

A narrative of my ontological transformation as I develop, pilot, and evaluate a curriculum for the healing and reflective nurse in a Japanese faculty of nursing

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Abstract

The cultural context of my question is the Faculty of Nursing at Fukuoka Prefectural University in Japan. The history, economics and politics of this social context are important to my inquiry as I am seeking to influence the education and the social formation of a new faculty of nursing through the design and pedagogisation of a curriculum for healing and enquiring nurses. This is also the context for my own learning between September 2004 & September 2008 as I ask, research and answer the question: 'How am I developing a curriculum and pedagogy for healing and enquiring nurses in living my life of learning as an educational inquiry?'

The research context focuses on my knowledge-creation as I seek to answer my questions and contribute to the development of a new epistemology for a new scholarship of educational inquiry for healing nurses. The development of this epistemology will be studied as part of the process through which the embodied knowledge of nursing practitioners is validated and legitimated as nursing attributes of professional praxis in relationship to embracing healing and care. This will involve the clarification of my embodied values in the process of their emergence in my nursing and teaching practice. Such a process will also involve the clarification of my own values and knowledge as I design and pedagogise a curriculum for the healing and enquiring nurse.

In the process of this clarification, the embodied values and knowledge become transformed into a life affirming flow of energy as living educational standards of judgment and practice. These can be used to evaluate the validity of my knowledge claims and praxis, with my peers.

Key words: Healing; Nursing; Education; Colonisation; Living action research.

a) Prologue

Before I offer you an account of how I began to make explicit my standards of practice, I need to say a few words about my spiritual values. These values are at the core of my being and actions. I am a priest of the Japanese Shingon Mikkyo Buddhist Order with the given name Je Kan. My name, I am told, is actually female, Ji Bo Kannon, an archetypal nurturing healing Mother. This energy represents unconditional loving associated with motherhood and with the ability lovingly to heal all without judgments or conditions, through the transition of one's own understanding of one's own issues, and thus, the individual 'I', truly transcends to the collective 'We' of community. Whilst this is not the appropriate place to tell the story of my development from Warrior to Priest (Adler-Collins, 1998) the story does provide some insights into the nature of my commitment to the spiritual values of the archetypal nurturing, healing Mother, two of whose qualities are said to be trust, and making safe all forms of communication. Both of these qualities were issues of extreme distress and anguish in the formative years I spent in council childcare homes from the age of three, and early manhood spent in the British Military.

I recognise that I am a product of my own educational journey, one in which reflective practice and researching my own understanding of my Western formed 'I' are fundamental aspects of my own being. Yet, in the same context, I see my Eastern Buddhist understanding as the dissolving of the concept of my 'I' as equally important and fundamental. This paradoxical struggle is a constant and unresolved issue in my learning as I struggle with attempting to see the separate areas of me: the nurse, the teacher, the reflective practitioner, the researcher and the monk, as separate items or areas of my selfhood, a position that is often required of me as an academic. For me they are all part of my whole understanding, and existence, in fact they form my holistic self in the Rayner (2003) sense of everything being connected through dynamic boundaries in a sense of wholeness and holonic¹ concept of self in the Wilber (2000) understandings of everything being nested and connected through and in holes.

From this, I create a sense of neighbourhoods of my multiple selves, which is constantly evolving, flowing into, and out of, defined aspects of selfhood. I see my conscious life-force weaving a web of experiences as I touch lightly with full consciousness with a sense of what I call *transient certainty*. By this, I mean that I only have the certainty of the moment in which to frame my understandings, and such understandings are fluid states of consciousness being adjusted and reframed as my sense of knowing and certainty change. This act of mindfulness in conscious inquiry is rooted in a sense of connectedness. This is represented as my assumed 'I' with its assumed values and identity shapes my living educational theory. Such shaping can be problematic. For example, as old aspects of an assumed self or consciousness release new understandings which have the disturbing habit of disrupting familiar thinking and patterns of action. Such disruptions often require choice to be made. On the one hand, there is the choice to move forward and live with the new

¹ Holonic was a term coined by Arthur Koestler, and taken up later by Ken Wilber. It refers to something being simultaneously both whole and part-whole.

understandings and embrace them openly as new epistemological insights and filters of judgement or on the other, to stay with what is assumed known and has a degree of comfort due to our fear of the new and the unknown.

Such choices are seldom made in a vacuum as much of our behaviour is socialised and influenced by those around us. It can often be the case that those who are familiar and comfortable with our old projections and values of selfhood become distressed and angry at the new. New contextual awareness' is formed in the Schön's (1983, 1995) sense of reflection in and on action. My understanding of this is that reflection in action is the actual moment where many differing aspects of my selfhood search my neighbourhoods of being, with their embodied knowing, to make sense of the new experienced situation. From this process, I act in accordance with what I know. Reflection on action suggests to me that I am now in an evaluation phase. Did my action work? Could I have done any better?

In my learning, my new understandings have evolved a new epistemology, one that is very different from my foundational one, grounded in my Eurocentric gaze of my whiteness. I consciously came to question many of the values that I had taken as a given fact as I actively deconstructed the filters of my being. Such a process continued to create a series of paradoxes in my life-worlds as I lived with my new understandings. For example, at times I found myself as a Western white male in an Eastern male dominated society. I found myself as a nurse, which is considered a female occupation because of its domination by woman. I hold Buddhist values of spirituality in an Eastern system of education that appears colonised by the West and Western values. At times the system of education appears *more* Western than the West in actions and thinking. This observation has been pivotal in shaping the direction my life's work. I made the conscious decision not to comply with Freire's (2000, 2004) sense of supporting '*a banking education*', or being a '*banking educator*'. The following words of Freire entered my consciousness as an educator, that 'those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings, and consciousness as consciousness intent upon the world' (Freire, 2000, p.79).

Holding such a position has been highly problematic in my life and there have been times when the easiest course of action would have been to abandon my commitment. Yet every time I feel the fear of conflict and power washing over me I am reminded of the words of Palmer (1998) where he said:

[A]s good teachers weave the fabric that joins them with students and subjects, the heart is the loom on which the threads are tied, the tension is held, the shuttle flies, and the fabric is stretched tight. Small wonder then that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart or even breaks the heart, and the more one loves teaching, the more heartbreaking it can be. The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning and living require. (Palmer, 1998, p.11)

Perhaps my innermost disquiet is that it could have been so easy just to comply to the concept of being a banking educator as described by Freire. For the seductive conditioning of my own journey of learning in formal teaching, education and educational study, started on my medical discharge from the military in 1989 and provided me with a framework of western thinking and educational philosophy, which I readily embraced. For

example, see Talbot, 1992; Tarnas, 2000; and Van Doren, 1992. In my MA dissertation (Adler-Collins, 2000) I delineated my epistemology and explored my ontology concerning the issues of '*space creating*', and how such a space was opened, held and protected by my values of love, compassion and critical reflection in a healing space. Over the next eight years, I explored how creating healing spaces that were protected through my enactment of those values, provided the necessary conditions for the healing and teaching of others and me to occur. My praxis was to create, maintain and understand a safe healing-space and to construct a valid account of my professional practice in nursing and teaching (Adler-Collins, 2007). In the next section, I move into describing the process through which I passed on my journey of becoming a professional educator.

b) Setting the scene.

Historically I developed, and refined my educational content and structures of my curriculum by using it as the basis of my research as I passed through the Higher Education system of the United Kingdom. I loved to read and I now include an excerpt from my writings called; *Warrior to Priest* (Adler-Collins, 1996). This can be accessed on the World Wide Web at: http://www.living-action-research.org/writings/writings_index.htm. I believe that this writing shows that my desire to learn was a driving force for good in me at an early age:

Big mistake!...One of the things I learnt, at three and a half years old, was, don't speak your truth, for your truth may not be received by those you speak it to with anything like the innocence in which you speak it. When we transgressed, which we always seemed to be doing, we were punished. The girls would get something done to them but if we were naughty, we were locked up in the coalbunker and left there in darkness. A friend of mine, a girl called Joy, and I were locked in this coalbunker quite often. It was a huge place, one that you opened a big door to, and then the coal was put behind big slats of wood. Joy was hysterical, for she could not stand spiders and of course, the hole, as we called it, was full of spiders. I think one of my proudest moments was when I sneaked in a battery and a light, two pieces of wires, it was a light bulb actually, and I hid them inside the coalbunker for I knew that we would go back in there again. The next time that Joy and I were thrown in the coalbunker was really quite wonderful because we had the light. I have no wish to bore whoever reads this narrative but they were desperately unhappy days. They were grey days, dark days, we were always hungry, our shoes, well they weren't shoes they were boots, always hurt and pinched the feet. I never seemed warm and the violence was quite extraordinary. (p.19)

I always wanted to be a teacher. However my military career and my rank precluded any formal educational qualifications that would be recognised in civilian life. Therefore, on my medical discharge, I embarked on becoming a qualified teacher and I completed my Further Adult Education Teaching Certificates stages 1 and 2 (FAETC). I soon started teaching at a local technical college in a City & Guilds Health and Hygiene Programme, and a Pre Nursing course. At the same time as teaching I was required to pass a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (Further Education: PGCEFE) which led to a Master of Arts (MA) in Education at the University of Bath University. By then I was completely hooked on education, teaching, curriculum design and research related to nursing issues. My Ph.D. soon

followed, also at the University of Bath. I just loved it. I was in love with learning and drunk on the drugs of knowledge! A heady combination fraught with power issues and ego! However, I grounded my theory and ideas in my practice of my own school of healing studies in Bath, UK in 2000. I found what worked in terms of the curriculum. I found what could be improved and modified the learning outcomes of my curriculum accordingly. Embedded in this process were my experiences of serving in a Governmental Steering Group on Standards in Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM). Through this process my curriculum was conceptualized, piloted, assessed and modified. I submitted it at the request of a friend to the Japanese Ministry of Education Science and Culture in the Autumn of 2000, and then promptly forgot all about it, as the next stage of my learning was to be in Japan as a Shingon Monk. It was only then that I started to step outside my process of schooling and to look at its conditioning. I was both angry and afraid. Angry in the sense that I felt I had been manipulated by a system to conform. I was afraid that such knowledge would take away the very foundations on which I had built my ideas of selfhood and status. Such enlightenment was a gradual process of critical self-reflection sustained over time. In the next section, I give an account of that process and my context.

In 2002 the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Mon bu kagaku sho) notified me that my curriculum of the healing Nurse, which I had submitted to the Ministry in 2000, had been selected for inclusion in the new curriculum of a new University being built in Tagawa City in Fukuoka Prefecture, the southern island of Japan. The University start date was April 2003. The University appointed me as an Assistant Professor in Mental Health to teach Healing Theory and Complementary Medicine. I came to that position well-versed in the theory and practice of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). It was in this appointment that I would come to challenge my own 'ontological sense of being' to the extent that they ceased to be mere words but became dynamic filters through which I understood the life-affirming energy to which I had dedicated my life. This feeling of connection to a flow or source is a very eastern idea, rooted in the ancient Chinese teachings of the way or Tao, which defies being locked into a cage of words, but is felt instantly when one-steps into or out of the dynamics of the flow or Tao.

What I offer next is, in many senses, what Frank (2006) suggests as chaos-narrative. I cannot show truly what I mean in a textual format. My narrative is my textual expression of a process that has dynamic elements all working in and on each other. For example, the six stages of living action research inquiry, as presented by Whitehead (1989), offered me another, more secure, framework than Frank's chaos narrative; one which I could use as a springboard into my inner world. In this sense, the framework of living action research was the link between my inner and outer worlds. I feel that this is what Bernstein (2000, p. 33) is referring to as the discursive gap between what he describes as *thinkable* and *unthinkable* forms of knowing. The semi-formal structure of living action research, with the assumed 'I' at the centre of the inquiry, offered me safety and a point of return as I free-fell into my inner depths of mystery using Moustakas's (1990) heuristic inquiry. Rayner's (2003) ideas about the fluid dynamics of boundaries and space allowed me to form and reform my emerging ideas and values using the solvent of consciousness. All the above processes are going on at the same time at different levels of my consciousness. This is perhaps better described by Talbot (1992) as a *holographic universe*, one where the brain sees as though it were a hologram and *lights up* when consciousness is applied to stored knowledge. I believe that understanding the above point is crucial to understanding how I am approaching my

learning methodologically. I truly believe that as I bring the dynamic mindfulness of my conscious mind to a body of knowledge, it illuminates the knowledge, which then can be tested and scrutinized. At the same time I find the mystery of the process both daunting and addictive. I have produced a multimedia account of my thinking, which can be accessed as a streaming video at: <http://www.screencast.com/t/SJ91yROI>. I should caution the reader that it is a lengthy account, as I work with different ideas and methods of expression, using different software. I am however, confident that if you persevere, you will have insights that cannot be expressed in words on printed pages of text.

I am now going to provide a clarification of the embodied values and the knowledge from which I designed and pedagogised my curriculum for the healing and inquiring nurse (Adler-Collins, 2007). These are applied to my teaching and nursing praxis. I am mindful at this point that I need to make clear how I am using words and values in my life-world as the same words can easily have different connotations and values to someone else. This research is a complex process in a complex context. Language barriers and cultural differences influenced the research. Many opportunities for misunderstandings and conflict existed, yet at the same time I had an understanding of the fluid dynamics of space and non-space that presented an opportunity to embrace inclusional thinking (Rayner 2003). I am suggesting that my ontology is the framing of the window and creates the spaces in which the different panes of glass each offers a different aspect - spaces of my life.

My boundaries of understanding are important to communication because their forms are bounded by my transitional certainty. Ones that are distinct but not discrete are those of the panes of glass. The reader is not separated from me, in individual terms, but shares with me a fluid dynamics of perception. I offer these panes, set in the frame of my selfhood, as a means of avoiding the separation of one from the other, and in so doing my reader and I co-create a journey of understanding and exploration. In this sense I believe that I am being inclusional. In an e-mail exchange on his work on inclusionality, Rayner said, 'inclusionality is an awareness of the vital inclusion of space in the fluid dynamic geometry of nature' (Personal communication March 15th, 2006).

Rayner's (2003) understandings are the closest I have seen to the Buddhist state of mindfulness which asks of its practitioners to bring conscious reflection to the interconnectedness of everything and to seek out our values with a compassionate heart to clarify their meanings.

I actively attempt to live with my embodied fundamental values. I do this with varying degrees of success. The values include those of respect, sensitivity, openness, flexibility, love, non-judgmentalism, non-violence, the capacity to forgive and compassion. I view my everyday living through the aspects of the active filters I am using - in that moment of knowing - through doing. By this I mean that as I teach I am using the aspect of me that is the teacher, grounded in my practice and supported and informed both by my practice and the theory, which I attribute to be necessary for my role as a teacher. When I change roles to a palliative care nurse, I change aspects of myself and the dominant aspect becomes that which is associated with my nursing practice. At the same time that I am engaging with my practice I am moving into and out of this practice by adding to or modifying the data-base of my nursing knowledge. I would therefore argue that multiple elements of different aspects of this relativity could be functioning in the same moment in an inclusional space. It is

inclusional from the stance that all the aspects of self inform the dominant aspect of self but are not necessarily acted on by the dominant aspect. The dominant aspect of self is situational and relative to events of the moment. In Buddhist terms of mindfulness, the situational self is connected to everything and there is no separation of the individual from the wholeness of the cosmos.

Through the praxis of *where we are*, my conscious understanding deepens these values and solidifies them into *transient certainty*. From this positional understanding of 'transient certainty' I set about building my framework, within which I see and make sense of the world. Such a framework is my *living truth*. I use *living truth* in the sense that Burke (1992) described as differentiated from the spectator truth. Burke suggested that the *living* or *authentic* truth of a situation can be fully understood only from within the situation; though the picture that emerges will never be as clear-cut as that provided by spectator truth with its imposed rationalized framework. I see that it is this framework – of a *living truth* – that emerges with my epistemology as my ontology is deepened and modified as a continual process of my conscious existence. In Rayner's (2004) sense, my epistemology evolves and morphs² into new forms of knowing in, on and around the moment of conscious understanding. I claim originality through my own authority of being. It is this concept upon which I build my pedagogy of the unique. It is my spirituality my truth and the very cosmology that I live by, which directly influence my being and are a direct result of my own experience. Through this process, by critical reflection, I seek to identify key aspects and the areas of learning that have occurred. My living truth, I believe, is grounded in the practice of my nursing, my teaching and the daily living of my humanity in which theory has to be born out in practice on a daily basis by the very nature of my work. I subject my living truth to the critical evaluations of others in order to strengthen the validity of my understandings with the insights of others. Submitting my ideas to *EJOLTS* for the critical evaluations of readers is part of this process.

In my teaching, I attempt to bring the instruction and ideas of experience and practice and offer these for open debate and analysis in the hope that the students will engage with these values. In this case, I can provide evidence of process but not evidence that the learning has been for *Good*. I can even provide analysis of the power structures and relationships to knowing and knowledge but I cannot prove student understanding without evidence from the students of the growth in their understanding. The universal nature of the core human values of mindful living embedded in my curriculum, is decided by the students in their selection of the seed values and making them their own or not as the case may be.

As I set these values, I designed and piloted a curriculum as a goal. What I ended up doing and where my new goal ended up are examples of the transformation of embodied values. My analysis of that transformation shows how living action-research extends to the borders and pushes the borders of expressions to embrace and evolve new epistemologies. Eisner (1997), in his paper *The Promises and Perils of Alternative Forms of Data Representation*, gave me insights in the process of exploring new knowledge:

² Morphs means changes, evolves.

We are, in a sense, looking for new stars. We are also looking for new seas. We are, as I said earlier, exploring the edges. There is, I think, no better place from which to see the stars and no better position from which to discover new seas than the view one gets from the edge. (p. 8)

Eisner finished his paper with a poem by Christopher Logue, an English poet (1926-) a poem often incorrectly attributed to Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918):

‘Come to the edge’, he said.
They said, ‘We are afraid.’
‘Come to the edge’, he said.
They came. He pushed them.
And they flew. (Eisner, 1997, p. 9)

Where I differ from Logue’s stance in his poem; is that I do not agree with pushing people into fear; rather, I choose a different way, that of asking them to jump freely. For I believe the empowering of free-will in someone’s learning, frees the mind from reliance on a guru or a power-relationship. Perhaps it is my Buddhist mindfulness nagging away at my thinking. I have repeatedly read the poem and keep asking myself: *‘what of the ones who fail to fly...do they fall?’* Even the possibility of hurting another is unacceptable to a Buddhist.

In keeping with the cyclical nature of heuristic and living action research, each time I visit my experiences I seek their teaching and learnings. However, I need an entry point to the cycles of reflection and actions. For this I use the Buddhist teachings of the four Noble truths as my declared ontological framework and my entry-point. They enable me to feel a degree of transitional certainty that I can find my way back to. In the next section of this paper, I place the framework of the four Noble truths on my window and offer each one as a new pane of glass through which I open a window in my world.

c) The concepts of the four Noble Truths in structuring my emerging epistemology

The Buddhist four Noble Truths are a basic framework for me as I seek to make sense of my world. Through engaging with the concepts of the Four Noble Truths as my basic epistemology and being willing to risk entering the abyss in the sense of a space-void of meaning, I create my own yoga of participation (Skolimowski, 1994). With new insights into myself and my values I can move to new positions of understanding. For example, my commitment to a loving and compassionate self emerged through the experience of humiliation and suffering. I transcended knowing and not knowing, not by a theory in words, but by knowing through praxis. In releasing myself from my craving for a particular kind of self-knowledge I engaged in a process of improvisatory self-realisation (Winter, 1998). I evolved my living educational theory through my experiential doing.

1st Noble Truth - Humiliation and Suffering (Jp³: KU-TAI)

In the Buddha's teachings of the first Noble Truth, there is an inevitability about our own humiliation and suffering. We are all subject to decay, old age, death, loss, disappointment or disease. As Kandy (1968) reported, '[B]irth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, not to get what one desires is suffering' (p.52).

From the grounding of my experience of humiliation and suffering documented in my writings (Adler-Collins, 2003) and from the experience of my 100 day fasts (Adler-Collins, 1996; 2000.) I reflected on the conceptual meanings of the first Noble Truth and asked myself: '*How does self give itself value?*' The truth I now try to embody came out of answering this question as I became conscious of the significance of loving and feeling compassionate towards others and myself. I have reached the understanding that the pain I feel is the pain I give myself. A part of me wants this pain, it is my friend and I have such familiarity with it from a path well trodden. My negative learning experiences and conditioning from the Catholic nuns of my childhood related to my '*original sin*'. This installed a mindset of guilt and a feeling that I had to suffer to have God forgive me for my birth. In transcending this guilt, by accepting who and what was the source, I freed myself. I now accept that I can live a life of Love and service and that I need no longer feel the pain, especially as that pain was installed through the belief-systems of another in a position of institutional and religious power. Deep meditation proved to be pivotal in identifying issues in my psyche and emotions that were placed there by external influence such as my class, culture, whiteness, and religion. Once identified it was a matter of seeking appropriate teaching and then moving on. Living a life of loving compassion towards all humanity is the praxis embedded within my new consciousness.

It is the sharing of this consciousness that I intended to bring to my curriculum, where the way we look at suffering and pain could be modified through compassion and love. A value that has been embedded within the curriculum is the human rights of our patients to be treated and seen as human beings, with feelings, emotions, worries, and fears, as members of a community, and as part of a family with a life history of living. What they *cannot* be reduced to, is a disease or a set of symptoms. Basic respect and compassion is a value that I believe should be embodied by every nurse.

The 2nd Noble Truth - Thirst and Craving (Jp: JIT-TAI)

The Buddha described the cause of suffering as the arising of dukkha (pervasive unsatisfactoriness) from which emerges two types of craving and thirst. The first is a craving for sense pleasures; the second is a craving for existence and non-existence. Perhaps in modern terms we can equate this with narcissistic craving, the thirst for a fixed image of self, either something or nothing. This would suggest that the Buddhist approach tells of a core existential insecurity that is beyond the content of any individual's story. We wish to know

³ Jp refers to Japanese.

ourselves securely, to be sure of who and what we are, but we are frustrated from the beginning by one essential contradiction. We, as experiencing subject, can never know ourselves satisfactorily as object. We cannot experience ourselves indivisibly but must experience ourselves as either subject as a knower, or object [as a knower or] as that which is known.

The Buddhist method of resolving this dilemma is to encourage states of not knowing. This is somewhat of a contradiction. I have doubts about myself and my 'I', for being the centre of my own universe in terms of consciousness. I feel that it is essential to discover if the truths and realities of my universe are really mine, or if I am seeing through the illusion and acquired filters of others, i.e. parents, culture etc., as previously described. I feel it to be essential to go into doubt rather than away from it, almost purposefully disrupting existing structures rather than indulging them. This process was traumatic for me, as the experience of two 100 day fasts that I completed were intended to be. A question I asked myself, with some concern for my sense of identity, was, 'If I were to remove the acquired filters of self from my Buddhist beliefs, then what is left?' This question remains unanswered. The Buddha, we are told, had an opinion on this subject, when asked the question; 'What is the nature of self?' The Buddha replied; 'there is neither self nor non-self. The question itself is flawed for it is being asked from a place that has already assumed that self was an entity.'

This seems to be a paradox of whether the self is just a rising from the mental causation, but has no identity other than illusions that we create from our attachment to sensory data. My reflection about my thirst and craving for self-knowledge still has to be resolved, as the second Noble truth remains one that creates in me dis-ease, as I struggle with the nihilism of the concept.

The 3rd Noble Truth - Release (Jp: MET-TAI)

Goldstein and Kornfield (1987) introduced me to a Buddhist idea of release through the translation of the Dhammapada, a poem of joy that the Buddha was said to have exclaimed on his realisation of enlightenment:

I wander through the rounds of countless births seeking but not finding the builder of this house sorrowful indeed is birth again and again Oh house builder! You have now been seen. You shall build the house no longer all your rafters have been broken, your ridgepole shattered. My mind has attained to unconditional freedom achieved is the end of craving. (p.76)

Because of our cravings, the Buddha appears to be teaching that we want things to become understandable. We reduce, concretise or substantialise. I cannot accept the strand of Buddhism that stipulates that we are born into humanness through our Karma through the wheel of life. I choose to believe that I create my humanness through my love and service to others. I do however, recognise that by exposing my cravings and needs and bringing them to my attention, I release myself from unquestioningly following their demands.

My thirst for knowledge and understanding can also constrict rather than release me. I want things, including myself, to be understandable, to explain myself to myself and others as a singularity in the way Maclure (1996) has characterised the narratives of becoming an action researcher. In the release from this craving for objective knowledge, which emerged from my entry into my Abyss of the two 100-day fasts I completed, I no longer seek to be perfect and no longer measure myself against standards of perfection, assumed or implied in the external standards of judgements that can be used to test the validity of claims to knowledge.

In releasing myself from my craving for a particular kind of self-knowledge, I now see myself and my knowledge as part of a continuous process of tension and creation, as part of a process of improvisatory self-realisation (Winter, 1998). I create my own living theories in the sense that I am creating my descriptions and explanations for my own learning, as I seek to improve my understanding and learning of my spirituality, nursing and educational practices. I believe my self-knowledge to be created through my fictions, my mirages, my shadows and my dreams. I also believe that I am a vessel of love and compassion and in service to the learning and healing of others, where my 'I' can be transferred and transformed into the 'We' of loving collective community.

The 4th Noble Truth - The Path (Jp: DO-TAI)

The 4th Noble Truth dictates the pathway which one walks. Embedded in my curriculum and pedagogy are the eight elements of the fourth Noble truth and it is here that I have to point out a possible clash of languages because the text is written in Sanskrit, the translation of which suggest the *right way*. I am very conscious that this *right way* is bounded by Asian Buddhist concepts and could cause others to argue that it is not *their* right way. It is for the reader to assess for himself or herself if the values declared speak to them and their individual praxis. These are the values I identified as important to me in my praxis as a nurse and teacher. I share them with the hope that others will concur.

1. *Right Views (Jp: SHO-KEN)*: respecting the humanity, originality and authority of each life without judgement and in humble service. Protecting the sick and the weak in your care, aspire to the relief of suffering on all levels: Spiritual, Mental, Emotional, Physical.
2. *Right Aspirations (Jp: SHO-SHIYUKI)*: to aspire to do your best in the discharge of your charge of care through service.
3. *Right Speech (Jp: SHO-GYO)*: never to speak in anger or to speak in jealousy, fear or reprimand. To use words sparingly, wisely and with care, understanding that the spoken or written word is never the received word as the values and concepts of speaker and writer may differ.
4. *Right Actions (Jp: SHO-GO)*: to act mindfully, protecting your patient and students and their rights. To be courteous in your dealings with other healthcare professionals but not subservient.
5. *Right Livelihood (Jp: SHO-MYO)*: to live life respectably and honourably; doing your best; to be mindful of others and their wants and needs.

6. *Right Effort (Jp: SHO-SHOJIN)*; to do all actions with the maximum of effort (GANBARU).
7. *Right Mindfulness (Jp: SHO-NEN)*; to be aware of the needs of others, understanding your limitations and value; see your place in the interconnected wholeness of creation.
8. *Right Meditation (Jp: SHO-JO)*: calmness of mind and heart gives rise to a softness of eyes and touch, tranquillity is conveyed in your words.

In essence, the fourth Noble Truth is the construct of my living educational theory, my pedagogy - for in order to walk my path I must continually self-survey, self-correct and self-improve in the stories of my learning. The fundamental truth is that it is my journey and my truth. The answers lie within me. It is not a re-inventing of myself or making up of a form of myself. I believe it is a discovery of a selfhood which is already there. In the next section of this paper, I explore the meanings of pedagogy in relation to my emerging values and their implications for standards of inclusional practice.

d) Inclusion Pedagogy and the Primordial Gap

The concept of pedagogy was germane to the development of my curriculum and this paper. I am using my understanding of my pedagogy as a natural extension of my ontology and epistemology. It, too, is inspired by Rayner's (2003) concept of inclusionality, which resonates with Shingon-Shu Buddhism. For that reason, I refer to my pedagogical approach, as Inclusional Pedagogy. I build on (Bernstein, 2000) ideas of pedagogy when he states:

Pedagogy is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice, and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator - appropriate either from the point of view of the acquirer or by some other body(s) or both. (p.78)

In relation to the pedagogising of my healing nurse texts, the distributive rules suggested by (Bernstein, 2000) are significant because they distinguish between two different classes of knowledge. Bernstein believes that it is the very nature of language that makes these two classes of knowledge possible. He terms them the 'thinkable class, and the unthinkable class' (p.30). He believes that there is a potential discourse gap between these two classes. He stresses that it is not a dislocation of meaning, but it is a gap. I would like to focus on this gap, which I refer to as the *primordial gap*. Within the primordial gap created by the thinkable class and unthinkable class there lies the opportunity for originality of mind.

For example, according to science (thinkable class), (spiritual?) healing is firmly in the unthinkable class, consequently all the forces and power available to the thinkable class in terms of voice, validity and distribution are brought to bear in order to negate, silence or control. The answer to this problem, as I understand it, is within the primordial gap.

Understanding this primordial gap is particularly important for attempts to pedagogise knowledge. This is because, as Bernstein (2000) explains, any distribution of power will always attempt to regulate the realisation of this potential discourse gap

between the thinkable and unthinkable knowledge. Bernstein believes that part of the reason why the rules of the pedagogic device are stable is that this gap will always be regulated. He points out that any distribution of power will regulate the potential of this gap in its own interest, because the gap itself has the possibility of an alternative order, an alternative society and an alternative power relation (p.30), thus posing a threat to the power holders.

In developing my own ideas of the primordial gap, I am mindful of the issues of stability in relation to colonial forms of knowing understood as the thinkable class. In the move to reduce the damaging aspects of colonial thinking and seeing with a colourless gaze, according to Buddhist teaching, it is important to examine Bernstein's work for what is – in effect an excellent critique and analysis of colonial workings. This limits the use of his work in terms of his understandings grounded in western thinking, but offers a sound analytical framework for analysing the colonial system of knowing and its power-relationships.

The advent of self-studies theses emerging around the world shows that, when ready, living educational theories do influence social formations. They hold that any distribution of power in controlling the primordial gap is directly influenced by context. However, for those of us on the edge, in Apollinaire's sense, we keenly feel the negations of our values. It is my belief that as we emerge from the primordial gap with new forms of knowing and understanding we can offer hope in the new social formations that are creating the future. Living educational theories spawned, born and nurtured in this *primordial gap*, a sort of black hole, are outside the control of the formal educative space. However, the fact remains that those different power-agencies, including myself, support different, and perhaps conflicting, pedagogies. I have found that after years of constant struggle, some satisfaction is achieved when you can identify your influence for good and positive growth and learning in others.

e) Redefining my practice, making explicit my position: understanding my learning

My living educational theory is occurring within the context of another set of contradictions (Whitehead, 1989). Within educational circles this is known as the paradigm wars described by (Gage, 1989) as: '...a minefield of conflicting polarities' (p.43); and this same issue was described by (Schön, 1995) as: '...an epistemological battle' (p.32). The paradigm wars are very real. Donmoyer (1996) writes:

[t]he fact [is] that ours is a field characterised by paradigm proliferation and consequently, the sort of field in which there is little consensus about what research and scholarship are and what research reporting and scholarly discourse should look like. (p.19)

The paradigm war within the Western Academy⁴ is at least explicit. Another kind of conflict is also occurring that is not so explicit and much harder to detect here in Japan. I am

⁴ Academy refers to universities, their traditions, and their body of knowledge, as well as the power they wield in defining what constitutes truth.

suggesting that this is not limited only to Japan but could easily be a global issue. As well as paradigm-clashes and conflicts, there is a paradigm-colonization underway.

For example, the importation of the concepts of ethics and research, and the subsequent use of those concepts, shows that there has been a change in the way the ideas are understood by the Eastern Academy in comparison with the Western Academy, although the ideas originated in the West. This could be understood as fusion or syncretism⁵.

If that is true of the Western Academy, it is even truer when the Eastern Academy is included. Therefore, it is *critical* that I seek clarification of my own embodied values and knowledge, as I design and pedagogise a curriculum for the healing and enquiring nurse. I need to understand my own values – right from the beginning when I started to live the paradigm fusion, I reflected on this issue, asking myself various questions of the nature:

- What is my Practice?
- How Do I improve my Practice?
- What is the students' experience of my Course?

I sought to make sense of what was often incomprehensible to me. As my analysis of my teaching and methodology progressed, the nature of the questions changed reflecting, I claim, a more inclusional understanding of the context in which I-we taught and learned. Examples of these questions are: '*What is our practice and what do our patients require from us?*' and '*How can we improve this course for future students?*'

I have concerns, as I not only watch the paradigm war unfold here in Japan, I also live in it, embedded as a foreigner in culture that has a feudal system of education. By feudal I mean that the professors have total control over what low ranking teachers can and cannot do. Time served is more important than efficiency and productivity or even higher degree awards.

Being so deeply involved in this living process in a culture not of my birth, it is sometimes problematic to give time for reflection, as I am in the middle of the experience, trying to understand and make sense of it. However, as I reflect on my experiences I am struck by the need for praxis. From the stance of the University, the curriculum was a success. I can claim this from the grades the students achieved and the quality of their engagement and their final evaluations. However the real test of its success for me came as I placed all the worry and problems encountered in the delivery into an inclusional perspective. This success was epitomized in the words of a patient in a Japanese Psychiatric ward where my students became the first Japanese nurses to be officially recognised through accreditation for using healing touch in their outside clinical practice. The patient said after his healing touch massage: 'I have been here 30 years and it is the first time I have been touched by a nurse... It was so comfortable' (K.Y., personal communication, Tagawa, October 19, 2007).

⁵ Syncretism refers to the attempt to reconcile contradictory forms of knowledge and to allow for an inclusive approach to religious faiths.

Within the patient's words was a story, one that nurses should heed, as it is not an isolated case within psychiatric nursing in Japan. His words also confirmed the value and uniqueness of compassionate human touch and the desperate need for nurses to start reforming their practice.

There remained the questions of why my colleagues were so distant, unhelpful or outright hostile? The issues were complex, educational ones about knowledge, knowledge-outcomes, teaching-methodologies and strategies. These were further complicated by the nuances of differing cultures and change. In seeking to enhance my understanding I gathered information and in so doing made one of most serious errors I could possibly make in Japanese culture. I approached the problems by using Western logic and an educational rationale that had been taught to me and served me so well in the past. I expected to have shared understandings in education and educational practices. My Japanese colleagues listened, smiled, but I found myself marginalised even more, and experienced a very difficult time. Coping became a matter of survival as I sank deeper and deeper into despair. *There were no shared understandings*, and in my naivety, I had assumed that, as nurses, we had a common ground in our aims. I had made no allowance for the very different types of nursing-culture and power-issues that existed between Western training and professionalism, and Eastern training and professionalism. What I had done in my ignorance of Japanese culture was entirely to ignore what the Japanese call '*Amaeru*' (Doi, 2001). I had also placed my colleagues in a position that no Japanese feels comfortable with, and that is of confrontation or being asked directly for an opinion. '*Amaeru*' is, in typical Japanese fashion, a word that translates poorly into English and is of a highly complex social-order and understanding. 'The inference was that it was impossible that a word describing a phenomenon so universal that it was to be found not only in human beings but even among animals should exist in Japan but not in other languages' (Doi, 2001, p.15).

What was happening was not only the paradigm wars being acted out but deeper cultural differences clashing in terms of knowing and knowledge. For example, nurses in Japan have little or no self-autonomy and due to poor training and educational requirements have little voice or academic ground to stand on as a profession. Improving nurse-education and the status of nursing in Japan are the declared aims of most faculty personnel with whom I speak. Yet, there is this conflict between words and actions that needs exploring. Educational paradigms are bandied about within the social formation, depending on the theoretical and research orientation of the senior professor's education. A good example of this conflict is the qualitative-quantitative debate, which in Japanese nurse-education is highly polarised. Japanese scholars take advanced degrees and Ph.D.s in Western countries, where mentors often use paradigms heavily influenced by Western perspectives on culture and knowledge. These scholars return to Japan almost colonized, with a new form of the 'correct way'. What happens next is that those in power then decide what is the thinkable and the unthinkable form of knowing (Bernstein, 2000). In my curriculum design, I was deeply conscious of these issues but had no idea of the meaning or importance of '*Amaeru*'. My Japanese peers for their part, had very little experience of a male western educated teacher who was also an experienced clinical nurse. For those who had never heard of action research and mixed-methods approaches, I was a source of great tension.

Culturally it is unacceptable for a lesser-grade teacher to question a higher-ranking one. This is not related to the educational qualifications held by the 'junior'-ranking teacher.

In my case, I have a Ph.D. in education. Many of my peers do not hold Ph.D.s or formal teaching-licences. The Western methodology of critical questioning, for example, asking:

- What did they mean by using the word ‘Learning Outcomes’?
- Against what criterion were they written?’

Alternatively:

- What is the educational audit-trail for this unit?
- How were they assessed, and evaluated in terms of levels of knowledge, reliability, repeatability, and function?’

Such questions brought about strained silence and were viewed as attacking the status of seniors. Such academic frailty, I believe, is institutionalized; more often than not it is embedded in power rather than in academic learning.

I also feel that there is another issue here that cannot be clearly expressed in words. However, I will try to articulate it as clearly as I can. The Western model of education is steeped in the philosophies of the individuality of the self and the rights of the individual, as explicated by such as notables as Maslow, Bloom, Schön, and Dewey. Critical inquiry and thinking flow naturally from those theories. I feel a sense of dis-ease almost as though the hidden agenda or hidden-curriculum of the real Japan with its values of ‘Amaeru’ are clashing with its declared educational agenda of critical inquiry. Coming from the challenging Western European environment, especially in the Bath Action Research Group at the University of Bath (where all knowledge claims were required to be defended rigorously) to an environment where the silence of respect was expected, and in some cases demanded, has probably been the biggest cause of my distress and dis-ease.

My tension was that my ontological position challenged the Western Academy and the medical profession. Some of my basic life-truths, relating to the concepts of disease, are grounded in Chinese medicine, Eastern philosophy and concepts of spirituality; concepts which are still very alien to the West, although they have been used for centuries in the East. Therefore these learned bodies relegate my form of knowing to the ‘unthinkable’ (Bernstein, 2000). They claim it is neither academic nor scholarly even though there is a small but growing recognition that the Western Medical forms of education are suffering from ‘Rightness and Whiteness’. My educational praxis focused on student-centred, co-creating knowledge that serves the profession by grounding nursing-education in the practice of nursing. This approach challenged the Eastern academy’s rigid ‘Lecture, Chalk and Talk community.’

It should be clear by now that what I lacked was a shared understanding of my experience. I felt I had made a cultural mistake. I suspect it was one of many as I sought to understand how the Japanese managed change – with their behind-the-scenes building of consensus referred to as *watering the roots*. This term not only implies a ‘careful tending to’, it is also about the importance of tradition, connections, having paid ones dues, and relationships that go back a long way in time. Compare that scene to my relative newness in the culture in which I had no long-term relationships or connections. I practiced an open style of management through negotiation and consensus-building by including all levels and grades to receive feedback on my curriculum. I found myself asking the question: ‘How,

then, do I recreate and hold my teaching/healing space within the constraints and academic-social issues outlined in order to bring about a more socially embedded curriculum?’

To answer this question I outline next the practical principles that I believe distinguish my pedagogy. They are based on my living action research, in which I have reflected about the paradigm wars, what they mean to me, and what I need to do to enact my values. My pedagogy reflects the knowledge I have gained about what it takes to ‘create and hold a healing-teaching space’ as well as the nature of the social structure within which I was striving to embed my curriculum.

The following 10 points are focused on distinguishing the practical principles I use in creating and holding a self healing-teaching space. The 10 practical principles are distinguished in terms of:

1. Creating my safe teaching/ healing space.
2. Maintaining and holding my safe/ healing/teaching space.
3. Understanding my healing/teaching space.
4. Creating a safe teaching/healing space with students.
5. Maintaining a safe teaching/healing space. Gathering data for an analysis of classroom video with students’ responses and journals
6. Students understanding a safe healing space.
7. Students expressing love in the healing process.
8. Students expressing compassion in the healing process
9. Students expressing understanding in the healing process.
10. Enabling the other to understand their healing process.

In the following 10 sections I want to be very clear that I am focusing on distinguishing 10 of the practical principles I use in creating and maintaining a safe teaching/healing space. There is as yet no analysis of the data but I offer the images with some of my own reflections and the evaluative reflections of my students to point to the power of images to communicate my meanings in relation to my practical principles. I recognise that as my research progresses then each practical principle and visual representation below will need analytic commentary that shows how my living theory of the creation of a safe teaching/healing space is being created with my explanatory practical principles.

1. Creating my safe teaching/ healing space.

My healing space is my classroom. The room is warm, well ventilated and welcoming with soft lights, pleasant smells of oils and incense and candles as a symbol of the light that we work with in the process of healing and learning. Classroom layout is informal and tables and chairs were laid out to facilitate small groups.



Figure 1. Normal classroom layout in the university (2004)⁶

The above photograph is typical of the university lecture-setting, being highly formal, and the body-language of the students shows the power-issues of the sensei⁷/banking educator at work. This is an example of Hall's (1969) fixed feature space.

The below space (Figure 2) presents a different image of my classroom-setting in which the space had been negotiated with the students. Group-learning is taking place in an atmosphere of co-operation. A comparison between the two pictures shows a marked difference in body-language. The first picture was of a formal environment controlled by the power of the establishment and the teaching style. The second picture suggests, through the body-language, a more relaxed approach to space and power-relationships. For example, the positioning of the two students on the left shows them to be comfortable with each other as they are leaning towards each other, combined with open body gestures. The gap between the two students in the middle of the picture suggests that they are not yet fully comfortable with each other. Group members were selected at random deliberately to show the students that they have to be flexible as nurses. This is important, as a nurse may well find that he or she is moved from their team or ward as staffing and circumstances dictate in the work-environment. The ability to form effective team-relationships and exercise flexibility is, I believe, another basic nursing skill. The students are smiling in this picture and there is a look of engagement and fun on the students' faces, suggesting that they are relaxed with each other, the environment and the task at hand (Krebs, 2000; Jordon, 2001). The portfolio that can be seen in this group shows the dynamic use of colour and space as they debate the topic. What the picture does not show is what the students are smiling about or if they are engaged with the subject-material. They could be talking about anything and this is where the importance of establishing trustworthiness, as previously mentioned, becomes critical to the introduction and use of images as evidence.

⁶ Consent to use these images and academic papers for research were given by all the members of this group. This is the case for all images in this paper. All photographs in this paper are copyrighted to Adler-Collins.

⁷ Sensei refers to the title in Japanese given to teachers and other professionals.



Figure 2. Layout of healing theory classroom after we had negotiated the classroom formation and layout (2003)

2. Maintaining and holding my safe/healing/teaching space.

I took responsibility for my students whilst they were in my care and in the healing-space. I worked at maintaining the safe space and this required that my own mental and spiritual disciplines were in place. I worked at ensuring that I focused in the moment. This was achieved by the discipline of meditation and prayer. The students visited issues of pain and antagonistic issues in their lives, as it was these issues that were a source of their dis-ease. Healing and counselling were made available.

I valued my insights, which permitted me to see these issues without being invasive or abusive but at the same time strong enough to allow the process to take place. This often meant that I was exposed to antagonistic energies, which were released from the student in the form of emotional responses or even antagonistic thoughts and actions. My issues from my autobiography (Adler-Collins, 1996) were often reflected back to me during a course of teaching a healing curriculum, and I worked at responding to these in a way, which was helpful to the learning of the student, whilst reducing or avoiding projections on my part, from my autobiography, onto my students.

3. Understanding my healing/teaching space.

I now want to take a 'risk' in Winter's (1989) sense that the action researcher reveals himself or herself in a vulnerable way. In what follows I simply want to communicate that I understand my healing/teaching-space in terms of positive and negative energies, prayer, love and compassion. This is a process I have evolved. I work at transcending the antagonistic energy and making it 'safe'. I do this through the process of prayer, expressing love, compassion and understanding and listening without judgement. I also use incense and essential oils that evoke a sense of the sacred. My practice is based on a combination of my training and my intuitive recognition of these energies. This 'decontamination' process, if you will, creates a feeling of safety for the students. I present an analysis of classroom video-clips showing the interaction of the students, which I believe could not have occurred in an environment of fear or control. The picture below links to a six-minute clip of a group of freshman⁸-students on the healing-theory course presenting back their work, ideas and feelings about the course and what they have learned. The spoken language is Japanese; I hope that that does not detract from the sense of fun and excitement I felt from this group in the youthful energy of their recital. Their words and voice for the most part are confident and they move around the space and text of the portfolio with ownership. The colours and use of Art-text is very Japanese in approach as are the drawings with their sense of embodied cultural youthfulness. The subject matter reflected a far deeper connection and engagement with the learning outcomes than I had expected or been led to expect. A valuable lesson for me in that I understood that given the freedom to explore their meanings of the subject matter, the students would have more connection to its relevance for them and for their patients.



Video 1. [Having fun with portfolio evidence](#) (Adler-Collins, 2008)

⁸ Freshman, an American term, refers to *first-year* college students.

In the next part of this paper, I wish to point out that the English has not been corrected from the journals and work of my students. I have left the text as it is to allow the reader to view the data without any editing. In this manner, my understanding can be placed in context with the text and images. In terms of the validity of this process, I draw on the data from the use of different instruments of data-collection to see to what extent I evidenced and communicated the following standards of practice.

4. Creating a safe teaching/healing space with students

Individual student's reflections on portfolio building:

- I was able to tackle new things in a friendly atmosphere.⁹
- I think that a group or activity was completed happily. I think that relations were able to become very good by doing one thing into a group.
- It was very good that it was able to discuss writing many things all together.
- I thought that what is necessary was just to be able to carry out group activity many more after this.
- For me This lesson was really pleasant.
- It discussed with the member of a group and the portfolio was created.



Figure 3. Students engaged in Portfolio Building (2003)

⁹ I would like to remind you here that the students' words have not been altered, for the sake of authenticity.

5. **Maintaining a safe teaching/healing space. Gathering data for an analysis of classroom video with students' responses and journals**



Figure 4. Students in Group work (Healing Theory)

For me, this picture (Figure 4) which at first may look unassuming, suggests the starting of a new group-dynamic. The students appear to be focused and looking inward. Their body language is leaning towards the focus on the portfolio at the centre of the group. Three students are actively writing.



Figure 5. Students in Group work (Healing Theory)

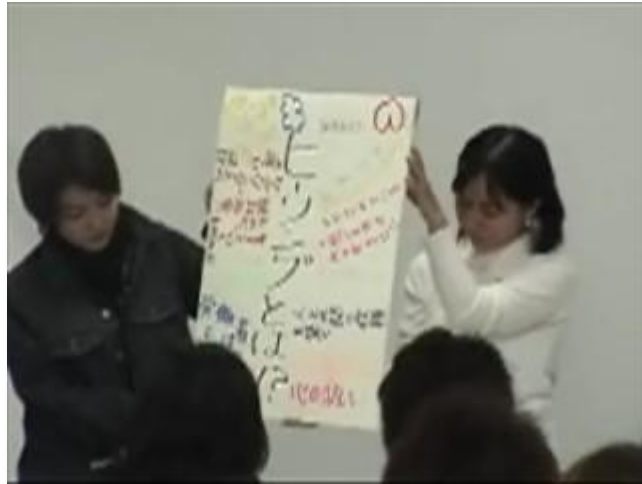


Figure 6 (Healing Theory) Students presenting their ideas

6. Students understanding a safe healing space.

The student's own reflective journals extend the range of data available for analysis. For example:

There was the healing theory and it was difficult for me. Since especially the talk about inside feelings. I was able to do very happily at the time of portfolio creation. I considered healing together with the friend and our group showed it with the picture as much as possible the time of a portfolio was very pleasant and I was healed. I did not consider and remember a disagreeable thing, but feeling became very easy. I entered in the inner part of the healing theory much more, and thought that I wanted many to know about healing." (Student Reflective Journal, October 16, 2003.)

Although we have received education from a school, a home, and society, need to question. I enjoyed myself with the others and thought it important an instruction and to learn. Finally, it is about a portfolio. The portfolio writes having learned or having thought [of us] collectively. Moreover, I thought that what I was can be communication with a teacher through a portfolio. (Student Reflective Journal, October 21, 2003.)

Here are some students' comments on the question of 'what is healing?' that enable me to understand their perceptions:

- Healing exists?
- Healing theory having many kinds of another country admitting by scholarship.
- Music healing, massage healing, action healing, makes good effect with patients.
- But, healing effect cannot prove causality.
- can not prove by scientific methods yet
- Also physically, man may be influenced by believing language and imagination.



Figure 7. [A students' group portfolio: What is healing?](#)

7. Students expressing love in the healing process.

The communication of expressions or love for what one is doing in one's practice in a research account is not easy. I believe that we need multi-media forms of representation for such communications and I have made a start below in relation to love and healing touch in the pictures below together with the students' evaluative reflections.



Figure 8. Pictures of body language and touch from classroom healing activities.



Figure 9. Healing Touch

Individual student's evaluative reflections:

- Healing Practice.
- Healing was given to the person who met for the first time.
- Healing was given to the person who met for the first time.
- Healing for the patient.
- It has actually practiced to a volunteer old person's man it is still far - I want to practice more.
- It is that it turns out that the model's complexion became good extremely although it does not understand whether to be using mind.
- Healing was truly made as a therapist (this is a great thing) with an external man The person who did was glad and returned.
- Tsubo points interest me.
- The patient actually came and I gave healing, enjoyed.
- Although the partner of healing which I performed until now was a student, since I performed healig with ordinary persons for the first time, I became tense this time.

8. Students expressing compassion in the healing process



Figure 10. Understanding Compassion

9. Students expressing understanding in the healing process.



Figure 11. Understanding through experience

10. Enabling the other to understand their healing process.



Figure 12. Communications skills with patients



Figure 13. Communication Skills with patients

f) In summary

Inclusionality, in the sense of compassion and flexible dynamic boundaries, is in my stated ontology. Consciousness and reflection are in my epistemology and the Four-fold-path is in my praxis. My pedagogy of the healing-nurse curriculum embodies all of the above. It does so in the following way:

The assumptions of healing are grounded in inclusionality and inclusional practice. Expansion of my enquiring consciousness and reflection are the means by which I enter or become more aware of 'My' I -we - the others space/boundaries (I-We-you-us). I think this needs a sentence or two to clarify meanings of 'My' I-we-the others space/boundaries (I-We-you-us).

My intention is guided by the Four-fold path, and the praxis is my ability to engage in a transformative space-boundary adventure with another – a balancing act; it is a process whereby my intention sparks the others to recreate their matrix of wholeness and health. Inclusionality then becomes the living space within which healing, teaching and learning occur, and healing becomes the space of inclusionality. My meanings of inclusionality and healing then become my living standards of judgement (Laidlaw, 1996).

My emerging epistemology has been modified through this process of research in and on my actions, context, personal values and teaching skills. I am sensitive to the critical issues of race within education and the power relationships involved with the generation of knowledge and its control. I clarify my own limitations and frustrations as an educator and I make a lifelong commitment to improve them. I believe that the classroom can and should be a safe place for learning, where the students and the teachers co-create knowledge that is not only the given curriculum; and they also develop citizenship and life skills. I have questioned my values of love and compassion that are grounded in my Buddhist faith. While my understanding has deepened with the process of critical inquiry, my ontology has also been strengthened.

Nursing education in Japan has entered into university-settings with the stated objective to improve the competence of the nursing workforce. Such an objective is problematic for several reasons.

g) Challenges that remain.

1. As the new curriculum is now replete with non-Japanese academic theories, curriculum-design should reflect in its theory Japanese thinking and cultural sensitivities.
2. The actual practice of nursing education – in terms of hands-on training, the touching of patients, and learning the basic skills of their nursing craft – is dangerously limited.
3. Drawing experienced clinical nurses into nursing academia is not happening. This is problematic due to a shortage of suitably-qualified individuals. This problem is compounded by the increased commissioning of new faculties of nursing as Japan expands its number of university level nursing schools. The current practice of not requiring nursing educators to stay current in their nursing practice also weakens the quality of nursing education. Nursing is an applied science and faculty without the grounding in current clinical practice are unable to consider practice relevant questions for research or teaching.
4. Japan has the lowest birth-rate in the world. Its nursing professional is predominantly female. With changes in social structuring in Japan, under the influence of Western thinking, women are expanding their choices of employment. Thus attracting top-level academic students to nursing will be a problem. The more famous and socially-elite universities will continue to select on academic criteria. The rural, prefectural universities are likely to have to accept students of lower academic achievement just to fill places. This in turn will place pressure on the teachers in the

system who will have to contend with having academically-challenged students coping with what is now a very challenging theory-driven academic curriculum. Japan is correct in looking towards scholarship as a means to improve the professional ability of nursing in Japan. The challenge remains, however, in the balancing of theory and practice and finding suitable inclusional models of representing nursing-knowledge. Japanese scholars, in cooperation with their students and with the voices of their patients, need to be mindful of creating an educational programme that embraces Japanese values along those of the West. The curriculum of the healing and reflecting nurse is an important next step in that direction.

5. A declared outcome of the Japanese education system is the development of English-speaking skills. Compared to the level of achievement of China, Korea, Taiwan and Indonesia, Japan is spectacular in its constant failure to achieve its objective. Japanese scholars and students of nursing are limited in their understanding of research-material because their lack of language-skills in English. They have to rely on the few limited texts that are translated into Japanese.

Japan has enjoyed nearly a century of economic leadership in Asia. She is being chased hard now and cannot afford any complacency in the use of English as the language of globalisation.

My final thoughts can be summarised by the words of my Ph.D. critical reader, Professor Emeritus of Nursing, Sarah Porter Ph.D., of Oregon Health & Sciences University.

The most amazing and original thing about your project, I think, is that you developed a healing curriculum – in another country-culture far different from your own, received the highest level of official approval, gained access to implement the curriculum within a fairly traditional school of nursing, including commitment of resources and it has and is being successful. Your reflections of your experience and why it happened for you that way and how you coped with it and what you learned and how you have changed – it seems to me to be the source of the unique. (Porter, 2005)

What started out as a healing curriculum grounded in the concept of 'I' has been engaged with, modified and re-formed into the Japanese curriculum of a collective 'We'. Where this understanding will go is difficult to assess. However, the first steps have been taken and the theory has so far withstood critical tests in practice. What is needed to move these local findings into national and international contexts is the vision and courage to pick up the challenges highlighted in this paper and bring them into consciousness and practice in other contexts. This will require an openness of praxis through enhancing the fluidity and permeability of the boundaries that are presently constraining the development of Japanese Nursing scholars and practice-nurses. This is likely to include some political lobbying and sociocultural 'educating' as a planned strategy of increasing the level of professionalism in Japanese Nursing. It will also require a shift of balancing theory and traditional values of nursing away from its dependence on the medical model for its authority of knowing. This is my dream. In the words of John Lennon¹⁰, '*maybe I am a dreamer, but I am not the only one*', sustains me in hope for the future.

¹⁰ John Lennon was a singer and songwriter with "The Beatles" Pop Group in England.

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