curriculum and years of teachers being trained to 'deliver' content, there are educators who have the courage and confidence to reflect, research their understanding of their professional educational praxis, make informed changes and contribute their evolving knowledge as a gift to create a professional body of educators.

In the paper by Jack Whitehead and Marie Huxtable, 'Creating a profession of educators with the living-theories of Master and Doctor educators', an analysis is offered of the unique and irreplaceable talents educators develop and offer as gifts. The analysis focusses on the contribution individual's living- educational-theories, accredited through a masters programme, make to the creation of a knowledge-base for a profession of educators. They work with Whitehead's (1989, 2008) notion of a living-educational-theory as an individual's explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their writings and their practice.

Whitehead and Huxtable also explore the implications for their tutoring of educators, on a Master's programme. The assignments of some of the educators who completed the inclusive gifted and talented education unit are published in this issue. The unit drew on Huxtable's (2012) and Hymer's (2007) understandings of inclusive gifted and talented education, which she developed from an educational perspective in her doctoral research programme. It shows how inclusive gifted and talented education can enable each learner (irrespective of age or stage) to develop and offer talents, expertise and knowledge as life-affirming and life-enhancing gifts. The knowledge is that created of the world, of self, and self in and of the world. They are claiming that this knowledge can provide the knowledge-base of a profession of Master and Doctor educators.

In Nina Clayton's paper, 'How am I using my own understanding and development of gifts and talents to promote the learning of children?', her focus is on the learning of her pupils, which is of course the bedrock of enhancing professionalism in education. We have included this paper to emphasise in particular the importance for the development of a profession of Master educators, of young teachers engaging in masters' enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' We are hoping that young teachers reading this will follow Nina's example and find the confidence to make public their embodied knowledge as a contribution to the knowledge-base of the profession.

Such a professional development programme is not just for classroom teachers. Kate Kemp's paper, 'How have I come to recognise and develop my talents which are my gift to my colleagues and pupils?', shows how someone working outside of a classroom context with pupils with special needs recognises the importance of showing the development of her own talents as an educator as a contribution to colleagues and pupils. This paper demonstrates the importance for the development

of a professional body of educators who are willing to engage in self-studies of their own practice in which they recognise their own talents and offer their explanations of their educational influences to colleagues and pupils as a contribution to the knowledge-base of the profession.

Joy Mounter, in her paper, 'How do I recognise the move from the language of learning to the language of educational responsibility?', engages with the ideas of Gert Biesta in recognising the importance of moving from a language of learning to a language of educational responsibility. This paper shows how this importance is relevant for the development of a profession of Master educators who accept an educational responsibility for generating explanations of their educational influences in learning. Not all learning is educational and the acceptance of an educational responsibility is vital for enhancing the professional knowledge-base of the profession.

The final paper, 'How do I research my own practice?', is by Sally Cartwright. Sally died of a double brain tumour in her early 50s and we are dedicating this issue of Gifted Education International to Sally's contribution to the educational development of her students and to the knowledge-base of the profession. Because she offered the knowledge she created during her master's enquiries freely as gifts in the Master Educators' Programme section of <http://www.actionresearch.net> her professional knowledge continues to have an educational influence and contributes to the growth of the professional body of educators far and wide.

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